

The EU and the sanctioning of norm violations

DISSERTATION
of the University of St.Gallen,
School of Management,
Economics, Law, Social Sciences,
International Affairs and Computer Science,
to obtain the title of
Doctor of Philosophy in International
Affairs and Political Economy

submitted by

Martina FÜRrutter

from

Austria

Approved on the application of

Prof. Dr. Tina Freyburg

and

Prof. Dr. Gerald Schneider

Dissertation no. 5103

Difo-Druck GmbH, Untersiemau 2021

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The University of St.Gallen, School of Management, Economics, Law, Social Sciences, International Affairs and Computer Science, hereby consents to the printing of the present dissertation, without hereby expressing any opinion on the views herein expressed.

St.Gallen, May 20, 2021

The President:

Prof. Dr. Bernhard Ehrenzeller

Acknowledgements

My PhD journey has been quite a roller coaster ride and I am eternally grateful to many very special people who have shared this ride with me. You have cheered me on when I needed support. But you have also reminded me to enjoy the ride and the seemingly ordinary moments, and to celebrate the smaller and bigger victories on the way.

Thank you to my dedicated, supportive, and inspiring supervisors Frank, Gerald, and especially Tina. I will carry your passion for research and teaching, your curiosity, and your ability to see the learning and potential for growth in everything forever with me.

Thank you, Ciaran, Hugo, Karina, Lisa, Michael, and Vero, for being the best teammates possible. Our brunches, sauna sessions, hikes and discussions over coffee and drinks have made this journey so much better. I could not imagine a better work team and a group of true friends.

Thank you to the wonderful people at the SEPS and IPW departments, especially Gina, Lina, Linda, Manali, Jana-Christina, Sebastian, and Vanessa. Thank you for all the inspiring, funny, and heartfelt moments we shared inside and outside of the office, on (virtual) coffee breaks, and on the yoga mat. You have made my time in St.Gallen so much better.

Beyond university, my time in St.Gallen has brought many wonderful friends into my life. Thank you, Antje, for your big and welcoming heart. Thank you, Judith, for your inspiring creativity and (com)passion. Thank you, Linda, for always being only a phone call or train ride away. Thank you, Julian, for taking me on little adventures around Switzerland and for introducing me to your Gönnerstage. Thank you to all the wonderful and inspiring Yogis at the Unisport, Sundari Yoga and beyond. You have all left a big imprint on me.

Finally, thank you to my wonderful family. Thank you to my caring, funny, and strong-minded sisters, Julia & Monika. Thank you for always being there for me, for always coming to visit, no matter where I am, and for always celebrating me and my life choices. Thank you to my parents Astrid & Klaus. Thank you for encouraging me to explore the world and to follow my interests and my heart wherever it may take me. Thank you for being my anchor and for providing me with the most loving home—always, but especially during those last strenuous months of my PhD journey.

It is a true gift knowing that wherever life takes me, there are so many wonderful people in my life whose hearts and doors are always open for me. I have not named all of you, but I am eternally grateful for you. Thank you!

St.Gallen, July 2021

Martina Füllrutter

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Summary

This thesis provides new insights into the characteristics and determinants of EU sanctioning policies by investigating: In what way and under which conditions does the European Union (EU) sanction the violation of norms? The extant literature about the nature, use, and effectiveness of sanctions is primarily based on cases involving the US and the UN. As a result, we lack an adequate understanding of the EU's decision-making, especially at a time when it is an increasingly important actor in international relations.

By studying *how* (characteristics) and *when* (determinants) the EU sanctions, I show that the EU pursues a gradualist approach emphasizing dialogue and diplomacy, and uses the threat of sanctions as a strategic foreign policy tool. In cases of brute violations of human rights and democratic freedom, the EU eschews diplomacy and imposes sanctions. In line with previous research, my findings indicate that economic and political interests are influential determinants of EU sanctioning. Notably, although the EU is unlikely to act against close political, and especially, economic partners, it uses sanctions against economically dependent countries. Moreover, the EU's decision to impose sanctions is also determined by the severity and visibility of violations. My statistical finding about the EU's sensitivity to bloodshed, especially when subject to extensive media coverage, is supported by interviews with sanctions experts in Brussels.

This thesis comprises three studies that analyse the EU as an international sanctioning actor *sui generis*. Using a mixed-methods approach combining regression analysis with in-depth case studies, I investigate the extent to which and how the EU's multi-level governance structure determines its sanctioning policies by shaping both its institutional decision-making constraints and its preferences for selecting certain policies following norm violations. Paper 1 delineates a research agenda for considering the role of the EU's multi-dimensional constitution in affecting its sanctioning policies. Paper 2 unpacks the relationship between media coverage and EU sanctioning and shows how the salience of norm violations determines the likelihood of sanctioning. Paper 3 compares the sanctioning policies of the EU and the US by focusing on their respective institutional setups.

Zusammenfassung

Diese Dissertation untersucht die Frage *unter welchen Bedingungen und wie die EU die Verletzung von Normen sanktioniert*, und bietet neue Einblicke in die Merkmale und Determinanten der EU-Sanktionspolitik. Dies erlaubt uns nicht nur mehr über eines der wichtigsten Instrumente der EU-Außenpolitik zu lernen, sondern zeigt uns die Entwicklung der EU als Akteurin in den internationalen Beziehungen. Obwohl die allgemeine Sanktionsliteratur viele wertvolle Lektionen über die Art, Anwendung und Wirksamkeit von Sanktionen beinhaltet, basieren diese Erkenntnisse hauptsächlich auf einer US- und UN-basierten Forschungsperspektive, welche den einzigartigen institutionellen und politischen Aufbau der EU nicht berücksichtigt.

Meine Forschung lehrt uns Neues über *das Wie* (Merkmale) und *das Warum* (Determinanten) von EU-Sanktionen. Sie zeigt, dass die EU als SanktioniererIn durch einen schrittweisen Sanktionsansatz gekennzeichnet ist. Die EU legt großen Wert auf Dialog und diplomatische Beziehungen und nutzt die Androhung von Sanktionen als strategisches außenpolitisches Instrument. Die statistischen Ergebnisse unterstreichen die Dominanz wirtschaftlicher sowie politischer Interessen, welche Sanktionen gegen enge Partnerstaaten unwahrscheinlich machen. Bei schweren Verstößen von Menschen- und Demokratierechten jedoch scheint die EU ihren diplomatischen Pfad zu verlassen und setzt ihr wirtschaftliches und politisches Gewicht anhand von Sanktionen ein. Das Vergießen von Blut ist hierbei offenbar der wunde Punkt, insbesondere wenn es von Medien angeprangert wird. In diesen Fällen scheinen die EU-Entscheidungsträger keine Alternative sehen, als zu sanktionieren.

Diese Dissertation setzte sich aus drei Studien zusammen, die untersuchen, wie das institutionelle Mehrebenensystem der EU ihre Sanktionspolitik prägt und die EU zu einer sanktionierenden, internationalen Akteurin *sui generis* macht. Studie 1 diskutiert die Dynamik der Sanktionspolitik in einem zunehmend transnationalem Politikumfeld und präsentiert eine Forschungsagenda, welche die Mehrdimensionalität der EU-Sanktionspolitik berücksichtigt. Studie 2 beleuchtet die Beziehung zwischen Medienberichterstattung und EU-Sanktionen und unterstreicht die Bedeutung der Salienz von Normverletzungen in der Wahrscheinlichkeit ihrer Sanktionierung. Studie 3 vergleicht die Sanktionspolitik der EU und der Vereinigten Staaten und analysiert, wie ihr jeweiliges institutionelles Umfeld ihre unterschiedlichen Sanktionsansätze prägen.

1. Introduction

Sanctions seem to be on everybody's lips. Broadcasting stations report about American and European weapon embargoes and trade restrictions on Russia in the Ukraine crisis.¹ Newspapers write about an easing of international sanctions following the Iranian concessions regarding its nuclear weapons program.² The then German Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel threatens to restrict foreign aid for countries of origin that refuse to take back asylum seekers who are not granted asylum.³ Governments cancel official visits, states break off diplomatic relations to counter norms-violating policies of other states, and regional and international organizations are ever more active sanctioning actors (Maller 2010; Charron 2011). In short, sanctions appear to be not only extremely popular, but also a versatile tool used to induce domestic reforms from the outside.

Since the late 1960s, scholars have developed a vivid interest in studying the nature, use, and effectiveness of sanctions as an instrument of foreign policy. Yet, for long, research was mainly focused on the United States (US) as a sanctioning actor (Taylor 2010). Only slowly, from the mid-1990s on, have scholars started inquiring into multilateral sanctioning by also focusing on the United Nations (UN) (Martin 1994). During this period, the first large data collections on sanctions were released, which brought momentum to the general sanctions research. However, both the 'Hufbauer, Schott and Elliott' (HSE) dataset and 'The Threat and Imposition of Economic Sanctions' (TIES) datasets are full of US and UN cases and hardly include cases on the EU (Hufbauer, Schott, and Elliott 1985; Morgan et al. 2006). This produced a research debate that is largely coined by studies focusing on sanctions by the US, and later the UN (Cortright and Lopez 2000). At the same time, the EU started to develop into an active sanctioning actor. Beginning as a relatively loose group of coordinating member states of the European Community that united to jointly sanction the Soviet Union over its invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s, EU sanctioning soon became increasingly institutionalized

¹ BBC (15/09/2017): How far do EU-US sanctions on Russia go? <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28400218>.

² The Washington Post (16/01/2016): International sanctions against Iran lifted. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/world-leaders-gathered-in-anticipation-of-iran-sanctions-being-lifted/2016/01/16/72b8295e-babf-11e5-99f3-184bc379b12d_story.html.

³ FAZ (18/01/16): "Sonst keine Entwicklungshilfe". Gabriel: Herkunftsländer müssen Asylbewerber zurücknehmen. <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/fluechtlingskrise/sonst-keine-entwicklungshilfe-gabriel-herkunftslaender-muessen-asylbewerber-zuruecknehmen-14020036.html>.

and much more common. Nonetheless, research on EU sanctions started only haltingly in the 2000s (Hazelzet 2001; Fierro 2003), and until today, there is still much to learn about the characteristics and determinants of EU sanctioning.

While general sanctions literature has undoubtedly generated many valuable insights on sanctions as an instrument of foreign policy and norm promotion, applying these US and UN-based explanations to study the EU may be, from both an empirical and a theoretical point of view, problematic. Empirically, thirty years of EU sanctioning policies have shown that the EU has its own approach to sanctioning, characterized by the strategic use of threats to sanction and a more gradual approach to sanctioning (Grieger 2013; Portela 2016b). Theoretically, we need to consider the different decision-making processes for sanctions between the EU and both the US and UN. The EU is neither a typical unilateral nor multilateral sanctioner. The decision-making process for EU sanctions, which happens mainly among the member states in the Council of the EU, is more complex and lengthier than in the US's institutional setting. However, at the same time, EU decisions are less conflicting than among the member states of the UN Security Council with its five veto players including "sanction busters" like China and Russia (Early 2009; see also Charron 2011).

Based on these empirical and theoretical considerations, I argue that we cannot measure all sanctioners with the same yardstick. That is, in light of the varying decision-making processes, but also approaches to sanctioning, we cannot simply apply US- and UN-based knowledge to the EU. I identify the need for an enhanced understanding of the specific characteristics and determinants for EU sanctioning. Thus, the overarching research question of my thesis poses the question: *Under which conditions and in what way does the EU sanction the violation of norms?*

I take an innovative approach, in terms of theory and empirics, to shed light on the determinants and characteristics of EU sanctioning policies. Theoretically, my research contributes knowledge on the transnationalization of sanctioning policies across time and space. It elaborates on the influence of media and broader public debates on the EU's decision to use sanctions and describes the consequences of institutional frameworks for decision-making as well as ideological interpretations of democracy promotion through the threat and imposition of sanctions. Empirically, I study sanction policies following two types of norm violations, human rights and democratic freedoms, using novel data on the salience of human rights issues in EU print media since the late

1990s. Comparing the varying use of (threatened) sanctions by the EU and the US following violations, my research provides insights on the sanctioning approaches that characterize the two sanctioners. What is more, distinguishing between the use and non-use of sanctions, I include the non-sanction option in a large-N study of the determinants of sanctioning policies. This is important as otherwise we run the risk of selecting based on the dependent variable. If we focus the analysis on only sanction cases and do not include non-sanction cases, it is difficult to establish whether a specific factor (e.g., trade or political relations with the violator) is causally important in determining the use of sanctions (Fearon 1991, see also Haverland 2006).

Inquiring into the sanctioning policies of the EU matters for several reasons. First, the EU is arguably an important international sanctioner ‘in the making’ (Portela and Ruffa 2014). While initially it used to follow the example of the US, since the 2000s the EU has increasingly developed its own way of sanctioning (Portela 2010; Taylor 2010). Understanding how the EU sanctions helps us to understand an increasingly important aspect of EU foreign policy. Second, the EU is still reproached for being an ‘economic giant, political dwarf, and military worm’.⁴ Nevertheless, since the introduction of the Union’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) with the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) the EU has become increasingly active and influential in international relations (Smith 2011). In parallel with this development as an international player, the EU has increasingly used sanctions as an instrument of foreign policy (Lehne 2012). Understanding EU sanctioning therefore helps gain a better understanding of the EU as an international actor. Finally, analysing the determinants and characteristics of EU sanctioning policies helps explain the broader development of sanctioning policies over the last decades and derive valuable lessons for studying other emerging sanctioning actors, such as the African Union (Hellquist 2020). With its hybrid constitution that combines features of states and international organizations, studying the EU allows not only learning about the EU but also acquiring more general knowledge on the characteristics, development, and interplay of unilateral and multilateral sanctioning.

Structured into three individual studies, this thesis fosters our understanding of the EU as a sanctioning multi-level governance actor. Paper 1 characterizes the EU as a sanctioning international actor, *sui generis*, and elaborates on how EU sanctioning is

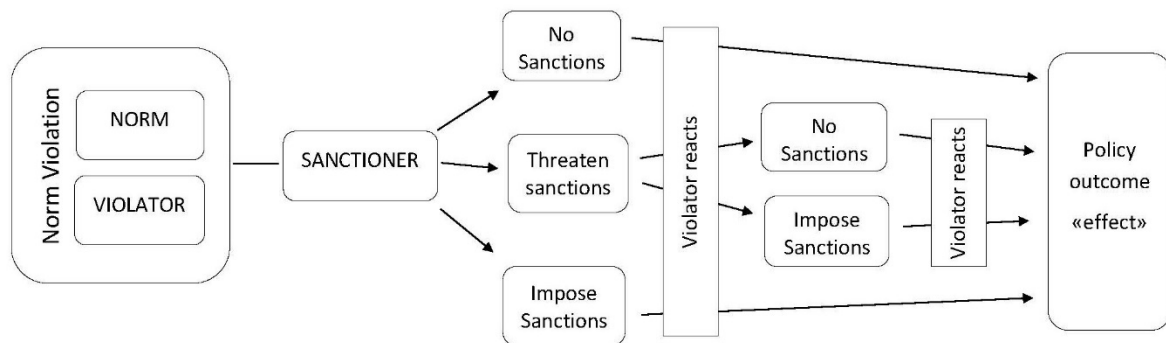
⁴ On the eve of the 1991 Gulf War, the former Belgian Foreign Minister Mark Eyskens shaped the renowned description of Europe being “an economic giant, a political dwarf, and a military worm.”

shaped by its multi-level institutional setup influencing both its decision-making competences and its policy preferences when it comes to general norm promotion and the particular use of sanctions. Paper 2 takes a closer look at *when*, despite these institutional constraints and their consequences for decision-making, the member states in the EU Council are still able to find an agreement to sanction in many norm violation cases. The study highlights the importance of public attention to the respective cases of norm violation. It argues that media coverage can increase salience, thereby putting specific cases higher up on the agenda of EU policy-makers which in turn increases the likelihood of them being sanctioned by the EU. Finally, Paper 3 contributes to a better understanding of *how* the EU sanctions norm violations and why the threat of sanctions plays a dominant role in the EU's catalogue of foreign policies. The study argues that the EU's complex multi-level decision-making process that is oriented toward negotiation and compromise, and the relating preferences for a gradual and dialogue-based approach to norm violations, render the EU prone to use sanction threats as a primary reaction to norm violations. However, as both Paper 2 and 3 show, if the stakes are high and the violations severe, the EU is willing to leave the path of diplomacy and to sanction rigorously. Yet, even in those instances of strict sanctions, the EU will try to keep the diplomatic door open and to pick up bilateral dialogue as soon as the crisis ebbs away.

1.1 Elements of a sanctioning process

Figure 1 illustrates an ideal-typical sanctioning process. The violation of a norm, such as the violation of human rights or democratic freedoms, is the starting point of any sanctioning process. In response, a sanctioner, such as the EU or the US, decides a) to use no sanctions, b) to threaten with the use of sanctions, or c) to impose sanctions directly. Thereupon, the violating state reacts, and in the case of threats, the sanctioner counter-reacts by imposing sanctions or not. At the very end, the sanctioning process leads to a certain policy outcome which might lead to the violating state conceding by changing its misbehaviour, or it refrains from making any concessions. This outcome is what scholars, ever since Johan Galtung's (1967) seminal study "On the Effects of International Economic Sanctions", classify as (un)successful or (un)effective sanctioning.

Figure 1: An ideal-typical sanctioning process



1.1.1 Norm violations

Norms are an essential element of every sanctioning policy. Eventually, sanctions present a reaction to the violation of norms in which both the violator and the sanctioner have agreed to comply to, either by ratifying international conventions or signing bilateral agreements. The importance and influence of norms has been widely discussed since early scholarship on international relations days (Björkdahl 2002). Today, scholarship largely follows a straightforward definition of norms, as proposed by Finnemore and Sikkink, that embraces two core functions: “Norms are standard of appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity” (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 891).

With their simple, yet dynamic conceptualization of norms, Finnemore and Sikkink’s work laid the foundation for a strand of research that emphasizes the dynamic and evolving nature of norms. In other words, norms are perceived not as facts but intersubjective agreements dependent on the respective society and their shared agreement on the relevance of an issue (Björkdahl 2002). If this is given, norms come to life and evolve into moral standards of behaviour. Established norms then regulate behaviour, constitute identity and interests, and their prescriptive characteristic induces a feeling of ‘oughtness’ and ‘right thing to do’ (Wiener 2007).

1.1.2 Violators

Violators are state or non-state actors which violate a norm and thereby potentially trigger a sanctioning case. Before the 1990s and the introduction of targeted sanctions, only state governments were targets of sanctioning policies. Since then, entities at the

sub-state level moved to the centre of attention. Individuals and organizations, such as members of the political elite and related organizations and companies, have increasingly become subject to sanctions (T. J. Biersteker, Eckert, and Tourinho 2016). Asset freezes of political elite members or import bans from state-related companies are typical examples of sanctions at the sub-state level (Drezner 2011). Since the 2000s, the range of potential targets has widened even further to include non-state actors as well. Along with the global ‘war on terror’ and the internationally proclaimed fight against terrorism, non-state actors, such as terrorist groups, have become potential targets of sanctioning. However, a look at the EU Sanctions Map shows that sanctions against non-state actors are still the exception rather than the rule.⁵ Only two out of nearly forty active sanction regimes target terror groups. Moreover, sanctions against non-state actors differ from ‘common’ sanctions against state-related actors as only the latter is based on bilaterally agreed norms. Against this background, my research focuses on EU sanctions imposed on norm violating states.

1.1.3 Sanctions and sanctioners

I distinguish between *sanctions* (i.e., policy tools used by external actors) and the active form of *sanctioning* which refers to the act of imposing sanctions. A *sanctioner*, in turn, is the actor using those restrictive measures. Sanctions are instruments of foreign policy with which political actors seek to influence the cost-benefit calculation of targeted actors in order to manipulate their behaviour. In other words, by imposing restrictive measures such as trade restrictions, travel bans, or asset freezes, sanctioners aim to render the costs of continuing with a norm violating behaviour so high that targets decide to concede and change their behaviour. Moreover, sanctions show an external actor’s commitment to act against the violation of norms by third parties and to carry the respective sender costs of, for example, lost trade or deteriorated political relations. Sanctioners may use both positive (i.e., incentivizing) and negative (i.e., restricting) measures. I focus on the negative sanctioning policies of external actors in my dissertation. Positive measures aim to induce a change in behaviour by promising a reward, such as an increase in trade relations or in foreign aid. Negative measures also aim for a change in behaviour, yet by imposing restricting measures such as a ban on

⁵ The EU Sanctions Map provides a current overview on the EU’s active sanction regimes, the types of restrictive measures, as well as the legal acts: <https://www.sanctionsmap.eu/>.

bilateral trade or a restriction on foreign aid. Hence, both aim to induce a change in behaviour but using measures based on different logics of action. While some sanctions scholars explicitly include positive measures in their studies (Baldwin 1971; Wallensteen 2005), the sanctions literature still predominantly focuses on negative restrictive measures ('sanctions'), leaving the study of positive incentivizing measures to students of 'political conditionality' (Molenaers, Dellepiane, and Faust 2015; Koch 2015).

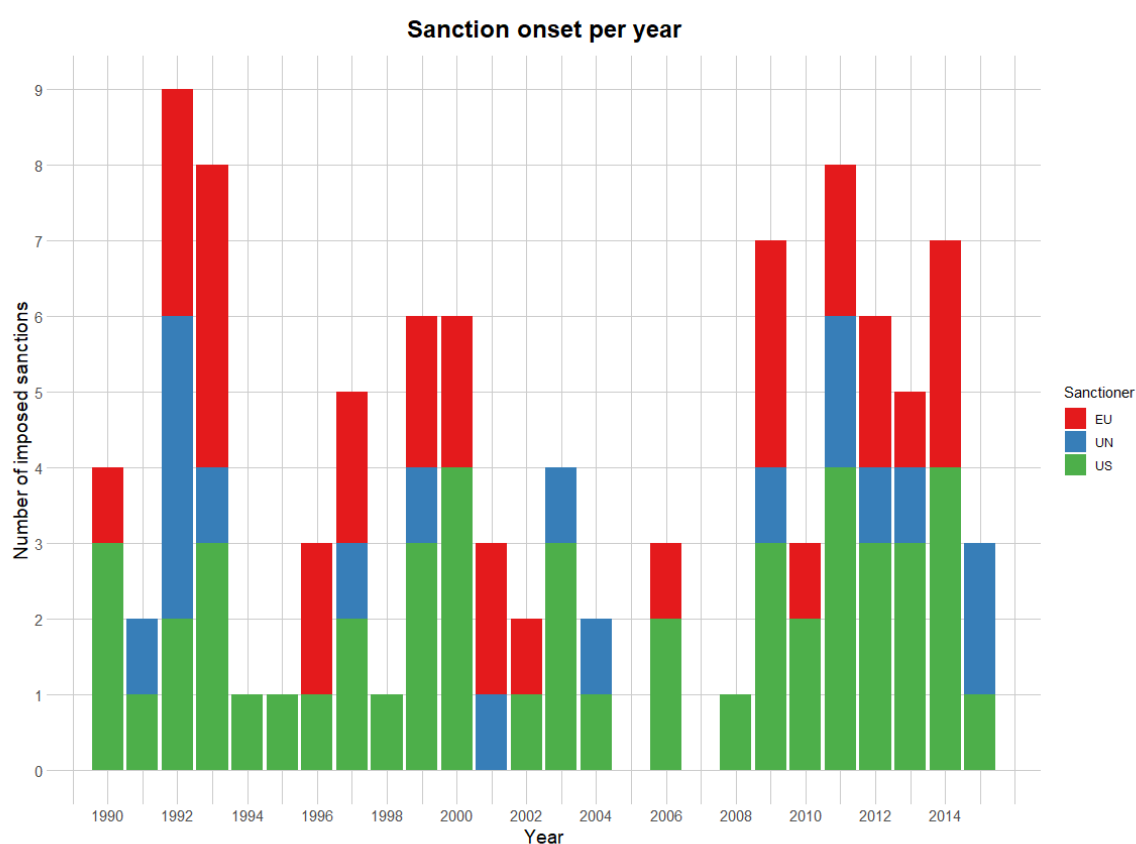
I mainly focus on the EU as a sanctioning actor which has been emphasizing its strong resolve to use sanctions ever since the publication of the EU's Basic Principles on the Use of Restrictive Measures (Sanctions) in 2004: "We are committed to the effective use of sanctions as an important way to maintain and restore international peace and security in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter and of our common foreign and security policy" (Council of the European Union 2004). Joint *EU sanctioning* did not exist until the 1980s; instead, member states sanctioned individually at the national level. For example, the member states implemented UN sanctions against Rhodesia (1965) and South Africa (1977).⁶ Other member states, like France or the UK, had an established individual sanctioning practice (Hufbauer, Schott, and Elliott 1985; Lindsay 1986). Joint Community sanctions against both the Soviet Union over its invasion of Afghanistan in 1982 and the sanctions against Argentina during the Falkland war with the UK marked the beginning of a coordinated European sanctions policy independent of the UN (Kreutz 2005). Establishment of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) by the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 enhanced the coordination of the member states. During the 1990s, although still not fully institutionalized, sanctions became an increasingly important instrument of the CFSP. Following the publication of the European Security Strategy in 2003, the EU finally adopted the "Basic Principles on the Use of Restrictive Measures (Sanctions)" as well as "The Guidelines on the Use of Restrictive Measures (Sanctions)" in 2004. These two documents provided a programmatic outline and an institutional setting for the EU's sanctioning policy. The EU has developed into a decisive international sanctioning actor in the years since. Among others, the negotiations during the Iranian nuclear crisis in 2006, have been

⁶ The implementation of sanctions decided by the UN's Security Council is obligatory for all UN member states. UN sanctions hereby provide a minimum standard which can be extended by imposing additional, individual sanctions—a practice which has been named 'gold plating' (Taylor 2010).

highlighted as an ‘ice-breaking experience’ for the EU as an internationally respected sanctioning actor (Lehne 2012).

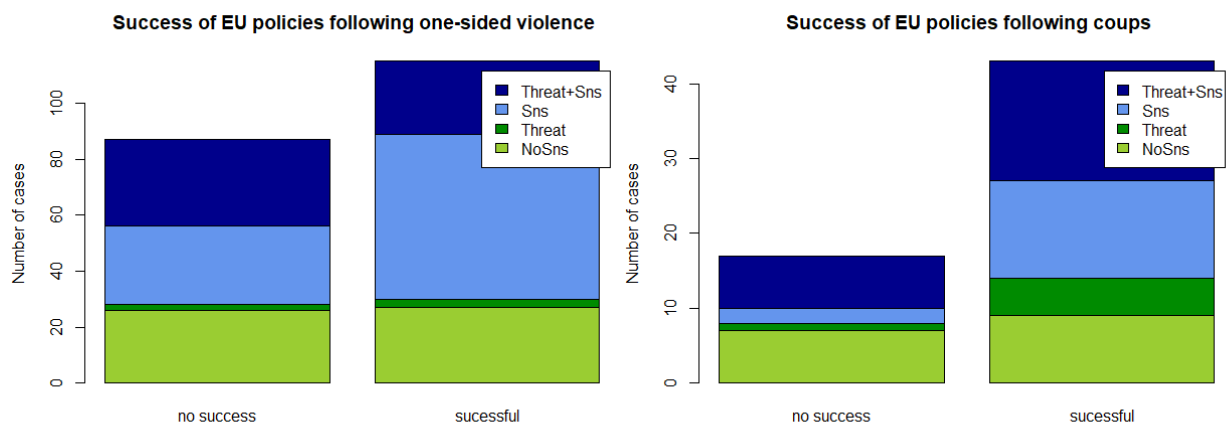
In terms of the number of sanctions used per year, today the EU ranks second between the United States (US) and the United Nations (UN)—the other two big sanctioners. Figure 2 illustrates the imposition of new sanctions per year between 1990 and 2015. The figure shows that, overall, the US is still the dominant sanctioning actor. However, the figure also shows that since the 1990s, the EU has continually made use of sanctions in reaction to norm violations by non-EU states. Moreover, as Figure 3 shows, the EU has not only developed a frequent sanctioning practice, but its sanctions have also been successful in inducing concessions by the norm violating target states, especially following incidences of *coup d'états*. Moreover, Figure 3 illustrates the prominent role that the threat of sanctions plays among the EU’s counter policies following violations of democratic and human rights.

Figure 2: Annual number of EU, UN, and US sanctions 1990-2015



Note: Data source: EUSANCT.

Figure 3: The success of EU sanctioning policies, 1990-2015



Note: Data source: EUSANCT.

1.2 General sanctions literature

Sanctions have been a popular instrument for influencing the behaviour of other political actors since ancient time. Even in ancient Greece—as delivered by Thucydides’ account of the Megarian decree in 460 B.C. (e.g., Tulpin 1979)—sanctions were applied as “restrictive policy tools imposed in response to undesirable behaviour on the side of the target, and designed to compel the target to rectify its wrongdoing and limit its ability to pursue the objectionable policies” (Portela 2013, 432). Since World War I, economic sanctions have been considered a liberal alternative to war (Pape 1997, 90). However, particularly since the end of the Cold War when public resistance to military interventions increased, there has been a remarkable rise in the use of sanctions as an instrument of foreign policy (Drezner 1998).

This increasing use of sanctions is reflected in the scientific study of the phenomenon. A great deal of, at first mainly US, research has dealt with the subject of (economic) sanctions since the late 1960s. Starting with qualitative case studies, followed by theoretical explanations, and then quantitative studies, research on sanctions has developed cumulatively and consecutively (Morgan, Bapat, and Krustev 2009). Early research mostly concentrated on discussing famous early sanctioning cases such as the League of Nations sanctions on Italy, the UN sanctions on Rhodesia, or the US sanctions on Cuba (e.g., Galtung 1967; Hoffmann 1967; Schreiber 1973). These case studies questioned the effectiveness of sanctions in inducing target states to change their

policies. Several studies then theoretically argued why sanctions do (not) and can (not) work (e.g., Barber 1979; Baldwin 1985; Lindsay 1986). The development of the first large-N dataset by Hufbauer, Schott, and Elliott (the HSE dataset) (1985) triggered a wave of quantitative research, which again, largely challenged the success of sanctions (e.g., Pape 1997) and identified several factors hindering or facilitating the effectiveness of sanctioning (e.g., Dashti-Gibson, Davis, and Radcliff 1997; Drezner 1999). Since then, research has diversified. Nowadays, we find both studies with a theoretical focus (e.g., Marinov and Nili 2015) as well as with an empirical focus (e.g., Morgan, Bapat, and Krustev 2009), and qualitative case studies (e.g., Taylor 2010) as well as quantitative large-N studies (e.g., Soest and Wahman 2014).

Over the years, research has provided three main strands of explanations for why governments decide to use sanctions. First, the *instrumental* theory of sanctions views sanctions as an instrument that aims “to bring about policy change in the target nation through imposing the severest possible economic harm” (Kaempfer and Lowenberg 1988, 786). However, the sender’s decision to use sanctions can also be explained as an attempt to appease domestic political concerns in the sender country (McLean and Whang 2014). The second strand is known as the *expressive* or *symbolic* theory of sanctions, which suggests that “sanctions might have an altogether different goal—namely, to serve the interests of pressure groups within the sender country” (Kaempfer and Lowenberg 1988, 786). From an expressive perspective, the visibility and intensity of the violation influence the likelihood of using sanctions because there is increased pressure on democratic senders to act when both the media and voters are aware of the violations (Hansen and Borchgrevink 2006). Third, studies have looked into different *economic* and *institutional* factors to explain sanctioning behaviour. Notably, the degree of proximity and interdependence, the ex-ante leverage of the sender, the regime type of the sender and the target, political and cultural relations between the two, the geopolitical context, and the level of international coordination are all found to impact the use of sanctions (Drezner 1999; Lektzian and Souva 2007; Martin 1994).

1.3 EU sanctions research

In contrast to its transatlantic counterpart, EU sanctions research had a more halting beginning. From the 2000s on, and hence more than ten years after the first joint imposition of sanctions by the then European Community, we have seen a slow but

steady increase in the number of studies inquiring into the Union's sanctioning policies. In the early years, mainly legal scholarship shaped the knowledge on EU sanctions (Koutrakos 2001; Fierro 2003). Soon, however, political scientists took over. First, there was De Wilde d'Estmael rather halting and not directly speaking of 'sanctions' but of the 'political dimension of economic relations' (De Wilde d'Estmael 1999), and then Hazelzet analysing 'reactions to human rights violations' (Hazelzet 2001). In the 2010s, the EU sanctions literature gained momentum. Still, as two EU sanctions scholars put it, research on EU sanctioning is "still in infancy" (Portela and Ruffa 2014, 8). The empirical variety is relatively low and mainly focused on the question of effectiveness, notably from CFSP sanctions (Eriksson 2011; Giumelli 2011, 2013a). Moreover, the methodological variety of EU sanctions research is only slowly starting to diversify. Regarding the pioneering task of EU sanctions scholars, research mainly focused on in-depth and comparative case study designs in the first couple of years (Portela 2005, 2010; Giumelli 2011, 2013a; Del Biondo 2015a). Only recently have EU scholars started to employ large-N quantitative study designs to gain more generalizable insights on incidences of EU sanctioning (von Soest and Wahman 2015; Pospieszna and Weber 2020; Weber and Schneider 2020b). The development of two datasets on EU sanctions have contributed to this quantification of EU sanctions research: the GIGA dataset and the newer and more comprehensive EUSANCT dataset (Portela and von Soest 2012; Weber and Schneider 2020a).

In other words, only recently have scholars started to investigate the "what, when, why and how" of EU sanctioning policies (Giumelli, Hoffmann, and Książczaková 2020). The focus of research is slowly moving towards the influence of the EU's distinct institutional features in the making of its sanctioning policy. The largely intergovernmental decision-making process for sanctions is highly dependent on an agreement from the member states in the Council of the European Union. Research shows how both economic and political conflicts of interests may hamper the negotiations within the Council (Tallberg 2008; Bailer 2010).

Two studies have recently shed more light on the persisting dominant influence of the Council in the decision-making for EU sanctions, and the interplay of preferences at the member, state, and EU level (Szép 2020; Portela et al. 2020). Analysing the imposition of restrictive measures on Russia in 2014, Viktor Szép (2020) describes how the Council has become a key decision-maker for sanctions since the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009, and

how the Union's Heads of States and Governments play a dominating role when it comes to the making of EU sanctioning policy. Szép argues that while the goal of norm promotion laid the cornerstone for sanctions against Russia following its intrusion in the Ukraine, the actual policies were highly dependent on Council-internal bargaining among the member states. In a similar way, Portela and her co-authors (2020) analyse the persistence of sanctions against Russia which have been renewed and extended several times since 2014—despite increasing discord about the sanctions among the member states. The authors explain this persistence as due to an interplay of favourable interests at both the member state and EU level. Analysing the political dynamics between the Brussels negotiation in the Council and the domestic policy preferences in Spain and Poland, which represent the two poles of pro-Russian and Russia-critical attitudes, the study illustrates how the EU's complex multi-level institutional setup has been shaping its sanctioning policies against Russia.

However, beyond these two case studies, and particularly from a large-scale point of view, sanctions research has shed little light on the consequences of the EU's institutional multi-level setup and its consequences for the use of sanctions as an instrument of foreign policy. This, even though already two decades ago, when comparing EU and US sanctioning policies following human rights violations from 1989 to 2000, Hadewych Hazelzet (2001) showed that the EU's institutional setup is likely to render EU sanctions to differ from the US's unilateral policies. The author found the EU to be prone to using a combination of “carrots and sticks”, while the US's approach was more direct and its understanding of positive ‘engagement’ only trade-focused. Unfortunately, Hazelzet's findings have only been published in her dissertation, which might explain why her work has hardly been picked up since then. The reasons for which the EU leans towards a more gradual approach to sanctioning, putting more weight on dialogue, and the strategic use of the threat of sanctions has largely remained ignored in sanctions research.

1.3.1 Characteristics of EU sanctioning

Literature on democracy promotion and political conditionality, which is closely related but still often not connected to the literature on sanctions, provides more insights on varying interpretations of, and approaches to, norm promotion, including the role that sanctions may play therein (Molenaers, Dellepiane, and Faust 2015). Students of

democracy promotion ideals typically distinguish between bottom-up and political, as well as top-down and developmental approaches of democracy promotion (Carothers 2009). While scholars identify traces of these ideal types on both sides of the Atlantic, the US and the EU seem to differ regarding the relative emphasis they put on either a more political or developmental approach. Therefore, in simplistic terms, research tends to characterize the EU's approach as developmental, meaning it is indirect and non-confrontational and based on partnership and cooperation with the government. In comparison, the US approach is dominantly perceived as being political, meaning it is more direct, confrontational, and pursues democratization strategies that circumvent the government (cf. Del Biondo 2015). Regarding the channels of democracy promotion, the EU tends to be described as supporting democracy top-down via state institutions, while the US more predominantly focuses on bottom-up democracy assistance via civil society actors (Kopstein 2006; Magen et al. 2009).

The political consequences of these different approaches to democracy promotion have not yet been explicitly connected to the varying use of sanctions by the EU and the US. Jeniffer Erickson's (2020) recent article on the role of arms embargoes and economic sanctions as a tool of norm enforcement is a notable exception. While the author does not specifically address the different ways of norm promotion by the EU and US, her study provides interesting insights on the role of meta norms—i.e., norms about enforcing norms—in international relations to gain lessons on the inconsistent use of these. Studying sanctions following violations of different security norms, she finds that sanctioners might refrain from norm-enforcement to avoid losing important economic or political partners. However, the author also shows that norm violations are rare events which could indicate that factors beyond the actual use of sanctions might encourage norm-compliance. In other words, not just non-material forces, like the social pressure of complying with norms between closely linked states, but also implicit or explicit threats of sanctions could be factors enhancing norm compliance. Since empirically we know that the EU tends to use these non-material incentives for compliance, the question is: Is the EU a champion in using non-material forces of influence, for example, via positive incentives by promising development help or negative incentives by threatening sanctions? Or, is this approach only a necessary consequence of the EU's complex institutional setup and the related difficult decision-making process for sanctions?

Following Svea Koch (2015), I believe that both the literature on political conditionality and norm compliance and the literature on sanctions could benefit greatly from speaking more directly to one another. In doing so, research could gain valuable insights on the characteristics of different sanctioning actors and on the reasons for which sanctioners might be active in certain countries following certain norm violations, or why sanctioners prefer using certain types of restrictive measures in comparison to others. All of this would facilitate a deeper understanding of the nature and use of sanctions by different international actors, be it unilateral states, regional organizations, or multilateral regimes.

1.3.2 Determinants of EU sanctioning

Only in recent years have EU scholars started studying the determinants of EU sanctioning (e.g., Del Biondo 2015b; Kreutz 2015; von Soest and Wahman 2015). However, most EU scholars still follow a largely outcome-oriented research focus that centres around the effectiveness of sanctions in inducing certain behavioural changes. By contrast, when it comes to research focusing on other sanctioners, more insights on the input factors for using sanctions are available. While the specific reasons for which states like the US or multilateral sanctioners like the UN decide to (not) use sanctions might differ, EU scholars can still learn from the insights gained in these studies and potentially adopt them for the EU. Looking into these determining factors, research highlights that the violation of some international norms first and foremost, for example, the violation of human rights or democratic freedoms, initializes a sanctioning process (Kreutz 2015; von Soest and Wahman 2015). However, at the same time, these studies show that several conditioning factors might interact with the aim of norm promotion which might either enhance or limit the likelihood of the use of sanctions (Erickson 2020).

1.3.2.1 Initiating norm violations

Scholars overall agree that international actors are sensitive to violations of core international norms. Both human rights violations and violations of democratic freedoms have been found to have a statistically significant triggering effect on the imposition of sanctions (Kreutz 2015; von Soest and Wahman 2015). However, empirically we also know that sanctioners act against some, but not all, of these norm

violations (Erickson 2020). For example, looking at EU policies following the most severe violations of human rights, we see that the Political Terror Scale (PTS) lists 74 countries that have shown the very worst levels of human rights conditions from 1999 to 2015. However, while the EU decided to act against the violations of approximately half of these countries (38 countries, cf. Appendix B1), it did not sanction the other half of the violating countries. Hence, it seems that the violation of human rights alone cannot explain the use of EU sanctions per se. A number of conditional factors might help find the missing link that connects the malpractices of some human rights-violating countries more closely to the EU than others.

1.3.2.2 Conditioning factors

Economic, political, and security interests

Beyond the existence of human rights violations, the literature points towards several economic and political factors that relate to increasing or decreasing use of sanctions. For example, sanctioners seem to be more likely to act against countries with unstable economies and unstable political systems, and more economically dependent countries (Dashti-Gibson, Davis, and Radcliff 1997; Marinov 2005; R. M. Wood 2008; Nooruddin and Lockwood Payton 2010; Molenaers et al. 2015). By contrast, sanctioners seem to refrain from acting against their trade partners and political allies (Mansfield 1994; Kotzian, Knodt, and Urdze 2011; Weber and Schneider 2020b). Some scholars also highlight the influence of internal political interests as, for example, the interest to secure one's political survival by satisfying political voters (A. Smith 1998; Aldrich et al. 2006; Bueno de Mesquita and Downs 2006). Others again highlight the influence of security interests, for example, by avoiding sanctions against important allies in the fight against international terrorism or managing migration flows (Warkotsch 2010; Nielsen 2013; Kreutz 2015; Masaki 2016).

Institutional constraints

Especially for multilateral sanctioners, a lack of decision-making power, as well as a lack of capacity to find an agreement for joint sanctions among several member states with potentially conflicting interests, might burden the use of sanctions. However, while imposing sanctions seems to be an overall easier endeavour for unilateral actors, research highlights that—especially within an institutional framework—multilateral sanctioning is feasible and effective. Institutionalization is said to provide robustness to

a coalition of sanctioners and to enhance their decision-making capabilities by providing a mechanism for coordination, information, and reassurance (Martin 1994; Drezner 2000; Bapat and Morgan 2009)—all of which we find in the EU.

Severity of the violations

When it comes to the severity of violations, Soest and Wahman (2015) have developed the concept of “trigger events”, in which they identify different degrees to which norm violations trigger the use of sanctions. Analysing Western sanctions following the violation of democratic freedoms, the authors find that *coup d'états*, being ‘the most blatant’ form of the violation of democratic freedoms, have a higher likelihood to trigger the use of sanctions than ‘weaker’ (i.e., less bloody and less brute) forms of democratic violations such as controversial elections. We see the same logic when it comes to the increasing inclusion of control variables like incidences of one-sided government-sponsored violence or the level of political terror in quantitative research, which similarly aims to control for the severity of human rights violations (Pettersson and Öberg 2020; Gibney et al. 2018; see, e.g., Weber and Schneider 2020b).

Media coverage

Alongside an interplay of competing interests, sanctions studies point towards the influence of media as a raiser of public awareness on the use of sanctions. In a US context, two seminal studies have tested the influence of media coverage on human rights violations and on the use of sanctions by the US (Nielsen 2013; Peksen, Peterson, and Drury 2014). According to their findings, an increasing salience of human rights issues in press coverage relates to a higher likelihood of the use of economic sanctions, as well as the restriction of foreign aid by the US. However, in an EU-context, the influence of media coverage on the use of sanctions has not been tested yet. Still, political media scholars like Kathleen Kantner (2014, 2017) find empirical support for the existence of an increasingly transnationalized form of political communication across EU member states. This means that national media outlets in member states are increasingly likely to cover the same international events (e.g., human rights violations) at the same time but without necessarily sharing the same opinion. Thus, the question is whether or not media could also influence the decision-making in an EU context—despite its multi-level governance system? Especially since legal scholars have also highlighted the important role the media and international organizations play in

providing ‘supporting evidence’ and hence legal justification for the use of EU sanctions against norm violators (Wimmer 2013; Cuyvers 2014).

Summing up, in essence, three main questions seem to determine the EU’s likelihood of using sanctions as an instrument of foreign policy: First, which *kind of norm violation* has happened and how severe does the EU perceive it to be? Second, *can* the EU act, for instance, do institutional constraints restrict the use of sanctions? Third, does the EU *want* to act, for instance, do economic, political, or security interests at both the EU and/or national level impede the use of sanctions?

1.4 Methodology, data, and operationalization

Aiming to generate new insights on the characteristics and determinants of EU sanctioning policies, I mainly rely on quantitative large-N research designs which I complement with in-depth case studies. In doing so, my research provides more generalizable insights in a research area which so far has mostly been addressed with single or comparative case study designs (Portela 2005, 2010; Giumelli 2011, 2013a; Del Biondo 2015a). Particularly, it was important to first gain in-depth insights on the then relatively young foreign policy instrument of EU sanctions at the beginning of EU sanctions research. However, research has increased its interest in gaining a more comprehensive perspective on EU sanctioning policies as the number of EU sanction episodes has considerably increased over the past thirty years of joint EU sanctioning. In line with this, quantitative datasets have increasingly included EU sanction episodes. While the HSE and TIES datasets were limited and include only a small number of EU sanctions (Hufbauer, Schott, and Elliott 1985; Morgan et al. 2006), the GIGA dataset and, distinctly, the newly released EUSANCT dataset explicitly aim to provide a more comprehensive perspective on EU sanctions since the end of the Cold War (Portela and von Soest 2012; Weber and Schneider 2020a).

1.4.1 Quantitative regression analysis

In my research, I aim to test the explanatory power of factors in explaining the use of sanctions by the EU (e.g., media coverage of human rights violations), and to gain comprehensive knowledge on the characteristics of EU sanctioning policies in comparison to other sanctioners (e.g., EU vs. US sanctions following democratic violations). In doing so, I employ binary and multinomial logistic regression analyses.

Using a statistical regression analysis allows the estimation of the average effects from independent variables for which, based on our theoretical expectations, we expect a positive or negative correlation with the dependent variable (e.g., media coverage affecting incidences of EU sanctions). Statistical research aims for a high scope of cases to maximize the leverage and the generalization of the results (Mahoney and Goertz 2006; McNabb 2010, 192ff).

However, the drawback of a quantitative approach is that the research remains at the macro-level of analysis, which means that details and in-depth insights largely remain disregarded. For this reason, nested methodological frameworks combining elements of quantitative and qualitative research are gaining popularity, notably, also in comparative political analysis (Lieberman 2005). As Lieberman (2005) underlines, the integrated ‘mixed-method’ strategy allows achieving a synergetic effect of combining elements from both research approaches and improves the prospect of making valid causal inferences. In Paper 3, I employ a nested analytical approach in which I first test the theoretical hypothesis using a large-N statistical analysis and then use two case studies to provide deeper knowledge on the institutional processes shaping EU and US policies following *coup d’états*. While the prior serves to provide more generalizable findings, the latter aims to provide a more specific understanding on how policies come about and why they look different in the end.

1.4.2 Qualitative case studies

The qualitative components of my research complement quantitative insights. John Gerring defines case study research as the intensive study of one or several cases where “the purpose of that study is—at least in part—to shed light on a larger class of cases, i.e., a population” (Gerring 2006, 20). A case describes the phenomenon to be explained which is spatially delimited and can be observed either at one point in time or over some time (Blatter and Haverland 2012; Gerring 2006, 19–37).

In Paper 3, I use case studies to illustrate the phenomena of EU and US sanctioning. The two case studies mainly serve to make the unfamiliar familiar, for instance, to give readers a more tangible image of the characteristics of the sanctioning approaches of both actors. As Seawright and Gerring (2008, 297) describe it, I use typical cases for representative purposes; thus, not primarily for exploratory reasons but to inform the

statistically derived correlations with more details. Lijphart (1971) would describe this approach as ‘hypothesis-confirming case studies’.

1.4.3 Data

In my research, I rely on data from the *EUSANCT dataset* (Weber and Schneider 2020a). Integrating and updating the TIES and GIGA datasets, the EUSANCT dataset covers EU, UN, and US sanctions from 1989 to 2015. It includes data on the imposition of economic and political sanctions, as well as on publicly sanction threats (353 sanction cases in total, including 121 EU sanction cases). The dataset includes up to three issues which are reported to have caused the imposition of sanctions (e.g., militarized actions, territorial disputes, promotion of human rights, fraud elections). Next to identifying the exact sender institutions and targeted sanction countries, the dataset provides information on the type(s) of sanctions used, ranging from complete economic embargoes and trade restrictions, to aid cuts and targeted financial sanctions. Hence, the EUSANCT dataset allows casting a systematic perspective on the EU’s sanctioning policy and comparatively analysing the Union’s use of sanctions over the past decades.

Furthermore, I use information gathered in *interviews* with EU sanctions experts from Brussels in May 2015. I learned more about the Union’s definition and use of sanctions as well as EU internal and external hurdles in the sanction decision-making process from conversations with eleven foreign policy and external trade experts, policy advisors, and country experts from different EU institutions. In my research, I use this data to support my theoretical framework and expectations, and to complement the case studies with insights from Brussels.

Moreover, I use novel data on the *media coverage of human rights violations* in European print media from 1999 to 2015. Using key-term research in Factiva and LexisNexis, I have collected media data from eight leading European newspapers from the four big EU member states: France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom (the EU4). The data collection provided me with approximately 20,000 articles. I used explorative qualitative text analysis to gain a more detailed understanding of the articles’ content, wording, and structure. In doing so, I gained a dictionary of words for describing and analysing the presence of human rights violations in an article. This dictionary was the basis for the quantitative structured text analysis that I used to connect

the media and sanctions data and study the relationship between media coverage and incidences of EU sanctioning.

1.5 Research outline and contribution to the academic debate

In this thesis, three studies contribute to the analysis of the determinants and characteristics of EU sanctioning policies. Specifically, discussing the changing dynamics of sanctioning policies in an ever more transnationalized environment, Paper 1 proposes a research agenda for the study of EU sanctioning policies that considers the multi-dimensional constitution of the EU. Paper 2 unpacks the relationship between media coverage and EU sanctioning, and highlights the influence of the salience of norm violations in determining the likelihood of their sanctioning. Paper 3 compares the EU's and US's sanctioning policies and argues for the role of institutional constraints when it comes to the specific approaches following norm violations of the two sanctioners.

Paper 1 opens up the framework of analysis and presents a new research agenda for the study of EU sanctioning policies. Accounting for the growing political interconnectedness in today's globalized external policy-making, the article revisits the question: *Under which condition does the EU sanction the violation of norms?* Arguing for the diverse nature of EU sanctions and sanctioning, it first illustrates such diversification among three dimensions: (1) the types of norms violated, (2) EU decision-making competencies and preferences, and (3) the instruments of sanctioning used. It then identifies avenues for future research on EU sanctioning which aim to deepen the theoretical and procedural understanding of EU sanctioning, and to account for the complexity of sanctioning policies in today's transnationalized policy-making. Specifically, it proposes avenues for how research could enhance its knowledge on the *what* (nature), the *why* (determinates), and the *how* (design) of EU sanctioning policies.

Paper 2 zooms into the determinants of EU sanctioning policies. It contributes knowledge on the role of media coverage in the making of EU foreign policy. Specifically, it explores the question: *"To which extent does the salience of human rights issues in European news media influence the EU's decisions on using sanctions?"* Drawing on media theories of agenda-setting and literature on the European public sphere, the article argues that the information status of the domestic constituencies and the political elite about events at the international level can positively affect decisions for joint policies. By raising public awareness on brute human rights violations and

putting these violations higher up on the agenda of policy-makers, salient media coverage is likely to increase moral pressure on governments to act. After analysing original data on the coverage of human rights violations in eight leading European newspapers and controlling for a potential media bias that focuses on more populous countries with close economic and cultural ties, I find that extensive media coverage indeed relates to a higher likelihood of EU sanctioning. Overall, the findings indicate that the EU is more likely to sanction smaller, less democratic, and culturally close countries with lower levels of bilateral trade—especially when there is a high level of media coverage. At the same time, the findings show that when the violations are committed by important European trade partners, the EU shies away from using any sanctions. Hence, it seems that an interplay of conditioning factors in which hard economic interests may trump the aim for norm promotion in the decision-making for EU sanctions is at play. Still, the results altogether support a decisive role of media as a raiser of public awareness and influencer on the political agenda of EU sanctioning policies.

Lastly, Paper 3 takes a closer look at the characteristics of EU sanctioning policies. This study contributes knowledge on the heterogeneous sanctioning policies from the EU and US since the end of the Cold War by analysing and contrasting why and to which extent they both (threaten to) sanction the violation of democratic freedoms and human rights, and is relevant to literature about the design of sanctions. Referring to existing insights on democracy promotion and multilateral versus unilateral sanctioning, as well as making use of the information gained in interviews with sanctions experts in Brussels, this article argues that different institutional features and ideological interpretations shape the EU's and US's distinct policies following norm violations. Using a mixed-method approach of multinomial regression analysis along with case studies of EU and US policies following the *coup d'états* in Madagascar (2002) and Mali (2009), the results conclude that while both sanctioners are sensitive to violations of democratic freedoms and human rights, especially in the form of *coup d'états*, their specific form of sanctioning differs considerably. While the EU is characterized by a more gradual policy approach putting more emphasis on dialogue and the strategic use of the threat of sanctions, the US prefers more straightforward policies in which the immediate imposition of sanctions plays a dominant role. In simple words, the EU threatens while the US strikes.

To sum up, my research provides new insights on the EU as an international sanctioning actor *sui generis*. It elaborates on how the EU's multi-level governance structure is likely to shape both its institutional constraints of decision-making, and its preferences in selecting joint EU policies following norm violations. My thesis shows that the EU is determined to use a more gradual and dialogue-oriented approach to norm promotion—especially in comparison to the US's bold and straightforward way of conducting foreign policy. The EU prefers to counter norm violations with an approach focussing on dialogue, cooperation, and persuasion, and in which the threat of sanctions plays a strategic role. However, my findings also show that if the stakes are high, for instance, when the violations are very brute and bloody and when media coverage is rendering their salience high in the eyes of the policy-makers, the EU knows how to use sanctions quickly and rigorously. Although even in these instances, the EU will try to soon again pick up the dialogue with the targeted state and support its transition back to stability.

2. The transnationalized reality of EU sanctioning: A new research agenda beyond the study of effective economic sanctions

Published in *Journal of European Public Policy*, 2020, Vol. 27, 1585-1597.⁷

Abstract

States and regional organizations like the European Union (EU) now cooperate in a variety of policy fields, including environment, trade, justice, and home affairs. Such policy cooperation provides external actors with a catalogue of options for imposing sanctions, meaning that sanctioning is no longer restricted to violations of purely political or economic norms. Noticeably, sectoral norms now play an increasingly large role. However, existing research tends to focus on the ineffectiveness of sanctions as primarily economic-coercion measures, and neglects to investigate also the determinants of the decision to sanction, or not, the violation of any internationally or bilaterally agreed norm. This research agenda argues for a multi-dimensional view on EU sanctioning. Given globalization and increasing transnational cooperation, it identifies the need for scholarship to respond to the externally and internally changing environment of EU policy-making. Based on a discussion of the implications of this transnationalized reality for EU sanctioning, it identifies promising avenues for future research.

⁷ Please cite as: FÜRRTUTTER, Martina (2020). The transnationalized reality of EU sanctioning: a new research agenda beyond the study of effective economic sanctions, *Journal of European Public Policy* 27, 1585-1597. Note that the text is identical to the published version, although the citation style has been adapted.

2.1 Introduction

In 1996, the European Union (EU) sanctioned Myanmar for violations of core labour rights. Because of the use of forced labour, the EU decided to withdraw benefits under the General System of Preferences (GSP), which grants tariff reductions and trade benefits to developing countries.⁸ In that same year, the EU had not sanctioned complaints against the alleged violations of core labour rights in Pakistan—a similar norm violation. Likewise, in 2002, the EU sanctioned the violation of democratic principles and rules of good governance in Zimbabwe, whereas it did not sanction the violation of the same set of norms in Nigeria the subsequent year.⁹ These episodes suggest that the EU's reactions to norm violations may vary greatly not only across the violating actors but also across the types of norm violated. In this research agenda, I propose to explicitly explore this variation, which has hitherto gone largely unnoticed in research on EU sanctions.

Especially in times when the use of sanctions features in the media near daily, it is surprising that we still have such a limited understanding of both the overall use and the selection of sanctioning measures. At present, EU sanctions literature is shaped by a primary research interest in explaining the (effective) use of sanctions in the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), given the EU's preferences (e.g., Jones 2007; Del Biondo 2015; Saltnes 2017). In other words, what these studies assume is that the EU will sanction if doing so is in line with its preferences. While this may sometimes be the case, I argue that next to the EU's preferences, the institutional setting and the EU's competences in sectoral policy-making may also determine the (effective) use of sanctions. Only if the EU *wants* to act and can *decide* on the imposition of joint sanctions, will it likely use sanctions as a measure of foreign policy.

A growing body of literature is departing from the dominant effectiveness-driven perspective on EU-CFSP sanctions. For instance, Giumelli (2011) proposes a more differentiated perspective on the purpose of sanctions as instrument of foreign policy, highlighting their coercive, constraining and signalling functions. Hellquist (2015) takes an interpretative approach discussing the continuity and change in beliefs about

⁸ See European Commission press release database: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-96-1190_en.htm, and, e.g., Portela and Orbie (2014). These sanctions followed CFSP measures imposed 5 years before.

⁹ See "EU imposes sanction on Zimbabwe", <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/feb/18/zimbabwe>, and, e.g., Del Biondo (2015).

sanctions. Saltnes (2017) contributes a case study of EU sanctions in Rwanda, demonstrating the importance of normative, next to interest-driven accounts of the Union's sanctioning policies. Recently, meso- and micro-level perspectives on EU sanctioning have also added to the debate. Here, studies look not only into the opinions of EU member states (Portela 2015) and their citizens (Onderco 2017) but also consider the irrelevance of internal EU sanctioning (Sedelmeier 2017), in particular if compared to EU policies of sanctioning norm violations by non-members (Hellquist 2018).

This paper adds to this literature by outlining an agenda for the study of EU sanctioning that considers the variety of sanctioning measures the EU can use in its external relations. Fundamentally, sanctions are "actions initiated by one or more international actors (the "senders") against one or more others (the "receiver") with either or both of two purposes: to punish the receivers by depriving them of some value and/or to make the receivers comply with certain norms the senders deem important" (Galtung 1967, 379). Sanctions are policy instruments used by international actors in reaction to the violation of a variety of norms, including human rights, labour rights, or democratic principles. Sanctions are always based upon the violation of a norm that was previously agreed upon in a bilateral or international agreement. Norms the EU deems important can fall into different issue areas, some of which resemble the international arena dominated by intergovernmental negotiations, while in others the Community method is applied and decisions involve (members of) the European Parliament and the Commission. Most of these norms present conditions that need to be met for the agreement to be maintained. In any case, applying some form of sanction (or threatening to do so) serves to enforce these norms.

In this research agenda, I argue that globalization as well as a growing number of issues stretching beyond the borders of traditional nation-states (e.g., climate change, pollution, or international terrorism) are likely to affect sanctioning policies of external actors, here the EU. Whereas in the past, policy fields such as environmental policy or social policy were seen as domestic matters, today, we increasingly find coordination of policies at the EU level and beyond (Lavenex 2004; McGrew 2014). In other words, almost all policy fields seem to include an international dimension these days, which in turn is likely to affect sanctions, as one of the most prominently used instruments of foreign policy. In consequence, there is not only a widened field of policy areas in which sanctions might potentially be used, the EU has also a more diverse set of sanctioning

instruments at its disposal and, when it comes to the imposition of EU sanctions, there is an increasing mixture of intergovernmental and supranational decision-making at play.

I further argue that any study of (effective) sanctioning needs to account both for cases in which the respective international actor decided to sanction the violation of a norm, and for cases in which it decided not to do so. Otherwise, we run the risk of selecting on the dependent variable. Hazelzet (2001) stresses the importance of considering both cases and non-cases of sanctions following norm violations. She shows that a diverse set of factors—including normative concerns, institutional impediments of decision-making, and the geographic proximity of the target state—might influence an international actor's decision to (not) sanction human rights violations. Still, apart from Kreutz' (2015) study of EU military (non-) interventions following human rights atrocities, hardly any study follows Hazelzet's call for a more comprehensive research design encompassing the whole process from the violation of a norm to the decision to sanction (or not) and its behavioural consequences.

Accounting for the growing political interconnectedness in today's globalized external policy-making, the proposed research agenda revisits the question: under which condition does the EU sanction the violation of norms? Arguing for the diverse nature of EU sanctions and sanctioning, it first illustrates such diversification along three dimensions: 1) the types of norms violated, 2) EU decision-making competences and preferences, and 3) the instruments of sanctioning used. It then elaborates on avenues for future research on EU sanctioning which aim to deepen the theoretical and procedural understanding of EU sanctioning and to account for the complexity of sanctioning policies in today's transnationalized policy-making. The paper ends with a brief discussion of the agenda's implications for the study of effective sanctioning.

2.2 Varieties of EU sanctions and sanctioning

2.2.1 Dimension 1: The type of norm violated

Scholars of transgovernmentalism in general, and EU external governance in particular, point to a growing externalization of former domestic issues (Keukeleire and Delreux 2014; Lavenex 2004; McGrew 2014;). Because transnational issues, such as migration, climate change or international terrorism, demand a concerted transgovernmental

approach, states, now more than ever, coordinate their policies when tackling these issues. Whereas in the past, policy fields such as environmental policy or social policy were matters of domestic concern, today, we increasingly find coordination of policies at the EU level and beyond. In other words, EU external actions take place in a variety of policy fields, including former internal policy areas. This diversification of external policies is mirrored in the drafting of international trade agreements, which include—next to economic conditions for cooperation—a growing number of non-trade issues (Lechner 2016).

In line with this, the EU refers to a progressively diversified set of norms when stipulating conditions upon which bilateral cooperation with partner states and the provision of foreign aid is agreed and maintained. These conditions specify what norms are to be followed by the contract partners. They establish standards of behaviour and manifest the terms of cooperation between the EU and its partner states. The Lomé agreement of 1989 (today the Cotonou agreement) between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group of states was the first international agreement in which the EU explicitly required its partner states to uphold human rights and rules of democracy, next to trade issues (Bartels 2005). More than a decade later, in the General System of Preferences (GSP), a bilateral trade agreement between the EU and a number of developing states providing the latter with preferential access to the EU market, the Union extended the range of normative provisions with clauses on social as well as labour rights, and environmental provisions (van den Putte and Orbie 2015). Political-economic analyses of clauses in preferential trade agreements support the use of non-trade issues as an instrument for political aims (Lechner 2016).

This diversification of the set of norms included in agreements with third states is likely to shape the trajectory of the EU's sanctioning policies. With a broader spectrum of norms included in conditionality clauses of bilateral and international agreements, the legal basis for sanctions has diversified, and so too might the EU's sanctioning policies. Indeed, EU scholars started to acknowledge the extended set of norms which violation the EU can potentially sanction. As Portela (2010) shows, today, sanctions can be found in a broad field of external actions, including the EU's neighbourhood policy, development policy, and trade policy.

Students of EU political conditionality discuss the growing importance of the new generations of human rights (Molenaers, Dellepiane, and Faust 2015). Next to civil and

political rights (first generation), economic, social, as well as cultural rights (second generation), and sustainable development as well as environmental protection (third generation) seem to, at least *de jure*, gain in relevance as conditions of the EU's external policy (Koch 2015). Still, while sanctions research broadly discusses the relevance of the first generation of human rights in making the use of sanction more likely (e.g., Kreutz 2015; Del Biondo 2015), inquiries into the newer generations of human rights are scarce. This can partly be explained by the prevalent research interest in CFSP sanctions.

Overall, as Portela and Orbie's (2014) innovative study of the coherence between CFSP (i.e., civic and political rights) and GSP measures (i.e., social, economic and environmental rights) shows, there is still much to be learned with regards to the differing normative grounds of EU sanctioning policy. It remains unclear what the growing relevance of non-trade issues mean for the implementation (and effectiveness) of EU sanctioning. Information shared by the eleven EU officials (specialized in EU sanctioning) that I interviewed in Brussels in May 2018 suggests that the violation of traditional human rights norms is more likely to be sanctioned (COM1, COM2, EEAS1, EEAS2, EP1)¹⁰. Systematic empirical evidence for such a hierarchy of violated norms when it comes to EU sanctioning is lacking though. To date, existing knowledge is largely based on individual case studies. Here, Portela's (2010) comparative analysis of the effectiveness of EU sanctions in the EU's trade policy, development policy and CFSP, is worth highlighting—but has not set a new trend in the study of EU sanctioning. In sum, the expansion of EU sanctioning into the wider mosaic of EU external actions is still a largely untouched field of research.

2.2.2 Dimension 2: EU decision-making competences and preferences

Over the last decade, the EU has become more heterogeneous as well as more integrated. It has widened to 27 member states; the authority of its institutions has been strengthened; and its scope has expanded. Research shows that this 'deepening' and 'widening' is changing the way the Union works and acts, as regards its internal and external relations (Wallace, Pollack, and Young 2014). Scholars of EU sanctions tend to look at the violator—i.e., who is the target, and how are the EU's respective interests

¹⁰ In order to guarantee my interview partners' anonymity, I use interview codes, see Appendix A1.

and policy preferences shaped vis-à-vis this target (e.g., Jones 2007; Eriksson 2011; Taylor 2010); yet, *what actor*—i.e., the member states, the Commission and/or the Parliament—is taking the decision to sanction has mostly been neglected. The literature on leadership and negotiations, however, reminds us of the importance of coalition-building and compromise in EU decision-making (Tallberg 2006). An increasing variety of interests and member state positions is thus likely to also affect the EU decision-making on sanctions. While studies of EU sanctions indeed teach us valuable lessons on the role of preferences in the use of sanctions (e.g., Jones 2007; Del Biondo 2015; Saltnes 2017), the expansion of European integration in terms of width, depth and breadth and the respective effects on EU sanctioning is hitherto still largely a blind spot in research.

As regards the territorial extension of the EU ('width'), studies report a shifting of coalition-building in negotiations and policy-making. Especially with the Eastern enlargements, partially new economic and political interests have entered the EU. Presumably mostly due to cultural closeness and common historical legacy, Naurin and Lindahl (2008), for example, find evidence for an East-North-South division in the coalition-building within the Council in policy areas as diverse as agriculture, economic policy and CFSP, following the Eastern rounds of EU enlargement. Petrova's (2011) study of the EU's external democracy promotion efforts conclude that the new members are particularly active in demanding and supporting democratic change in their neighbourhood. Their enhanced engagement in democracy promotion in Eastern and Central Europe might have a strengthening effect on the EU's sanctioning policies in the region.

Regular revisions of the EU Treaties considerably changed the institutional set-up of decision-making in the EU ('depth'). Especially the increasing role of the European Parliament has been widely discussed in the literature (Maurer 2003; Hix and Høyland 2013). While at first the European Parliament fulfilled a mainly advisory function, except the CFSP, it became with the Treaty of Lisbon (2009) an equal co-decision-maker in over 80 percent of policy areas. Hence, if today the EU decides to suspend a partnership agreement with a third country, the Parliament and the Council co-decide with equal power. This might be relevant, for example, in the realm of human rights. Whereas the Parliament stands out as a vivid promoter of human rights (Stavridis and

Irrera 2015), the Council's positions and actions are also enhancing but partly limited by conflicting member states positions (EP1).

Students of EU external governance point to the thematic expansion of EU external actions ('breadth') (Keukeleire and Delreux 2014; Lavenex 2004). Next to the increasing relevance of former domestic areas, such as trade, development, and environmental policy, research highlights the increasing supranationalization of (external) decision-making (Sandholtz and Stone Sweet 1998). While in the early days of EU sanctioning, it was mainly the EU member states that decided intergovernmentally upon the imposition of CFSP sanctions, the European Commission and the Parliament gained in relevance in EU external relations, including sanctioning policies. For example, it is the Commission leading the policy-process of alleged violations of conditionality included in the Cotonou agreement and GSP. Moreover, post-Lisbon, the Parliament and the Council co-decide upon the signing but also withdrawal of such agreements.

Such supranationalization of policy-making, that is, the growing transfer of domestic competencies, altered the distribution of power among the EU institutions. While the member states still own the main powers in the intergovernmental CFSP, in other policy areas (e.g., trade and development policy), however, the introduction of the Community method with the Ordinary Legislative Procedure (OLP) strengthened the role of the Commission and the European Parliament. Especially since the Treaty of Lisbon (2009), the European Parliament has been established as an equal decision-maker next to the Council of the EU. Meanwhile, the European Commission has manifested its role in the initiation, implementation, and monitoring of EU policies.¹¹

This has consequences for the EU's sanctioning policy. Today, the EU's sanctioning menu includes sanctions adopted within the intergovernmental CFSP as well as aid sanctions imposed within the Community framework and decisions to withdraw trade measures under the GSP (Portela 2010). While CFSP sanctions fall into the domain of member states only, aid sanctions demand a joint legislative proposal of both the European Council and the European Parliament. This distinction implies that depending on the norm violated, EU sanctioning policy takes places in an environment that can be

¹¹ See Portela (2010, 20–25) for more details on the intergovernmental and Community method of decision-making on EU sanctions.

more or less politicized—Community politics involves more (diverse) actors (e.g., national and European; government and opposition) and can therefore be seen as more politicized than intergovernmental negotiations, which are predominantly held among national executive actors only (Costa 2019, 795).¹² In consequence, next to its preferences, the EU's ability to act and decide is also likely to shape its political actions. Hence, understanding why the EU does (not) sanction is more complex than a simple “preference = policy” equation. Rather, it requires taking the institutional setting of EU policy-making into account.

2.2.3 Dimension 3: The instruments of sanctioning used

Empirical analyses suggest the existence of a broad variety of sanctioning instruments. The EU itself lists arms embargoes, trade restrictions, financial restrictions, and the restriction of movement as potential sanctioning instruments in the CFSP.¹³ In my interviews, other, often lesser known sanctions were highlighted, notably rebalancing measures (e.g., anti-dumping measures), political measures (e.g., the freezing/suspension of negotiations of partnership and trade agreements), or trade measures (e.g., the partial/ complete withdrawal of trade preferences) (COM1–3, EEAS1, EEAS5, EEAS6). Next to imposing no sanctions at all, the EU could thus use either trade or political measures, or even a mixture of both. In fact, reacting to the violation of human rights, we have seen the EU terminate foreign aid for Haiti in 2001, impose a travel ban on the Belarusian elite in 2002, and use a bundle of measures including financial restrictions, travel bans, and arms embargoes in Zimbabwe from 2002 on. Hence, the EU has a multitude of options to react to the violation of a specific norm. As trade and partnership agreements have been gaining in relevance in a transnationalized environment of policy-making, there is an ever-growing potential for these less conventional sanctioning instruments.

EU sanctions research is starting to look into the diversity of EU sanctioning instruments. For example, the suspension of budget support (Molenaers et al. 2015), the role of interests or norms in explaining sanctions in EU development policy (Del Biondo

¹² Costa (2019, 791) applies a definition of politicization as “an ‘increase in polarization of opinions, interests or values and the extent to which they are publicly advanced towards the process of policy formulation’ (De Wilde 2011, 260)”.

¹³ See Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI). Sanctions: Instruments and aims. http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/fpi/what-we-do/sanctions_en.htm.

2015), the EU's interpretation of the concept of targeted sanctions (Portela 2016a), or the coherence between CFSP sanctions and the withdrawal of trade preferences (Portela and Orbie 2014), have been discussed in more recent studies. Yet, a systematic analysis across different EU sanctioning instruments is still missing. Comparing the effectiveness of different sanctions tools, Portela (2010) found a varying degree of effectiveness between more and less formalized types of sanctioning (with the much formalized sanctioning procedure under the Cotonou framework being the most effective one). Still, the design of EU sanctioning policies is a largely unaddressed question in research.

2.3 Avenues for future research on EU sanctioning

With this research agenda, I call on scholars of EU sanctioning policies and its effectiveness to consider the externally and internally changing settings of EU policy-making. I suggest taking the violation of a norm as the starting point, and systematically juxtaposing cases in which the EU decided to sanction the violation of a norm with those where it refrained from doing so. Based on the above-outlined developments, I present the following potential avenues for future research on EU sanctioning.

Firstly, research would benefit from a more comprehensive exploration and theorization of the nature of sanctions applied across countries and over time (cf. Koch 2015). If we accept an increasing complexity of norms violated, competences as well as preferences, and instruments of EU sanctioning, the questions are: What is the role of sanctions today? And, in what way has the manner of sanctioning changed? Discussions of the normative and political role of sanctions could essentially shape our understanding of sanctions as an instrument of foreign policy. We should put more focus on the motivation behind the imposition and termination of sanctions, as well as on the direct and indirect consequences of doing so. Related to this, and considering the changing international political environment, empirical research would also benefit from a reconceptualization and operationalization of sanctioning. A refined understanding of sanctions and their use could enhance the consistency of theoretical arguments and empirical analysis.

Research should pay more attention to the determinants of sanctioning policies and their design—i.e., the why and how of sanctioning. That is, secondly, *why* the EU decides to (not) sanction a country for violating a specific norm could depend on both external and

internal factors. In line with the two-level game of policy-making (Putnam 1988), studies of the use of conditionality in the foreign policy of regional organizations highlight ‘the collective action problem in enforcement’ (Pevehouse 2005, 47), rooted in strategic considerations of individual member states. At the international level, the influence of other states (e.g., the US) or international organisations (e.g., the UN) on decisions taken in Brussels is likely (Biersteker and Portela 2015; cf. Taylor 2010). Such an influence was supported by several of my interviewees (COM1-3, EEAS1-6, EP1). But, of course, decision-making within the national arenas of the individual member states, their preferences and policy-coalitions likely influence EU-level decisions too. The behaviour and influence of the decision-makers might change over time due to learning or habituation effects, be it in terms of previous sanctioning experiences in the region or in similar cases of norm violation. Furthermore, the likelihood of sanctioning might depend on the type of norm violation (e.g., ‘older’ human rights norms versus ‘newer’ norms of environmental protection) or on the violating country (e.g., allies versus adversaries, neighbouring versus distant countries). Here, one might want to investigate the extent to and the way in which the increased role of non-state actors and transgovernmental organisations is impacting the explanatory power of traditional state-focussed explanations. The likelihood of sanctioning might also vary among geographical regions and points in time, thus suggesting diffusion effects in the shape of waves or (temporal and/or spatial) clusters of sanctioning. If so, we could expect the probability of EU sanctioning (or non-sanctioning) to be higher in certain regions or historical periods.

Thirdly, *how* the EU designs its sanctioning policies, that is, which measures it decides to use is another aspect of the ‘black box’ of sanctioning. Although scholars have argued the design of sanctions “to be key to their outcomes” (McLean and Whang 2014, 590), to date, there is no systematic research on the design of EU sanctions and on factors influencing the decision for certain designs. Next to the empirical value of this question also from a practical point of view, optimizing the design of sanctions could enhance their effectiveness. For example, the act of sanctioning could be endogenous in that the use of specific types of sanctions depends on the previously used (sanctioning) measure in one country. A ratcheting-up of sanctioning intensity would be evidence for such an endogenous hierarchy of EU sanctioning, which could begin with economically less costly sanctions (e.g., visa bans), then gradually increase the intensity of sanctions until imposing a full economic embargo. Examining lagged effects—i.e., impacts of one time

period on another, scholars might want to look into the development of sanctioning instruments over time. Is there, for instance, evidence for an increased use of ‘smart’ targeted sanctions following the debate in the late 1990s (cf. Gordon 2011; Lopez 2012)? Research might also find an interaction between the type of norm violated and the type of sanctioning instrument used. For example, does the EU use distinct types of sanctions in reaction to the violation of human rights, compared to the violation of labour standards? Such evidence would shed more light on the design of EU sanctioning, which in relation to studying their outcome could help to enhance the design and effectiveness of sanctions.

What does this agenda imply for the study of effective sanctions? A better understanding of the determinants of the EU’s decision (not) to sanction the violation of a norm can enrich our understanding of the effectiveness of sanctions. Assessing a sanction’s effectiveness without understanding the considerations behind its application is like discussing the health impacts of eating a cake based on its smell and taste, rather than its ingredients. For instance, if the decision to sanction is concordantly backed-up by all EU members plus the European Parliament, this may have a stronger effect on the targeted state’s behaviour, compared to a decision that is the result of lengthy intergovernmental negotiations. Furthermore, the EU’s perception of effective sanctions might not only be to a direct change of target-behaviour, but also indirectly to deter similar violations by other states in future. Hence, estimating the effectiveness of sanctions might be more complex and demand a look beyond the black box of EU sanctioning.

Summing up, we see that there is still much to be learned in the study of EU sanctioning policies. If we accept an ever more complex environment of external policy-making in today’s globalized world, we have to reconsider our knowledge on why and how the EU uses sanctions. Along with the highlighted changes in EU external relations, this research agenda elaborates on the mostly unexplored varieties of EU sanctioning policies and—in so doing—opens promising avenues for future research.

3. The (Non-)Sanctioning of Human Rights Violations: News Media Coverage and European Union Sanctions

Abstract

According to sanctions studies, economic and political relations influence the onset of sanctions by international actors. However, when looking at the imposition of European Union (EU) sanctions on countries being considered as the very worst violators of human rights, economic and political factors help to explain some but not all of the cases in which the EU decided to use sanctions. Drawing on media theories of agenda-setting and literature on the European public sphere, the author argues that the information status of the domestic constituencies and the political elite on events at the international level can positively affect decisions for joint policies. The author contends that news media coverage on humanitarian atrocities increases the moral pressure on governments to act, and hence in the EU's case, to reach agreements on joint EU sanctions. Analysing original data on the coverage of human rights violations in eight leading newspapers from the EU4 member states—Germany, Italy, France, and the UK since the late 1990s, this study contributes a new perspective on the onset of sanctions. Using multinomial regression analysis, the author indeed finds a significant influence of media coverage on the likelihood of EU sanctioning, but only if the EU shares no strong trade relations with the violating state.

3.1 Introduction

Reading the daily newspapers from European member states, we frequently find articles on human rights violations in third countries. Torture cases of dissidents, bloody elections, or the violent persecution of opposition groups play a visible role in the newspaper coverage by media outlets. However, despite the number of newspaper articles on human rights violations and the detailed pictures they provide on the atrocities, their effect on external policies of European Union (EU) sanctions, in particular, have hardly been studied. This is surprising given that political media studies have been discussing the priming and framing functions of news media since the 1990s (e.g., Krosnick and Kinder 1990; Nelson and Kinder 1996). Against this background, the question emerges: *How does the salience of human rights issues in European news media influence the EU's decision to use sanctions?*

Today, sanctions are a common and often-applied instrument of foreign policy aimed at countering the illicit political behaviour of other states. The EU frequently uses sanctions as “a liberal alternative to war” (Pape 1997, 90). Sanctions provide the EU with an instrument to use its economic and increasingly political weight to influence the behaviour of third states. Ever since the late 1980s, but especially since the release of the “Basic Principles on the Use of Restrictive Measures (Sanctions)” and the “Guidelines on implementation and evaluation of restrictive measures (sanctions)” by the Council of the European Union (2004, 2005), EU member states institutionalized the political practice to issue sanctions jointly rather than unilaterally. Even though member states often enter the Council meetings in Brussels with conflicting national, economic, and political interests, they often manage to reach an agreement on issuing joint sanctions over the violation of human rights standards.

While the EU did agree to use sanctions against approximately half of the 74 countries that the Political Terror Scale (PTS) lists as countries with the very worst levels of human rights conditions from 1999 to 2015, there was no reached agreement to act against the other half (cf. Appendix B1). Hence, the violation of human rights alone cannot explain why the member states often, but not always, agree to issue joint EU sanctions. Beyond the existence of human rights violations, the literature points towards several economic and political factors potentially related to increasing use of sanctions—including the violator's political and economic stability and/or its trade relations with the potential sanctioner (e.g., Peksen, Peterson, and Drury 2014). Still, as

shown in the following, accounting for the usual economic and political factors, we may struggle to grasp the missing link that connects the malpractices of some human rights-violating countries more closely to the EU than others.

I argue that an answer to this puzzle lies in the salience of human rights issues in EU news media coverage. Studies show that the content of news reports inform and shape the opinion of readers (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Ron, Ramos, and Rodgers 2005). By reporting and informing on some topics but not others, media is said to determine what we think and discuss, thereby influencing the political agenda of national governments (Vliegenthart et al. 2016). Referring to the *CNN effect*, students of International Relations find a correlation between news reports on humanitarian atrocities and the likelihood of military intervention (e.g., Livingston 1997; Robinson 2000, 2002). The better informed the public is about human rights violations, the higher the moral pressure seems to be for governments to act on these violations.

In particular, two seminal studies on the use of economic sanctions and the suspension of foreign aid by the United States (US) found a determining role of media coverage on the decision to use sanctions (Nielsen 2013; Peksen, Peterson, and Drury 2014). Also, EU sanctions scholars have started to discuss a “signalling function of sanctions” (e.g., Giumelli 2011), meaning that the EU does not only directly target the violating states by sanctioning them, but also indirectly addresses other external actors and domestic audiences. However, the influence of these domestic audiences on EU sanctioning policy has not been studied yet. Addressing this lacuna, I inquire into the relationship between EU newspaper coverage of human rights violations and the decision to sanction. Drawing on the observation of transnational political communication across EU media (Kantner 2014, 2017), I argue that the extent to which EU media cover human rights violations in EU third countries influences the extent to which the EU is likely to sanction these violations.

In exploring the link between print media coverage and the use of sanctions by the EU, this study makes both an empirical and a theoretical contribution. Empirically, the study fosters our knowledge on the coverage of human rights issues in European newspapers since the late 1990s, and the extent to and how it may influence political decisions in foreign policy. I study the salience of human rights issues in the media landscape of EU member states and examine its effect on EU sanctioning decisions. To this end, I analyse

new data on newspaper coverage of human rights issues in the big four EU member states (EU4): France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom (UK).

Theoretically, this study enriches explanatory accounts of the often-disregarded onset of EU sanctioning policies and highlights the determining role of the media in the making of foreign policy beyond traditional state actors. While existing research provides many insights on the (effective) use of sanctions, the grounds behind the decision to actually sanction norm violations remain very unclear. The study accounts for both cases and non-cases of EU sanctioning and explores the influence of the media in raising public awareness and influencing EU sanctioning policies. Furthermore, by centring on a non-state sanctioning actor like the EU, the study contributes to a wider generalizability on the role of media coverage, and hence public attention, in the making of political decisions on sanctions. If we find media coverage to play a decisive role in the complex, partly intergovernmental but also supranational decision-making of EU sanctions, then media coverage and public awareness should play a more general role in international sanction-making beyond the EU.

This article starts by providing an overview of the current state of debate on EU sanctioning. After presenting the research puzzle and the main argument, I outline the research design and my methodological approach. The subsequent statistical analysis of the effect of media on the use of EU sanctions supports a significant relationship between media coverage and EU sanctioning while also considering trade, political, and strategic determinants. While overall, the EU is unlikely to sanction its closest trade partners, extensive media coverage relates to a higher likelihood of EU sanctioning for countries with less bilateral trade—especially in cases of highly populated countries with lower levels of democracy.

3.2 Determinants of EU sanctioning: What we do (not) know

Following the seminal work of Johan Galtung (1967), scholars have developed a strong research interest in the logic and effect of sanctions. Initially, the literature mainly focused on whether economic sanctions provide a viable alternative to military interventions. Over time, however, the research agenda incorporated a wide range of foreign policy tools that may be used as instruments of ‘economic statecraft’ (Baldwin 1985), including the suspension of aid. In the late 1990s, the literature shifted towards analysing ‘smart sanctions’, targeted at elite actors instead of harming the broader

population (Cortright and Lopez 2002). Furthermore, studies report a widening of policy fields in which sanctions are used in addition to a diversification of sanctioning actors (Fürrutter 2020). While traditionally powerful state actors, notably the US, used to dominate the interest of research; scholars today are intrigued by the growing influence of newer international actors like the EU (Taylor 2010). Along with analysing the EU as a sanctioning actor (Portela 2010), research also contributes insights on the aims and success of EU sanctioning policies (Giumelli 2011, 2013b).

Although, despite the wealth of acquired knowledge on the effectiveness and use of sanctions, we still know relatively little on the determinants of EU sanctioning policies. Empirically, there is a lack of research considering the non-cases of EU sanctioning (Fürrutter 2020). Most of our knowledge of the (effective) use of sanctions comes from studies looking into positive cases of only using sanctions. By doing so, we risk a biased view of EU sanctions neglecting the actual variation in EU sanctioning of human rights violations. Furthermore, theoretically, there is a lack of research looking at the role of media as a determinant of EU sanctioning policy. EU sanctions literature is currently shaped by a primary research interest in explaining the (effective) use of sanctions in the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), given the EU's preferences (e.g., Del Biondo 2015; Jones 2007). Yet, next to the EU's preferences, I argue that by reporting on human rights violations, media raises public awareness and influences the political agenda of EU policy-makers.

In more detail, empirically, any study of (effective) sanctioning needs to account for both cases in which the respective international actor decided to sanction the violation of a norm, and for cases in which it decided not to do so. Otherwise we run the risk of selecting based on the dependent variable. By only focussing on sanction cases, rather than also including non-sanction cases, it is difficult to establish if a factor (e.g., trade or political relations with the violator) is causally important in determining the use of sanctions (Fearon 1991, cf. Haverland 2006). Following this reasoning, Hazelzet (2001) stresses the importance of considering both cases and non-cases of sanctions following norm violations. She shows that a diverse set of factors—including normative concerns, institutional impediments of decision-making, and the geographic proximity of the target state—might influence an international actor's decision to (not) sanction human rights violations. Still, apart from Kreutz' (2015) study of EU military (non-) interventions in reaction to human rights atrocities, hardly any study follows Hazelzet's

call for a more comprehensive research design encompassing the whole process—from the violation of a norm, to the decision on sanctioning (or not), and its effectiveness. However, both Hazelzet (2001) and Kreutz (2015) miss providing a coherent explanation for the role of human rights issues in political decisions. While their respective studies show an empirical correlation between the presence of human rights violations and the likelihood of the use of sanctions by the EU, they provide no explanation why this is sometimes the case and sometimes not. Thus, the question emerges on what triggers the defence of human rights in some cases but not in others?

Theoretically, I argue that an answer to this question can be found in the influence of media as raising public awareness and so influencing political agenda. Political media scientists have long been trying to show the political (and foreign policy) agenda-setting role the media has (e.g., McCombs and Shaw 1972). In a US context, first studies support a relationship between media coverage on human rights and the use of economic sanctions (Peksen, Peterson, and Drury 2014) as well as the restriction of foreign aid (Nielsen 2013). By contrast, in an EU context the role of the media in determining EU sanctioning policy has not been studied yet. As the EU is not a traditional state actor but plays an increasingly important role in international relations, studying it allows deriving more generalizable insights about the role of media in the use of sanctions.

The EU is a complex sanctioning actor, whose decision-making process still largely depends on finding an agreement between the 27 member states. Even though over the years the European Parliament has gained power, it still has little say when it comes to sanctions. In the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), that covers frequently imposed measures such as travel bans or arms embargoes, the heads of the member states decide unanimously while Parliament is only informed about the final decision. When it comes to measures concerning the restrictions of bilateral relations between the EU and third states, today the Parliament and Council are nominally equal decision-makers in the Ordinary Legal Procedure (OLP). As a sanctions expert from the European Parliament underlined during an interview in Brussels in May 2018, however: “The Parliament still plays a minor role. It gets to sign off the done deal, but it does not really influence the content (yet)” (EP1).¹⁴ Hence, the key to the imposition of sanctions by the EU remains an agreement between the member states. Under this circumstance, high

¹⁴ I use abbreviations in reference to the institutional affiliation of my interview partners. For an overview of all Brussels interviews, see Appendix A1.

media coverage could facilitate negotiations between them. Media coverage renders human rights violations visible to the public and may thereby increase public demand for political action within the member states. The member states are likely to carry these demands for action to Brussels, where I would expect them to facilitate the decision-making for sanctions.

3.3 Media coverage and EU sanctioning

3.3.1 European news media sphere

My theoretical argument draws on the observation of the existence of transnational political communication across EU member states and the emergence of a European public sphere (Kantner 2014, 2017). In the early 2000s, when thousands of people demonstrated against the US war in Iraq throughout several European capitals—and this despite the heterogenous political positions of the member states towards the war—Habermas and Derrida (2003) saw the birth of a European public sphere. A decade later theoretical, as well as empirical, discussions of this European public sphere (e.g., Eriksen 2005; Koopmans and Statham 2010) Cathleen Kantner (2014, 2017) provided the first large-scale comparative empirical study of transnational political communication across EU member states. According to Kantner (2014, 411), transnational political communication exists when 1) the same transnational issues are discussed, 2) at the same time, and 3) under similar aspects of relevance. Sharing the same opinion on the issue is, however, no necessary condition for the existence of transnational political communication (cf. Kantner 2004, 130–62). Studying print media coverage of humanitarian interventions from six EU member states and the US between 1990 and 2006, she finds evidence for an intertwining of national arenas of political communication across borders. Continental Europeans particularly seem to discuss the same issues at the same time, whereas British media (although to a lower degree) seems to follow more issue cycles like US media does.

Kantner's findings are supported by Maximilian Overbeck (2014). He was interested in learning whether diverging governmental positions from member states towards the Libyan war in 2011 were mirrored in the national news media, or whether EU media shared a common position in describing the war as a joint EU foreign policy issue. Similar to Kantner (2014), he finds evidence for the existence of a 'pan-European

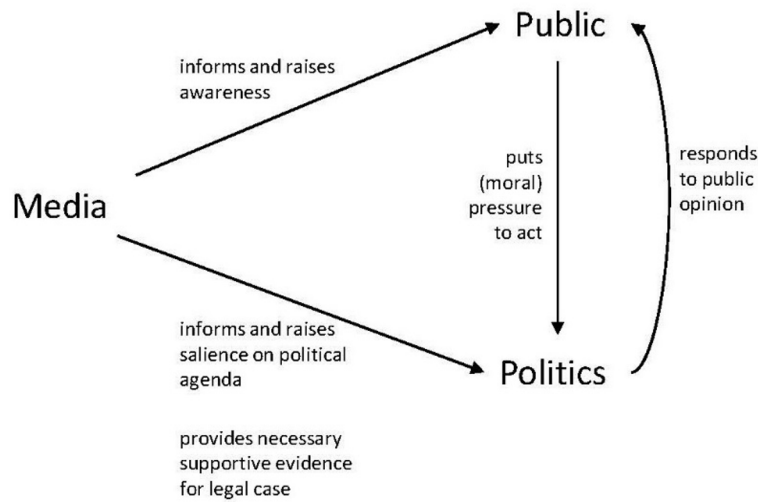
debate’ on Libya in France, Germany, and Austria. In comparison, again, British media coverage somewhat differed from continental European media. Overall, all tested newspapers covered the Libyan war to a rather similar extent. They differed in that British newspapers used a more ‘Eurosceptic’ language, while in the continental member states, the framing was more pro-European. Despite these differences in framing, both Overbeck and Kantner find evidence for the existence of transnational political communication across key EU member states.

Like these findings, I too expect transnational political communication across EU newspapers to also exist when it comes to severe cases of human rights violations in EU third countries. Accordingly, I speak of the influence of ‘EU media’ coverage—rather than national media coverage—on the EU’s decision to use sanctions against violating countries. So how is the media said to influence the political agenda of policy-makers?

3.3.2 Media’s influence on EU (foreign) policy

When it comes to mechanisms by which media coverage influences the making of EU foreign policy, the arguments provided in the literature can best be described as a triadic relationship between EU media, the public, and politics (see Figure 4). In this relationship, media possesses one core function: it provides information on foreign policy events such as human rights violations. In doing so, the media raises the salience and the awareness of certain issues and events, which may in turn influence the agenda of democratic policy-makers by increasing the (moral) pressure to act (Smith 1996; Bueno de Mesquita and Downs 2006; Vliegenthart et al. 2016).

Figure 4: Mechanism of influence of media coverage



First, media informs the general public and raises public awareness on a certain foreign policy issue which is likely to influence the public's demand for political action. In the literature, the re-election argument explains the connection between public demand and political actions. Specifically, the argument explains how democratic governments calibrate their political actions to please their voters and to secure their political survival. For example, speaking of 'audience costs', Smith (1996, 1998) elaborates on how governments would even go so far as to stage military interventions to convince their voters of their political competence. In addition, Bueno de Mesquita and Downs (2006) show that military interventions are more likely to happen if they are in line with the interests of the general public—'the selectorate'. The authors argue that military interventions do not often primarily aim at promoting democracy abroad but rather aim to secure domestic support by taking action in matters of public interest. Furthermore, by studying public opinion and the decision-making for a US economic embargo during the Cuban missile crisis, Mc Keown (2000) finds that the US blockade can at least be partly explained by the broad support it had among the US public. Meeting protocols of ExComm members discussing the crisis show that the decision-makers considered public opinion when deciding to host a broad economic embargo. In a similar way, Bucher and her co-authors (2013) highlight that public opinion is particularly influential during election periods, which again, relates back to the basic argument of re-election incentives and the aim to secure political survival.

Along with raising public awareness, the media also informs actors in the political sector. In doing so, they raise awareness for certain issues, such as human rights violations, thereby shaping the political agenda. For years, media scholars have been discussing the relationship between media and politics in a ‘hen and egg’ like manner: What comes first, media or politics? Also, which has more impact on the behaviour of the respective other (e.g., Jones and Baumgartner 2005; Walgrave and Aelst 2006)? In the first longitudinal study of issues in European print media, in comparison to issues on the political agenda (here: parliamentary discussions), a group of political media scholars conclude that media has a bigger agenda-setting influence on politics than vice versa (Vliegenthart et al. 2016). Although the size of such an agenda-setting effect seems to vary across political systems, in general, the findings support an agenda-setting media role in the making of foreign policy across seven European democracies. Several single-country studies provide in-depth insights into the role of media in setting the political agenda. Here, studies highlight the bigger impact of negative news (in comparison to positive) on the political agenda (Thesen 2013), and how politicians are more attentive to foreign policy media coverage than other issue areas (Wood and Peake 1998).

Lastly, media plays an important role in providing legal evidence for EU sanctioning. Images and reports of humanitarian atrocities by the media furnish the EU with ‘supporting evidence’, which is nowadays a condition for the imposition of EU sanctions. Since the early 2010s, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) has seen an increasing number of legal appellations by targets of EU sanctions. Especially following two landmark cases in 2013, *Kadi II*¹⁵ and *Bamba*¹⁶, most legal commentators agree on three main requirements for an individual designation to survive a challenge in Court (Wimmer 2013, 1126; Cuyvers 2014, 1768): 1) explaining the general purpose of a sanction regime, 2) justifying targeting certain persons, and 3) the Council has to provide sufficient supporting evidence for the factual correctness of the violations. When interviewed, sanctions experts from the European External Action Service and the European Commission agreed that news reports (as well as reports from NGOs) are important sources providing evidence for legal cases (EEAS1, EEAS3, COM3). As they explained, in addition to finding unanimity in the Council, the need for clear evidence

¹⁵ Joined Cases C-584/10, C-593/19 and C-595/10, *Commission and other v Yassin Abdullah Kadi*, ECLI:EU:C:2013:518 (“*Kadi II*”).

¹⁶ Case C-417/11, *Council of the European Union v. Nadiany Bamba*, ECLI:EU:C:2012:718 (“*Bamba*”).

is one of the main struggles for EU sanctioning. In contrast to the US, no classified information can be used as legal proof during the hearings of sanction targets in the EU. My interview partners further underlined that, especially in the case of “bloody events” and “visible” cases of human rights violations with much media attention, the member states often feel that there is no other option than acting and imposing joint sanctions (EEAS3, EEAS4).

In line with the reasoning above, the basic expectation from my study is that the likelihood of EU sanctioning increases with increasing human rights violations media attention.

H1: A higher number of media articles on human rights violations in an EU third country positively relates to a higher likelihood of the EU sanctioning this country.

3.3.3 Conditioning factors

Media studies show that there is an inherent selection bias when it comes to the coverage of some issues, or some countries, rather than others (d’Haenens 2003). First, certain internal media factors, such as personal preferences from newspaper editors, the allocation of budgets towards newspaper sections dealing with foreign affairs, or the location of foreign correspondents likely influencing media coverage. However, due to confidentiality and data secrecy issues, access to this information is often restricted. Moreover, scholars highlight the determining role of external factors. Especially trade relations, the presence of international news agencies which often allocate their regional head offices in bigger more populous countries, as well as cultural affinities all seem to relate to a structural selection bias within news media coverage (Wu 2000).

First, when it comes to trade relations, sanctions studies indicate a negative relation between the extent of bilateral trade and the imposition of sanctions. Both Nielsen (2013) as well as Peksen and Drury (2014) show that while the US is overall more likely to use sanctions following salient media coverage in US print media, the tendency for doing so drops when there are economic interests at stake. Hence, even though media studies argue for increased media attention towards events happening in countries with close economic ties, the strategic interest to secure important trade relations seems to trump the influence of media coverage and public knowledge on human rights violations, which is likely to lower the likelihood of EU sanctioning.

H2: The media effect on EU sanctioning is weaker if human rights violations are reported in countries with which the EU shares close trade relations.

A second determining factor is the size of the violating country. Scholars of political conditionality highlight population size as an important factor influencing the selectivity of foreign aid (Clist 2011). The media also seems to have a bias in reporting more on foreign policy events from more populous countries (Wu 2000), which in turn is likely to raise the attention of both populations over politics and happenings in these countries. Therefore, the signalling effect of political actions to domestic audiences is likely to be bigger if the actions concern countries with large populations. Accordingly, I expect the EU to more likely focus on the malpractices in countries with a large population, especially when there is extensive media coverage.

H3: The media effect on EU sanctioning is stronger if human rights violations are reported in countries with large populations.

Lastly, when it comes to the role of ex-colonial relations, research shows that the EU tends to pay close attention to happenings in its former colonies, especially on the African continent (Carnegie and Marinov 2017; Zanger 2000). However, whether or not this leads to a higher likelihood of sanctioning human rights violations is not fully clear. On the one hand, there are several prominent examples of EU sanctioning cases in former colonies, notably Zimbabwe (Giumelli and Krulis 2012) and Myanmar (Zhou and Cuyvers 2011). Other examples, on the other hand, raise doubts about a uniform sanctions-enhancing role of ex-colonial relations. For example, Portela (2015) discusses how France ‘deviated’ from the prevailing EU travel restrictions against the Zimbabwean elite in the 2000s by inviting the former Zimbabwean president Mugabe to the Franco-African Summit in Paris. Similarly, Saltnes (2017) discusses how due to conflicting normative goals, the EU did not decide to use sanctions in response to severe human rights violations in Rwanda in the 2000s. According to some, Western donors may apply softer instruments in Rwanda because of ‘genocide guilt’ (Zorbas 2011) or a ‘genocide credit’ (Reyntjens 2004). Accordingly, my expectations towards the influence of ex-colonial relations are twofold:

H4a: The media effect on EU sanctioning is stronger if media reports on human rights violations in countries with which the EU shares ex-colonial relations.

H4b: *The media effect on EU sanctioning is weaker if media reports on human rights violations in countries with which the EU shares ex-colonial relations.*

3.4 Research Design

I study EU sanctioning policy from 1999 to 2015, a time that marked an increasing inclusion of conditionality in EU trade and partnership agreements, as well as the slow expansion of a joined EU sanctioning policy. I take the violation of a norm as the starting point of the analysis and explore the conditions under which the EU decides to sanction. I specifically focus on the salience of media coverage on human rights violations as a determining factor. That is, I analyse the extent to which the salience of human rights violations in daily newspaper coverage from the four big EU member states—Germany, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom (the EU4)—correlates with the likelihood of EU sanctioning.

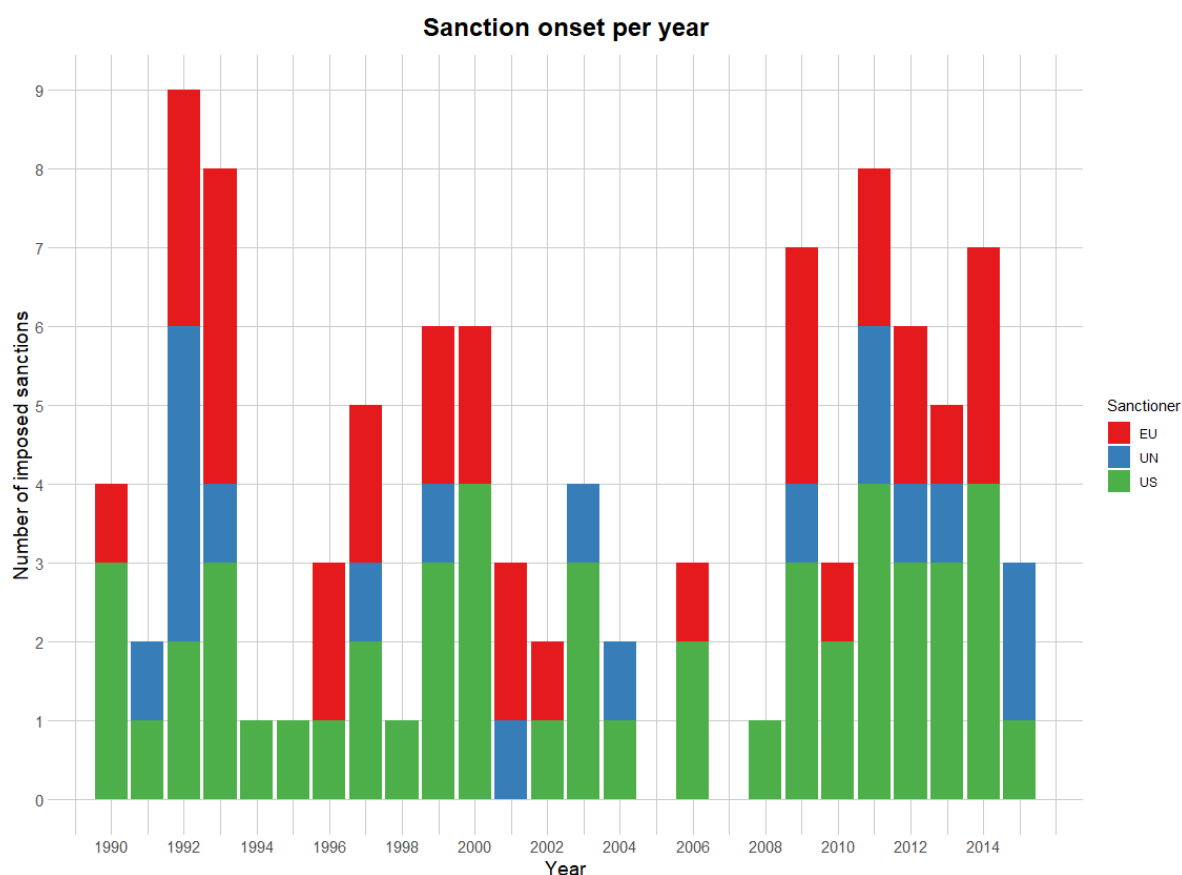
The study focusses on the EU as an international sanctioner. Since the 1990s, the EU has developed into an international decisive sanctioning actor. In terms of the number of sanctions used per year, by now, the EU ranks second between the US and the United Nations (UN), the other two big global sanctioners (cf. Figure 5). Still, the EU is a hard case to study the influence of media on foreign policy-making. In contrast to state actors, like the US, the accountability and responsiveness of EU policy-making vis-à-vis European citizens is much lower—which is one of the major points of critique from scholars discussing the EU's so-called democratic deficit (Follesdal and Hix 2006). Since existing studies find a decisive influence of media coverage on the imposition of economic sanctions by the US (Peksen and Drury 2010; Nielsen 2013), the question, therefore, is whether this influence also holds true for an unlikely case like the EU, which would also indicate wider generalizability of this link. Due to its multi-level governance structure, the EU is an interesting case for analysing the influence of domestic media on supranational policy-making. If we find a significant relationship between media coverage within member states and the decision-making for sanctions at the EU level, then this may indicate that such a relationship could also exist in other international multigovernmental actors.

By studying the EU's sanctioning policy in reaction to human rights violations, I focus on a well-established set of norms that are deeply enshrined in the Union's legal and political context. The EU defines itself as a promoter of human rights and democracy.

Together with the respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, and the rule of law, the respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, are all key values on which the Union was founded (Art.2 TEU). In 2000, the EU institutions jointly proclaimed the Charter of Fundamental Rights. The charter became legally binding to the EU and its member states with the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009. The treaty legally obliges the EU and its member states to respect fundamental rights within the EU as well as to advance and consolidate human rights in EU external action. Although, well before the legal entrance of the protection of human rights into EU treaties, since the 1980s and the Lomé partnership agreement with African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) states, the EU had already developed the practice of including the respect for human rights as a condition for cooperation and aid in bilateral trade and partnership agreements (Bartels 2005). Given the high legal and political status of human rights, the EU can very well be expected to take these norms seriously and to act upon their violation (Whitman 2011).

Furthermore, and important for my argument, the promotion of human rights is also a core concern for the wider EU population. As the 2018 Eurobarometer survey shows, promoting human rights worldwide is the primary value voters expect the European Parliament to defend. When asked which values the European Parliament should defend as a matter of priority, on average, approximately 46 percent of EU citizens responded that the protection of human rights worldwide is a core value from their point of view (Eurobarometer 90.1, $n = 27474$). It is noteworthy that, at least when it comes to policy demands towards the European Parliament, the promotion of human rights seems to be closer to the population than values such as equality of men and women (36 %), or the freedom of speech (38 %) (cf. European Parliament 2018). These numbers remain relatively stable when only focussing on the opinions of citizens from the EU4 countries. Also, in the EU4, approximately 46 percent of the respondents express their support for the protection of human rights worldwide ($n = 4563$). This highlights that when it comes to public opinion on human rights issues, on average, the EU4 countries provide a good picture of the overall stance of EU citizens.

Figure 5: Annual number of EU, UN, and US sanctions 1990-2015



Note: Data source: EUSANCT.

3.4.1 Selection of cases of human rights violations

My analysis of EU sanctioning decisions concentrates on all 74 EU third countries that experienced severe human rights violations between 1999 and 2015. I selected these cases using the Political Terror Scale (PTS) rating which defines political terror as the “violations of basic human rights to the physical integrity of the person by agents of the state within the territorial boundaries of the state” and have extended to a wide range of the population or even to the whole population (Haschke 2017, 1). Drawing on annual country reports on the state of human rights by Amnesty International, the US State Department, and Human Rights Watch, the PTS classifies the rating by each of these three sources into scales of a country’s human rights situation ranging from 1 (best) to 5 (very worst). Since per definition sanctions are a tool of foreign policy with which the EU seeks to promote the respect for human rights, especially in the worst cases of human rights violations, my analysis focuses on country-years with medium PTS levels of 4

(‘worst’) and 5 (‘very worst’) (Gibney et al. 2018). I created an average PTS scale with mean values of the three human rights scales.

When it comes to the duration of human rights violations, ex-colonial relations, geographic locations, as well as population size and trade relations with the EU, all 74 countries show a variety of characteristics (cf. Appendix B1). Some countries have experienced extended periods of human rights violations (e.g., Afghanistan, Somalia), while others only show single years of PTS 4/5-level human rights violations (e.g., Fiji, Georgia). The majority of the 74 countries are former colonies (mostly British, French, or Spanish) but approximately a fourth of the countries have never been colonized. The majority are located in Africa (particularly both Sub-Saharan and North Africa) and the Middle East, but some violating states are also located in Asia, Europe, and the Americas. The majority of the countries have large populations with several hundred million inhabitants but some are smaller islands or countries with populations below 1 million people. Lastly, the numbers in terms of bilateral trade with the EU vary extensively. Some countries share decisive trade relations with the EU (e.g., Ukraine, South Africa, or Israel), while others are only minor trade partners (e.g., Somalia, Solomon Islands).

3.4.2 Data collection and methodological approach

The data collection on media coverage of human rights violations focusses on the leading newspapers from the EU’s big four member states—France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom (the EU4). EU scholars speak of a determining role of these four member states when it comes to decisions taken during negotiations in Brussels (Naurin 2015). Next to being the biggest four member states in Western Europe, the EU4 are the only EU members who have a say in the G7 and G20 as well in the “Quint”, an informal political forum with the US (cf. Debaere 2015; Gegout 2002). As the decision to impose sanctions on third countries heavily depends on agreements made in the EU Council, I chose the EU4 countries to analyse the interplay between media coverage and political decision-making.

The media portfolio in my study consists of the two leading newspapers from each EU4 country, namely *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde*, *Corriere della Sera*, *La Stampa*, *Süddeutsche*

Zeitung, Die Welt, The Daily Telegraph, and The Times.¹⁷ These major national quality newspapers are known for their large country-wide circulation, and are read by the well-educated and decision-makers (cf. Table 1). Analysing data from eight sources, two from each of the four countries and in four different languages, helps lower the risk of source bias (Woolley 2000, 158ff). I focus on the print edition from the eight newspapers. While today many news media outlets put larger effort and resources into their online offer, in the 1990s and in the early 2000s print media, next to television, still held a more dominant role in the news media market (cf. Statista Research Department, 2020).

The data collection accounts for all articles in which the violating country's name and the term "human rights" appear within every 25 words. The two existing data sets on media coverage of human rights issues in US newspapers use a similar data collection strategy. The difference between the two is that Ramos et al. (2007) only added a second round of manual coding to gather articles on "human rights abuses", while Nielsen (2013) did not perform this additional differentiation and focusses on all articles discussing "human rights" in relation to foreign countries. According to Peksen et al. (2014), the numbers from the two studies show a correlation of 0.8. That is, if newspapers report on the state of human rights in foreign countries, they predominantly cover the violation of human rights. I decided to steer a middle course between the two studies. While I did not perform a second round of manual coding for all articles, we (two coders and myself) manually coded a ten-percent sample of all articles to have a gold standard that allows for controlling the quality of the data.

Moreover, we used the qualitative coding phase to develop a dictionary of human rights violations. The English version of the dictionary includes the following types of human rights violations: abduction, arbitrary arrest, arbitrary detention, assault, atrocity, ethnic cleansing, execution, genocide, kidnappings, killings, massacres, murders, prisoner abuse, rape, slavery, torture, and war crimes. The German, Italian, and French dictionaries consist of the common translations for these human rights violations. We used this dictionary to capture how detailed an article describes a country's violations.

¹⁷ Except for Le Monde which was only available via LexisNexis, all newspapers were retrieved using key term search in the Factiva news databank. Due to data limitations, the German Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung could not be analysed. The British Guardian was not included for its comparatively low circulation of approximately 165,000 daily readers in 2015.

I use a quantitative approach of structured text analysis on the full sample of articles in addition to an extensive qualitative analysis of the ten percent sample, exploring the content, wording, and structure of the newspaper articles in-depth. Although more sophisticated forms of quantitative text analysis have recently been developed based on machine-learning techniques (cf. Watanabe 2020), the partly unclear semantic distinction between the promotion of human rights and their violation made such approaches unfeasible. In all four languages, the coders noticed the partly implicit reference to human rights violations during the qualitative coding. For example, the articles used phrases like “it is a sad example of human rights” instead of explicitly naming the violations. Furthermore, the relatively short length of newspaper articles, with a mean length below 200 words, supports the use of a structured form of quantitative text analysis using a dictionary.

Table 1: EU4 newspaper coverage of human rights issues (1999-2015)

Country	Newspapers	Circulation	Number of articles
France	Le Figaro,	321'569	4'832
	Le Monde	292'054	
Italy	Corriere della Sera,	494'675	3'318
	La Stampa	396'621	
Germany	Süddeutsche Zeitung,	378'651	2'827
	Die Welt	212'360	
UK	The Daily Telegraph,	670'000	9'244
	The Times	1'120'000	
Total			20'211

Note: Circulation numbers refer to overall circulation in 2015; data retrieved from ACPM (France), ABC (UK), Istat (Italy), and Axel Springer (Germany).

3.4.3 Operationalisation of variables

The dependent variable in my study is *EU sanctions*, for which I use a simple binary operationalization indicating the presence or absence of sanctions. The data comes from the EUSANCT dataset (Weber and Schneider 2020a), a new dataset covering EU, UN, and US sanctions between 1989 and 2015. It integrates and updates the Threats and Imposition of Economic Sanctions (TIES) dataset (Morgan, Bapat, and Kobayashi 2014) and the GIGA sanctions dataset (Portela and von Soest 2012), and covers

economic and political sanctions as well as publicly sanction threats (in total, 353 sanction cases including 121 EU sanction cases). EUSANCT identifies issues which are reported to have caused the imposition of sanctions, including militarized actions, territorial disputes, promotion of human rights, and fraud elections. Along with identifying the exact sender institutions and target countries of sanctions, the dataset provides information on the type(s) of sanctions used, ranging from complete economic embargoes and trade restrictions to aid cuts and targeted financial sanctions. EUSANCT thus allows a systematic analysis of the EU's use of sanctions over the last decades.

The main independent variable is the *coverage* of human rights violations in major European newspapers. Political media scholars define salient, for instance, as frequently covered issues like events or political and social questions which are “likely to influence decisions of individual citizens and elite actors” (Collins and Cooper 2012). In the context of sanctions, Ang and Peksen (2007), for example, find that economic sanctions are much more likely to be effective if the state enforcing the sanction sees the issue as salient. When it comes to the salience of news articles, the frequency of coverage of an issue along with its visibility to the reader should be decisive factors. Accordingly, I count the number of articles that report on human rights violations in a country per year (*coverage*). Furthermore, I control for the visibility of the articles in terms of their *word count*. Looking at the content of the articles more closely, I measure the number of descriptions of human rights violations types in a text at the mean (*HRtype* referring to the presence of at least one type of human rights violations).

Next to the media variables, I account for a potential influence of several economic, political, and cultural factors. Media studies indicate that bilateral *trade* relations, the size of a country's *population*, as well as cultural proximity, and including ex-colonial relations (*colony*), may positively influence the extent to which it is covered in the international press (Ramos, Ron, and Thoms 2007; Wu 2000). The data for trade volume and population size comes from the Eurostat trade statistics and the World Development Indicators (WDI) and is included by using the natural logarithm (*trade*) and logarithm (*population*).

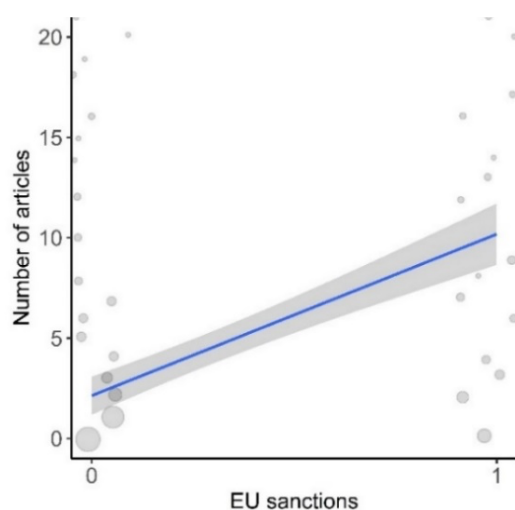
Along with these three conditioning factors, I also control for the influence of political relations as well as for the violator's level of democracy. Studies indicate that sanctioners may be less likely to sanction their political *allies* (Drezner 1998; Peksen, Peterson, and Drury 2014). Controlling for the influence of political alliances, I use data

from the Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions (ATOP) dataset (Leeds et al. 2002). Furthermore, democratic countries seem to be less likely to sanction other democracies. The supporting data for this comes from the *Polity IV* dataset which centres around the existence of conflict and war and thus fits the research focus of my study well (Teorell et al. 2020). The regression models include time fixed effects to control for potential temporal dynamic. Appendix B2 and B3 provide summary statistics and a correlation matrix of all independent variables.

3.5 Empirical analysis

Between 1999 and 2015, the EU imposed sanctions against 38 out of the total of 74 countries with PTS levels of 4 or 5 (cf. Appendix B1). The extent of media coverage varies greatly between these countries but also between world regions in general (see Appendix B4). Still, as Figure 6 illustrates, when looking at the relationship between the media coverage on human rights issues and the imposition of EU sanctions, there is a positive and statistically significant correlation between the two ($t(3295) = -9.66, p = 0.00$).

Figure 6: News Coverage and EU sanctions



Note: Size of dots illustrates the number of cases. Source: own data and EUSANCT.

Juxtaposing the dates of publication and the dates of EU sanctions supports that in almost all cases newspaper articles predate sanction policies. Notably, in every incidence of EU sanctioning between 1999 and 2015, there was at least one newspaper article published before the sanctions were imposed, and even before the EU publicly threatened to use sanctions—except for Madagascar or Mali for which there was no coverage (Madagascar) or coverage started after the imposition of sanctions (Mali). Therefore, even though the publication dates of the legal documents for EU sanctioning do not exactly match the dates when the decisions for sanctions were taken, overall, the comparison of the dates speaks against a reversed correlation between media coverage and sanctions.

Looking at news coverage in the EU4 countries specifically, a correlation analysis of media coverage shows a strong correlation of the coverage of human rights violations ($r(642) = .77, p = 0.00$). This does not mean, that all eight newspapers equally covered human rights violations in every analysed country-year. However, if there was media coverage in one of the EU4 countries, in the majority of cases at least one or two other countries covered the incidences as well, and in all three other countries nearly one-third of the cases did.

3.5.1 Analysis of the effect of media coverage

A logit binomial regression model with weighted mean measures for the coverage of human rights issues in European media shows a positive and statistically significant influence of media coverage on the EU's use of sanctions (Hypothesis 1). In line with Hypotheses 2 and 3, respectively, the EU is less likely to sanction close trade partners and more populous countries. On the other hand, it is more likely to sanction countries without former colonial relations, especially when there is a high level of coverage on human rights issues concerning these countries.

Table 2 summarizes the results of the regression analyses. The six regression models test the influence of media coverage on the imposition of EU sanctions while increasingly adding further conditioning and controlling variables. Model 1 focuses on the influence of media coverage, while Model 2 combines coverage with the three expected conditioning factors—population size, bilateral trade, and ex-colonial relations—and their interaction effects with media coverage. All three conditioning factors, as well as the respective interaction terms, show a significant relationship with

the likelihood of sanctioning. Model 3 controls for the effect of the violator's level of democracy as well as for the effect of being a political ally of the EU. While the level of democracy significantly lowers the likelihood of EU sanctioning, being an ally shows no significant relation with the likelihood of sanctioning and so seems to have no significant impact on the likelihood of sanctioning. Lastly, Model 4 further controls for the effect of the media variables' word count and the specific types of human rights violations. All regression models include year dummies controlling for potential temporal dynamics. The VIFs values are below 2.5 which indicates that multicollinearity is not an issue in any of the models.

Table 2: Binary Logit Regression

	EU sanctions			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Coverage	0.11*** (0.02)	0.21 (0.33)	1.04* (0.58)	1.09* (0.61)
Population		-0.29*** (0.08)	-0.42*** (0.09)	-0.43*** (0.10)
Trade		-0.10* (0.05)	-0.16** (0.07)	-0.14** (0.07)
Colony		0.53** (0.23)	0.89*** (0.30)	0.91*** (0.30)
Polity IV			-0.16*** (0.02)	-0.16*** (0.02)
Ally			-0.03 (0.24)	-0.03 (0.24)
HRtype				0.27 (0.25)
Word count				-0.001 (0.001)
Population:coverage		0.06*** (0.02)	0.12*** (0.04)	0.13*** (0.04)
Trade:coverage		-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.12*** (0.03)	-0.12*** (0.03)
Colony:coverage		-0.04 (0.05)	-0.21** (0.08)	-0.22*** (0.08)
<i>Observations</i>	1,204	1,200	1,104	1,104
<i>Log likelihood</i>	-580.82	-544.07	-390.89	-390.18
<i>AIC</i>	1,197.64	1,136.13	833.79	836.37

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < 0.0001$, ** $p < 0.001$, * $p < 0.01$.

Overall, the results of the regression analyses support the hypothesized positive and statistically significant influence of media coverage on the EU's use of sanctions. In line with Hypotheses 2-4, and as the plotted interaction effects in Figure 7 indicate, the effect of media coverage varies with the violator's population size, with bilateral trade relations, and the existence of ex-colonial relations. The plots illustrate the interaction effects on the likelihood of EU sanctioning at four levels of media coverage ranging between zero to fifteen articles covering human rights issues in a respective country per year. For very small countries, like Fiji or the Solomon Islands, the interaction effect of media coverage and population size is fuzzy and due to high standard errors unclear in its interpretation. With about three million inhabitants or more, higher levels of media coverage relate to a higher likelihood of EU sanctioning policies. The interaction plot of trade and media coverage shows a similar but reversed effect. For countries with low to medium levels of bilateral trade, media coverage on human rights violations relates to higher levels of EU sanctioning. Furthermore, it appears that the EU is unlikely to sanction countries with whom it shares very close trade relations—no matter the extent of media coverage. Lastly, when it comes to the imposition of sanctions on countries with ex-colonial relations, the EU appears less likely to use sanctions when there is a high level of media coverage. In contrast, the more the media covers human rights issues in countries without colonial relations, the more likely EU sanctioning seems to be. When using both a one-year lagged dependent variable as a robustness test and when looking into the variations between the EU4 news media reports, the results remain stable (Appendices B10-B14).

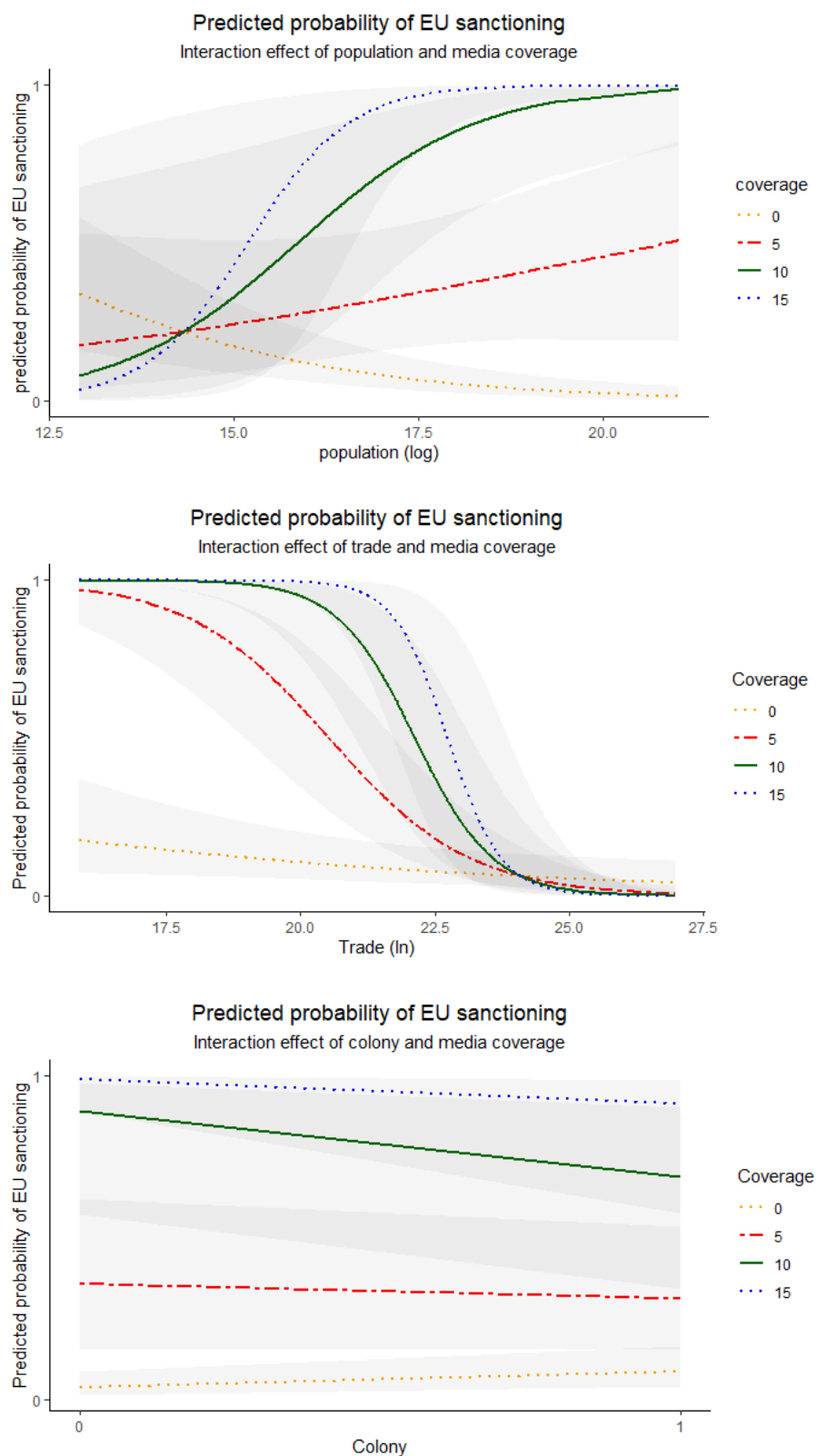
To sum up, the EU appears more likely to use sanctions if there is a high amount of media coverage by the member states' newspapers; yet, only if it shares no dense trade relations with the violating countries. Also, a smaller population size and ex-colonial relations decrease the chances of EU sanctioning in the case of extensive media coverage—albeit here the interaction effects are less pronounced. However, media coverage decisively increases the probability of EU sanctioning when the violations were committed by less populous countries with which the EU only shares minor trade relations. Hence, unless human rights violations are committed by the EU's closest trade partners, media coverage has a positive and significant impact on the EU's use of sanctions.

3.6 Conclusion

How does the salience of human rights issues in European news media influence the EU's decision to use sanctions? Making use of novel media data on newspaper coverage in the EU4, this study analyses the relationship between the salience of media coverage of human rights violations and the likelihood of EU sanctioning. While discussing our lack of understanding on why in some cases of human rights violations the EU sanctions but does not in others, I argue that we should look at the domestic level of member states' politics. Political media studies highlight the decisive role of the media in influencing the agenda of policy-makers. By informing the political elite, interest groups, and the general public, media coverage of human rights violations increases moral pressure to act against the violations. Hence, I argue that with an increasing salience of media coverage in the EU4 member states, the EU is more likely to sanction human rights violations.

I tested this expectation with novel data on the coverage of human rights violations in the EU4 member states: Germany, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom between 1999 and 2015. Using binary logit regression analyses, including interaction effects accounting for a potential media bias by focussing on more populous countries with close economic and cultural ties, I find that extensive media coverage indeed relates to a higher likelihood of EU sanctioning. Overall, the EU is more likely to sanction smaller, less populous, and culturally close countries with a lower level of bilateral trade. When there is a high level of media coverage on human rights violations the likelihood of sanctioning increases. However, this is not the case when the news covers countries with whom the EU shares very close trade relations. Trade interests seem to outrun normative concerns in the case of crucial trade partners. Still altogether, the results support a decisive role of media as a raiser of public awareness and influencer of the political agenda on EU sanctioning policies. This implies that in addition to economic and political factors, future research should pay more attention to public awareness, also when it comes to the imposition of sanctioning policies by non-state actors such as the EU.

Figure 7: Interaction effects of media coverage and 1) population size, 2) trade relations, 3) ex-colonial relations



Note: Marginal effects at the mean, i.e., with all control variables in Model 4 held constant.

By studying the EU's sanctioning policy, I tested the influence of media coverage on a hard case of international sanctioners. This speaks for wider generalizability of the influence of media coverage on the likelihood of sanctioning beyond unilateral sanctioners like the US (Peksen, Peterson, and Drury 2014). This finding should be further tested by studying other (emerging) multilateral sanctioning actors, like the African Union (Hellquist 2020). In this study, I focus on a basic operationalization of the use or non-use of sanctions by the EU. As a next step, it would be interesting to analyse the EU's sanctioning activities by using a more fine-grained operationalization of sanctioning policy. For example, studies could further distinguish between the threat and the actual imposition of a sanction, or even look into the specific types of sanctioning measures being used. Recently, Schneider and co-authors (2020) have shed first light on this matter. Studying the onset and intensity of EU and US sanctioning policies since the end of the Cold War, the authors distinguish between six types of sanctions: visa bans, aid sanctions, arms embargos, targeted financial sanctions, trade sanctions, and economic embargoes. Arguing for the influence of competing interest groups in the design of sanctioning policies, the authors find evidence for differing use of sanctioning measures between countries which they relate to the influence of political and economic interest. Moreover, it would be interesting to study whether media coverage also significantly correlates with the imposition of sanctions following other types of norm violations, like democratic freedoms, equality, or the rule of law?

This article contributes to explanatory accounts of the often-disregarded onset of EU sanctioning policies, and highlights the determining role of media in the making of foreign policy beyond traditional state actors. Moreover, this study provides novel empirical insights into European media coverage on human rights issues. With an overlap of 80 percent, the EU4 newspapers covered human rights violations in the same EU third countries between 1999 and 2015. The findings support the existence of transnational political communication among the European member states, and more importantly, its influence on EU foreign policy-making.

4. The EU threatens while the US strikes: Comparing EU and US sanctioning policies following norm violations

Abstract

Previous sanctions studies found international sanctioners to be sensitive to violations of international norms, especially human rights and *coup d'états*. However, empirics show that the specific form of sanctioning varies depending on the sanctioning actors. This study looks into the different use of (the threat of) sanctions by the EU and the US against authoritarian countries since the end of the Cold War. Bridging insights gained by the literature on democracy promotion, as well as unilateral versus multilateral sanctioning, in combination with insights gained by expert interviews in Brussels, the author argues that differing ideological interpretations of norm promotion in addition to institutional differences shape both the EU's and US's respective policy approaches. Using a mixed-method approach of statistical regression analysis and in-depth case studies, the author finds the EU to be characterized by a more gradual policy approach putting more focus on dialogue and the strategic use of the threat to sanction. In contrast, the US is characterized by a more straightforward approach of sanctioning in which the immediate imposition of sanctions plays a more dominant role.

4.1 Introduction

Coup d'états are brute and blatant violations of democratic freedoms and political rights. Next to humanitarian atrocities, the unconstitutional removal and seizure of a government and its powers has been described as a 'trigger event' for the use of sanctions by major sanctioning actors, notably the European Union (EU) and the United States (US) (von Soest and Wahman 2015). The sudden brutality of coups seems to be so immense that—even though they often happen in poor countries with low levels of international relations and little international press coverage—they trigger strong political reactions by states and both international and regional organizations (Masaki 2016; Powell, Lasley, and Schiel 2016). However, what has hitherto gone largely unnoticed is that the imposition of sanctions is not the standard answer to *coup d'états*. The image of coups rather triggering the immediate use of hard economic or political sanctions is one very much coined US policy, who tend to strike quickly and hard. In contrast, the EU's answer to coups is more complex, gradual, and less direct. This does not mean that the EU refrains from using sanctions; yet, in the majority of cases the threat of sanctions plays a primary role in the EU's approach. The imposition of sanctions happens only subsequently in a secondary step.

This article analyses the puzzling use of threatened versus imposed sanctions by both the EU and the US. Addressing the question: *To which extent and why do the EU and the US (threaten to) sanction the violation of democratic freedoms and human rights?* The article explores why sanction threats play a much stronger role in the EU's repertoire of counter-policies following norm-violations, whereas the immediate imposition of sanctions plays a more dominant role among US policies. It argues that the EU's institutional features as an actor *sui generis* help explain these differences in sanctioning as they are likely to affect both the EU's institutional capabilities to take decisions for sanctions as well as its approach to norm-promotion.

In the US, the relatively 'easy' decision-making process, in which the president can impose sanctions alone with an executive order or in cooperation with the Congress, favours the direct imposition of sanctions. In addition, the dominant ideology of pursuing bottom-up democracy assistance via the civil society, which often circumvents the government (Carothers 2009), speaks for a more direct form of sanctioning. Since a bottom-up approach does not require keeping the diplomatic door open, by all means, sanctions may be used to target individuals at the top regime level.

In the EU, to contrast, policy proposals and decisions for EU-wide joint sanctioning policies are made based on a complex multi-level decision-making process involving the member states and the three core European institutions—the Council of the EU, the European Parliament, and the European Commission. Furthermore, the EU’s ideological understanding of democracy promotion tends to be focussed on both a top-down and developmental approach of democracy assistance, which centres around dialogue and persuasion at the state level (Magen, Risse, and McFaul 2009; Del Biondo 2015c). Hence, the EU primarily aims to keep the diplomatic door open which explains why the use of threats of sanctions is more prominent—in fact, so much so that threats almost always precede a potential use of sanctions later.

Empirically, this study employs a mixed-method strategy for comparative research. In line with Lieberman’s (2005) nested analysis, it first uses multinomial regression analyses to statistically contrast the use of threats to sanction and their actual imposition by the EU and the US. Second, by describing two episodes of *coup d’états* in Madagascar (2009) and Mali (2012), it qualitatively illustrates and contrasts the respective sanctioning policies from the EU and US more in-depth. Analysing these two typical cases of EU and US sanctioning serves to gain a better understanding on how institutional hurdles may impact the use of sanctioning policies, especially for the EU.

Along with providing novel empirical insight into the role of threats and the differing sanctioning approaches by the EU and US, this study contributes new theoretical explanations for the use of sanctioning policies in reaction to violations of democratic freedoms. Bridging two strands of literature which rarely interact with one another and making use of information gained in interviews with sanctions experts in Brussels, I apply concepts from democracy promotion literature as well as multilateral versus unilateral sanctioning to explain why sanction threats play a much stronger role in the EU’s repertoire of counter-policies following norm violations, whereas the immediate imposition of sanctions plays a more dominant role among US policies. In doing so, the study provides new insights on how the EU’s multi-level institutional features are likely to affect how the EU sanctions the violation of international norms, and why its particular emphasis on the threat of sanctions differs from unilateral sanctioners like the US.

This study begins with an overview of the current state of the literature on the process and determinants of unilateral versus multilateral sanctioning policies. I then present the

study's theoretical framework and expectations, which I test using a nested mixed-methods approach with, firstly, a quantitative multinomial regression analysis and, secondly, two case studies of EU and US sanctioning policies. Finally, I present and discuss the study's findings which show that while both sanctioners are sensitive to violations of human rights and democratic freedoms, their specific sanctioning policies tend to vary. While the EU is characterized by a more gradual policy approach putting more focus on dialogue and the strategic use of threats to sanction; the US is characterized by a more straightforward approach of sanctioning in which the immediate imposition of sanctions plays a more dominant role.

4.2 Literature Review

The ideal-typical sanctioning process starts with the violation of a norm, such as the violation of democratic freedoms in a coup d'état. In reaction, an external actor or 'sanctioner' (here: the EU or the US) has the choice between a) to use no sanctions, b) to threaten the use of sanctions, or c) to directly impose sanctions. Thereupon the violating state reacts, and in the case of threats, the sanctioner counter-reacts by imposing sanctions or not. At the very end, the sanctioning process leads to a certain policy outcome which might result in the violating state conceding by changing its behaviour, or it refrains from making any concessions. This outcome is what scholars, ever since Johan Galtung's (1967) seminal study "On the Effects of International Economic Sanctions", have classified as (un)successful or (un)effective sanctioning in terms of inducing a policy change or not.

Figure 8: An ideal-typical sanctioning process

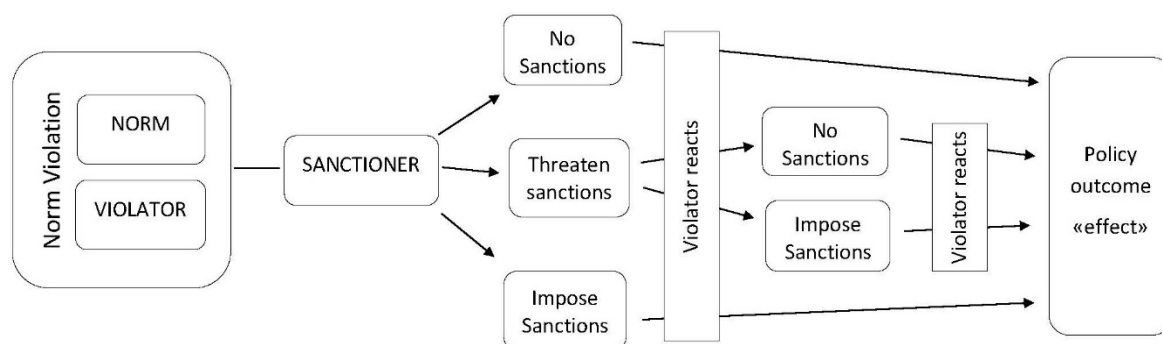


Figure 8 illustrates an ideal-typical sanctioning process, in which the threat of sanctions is one way a sanctioner may react to a norm violation. In this article, I focus on analysing the reasons for which sanctioners may decide to threaten sanctions instead of imposing them straightaway. This is an important first step in illuminating the black box that is sanctioning. Understanding the reasons for which sanctioners decide to use specific measures, for example, imposing trade restrictions or travel bans, could be the next step in future research.

When it comes to the determinants of the use of sanctions as an instrument of foreign policy, there is a broad consensus among scholars on the importance of international core norm violations, such as human rights and democratic freedoms, as they are sanction triggers (Kreutz 2015; von Soest and Wahman 2015). However, research has also found that some norm violations tend to be sanctioned more than others (Erickson 2020). In this regard, Soest and Wahmann (2015) established the concept of ‘trigger events’ which describes foreign policy events that are more likely to be sanctioned than others. In essence, the authors argue that democratic sanctioners are especially likely to act against brute and violent violations of democratic freedoms and human rights because in these cases, the political costs for not acting are likely to outweigh any anticipated sender costs. The authors particularly focus on the crucial impact of *coup d’états*, as “the most blatant signal of democratic and human rights infringements”, in increasing the likelihood for the use of sanctions (von Soest and Wahman 2015, 18; see also Masaki 2016; Powell, Lasley, and Schiel 2016). However, they also find that controversial elections, as well as human rights violations, relate to a higher likelihood of sanctioning by Western sanctioners, even if the effect is weaker. Moreover, studying EU sanctions in the 1990s and 2000s, both Hazelzet (2001) and Kreutz (2015) find a positive relationship between the presence of humanitarian atrocities and the use of sanctions.

Regardless, research also shows that conflicting political and trade interests may lower the likelihood of sanctions. For example, studying the use of arms embargoes and economic sanctions following the violations of different security norms, Jeniffer Erickson (2020) finds evidence for the inconsistency of policies following norm violations. The author argues that sanctioners refrain from norm enforcement to avoid losing important economic or political partners. This finding goes in line with previous sanctions studies which found sanctioners to refrain from acting against their trade

partners and political allies (Mansfield 1994; Kotzian, Knodt, and Urdze 2011; Weber and Schneider 2020b). In contrast, sanctioners seem to be more likely to act against countries with unstable economies, unstable political systems, and more economically dependent situations (Dashti-Gibson, Davis, and Radcliff 1997; Marinov 2005; R. M. Wood 2008; Nooruddin and Lockwood Payton 2010; Molenaers et al. 2015).

While these studies provide valuable insights on the use of sanctions, what is important to keep in mind is that the majority of these insights are based on studies using a binary operationalization of sanctions, in terms of using sanctions or not. However, since the 1990s scholars have not only increasingly highlighted that threats are frequently used by sanctioners, but also that these threats are effective in achieving behavioural changes from the targeted states (Smith 1995; Drezner 2003; Lacy and Niou 2004; Walentek et al. 2021). In the field of nuclear non-proliferation, for example, Nicholas Miller (2014) argues that over the years, sanction threats in particular have had a crucial impact in deterring states from starting a nuclear weapons program. Hence, studying only imposed sanctions comes with the risk of selection bias, which means that we could underestimate the actual number of sanction cases, the duration of sanction episodes, and the political effectiveness of (the threat to use and/or imposed) sanctions.

Moreover, our insights on the use of sanctions have predominantly been acquired through the use of studies with empirical focus on US and UN sanctions. Both the ‘Hufbauer, Schott, and Elliott’ (HSE) dataset and ‘The Threat and Imposition of Economic Sanctions’ (TIES) dataset are full of US and UN cases and hardly include EU sanction cases (Hufbauer, Schott, and Elliott 1985; Morgan et al. 2006). However, generalizations on the nature and determinants of sanctions based on ‘typical’ unilateral (US) and multilateral (UN) sanctioning policies might be critical. What goes unnoticed when generalizing insights on sanctioning using only two sanctioning actors is that the reasons for which actors decide to use (threats of) sanctions might be more diverse—especially when looking at ‘atypical’ international actors such as the EU.

The EU is neither a typical unilateral (state) nor multilateral (international organization) actor. Many scholars have described the EU’s distinct nature as being ‘*sui generis*’, ‘unique’, ‘exceptional’, ‘hybrid’, etc. (Risse-Kappen 1996; Burley and Mattli 1993; Hix 1994; Laffan 1998; Wallace 1999; see also Phelan 2012). In this article, I argue that the EU’s multilevel governance structure is likely to shape the EU as a sanctioning actor because, as the literature shows, the EU’s unique institutional features are likely to coin

both its decision-making for sanctions and its approach to norm promotion (Hazelzet 2001; Weber and Schneider 2020b; Carothers 2009; Del Biondo 2015c).

4.3 Theoretical framework and expectations

I argue that due to the EU's institutional features as international actor 'sui generis', which are likely to affect both its decision-making process for sanctions and its general approach to norm promotion, the EU is likely to sanction differently than the US, the prototype unilateral sanctioner. Specifically, I expect the EU to be more likely to use threats of sanctions, because both its complex intergovernmental decision-making process and its strive for dialogue and diplomacy above all things, favour the use of threats. Hence, when it comes to the comparison of EU and US sanctioning policies following violations of human rights and democratic freedoms, I expect that the likelihood and the specific form of sanctioning to vary along with two key questions: First, do *institutional factors* constrain the use of sanctions? Second, what is the actor's understanding and *approach to norm promotion*?

4.3.1 Institutional constraints of decision-making

When it comes to the institutional features of decision-making, traditionally the distinction is made between unilateral and multilateral types of sanctioning (Martin 1994; Drezner 2000). In other words, scholars distinguish between decisions taken in a state-based, unilateral institutional setting such as in the US; and in cooperation and coalition-based, multilateral setting among several states such as in the EU or the UN.

Since multilateral cooperation in sanctioning comes with the burden of joint decision-making between several states with often conflicting interests, the reasons for which states sanction multilaterally instead of unilaterally has puzzled researchers since the 1990s. The question is, why would states decide to carry the burden of international cooperation—such as joint decision-making with intense negotiations, bargaining, and potential free-riding—if they could also sanction unilaterally? Inquiring into the reasons for 'coercive cooperation' (i.e., multilateral sanctioning), Lisa Martin (1994) argues that states cooperate to share the burden of high sender costs, due to positive contagion effects among the senders, and to increase the credibility of the sanctions which links to the institutionalization of the sanctioning among members of international organizations. In line with this, Daniel Drezner (2000) highlights that international

organizations provide a coordination mechanism for reassurance and information from which fragile coalitions benefit by gaining in robustness. Furthermore, Bapat and Morgan (2009) found that multilateral sanctioning is especially effective when there is a limited number of issues at stake (the lower, the less free-riding, and the more cooperation among co-sanctioners) and when the sanctioning happens within an institutional framework of cooperation. Hence, even though scholars agree that the decision-making for sanctions is easier in a unilateral setting, multilateral sanctioning seems to be facilitated by institutionalized cooperation, as we see in the EU.

When it comes to the comparison of the institutional backgrounds between EU and US sanctioning specifically, Hadewych Hazelzet (2001) provided first comparative insights into the EU's and US's reactions to human rights violations from 1989 to 2000. Nearly twenty years later, Weber and Schneider (2020b) picked this issue up again, and like Hazelzet, the authors argue that due to institutional differences the thresholds for imposing sanctions between the intergovernmental decision-making in the EU and the state-based decision-making in the US significantly differ.

Democratic states usually involve the executive and legislative political branches in the making of foreign policy. In the US presidential system, specifically, decisions to use sanctions are either taken by a strong executive (the President), who can impose sanctions alone or together with the legislative branch (Congress). Due to these institutional features, decisions for sanctions can be taken relatively fast and easy. In other words, the US's institutional features favour the quick and direct imposition of sanctions (cf. Hazelzet 2001; Weber and Schneider 2020).

In contrast, the EU's multilateral institutional setting of decision-making features a strong but divided executive (the Council of the EU) and, at least when it comes to decisions for sanctions, a relatively weak legislator (the European Parliament). Since its formation as a publicly elected institution in 1979, the European Parliament has gradually gained power (Maurer 2003). Especially since the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009, the Parliament has been established as an equal co-decision-making maker in the Ordinary Legislative Procedure which applies to supranational policy areas. However, when it comes to decisions in the area of foreign policy, and sanctions explicitly, most decisions are still taken in an intergovernmental setting amongst the member states, which has been described as partly difficult, and depending on the member states' interests, also very challenging. Some of the member states are former colonial powers

and might still share close cultural relations with their former colonies, while other member states' interests might be coined by close economic and political relations with potential norm violating states (Tallberg 2008; Bailer 2010; Wallace et al. 2020).

Thus, in sum, the EU's institutional features do not favour the imposition of sanctions. The decision-making process is often lengthy, full of negotiation, and frequently leads to no (or watered-down) agreements for the imposition of sanctions (Schneider, Weber, and Invernizzi 2020). Notably, in conversations with sanctions experts in Brussels, I have learned that depending on the severity of the crisis, it may take weeks, if not months, until a decision for the imposition of an EU sanction is taken. In contrast, the US's presidential political system facilitates the imposition of sanctions. It takes one presidential executive order, and sanctions can be imposed within days following norm violations.

4.3.2 Approaches to norm promotion

Overall, scholars highlight the different interpretations and approaches to democracy promotion from both the EU and the US. Kagan (2003) has gone so far as to describe the softer, 'civilian' or 'normative' EU approach as coming from Venus (cf. Duchêne 1973; Manners 2002), while the US's fierce approach is said to resemble Mars. While this very rough categorization has been criticised and put into perspective (Börzel and Risse 2013), at the bottom line, students of democracy promotion agree that the two actors pursue the promotion of norms quite differently. As Wetzel and her co-authors put it eloquently, "international democracy promoters are soloists. While apparently singing the same melody, they sing it with different lyrics and intonation" (Wetzel, Orbie, and Bossuyt 2015, 21).

Comparing the EU and the US's approaches to democracy promotion, Carothers (2009) explains that while in practice both actors rely on developmental and political approaches, the relative emphasis on the prior or the latter differs. Therefore, in simplistic terms, research tends to characterize the EU's approach as developmental, meaning it is indirect and non-confrontational and based on partnership as well as cooperation with the government. In comparison, the US's approach is dominantly perceived as being political, meaning it is more direct as well as confrontational and pursues democratization strategies that circumvent the government (cf. Del Biondo 2015). Regarding the channels of democracy promotion, the EU tends to be described

as supporting democracy top-down via state institutions, while the US predominantly focuses on bottom-up democracy assistance via civil society actors (Kopstein 2006; Magen et al. 2009).

What this means for the use of sanctions is that the US is more likely to go in hard and use sanctions more directly. Since its approach for democracy promotion is mainly directed at civil society and opposition actors (i.e., outside of the governmental circle), the US is not only more likely to impose sanctions more so in general, but also to target people and entities at the top state level. With its emphasis on dialogue and persuasion at the regime level, the EU, on the other hand, is more likely to threaten the use of sanctions first and to impose sanctions only later as a secondary step.

To sum up, both the institutional features of decision-making and the respective approaches to norm promotion are likely to shape the EU's and US's way of sanctioning. The EU is coined by a multigovernmental setting of decision-making, dialogue, and persuasion-focussed approach to norm promotion which speaks for the use of threats as a primary reaction to norm violations. In contrast, the US's presidential political system and its bottom-up approach to norm promotion favour a straightforward use of sanctions as an instrument to counter norm violations.

H1: The EU is more likely to threaten the use of sanctions.

H2: The US is more likely to directly impose sanctions.

4.4 Empirical analysis

This study uses a mixed-methods research design with a nested empirical approach (Lieberman 2005). First, I run multinomial regression analyses with EU and US sanctioning policies as the dependent variables. Specifically, the regression analyses study the determinants of the EU's and the US's use of 1) no sanctions, 2) sanction threats, 3) imposed sanctions, or 4) a sequence of threats plus imposed sanctions following the violation of human rights and/or democratic freedoms from 1989 to 2014. Second, the study describes two cases of norm violations of democratic and human rights in-depth, specifically the *coup d'états* in Madagascar (2009) and Mali (2012). Studying these cases and discussing information gathered in interviews with sanctions experts in Brussels, I illustrate and contrast the sanctioning policies from the EU and US, and provide deeper insights into their respective sanctioning approaches. In

conversations with eleven foreign policy and external trade experts, policy advisors, as well as country experts from different EU institutions, I learned more about the Union's definition and use of sanctions, as well as about internal and external EU hurdles in the decision-making process for sanctions.¹⁸

4.4.1 Quantitative insights on EU and US sanctioning

4.4.1.1 Research design and data

The cases in my study consist of authoritarian country-years between 1989 and 2014, which I generated using the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project's Electoral Democracy Index. The Electoral Democracy Index is a composed index consisting of five sub-indices measuring the degree of freedom of association, clean elections, freedom of expression, elected officials, and suffrage (Coppedge et al. 2017). For my sample, I selected all country-years showing index values of less or equal to 0.5 which provided me with a sample consisting of 128 authoritarian countries.

My study focusses on two dependent variables: EU and US sanctioning policies. Specifically, both *EU sanctions* and *US sanctions* are operationalized in a multinomial format which distinguishes between the use of a) no sanctions, b) the threat of sanctions, c) the direct imposition of sanctions, or d) a sequence of threats followed by imposed sanctions. The data hereto comes from the EUSANCT dataset (Weber and Schneider 2020a). The EUSANCT dataset covers EU, UN, and US sanctions between 1989 and 2015. It integrates and updates the Threats and Imposition of Economic Sanctions (TIES) dataset (Morgan, Bapat, and Kobayashi 2014), the GIGA sanctions dataset (Portela and von Soest 2012), and contains imposed economic and political sanctions as well as public sanction threats. The EUSANCT dataset allows casting a systematic and comparative perspective on EU and US sanctioning policies since the end of the Cold War.

Today, scholars do not only agree that sanction threats play an important role in politics, but also that they can be effective in achieving political concession from targeted countries (Morgan, Bapat, and Kobayashi 2014; Powell, Lasley, and Schiel 2016;

¹⁸ In the references, I use abbreviations that indicate the institutional affiliations of my interview partners but guarantee their anonymity. See Appendix A1 for an overview of all Brussels interviews.

Walentek et al. 2021). Still, accounting for incidences of sanction threats, one has to be aware that due to the partly secretive nature of political negotiations, the actual number of threats is difficult to measure and is likely to be higher than indicated in the datasets. However, viewing the threat of sanctions as a strategic, publicly displayed diplomatic tool, the multinomial regression analyses allow us to comparatively picture the EU's and US's approach to using threats as a strategic foreign policy tool.

I test the influence of the violation of democratic and human rights on the use of sanctions by the EU and US. When it comes to violations of democratic freedoms, I test the influence of incidences of *coup d'états* and the degree of electoral cleanliness (*clean elections*) in a given country-year. Both the presence of coups as well as the occurrence of electoral fraud have been found to trigger the use of sanctions, however, to a varying degree (von Soest and Wahman 2015). Coups seem to attract a higher level of international attention than fraud elections, and as such are said to more likely influence the imposition of sanctions. To measure the occurrence of coups, I use data from the Global Instances of Coups dataset (Powell and Thyne 2011). The authors define coups as “illegal and overt attempts by the military or other elites within the state apparatus to unseat the sitting executive” (Powell and Thyne 2011, 252). The data for the degree of electoral fraud comes from the V-Dem's Clean Election Index, which measures the degree to which elections are free and fair. More specifically, ‘free and fair’ describes an absence of registration fraud, systematic irregularities, government intimidation of the opposition, vote buying, and election violence (Coppedge et al. 2017). The Clean Election Index measures electoral cleanliness on a scale ranging from 0 to 1, where 0 indicates no electoral freedoms and 1 describes full electoral freedoms.

When it comes to violation of human rights, I test the influence of incidences of *one-sided violence* in a year. My interview partners in Brussels highlighted the relevance of bloodshed in convincing the hesitating member states that the use of sanctions is unavoidable (EEAS3). Also, research describes a positive relationship between the presence of government-sponsored one-sided violence and sanction incidences (Weber and Schneider 2020a). I use data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's One-Sided Violence Dataset (Pettersson and Öberg 2020). The presence of one-sided violence is a binary indicator, this accounts for all country-years in which “the use of armed force by the government of a state or by a formally organized group against civilians [...] results in at least 25 deaths” (Eck and Hultman 2007, 235).

Next to the influence of the violation of democratic and human rights, I control for both the influence of economic and political interests. Specifically, I account for the potential influence of bilateral *trade*, the target's size of economy (*GDPpc*), and its *population*. The data for trade volume, per capita GDP, and population size comes from the Eurostat trade statistics and the World Development Indicators (WDI), and was included by using logged values due to the skewed distribution of the data. Furthermore, I control for the influence of the target's status as a political ally of the EU (*EU ally*) and US (*US ally*) in addition to the robustness of the target country's civil society. The data for political alliances comes from the Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions (ATOP) dataset (Leeds et al. 2002), and the data for the strength of the civil society comes from V-Dem's Civil Society Index which accounts for the existence, repression, and participatory environment of civil society organizations (Coppedge et al. 2017). In the case of EU policies, I additionally control for the potential effect of ex-colonial relations between an EU member state and the targeted country (*EU colony*). All regression models include year dummies controlling for potential temporal dynamics. The VIFs values are below 2.5 which indicates that multicollinearity is not an issue in any of the models. The tables in Appendix C1 and C2 provide summary statistics and a correlation matrix of all independent variables.

4.4.1.2 Descriptives

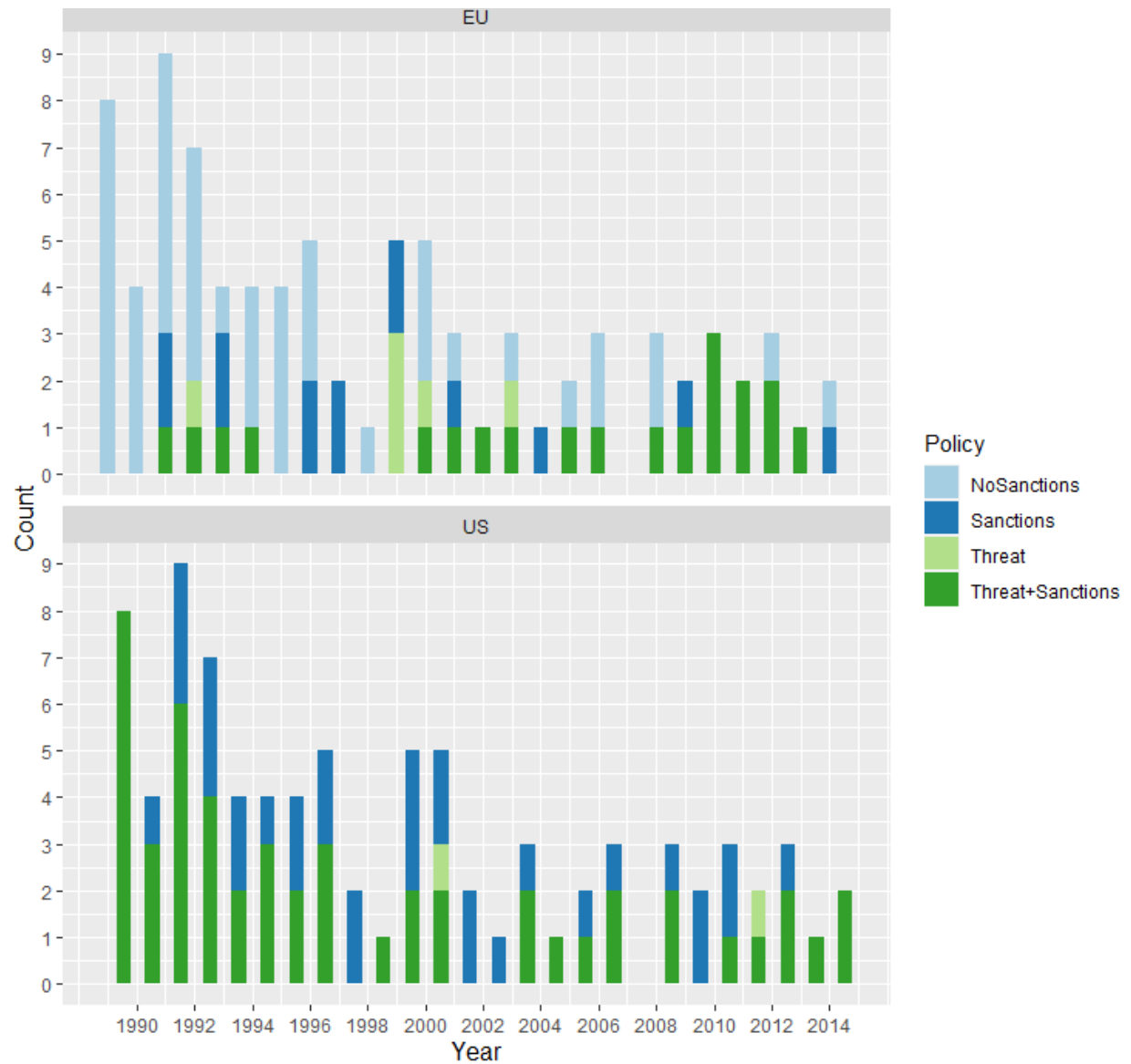
From 1989 to 2014, 44 of the 128 authoritarian countries included in the dataset experienced coups. Among these, some countries experienced only one coup attempt since the end of the Cold War (e.g., Fiji 2006), while others experienced up to 7 years with coups (e.g., Guinea-Bissau). In total, the sample includes 173 incidences of *coup d'états* for which both the EU and the US decided to use sanctions in approximately half of the cases. While altogether, EU and US sanctioning policies following these coups show a correlation of approximately 70 percent in terms of whether they used sanctions following the coups or not ($t(4103) = -6.25, p = 0.00$), the specific use of sanctioning policies varies greatly between the two sanctioners. The grouped bar plots in Figure 9 illustrate the varying use of sanctioning policies following coups. In the early 1990s, the EU was still very reluctant to use any sanctions at all. However, from the mid-1990s on, the EU developed into an engaged sanctioner as a response to coups. The EU's catalogue of sanctioning policies is dominated by the use of threats (11 cases) or a combination of

threatening first and imposing sanctions at a later stage (38 cases). However, in 27 cases the EU did also impose sanctions directly without publicly announcing any prior threats. In contrast, the US has been an active sanctioner following coups since the end of the Cold War. It has hardly ever only threatened (4 cases) but did sometimes use a combination of threat and sanctions (23 cases). In the majority of cases, however (57 cases), the US acted more directly and imposed sanctions straight away.

When we look at the bar plots illustrating EU and US policies related to incidences of government-sponsored one-sided violence, Figure 10 shows a higher rate of imposed sanctions and a lower number of sanction threats by the EU. Moreover, the figure indicates that in the past three decades, the US has often acted against regimes that use violence against their population and here again the direct imposition of sanctions is most prominently seen. However, there are also several countries, like Chad, Mauritania, or Tajikistan which have never faced any sanctions, neither by the EU nor by the US. This difference in the use of sanctions indicates that bloodier ‘trigger events’ have a higher likelihood to be sanctioned, both by the EU and the US, but it also supports the difference in meta norms when it comes to the unequal sanctioning of norm violations (Soest and Wahman 2014; Erickson 2020).

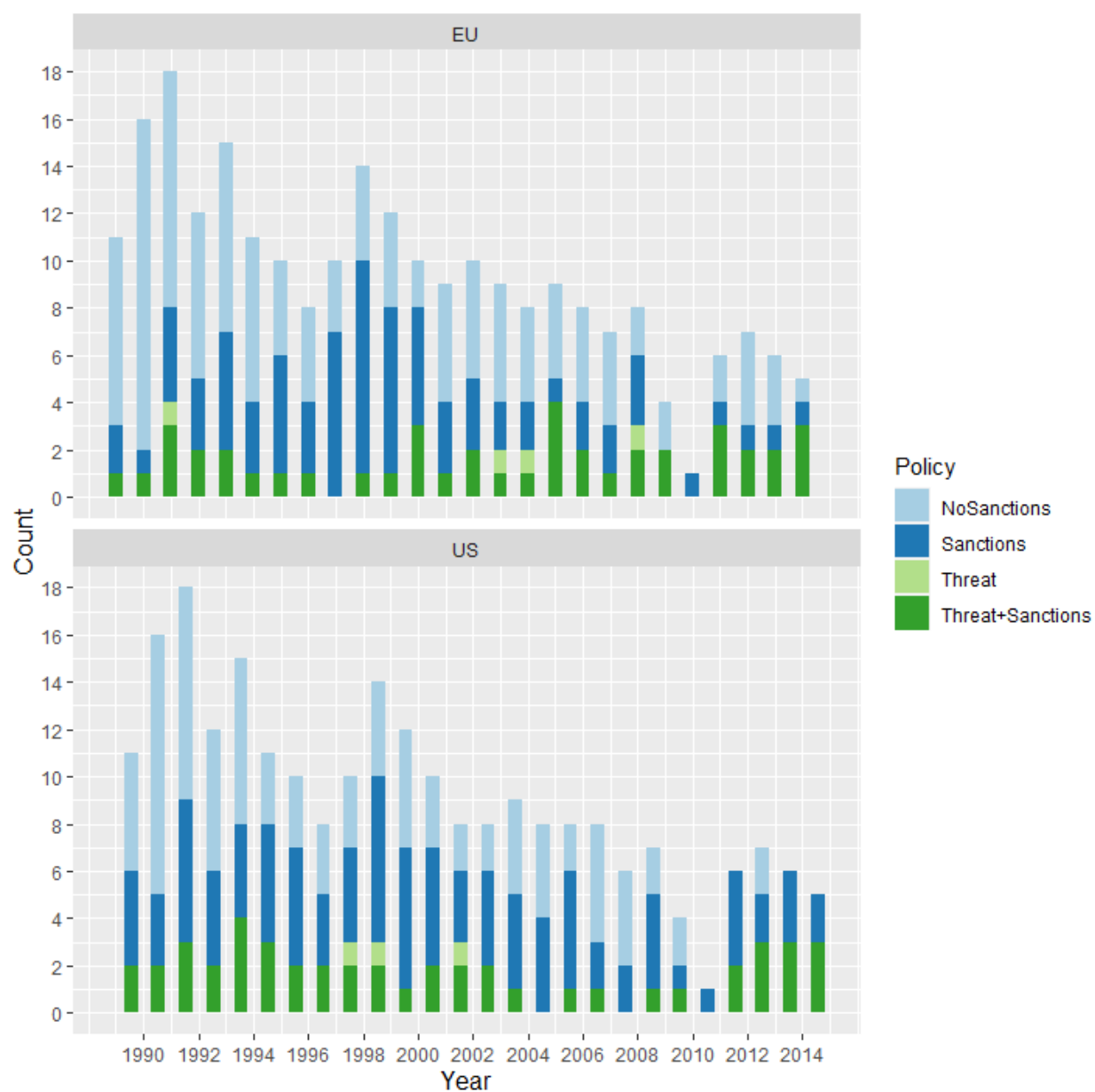
When it comes to the median use of sanctioning policies following electoral fraud, Figure 11 indicates different sanctioning approaches between the EU and the US. For the US, the median level of electoral cleanliness relating to specific US sanctioning policies is relatively stable, which indicates that there is not one specific form of sanctioning that the US employs in case of, for example, very serious incidences of electoral fraud. Things look different in the EU’s case. While high levels of electoral cleanliness seem to relate to the more frequent use of threats or a combination of threats and sanctions, severe cases of electoral fraud (i.e., cases with a clean election index close to zero, such as in Burundi 1996, 2001) seem to make the direct imposition of EU sanctions more likely.

Figure 9: EU and US policies following incidences of coups, 1989-2014



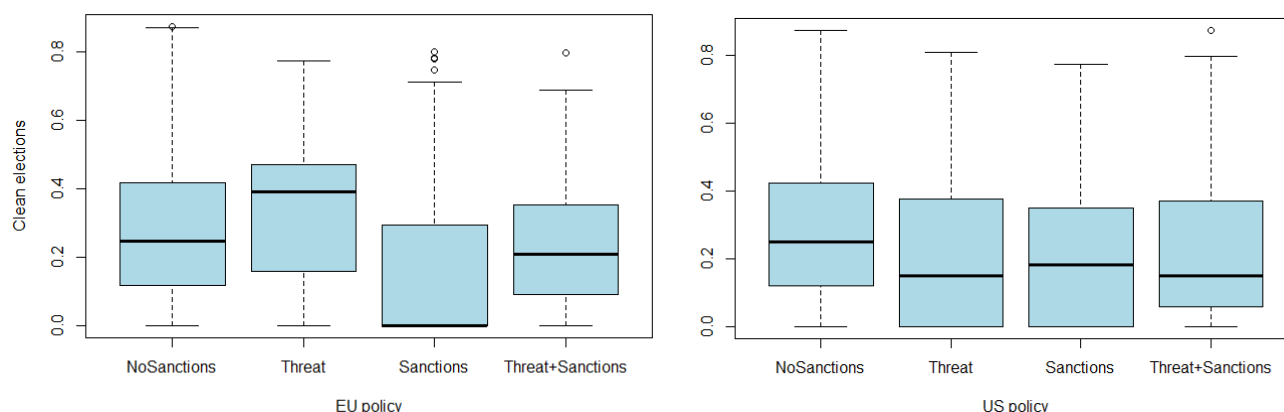
Note: Data source: EUSANCT.

Figure 10: EU and US policies following incidences of one-sided violence, 1989-2014



Note: Data source: EUSANCT.

Figure 11: EU and US sanctioning policies following electoral fraud, 1989-2014



Note: Data source: EUSANCT.

4.4.1.3 Regression Results

Table 3 summarizes the results of the multinomial regression analyses with EU and US sanctioning policies as dependent variables. The US is generally more likely to sanction violations of democratic freedoms and human rights. Moreover, trigger events, such as incidences of coups and government-sponsored one-sided violence, relate to an increased use of sanctions by both sanctioners. Although, the specific form of sanctioning policy differs between the two. In the presence of a coup, the EU is 25 percent and the US even 40 percent more likely to use any form of sanctioning in comparison to the non-coup scenario. Specifically, there is a 32 percent probability that the EU will threaten the use of sanctions. In two-thirds of these cases, the EU will follow up with sanctions, and in a further 12 percent of coup cases, the EU will directly impose sanctions. In contrast, following coups, the US is more likely to directly impose sanctions (48%), whereas it seldomly only threatens (8%), and sometimes threatens plus sanctions (15%). These findings support the expectations in Hypothesis 1 and 2.

As for one-sided violence, the predicted probabilities for the direct imposition of sanctions as well as for the use of threats plus sanctions significantly increase when there is government-sponsored violence. However, for both the EU and the US, one-sided violence seems to have no significant effect on the mere threat of sanctions.

When it comes to electoral fraud, the clean election index shows that higher levels of electoral cleanliness relate to a lower likelihood of EU sanctioning. More specifically,

regimes with very fraud elections (clean election index = 0.0), as we saw in the cases of Madagascar or Niger in the 2010 elections, are ten percent more likely to face the imposition of sanctions by the EU, whereas there seems to be no significant effect on the use of threats. Looking at the US, however, lower levels of electoral cleanliness seem to have no significant effect on the US's probability to use sanctions. The EU is significantly less likely to use sanctions if there are higher levels of electoral cleanliness. In contrast, the US's likelihood to sanction is mainly driven by incidences of coups and less so by the level of electoral cleanliness.

Looking at the influence of economic and political interests, the effects between the two sanctioners slightly differ. The US seems to be averse to sanction its trade partners, whereas the EU is more likely to use its trade leverage to act against violating states. However, this seems to not be the case when the violations are committed by economically strong and populous countries, in which case the EU seems to refrain from using sanctions. In contrast, the US seems to not shy away from acting against other big players. The findings indicate that the presence of strong civil society organizations decrease the likelihood of both EU and US sanctions. This might indicate that with strong civil society organizations in place, the EU and the US direct their efforts towards the non-governmental level, for example, by supporting civil society actors instead of imposing sanctions at the regime level. Lastly, both the EU and the US seem slightly more likely to use their political leverage against violating allied states.

The robustness tests in the appendix further control for the use of EU policies against former European colonies, which indicates that the EU is less likely to sanction its former colonies, whereas there seem to be no significant effect when it comes to threatening sanctions. Furthermore, I have controlled for a potential delay in the onset of EU and US policies because the decision-making process for sanctions, especially in the EU, is partly very time-consuming. Although, the results with lagged dependent variables do not show any change in significance (Appendix C10, C11).

Finally, when looking at the degree to which the sender goals of the sanctioners are realised, the figures in Appendix C8 and C9 indicate that the EU is not only more likely to threaten sanctions following coups than the US but is also more successful in doing so. In contrast, the EU's threat to sanction after incidences of one-sided violence has a more ambiguous effect. Following one-sided violence, threatened but also imposed EU sanctions may successfully contribute to a policy change from violating countries,

however, the policies may also fail in doing so. The same seems to hold true for US sanctions.

Table 3: Multinomial logistic regression

	EU policy			US policy		
	Threat	Sanction	Threat + Sanctions	Threat	Sanction	Threat + Sanctions
Coup	2.41*** (0.58) [11.17]	1.23*** (0.39) [3.43]	1.65*** (0.33) [5.23]	1.76** (0.80) [5.83]	1.80*** (0.30) [6.08]	1.41*** (0.39) [4.11]
Clean elections	1.33 (1.12) [3.78]	-1.73*** (0.55) [0.18]	-0.95* (0.51) [0.39]	-1.04 (0.89) [0.35]	-0.59 (0.39) [0.55]	-0.22 (0.57) [0.80]
One-sided violence	0.28 (0.62) [1.33]	1.87*** (0.23) [6.46]	1.45*** (0.25) [4.28]	0.24 (0.65) [1.28]	1.10*** (0.20) [3.00]	1.24*** (0.25) [3.45]
Trade	0.01 (0.28) [1.01]	0.20* (0.10) [1.22]	0.43*** (0.10) [1.54]	0.27* (0.16) [1.31]	-0.36*** (0.05) [0.70]	-0.10 (0.08) [0.90]
GDPpc	0.16 (0.37) [1.17]	-0.21 (0.14) [0.81]	-0.65*** (0.13) [0.52]	0.12 (0.27) [1.13]	0.54*** (0.09) [1.71]	-0.08 (0.13) [0.93]
Population	0.48* (0.28) [1.61]	0.06 (0.10) [1.06]	-0.36*** (0.10) [0.70]	0.33 (0.21) [1.39]	0.86*** (0.07) [2.37]	0.62*** (0.11) [1.85]
Civil Society	1.00 (1.11) [2.72]	-2.28*** (0.46) [0.10]	-0.71 (0.45) [0.49]	-2.06** (0.99) [0.13]	-1.45*** (0.36) [0.23]	-0.45 (0.50) [0.63]
Ally	0.26 (0.50) [1.29]	0.74*** (0.20) [2.10]	-0.04 (0.20) [0.96]	-0.03 (0.42) [0.97]	0.15 (0.16) [1.17]	0.85*** (0.22) [2.33]
<i>AIC</i>		2321			2760	
<i>N</i>		1884			1827	

Note: Numbers are coefficients with standard error in parenthesis and odds ratio in brackets.

p<0.1; **p<0.05; *p<0.00.*

4.4.2 Qualitative insights on EU and US sanctioning

The following analysis describes the EU's and US's policies following two episodes of norm violations more in-depth. Following Lieberman's (2005) approach of a model-testing small-N analysis, I selected two 'on-the-line cases' from within the large-N dataset. Which means that I selected the cases of Madagascar and Mali to gain a better understanding on how institutional hurdles may impact the use of sanctioning policies. Particularly the EU's multi-level institutional setup as it is likely to coin its sanctioning policy by being more negotiation intense, slower, complex, and compromise driven.

Studying the cases of Madagascar and Mali, the analysis juxtaposes two contrasting cases of EU and US sanctioning. The cases illustrate the different political approaches of the two sanctioners. While the US was relatively quick in using sanctions following the coups in both cases, the EU's approach was more gradual and dialogue-focused. Only in the case of Mali did the EU decide to impose sanctions following a period of threats, but even here the EU was the first to pick the political dialogue up again. Moreover, the case studies illustrate how along with the EU and the US, other regional and international actors such as the African Union and the United Nations have also shaped the political reactions of the international community following coups.

4.4.2.1 Madagascar

The island state of Madagascar experienced a period of political upheaval at the end of the 2010s which led to aid sanctions by both the EU and US, along with other international donors. For decades, the country had suffered from an unstable political regime, a weak economy, and was highly dependent on international aid. Approximately 40 percent of the former French colony's budget came from foreign aid before the coup.

In January 2009, the Malagasy political crisis began in Madagascar's capital Antananarivo, where mayor Andry Rajoelina sought to oust president Marc Ravalomanana from the presidency. Rajoelina called for a general protest against the president, whom he called a dictator. The protests quickly grew into violence claiming more than a hundred victims. Only days into the protests, the AU answered by warning Rajoelina that it would not accept an unconstitutional power grab in Madagascar (Malone 2009). The upheaval continued into February 2009 with thousands of people rallying on the streets. In March 2009, the opposition finally took over several ministries

and stormed the palace of the president with the help of the military. Rajoelina installed himself as president and international condemnation of his takeover followed. The African Union suspended Madagascar and both the EU and the US condemned the coup d'état and urged the country to restore democratic governance (Iloniaina and Lough 2009). Suspending Madagascar from the African Growth and Opportunities Act, the US soon halted all non-humanitarian aid to the island state (Ploch and Cook 2012). The EU, in contrast, reacted more cautiously, for which even the exiled ex-president Ravalomanana declared that “each day of silence out of Paris and Brussels is a day of lost hope for Malagasy families who can no longer feed their children” and called on the EU to impose sanctions (Lough 2010). At first, the EU halted all plans for new development aid schemes but refrained from imposing any additional measures. In July 2009, the EU finally opened consultations with Madagascar under Article 96 of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement and threatened that restrictive measures would follow if democratic presidential elections were not held by the end of November. Nearly a year later, in June 2010, the Council concluded the consultations and decided to suspend all budgetary aid to Madagascar that was channelled through the government (Council of the European Union 2010).

The sanctioning slowly started to peter out one year later following a UN appeal to the international community to reconsider all sanctions against Madagascar. A UN mission had previously concluded that the Malagasy population was carrying the main burden of the restrictive measures causing thousands of people to suffer from hunger (UN News 2011). In August 2012, the EU resumed on-budget development aid aimed at promoting health, education, and civil society groups. However, another year later, the EU again threatened more sanctions against the Malagasy regime which was blocking democratic elections. After Madagascar finally held elections in January 2014, the EU decided to resume all development aid programmes. This decision was part of a broader rehabilitation for Madagascar from the international community in which the International Monetary Fund, as well as the World Bank, agreed on financial support for the poor country (Rabary 2014). In the same period, the AU lifted Madagascar's suspension from the Union and the US finally lifted all restrictions on aid assistance to the Malagasy government (AGOA 2014).

4.4.2.2 *Mali*

The year 2012 started off as an economically, politically, and socially troubled year for Mali. Economically, the West African country, and former French colony, had been highly dependent on foreign aid for years. Socially, Mali was going through a major food crisis leading to a displaced population and thousands of people suffering from hunger. Simultaneously, ethnic conflicts and independence efforts in the Northern territory of Mali, which had been relatively calm for years, were picking up again. Politically, for two decades Mali had been handled as a good example of democratization and praised for its regularly held democratic elections and political stability (Bergamaschi 2014). However, when the economic, political, and social crises finally erupted in a brute military coup d'état in March 2012, the world community, including the EU and the US, immediately reacted by imposing hard sanctions on the Malian rebel regime, which carried dire economic and political consequences for the country.

The Malian coup began on 21 March when mutinying Malian soldiers attacked several places in the capital of Bamako and ousted president Amadou Toumani Touré and his government. The EU immediately reacted by suspending all non-humanitarian development aid to Mali and called for a “speedy resolution of the crisis, restoration of constitutional order and the holding of democratic elections as soon as possible” (European Commission 2012). The African Union followed by suspending Mali’s membership and only days later the US also suspended all development aid to Mali stating that it would only resume once democracy was restored (Arieff, Lawson, and Chesser 2020). Also, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) took a strong stance against the revolting regime closing down trade and freezing bank accounts (BBC News 2012). In a Security Council meeting, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addressed the “deeply troubling situation in Mali” and encouraged the international community to take more action (such as targeted travel and financial sanctions) against the responsible Malian regime members (UN News 2012). A politically turbulent year followed, however, in the end the concerted regional and international actions against the unconstitutional regime led to the adoption of the ‘Roadmap for Transition’ in January 2013. In the time following, the EU resumed its development cooperation with Mali and organized the donor conference ‘Together for a new Mali’ which included representatives of local authorities, civil society actors, the

Malian diaspora, and private sector actors (European Commission 2013a, 2013b). Following peaceful democratic elections in September 2013, the US also lifted its restrictions on bilateral aid and USAID began working with the government of Mali by resuming foreign assistance more broadly, including education and governance activities that had been suspended since the coup (Harf 2013; USAID 2020).

4.4.2.3 Discussion

The Malagasy and Malian cases illustrate typical features of EU and US sanctioning policies following violations of democratic freedoms. The EU tends to be reluctant in going in hard and puts more weight on the diplomatic path. Instead of imposing hard wide-ranging sanctions, the EU focusses on political dialogue and a ‘carrot and sticks’ approach in influencing the behaviour of the violating political regimes. In doing so, the threat of sanctions plays a strategically important role, whereas the imposition of sanctions follows mostly only subsequently if at all. However, the Malian case shows that if the stakes are high, the EU also knows how to react quickly and rigorously by immediately imposing sanctions. It seems that the Malian coup d’état was so brute and its consequences in erupting the political stability so immense that the international community concertedly saw no other option but to react and immediately sanction. Yet even in this crisis, the EU was the first to once more pick the dialogue up and to organize a donor conference facilitating the country’s transition back to stability.

Talking to Brussels experts about these features found in EU sanctioning, my interview partners explained that due to conflicting economic and political interests among member states, the negotiations for sanctions are often difficult and not always successful (EEAS1, EEAS2, EEAS5, EP1). Yet, in the case of very grave violations of democratic freedoms and human rights, it seems that the EU also sees “no other option but to sanction” (EEAS3). The “severity of the crisis” seems to be the crucial point. For example, the “shed of blood” was described as “also making electoral misconduct and the undermining of the rule of law to cases for sanctions” (EEAS3). Due to media coverage and the pressure from non-governmental organizations for political action being more decisive in these cases.

Speaking to a former head of the EU’s Election Observation Mission, my interview partner explained that apart from very serious cases of electoral fraud, the EU usually does not sanction electoral misconduct but rather opts for ‘softer’ forms of pressure such

as restrictions on the financial support of elections, or the support of domestic observers and actors from the civil society. However, grave violations like the expulsion of the head of the Election Observation Mission in the Zimbabwean presidential elections from 2002 have led to EU sanctions (EEAS2).

Otherwise, dialogue and diplomatic engagement is the EU's standard answer to norm violations. As a Brussels expert explained, "the EU is so favourable of the political track—you know, dialogue, dialogue, dialogue—the freezing of talks or the interruption of diplomatic relations are among the last measures to use" (EEAS5). The EU seems more favourable towards a gradual approach to sanctioning, that is "sending a message: this is the start of the process", but also "warning that further measures are likely to follow" (EEAS1). Or as another interviewee phrased it: "The EU is good at giving a foretaste for what is coming next" (EEAS3). In other words, the EU does not refrain from imposing sanctions if necessary, however, it is more likely to threaten with them first.

In contrast to the EU, the US often opts for more straightforward political (re)actions. Empirics show that the US sometimes starts a policy cycle by threatening sanctions if certain behavioural changes are not to follow. However, what stands out is that these threats hardly ever come to nothing. Maybe it is a manifestation of having less patience, more political determination, or simply the pragmatic result of having an easier decision-making process for the use of sanctions than in the EU; but if the US threatens, then sanctions are most likely to soon follow. As both the Malagasy and Malian cases illustrate, if the US decides to sanction violations of democratic freedoms then it will likely not waste much time by uttering any prior threats but rather directly sanctions. In short, the EU tends to threaten while the US strikes.

4.5 Conclusion

This article explores the heterogenous sanctioning policies of the EU and the US since the end of the Cold War. It analyses and contrasts to which extent and why they both (threaten to) sanction the violation of democratic freedoms and human rights. Next to providing novel empirical insights on the role of threats and the different sanctioning approaches from both the EU and the US, this study contributes new theoretical explanations for the use of sanctioning policies following violations of democratic freedoms. It argues that the EU's multi-level institutional features are likely to coin both

its institutional capabilities to take decisions for sanctions and its approach to norm-promotion. Both these features make the EU prone to threaten the use of sanctions. Applying concepts from the literature on democracy promotion, as well as multilateral versus unilateral sanctioning, and making use of the information gained in interviews with sanctions experts in Brussels, the article explains why sanction threats play a much stronger role in the EU's repertoire of counter-policies following norm violations, whereas the immediate imposition of sanctions plays a more dominant role among US policies.

Using a nested empirical approach of statistical multinomial regression analysis, and within case studies, I contribute new comparative insights on EU and US sanctioning policies following violations of human rights and democratic freedoms. In line with previous findings, the article concludes that both sanctioners are sensitive to norm violations, especially in the form of *coup d'états* (von Soest and Wahman 2015). However, the specific form of sanctioning tends to differ between the two. The EU tends to put more emphasis on dialogue and on keeping the diplomatic door open. EU sanctioning policies are more tentative and gradual and tend to begin with an initial threat for future sanctions. However, this does not mean that the EU refrains from using sanctions at all. As the Malian case illustrates, if the stakes are high and the violations very brute and bloody, the EU also knows how to act quickly and directly impose sanctions. Incidences of one-sided violence seem to increase the EU's willingness to use sanctions against violating states. The US, on the other hand, benefits from an easier decision-making process for the use of sanctions and is characterized by a more straightforward approach to foreign policy. If the US decides to act against violations of democratic freedoms, it tends to do so immediately without expressing any prior threats. What stands out is that since the end of the Cold War, the US has hardly ever only threatened to sanction. The US tends to strike immediately, and even if it threatens first, the strike is soon to follow.

Altogether, this study shows that sanctioning policies should not be treated as binary variables for using or not using sanctions. Especially for the EU, the threat of sanctions plays an important role as a strategic negotiation tool. Due to the difficult measurement of the threat of sanctions, the exact number of sanction threats has to be taken with a grain of salt. My results show clear trends of different approaches to sanctioning between the EU and the US. However, the results also indicate that with an increasing

level of bloodiness the EU also slowly leaves its diplomatic path and gets ready to use sanctions. It seems that some norm violations are more sanctionable than others.

Carrying on with the findings from my study, it would be interesting if future research carries out a more fine-grained comparative analysis of the differing meta norms of sanctioning which seem to influence *why* actors sanction some norm violations but not others (Erickson 2020). Furthermore, research should shed more light on the *how* of sanctioning. While this study brought some first insights on the differing use of threats and the imposition of sanctions, the specific sanctioning instruments actors use still largely remain a lacuna in research, especially from a comparative point of view. This lacuna could be approached with either a large-scale quantitative research design or with a series of qualitative case studies highlighting the specific processes from varying sanctioning actors. It would be interesting to put more focus on regional sanctioning actors such as the African Union. The Malagasy and Malian cases have illustrated the active role of regional African organizations. While some authors have brought first insights on the sanctioning policies of these actors (e.g., Hellquist 2020), research would benefit from more insights on the sanctioning policies of actors beyond and in concert with big sanctioning players, such as the EU and the US. As sanctions have become one of the leading instruments in punishing violations of democratic freedoms and pushing authoritarian states towards democratic governance, understanding by which actors, and how, sanctions are used is key for research on international relations and comparative political analysis.

5. Conclusion

This thesis provides new insights into the characteristics and determinants of EU sanctioning policies by addressing the question: *In what way and under which conditions does the European Union (EU) sanction the violation of norms?* This is important because studying EU sanctioning not only improves our understanding of one of the most important instruments of EU foreign policy but also allows deriving insights on the development of the EU as an actor in international relations, which we could apply to other sanctioners in the making. Much of the extant sanctions literature on the nature, use, and effectiveness of sanctions is mainly based on a US, and later UN-centred research perspective. Although valuable, these perspectives do not account for the EU's unique institutional and political decision-making processes. Thus, our knowledge of the 'what, when, where, and why of EU sanctioning' is still very limited (Giumelli, Hoffmann, and Książczaková 2020).

Both individually and jointly, the three studies in my thesis contribute new insights on *how* (characteristics) and *when* (determinants) the EU imposes sanctions. Characterizing the EU as a *sui generis* sanctioning actor, and analysing how its multi-level institutional setup influences its decision-making competences provides a richer understanding of its policy preferences when it comes to norm promotion, in general, and the use of sanctions, in particular. Specifically, I find that the EU pursues a gradualist approach to sanctioning in which it incrementally increases the force of its measures. The EU also tends to emphasize dialogue and diplomatic relations, and uses the threat of sanctions as a strategic foreign policy tool. My statistical results show that following violations of democratic and human rights from 1989 to 2015, the EU used the threat of sanctions in nearly one third of all cases. As one of my interview partners in Brussels explained, the EU likes to send a message "this is the start of the process", and to warn that "further measures are likely to follow" soon if the violations are not halted (EEAS1).

Yet, when the stakes are high—as in cases of brute violations of human rights and democratic freedoms—the EU leaves its diplomatic path and imposes sanctions. The case study of EU sanctions following the Malian coup d'état in March 2012 illustrates this well. Following the Malian coup, the EU was among the firsts to call for a speedy resolution of the crisis and the restoration of constitutional order. Together with the US, the EU imposed hard sanctions on the Malian rebel regime, which carried dire economic

and political consequences for the country and in the end brought the intended concessions by the Malian regime.

Zooming into the question of why, despite the often conflicting economic and political interests among the member states, they are still able to find the necessary unanimous agreement on imposing sanctions in many cases of norm violations, I highlight the importance of public attention to the respective cases of norm violations and the role of the media as a key raiser of public awareness. Media coverage can increase the salience of specific instances of norm violations putting these cases higher up on the agenda of EU policy-makers, which in turn increases the likelihood of them being sanctioned by the EU.

In line with previous research, my findings also indicate that both economic and political interests are influential determinants of EU sanctioning. Notably, the EU is unlikely to act against close political, and especially, economic partners. In line with this, despite several accusations of human rights violations in Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and South Africa since the 1990s, the EU has sometimes threatened but never actually imposed any sanctions against these countries. At the same time, the EU knows how to make use of its leverage to influence the behaviour of economically dependent norm violating countries. Following decisive human and labour rights violations, the EU withdrew any trade benefits provided under its General System of Preferences from Belarus, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka in the 1990s and 2000s, for example. Moreover, the severity and visibility of the violations affects whether the EU uses sanctions or not. This statistical finding is supported by interviews with sanctions experts in Brussels. The EU is sensitive to bloodshed, especially when it is extensively covered in the media. As one of my interview partners explained, in the case of very bloody violations, EU decision-makers often see “no other option but to sanction” (EEAS3). The immediate imposition of sanctions following bloody coups in Honduras (2009), Mali (2009), and the Ukraine (2014) illustrate this well.

Thus, my research contributes to a better understanding of how the EU sanctions norm violations, and why the threat of sanctions plays a dominant role in the EU’s catalogue of foreign policies. I show that the EU’s complex multi-level decision-making process, which is oriented towards negotiation and compromise, and the relating preferences for a gradual and dialogue-based approach to norm violations, render the EU prone to use threats of sanctions as a primary reaction to norm violations. However, my findings also

show that if the stakes are high and the violations severe, the EU is willing to leave the path of diplomacy and sanction rigorously. Regardless, the Malian case study illustrates that even in those instances of strict sanctions, the EU tries to soon pick the dialogue with the targeted state up again and support its transition back to stability.

5.1 Avenues for further research

My research studies EU sanctioning policies, which I operationalize by looking into incidences of EU sanctioning since the end of the Cold War. In other words, my research focuses on the full period of sanctioning policies ranging from the onset up until the determination of the restrictive measure/s. Strictly speaking, when studying the determinants of sanctioning policies, it would be better practice to only focus the analysis on the onset of sanctions because the reasons for which actors decide to impose sanctions might differ from the ones causing a year-long use of sanctioning measures. In some cases, prolonged violations of human rights or democratic freedoms might explain why sanctions are kept in place for years. Administrative rigidity or discord among the decision-makers could also explain extended periods of sanctioning. However, given the still rather small number of EU sanctions, only focusing the analysis on the onset of sanctions would result in a sharp drop in the number of observations and the leverage of the statistical results. Notably, the number of observations would drop even more if we were to further focus on certain types of norm violations (e.g., human rights or democratic freedoms) or certain types of norm violators (e.g., authoritarian states) as my study does. This is why I decided to focus on the full period of sanctioning policies.

In time and with more incidences of EU sanctioning, this issue will dissolve by itself. Until then, research methodologies beyond regression analysis could provide more insights on the onset of sanctions, specifically. At the meso-level, Quantitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), for example, focusing on violations in certain geographic regions, could enhance our knowledge on the pathways and combinations of determinants leading to the onset of sanctions. Such an approach could also be valuable to increase our knowledge on the determinants of sanctioning policies from newer regional sanctioning actors. In Paper 3, the case studies of sanctioning policies following *coup d'états* in Madagascar (2009) and Mali (2012) illustrate how regional organizations, such as the African Union (AU) or the Economic Community of West

African States (ECOWAS), are playing an increasingly active role as sanctioning actors. At the micro-level, case studies could provide valuable insights into these newer sanctioning actors. Single case studies and studies comparing the sanctioning policies of newer sanctioning actors to the ones from the EU or US could both provide interesting in-depth insights.

Moreover, it would be interesting to learn more about which types of sanctioning measures different actors use. In other words, which policies hide behind the rather general category of ‘sanctions’? While by distinguishing between the threat and/or the imposition of sanctions my research made a first step towards illuminating this black box, much more can be learned about the design of sanctioning policies from different actors.

A first important step here will be to clarify our understanding of sanctions, especially when it comes to the EU. I noticed a different understanding of the term ‘sanctions’ both in the sanctions literature and my interviews in Brussels. While some follow a narrow conceptualization of sanctions that only encompasses measures used in the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), such as arms embargoes, asset freezes, or travel bans (Giumelli 2011, 2013b), others open the definition of sanctions up to other types of measures and areas of external policy. The suspension of regional and bilateral partnership agreements, such as the Cotonou Agreement with the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) group of states falls under such a broader understanding of sanctions (Portela 2010). In 2016, following unsuccessful consultations with the Burundian government, the EU halted any financial support due to pervasive violations of democratic freedoms, human rights, and the rule of law (Council of the European Union 2016). In addition, the withdrawal of trade benefits under the EU’s General System of Preferences (GSP), as in the case of Myanmar in 1997 following extensive human and labour rights violations shows, is partly counted as a ‘sanction’ (Portela and Orbie 2014). Moreover, it is possible to also think about the inclusion of diplomatic sanctions like the reduction or removal of diplomatic ties, but also culturally-oriented restrictive measures such as the ban from international sporting events. We have seen these types of restrictive cultural measures, for example, during the Winter Olympic Games of 2014 in Sochi, Russia in which several European heads of states did not attend following discussions of infringements of democratic freedoms, the rule of law, and freedom of the press. Lastly, in the future, we might increasingly need to reflect on the use of

sanctions in the digital sphere of cybersecurity. After all, sanctions in response to cyber activities are already part of the EU's toolkit, even if they have not been used yet, as one of my interview partners in Brussels explained (EEAS1).

5.2 Final remarks

My interest in sanctions as an instrument of foreign policy and their integral role in the EU's development as a foreign policy actor was kindled during my undergraduate studies when I first learned about the joined engagement of the EU in the Iranian nuclear non-proliferation crisis. Unfortunately, this crisis accompanies us today. Yet, I believe its evolution nicely illustrates the development of the EU as a sanctioning actor. It also shows how many faces sanctions can have and how complex the evaluation of the effectiveness of sanctions can be.

The experience of the Iranian nuclear crisis is described as an ice-breaking moment in the EU's development as an international actor (Lehne 2012). In 2006, at first, the E3—France, Germany, and Italy—and soon also the EU in form of its High Representative for the CFSP Javier Solana led the negotiation with the Iranian regime. While the US-Iranian relations had been frozen since the hostage crisis in the US embassy in Teheran in the late 1970s, the EU as a young and relatively untarnished foreign policy actor was able to step in and lead the negotiations in the name of the international community (Cronberg 2017). First, the threat, and later the imposition of sanctions, played an integral part during the year-long negotiations with Iran. While the conflict appeared close to an end after the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in 2015, the tensions re-emerged when former US President Trump withdrew from the agreement in 2018. Recently, President Joe Biden has declared his intention to return the US to the deal, which might bring another interesting turn in the conflict and initiate a renewed phase of reconciliation.

From my perspective, the Iranian nuclear non-proliferation crisis is an interesting case to follow the EU's development as an international sanctioning actor. It was one of the first international crises in which the EU stood out and distinguished itself as an important player in international relations. The EU's continuing diplomatic engagement in the Iranian case exemplifies its credo of keeping the diplomatic door open at all times. It illustrates the EU's gradual approach to sanctioning, and even though the Iranian sanctions might not be seen as successful in terms of bringing a sustainable solution to

the conflict (yet), the threat and imposition of sanctions are likely to have given point to the EU's words in the negotiations and thereby contributed to a de-escalation of the crisis. Even though till today the nuclear conflict with Iran has not been solved, non-proliferation experts highlight the EU's role in preventing a military escalation of the conflict (Meier 2013; Cronberg 2017).

As sanctions continue to be one of the leading instruments in punishing violations of human rights and in pushing authoritarian states towards democratic governance, understanding when, how, and why international actors (do not) use them is key for international relations research and comparative political analysis.

Appendix A

Appendix A 1: Interviews with sanctions experts in Brussels

Interview Partner	Interview Date	Interview Code
<i>European Commission</i>		
DG Trade	May 2018	COM1–3
EEAS	May 2018	EEAS1–6
<i>European Parliament</i>		
Policy Advisor to EP	May 2018	EP1
<i>Council of the EU</i>		
Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER)	May 2018	COR1

Appendix B

Appendix B 1: Universe of cases

Country	PTS 4/5 years	Ex-colony	Region	GDPpc	Population	EU sns
Afghanistan	1999-2015		South Asia	619.751312	32526562	1996-2002
Algeria	1999-2007	French	North Africa & the Middle East	4364.2241	34261971	
Angola	1999-2005, 2007, 2009, 2013-2014	Portuguese	Sub-Saharan Africa	4164.11874	24227524	
Bangladesh	2001-2015	British	South Asia	972.880678	160995642	
Brazil	1999-2015	Portuguese	Latin America	11211.8911	207847528	
Burundi	1999-2008, 2010-2015	Belgian	Sub-Saharan Africa	206.711449	11178921	1993-2001, 2015*
Cambodia	2007, 2013	French	South-East Asia	920.303572	15078564	
Cameroon	1999-2000, 2003-2006, 2008, 2014	French	Sub-Saharan Africa	1263.34764	22773014	
CAR	2001, 2003, 2005-2015	French	Sub-Saharan Africa	292.164773	4900274	2003-2005
Chad	1999-2001, 2003-2004, 2006-2011	French	Sub-Saharan Africa	867.303098	12298512	
China	1999-2015		East Asia	6497.72578	1371220000	1989-2015
Colombia	1999-2015	Spanish	Latin America	7447.87726	48228704	
Congo	1999, 2000, 2002-2003, 2014-2015	French	Sub-Saharan Africa	3163.1728	4620330	1997-2001
DRC	1999-2015	Belgian	Sub-Saharan Africa	384.506777	77266814	1997-2008
Cote d'Ivoire	2000, 2002-2012	French	Sub-Saharan Africa	1248.19121	21102641	2000-2002, 2003-2004, 2010-2011
Dominican Republic	2008-2011	Spanish	Latin America	5547.76391	10027140	
Egypt	2001-2015	British	North Africa & the Middle East	2707.08626	91508084	2011-2013
Equatorial Guinea	2010	Spanish	Sub-Saharan Africa	22366.2939	728710	1992
Eritrea	1999, 2004-2015	British	Sub-Saharan Africa	480.376165	4789568	1999-2001

Country	PTS 4/5 years	Ex-colony	Region	GDPpc	Population	EU sns
Ethiopia	1999-2012, 2014		Sub-Saharan Africa	454.773175	96958732	1999-2001
Fiji	2000	British	The Pacific	3315.06745	811223	2000-2003
Georgia	2008		Eastern and Central Europe	2824.66923	4030000	
Guatemala	2005-2007	Spanish	Latin America	2805.19231	13797629	
Guinea	2000-2001, 2007-2009	French	Sub-Saharan Africa	433.566588	10715770	
Guinea-Bissau	1999, 2009	Portuguese	Sub-Saharan Africa	507.514919	1596832	1999-1999
Haiti	2000, 2004- 2007	French	Latin America	705.383103	9556958	2000-2005
Honduras	2003, 2009	Spanish	Latin America	2053.8614	7383098	2009-2010
India	1999-2015	British	South Asia	1751.74572	1311050527	
Indonesia	1999-2005, 2009	Dutch	South-East Asia	2980.94601	238465165	1999-2000
Iran	1999-2000, 2002, 2004- 2015		North Africa & the Middle East	NA	79109272	2006*
Iraq	1999-2015	British	North Africa & the Middle East	5119.25219	36423395	
Israel	1999-2015		North Africa & the Middle East	33117.9652	8380100	2001-2003, 2013*
Jamaica	2001, 2003, 2008-2011	British	The Caribbean	4875.93885	2752358	
Jordan	2008, 2010	British	North Africa & the Middle East	4054.27067	6517912	
Kenya	2002-2003, 2005-2014	British	Sub-Saharan Africa	1101.22986	44863583	2008-2008
North Korea	1999-2015		East Asia	NA	25155317	2002*
Kyrgyzstan	2010		Eastern and Central Europe	880.037775	5447900	
Lebanon	2007	French	North Africa & the Middle East	7159.37283	4085426	
Liberia	1999-2003		Sub-Saharan Africa	270.329107	3124222	2000-2006
Libya	1999, 2011- 2015	Italian	North Africa & the Middle East	NA	6278438	1986-2004, 2011*
Macedonia	2001		Eastern and Central Europe	3364.935	2021585	2001-2001
Madagascar	2009, 2012, 2015	French	Sub-Saharan Africa	409.923677	24235390	2009-2014
Mali	2012-2015	French	Sub-Saharan Africa	720.809819	17599694	2012-2013

Country	PTS 4/5 years	Ex-colony	Region	GDPpc	Population	EU sns
Mexico	2006, 2008-2015	Spanish	Latin America	9510.59625	127017224	
Mozambique	2010	Portuguese	Sub-Saharan Africa	417.501232	24321457	
Myanmar	1999-2015	British	South-East Asia	1308.74691	53897154	1988*
Nepal	2000-2011		South Asia	608.929524	27179237	2005-2006
Niger	2007-2008, 2015	French	Sub-Saharan Africa	383.830732	19899120	
Nigeria	1999, 2001-2015	British	Sub-Saharan Africa	2534.81639	182201962	1993-1999
Pakistan	1999-2015	British	South Asia	1142.7522	188924874	1998-1999
Peru	1999	Spanish	Latin America	3267.70155	25561297	
Philippines	1999-2001, 2003-2015	US	South-East Asia	2639.86843	100699395	
Russia	1999-2014		Eastern and Central Europe	11493.7207	143819666	1999-2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2014*
Rwanda	1999-2004	Belgian	Sub-Saharan Africa	405.125737	8828956	
Saudi Arabia	1999, 2007-2011		North Africa & the Middle East	20121.8373	28788438	
Sierra Leone	1999-2003	British	Sub-Saharan Africa	382.62889	4647701	
Solomon Islands	2000	British	The Pacific	1235.11641	412336	
Somalia	1999-2015	Italian	Sub-Saharan Africa	NA	10787104	
South Africa	2001, 2007, 2012	British	Sub-Saharan Africa	7546.8139	52506515.1	
South Sudan	2012-2015	British	Sub-Saharan Africa	717.695758	12339812	2014*
Sri Lanka	1999-2001, 2004-2014	British	South Asia	3503.98833	20771000	
Sudan	1999-2015	British	Sub-Saharan Africa	1807.66325	40234882	1994-2004, 2004*
Syria	2007-2015	French	North Africa & the Middle East	NA	18502413	2011*
Thailand	2004-2008, 2010-2012		South-East Asia	5488.39619	67164130	
Timor-Leste	2006		South-East Asia	589.058389	1008389	
Togo	2005	French	Sub-Saharan Africa	485.648224	5578219	1991-2007
Turkey	1999-2002, 2005-2009, 2013, 2015		North Africa & the Middle East	11522.7051	78665830	
Uganda	1999-2011	British	Sub-Saharan Africa	644.559732	34260342	
Ukraine	2014-2015		Eastern and Central Europe	2825.8501	45154029	2014-2014

Country	PTS 4/5 years	Ex-colony	Region	GDPpc	Population	EU sns
Uzbekistan	2001-2003, 2005		Eastern and Central Europe	996.868052	26167000	2005-2009
Venezuela	2002, 2006- 2009, 2012	Spanish	Latin America	14514.8128	29854238	
Yemen	2004-2005, 2007-2015	British	North Africa & the Middle East	774.450494	26832215	
Zambia	2010	British	Sub-Saharan Africa	1456.12683	13917439	
Zimbabwe	2000-2012	British	Sub-Saharan Africa	800.378144	14565482	2000*

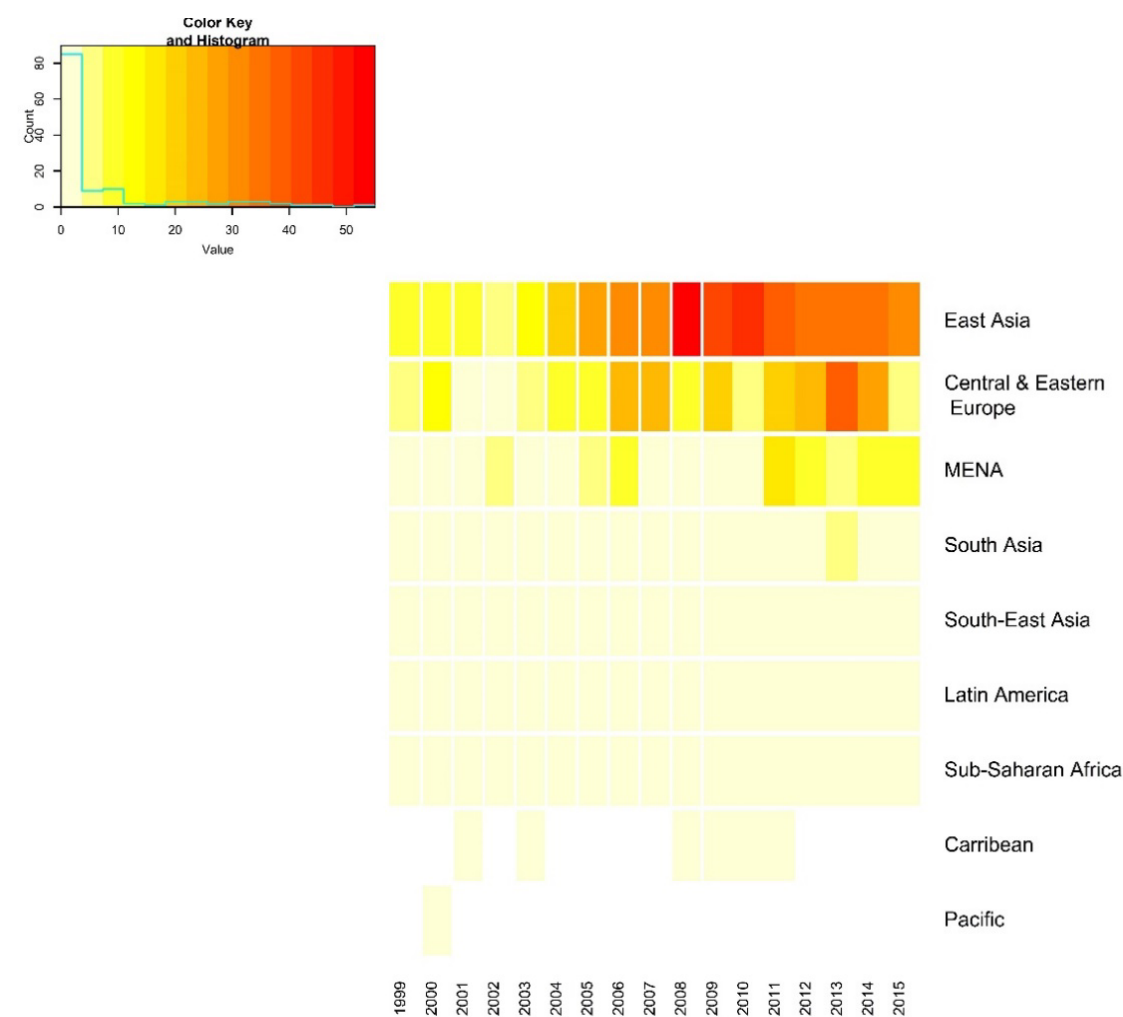
Appendix B 2: Descriptive statistics

Variable	No. of Obs	Mean	Median	Min	Max	Operationalization
<i>Dependent variable</i>						
EU sanctions	1204	0.22	0	0	1	binary
<i>Independent variables</i>						
Coverage	1204	2.46	0	0	108	continuous
Population (log)	1200	16.77	16.81	12.90	21.04	continuous
Colony	1204	0.73	1	0	1	continuous
Polity VI	1108	1.75	4	-10	9	categorical
Trade (ln)	1204	21.42	21.24	14.94	26.98	continuous
Ally	1204	0.24	0	0	1	binary
HRtype	1204	0.49	0	0	1	binary
Word Count	1204	194.49	160.50	0	1180	continuous

Appendix B 3: Correlation matrix of independent variables

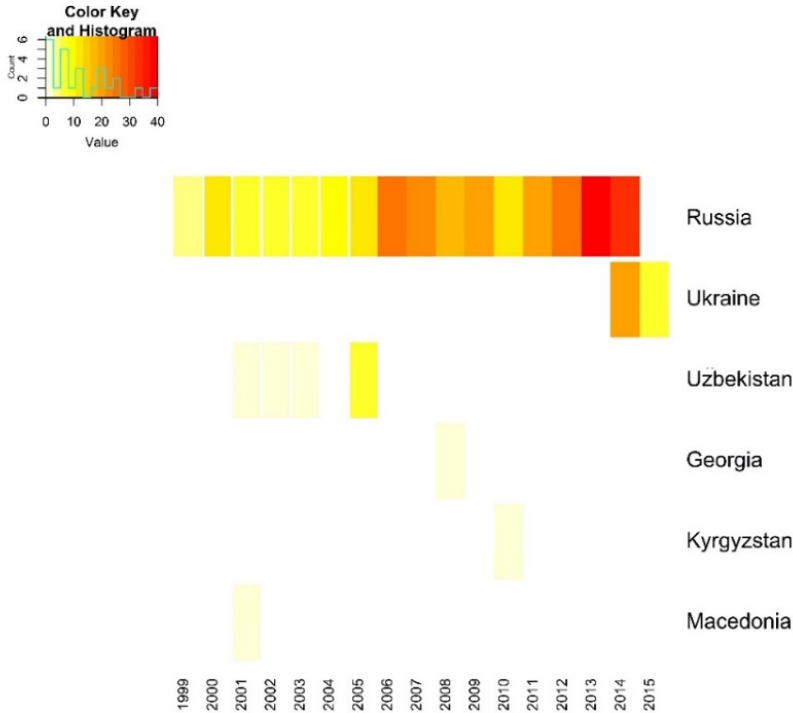
Variable	Coverage	Population (log)	Trade (ln)	Colony	Polity VI	Ally	HRtype	Word Count
Coverage	1	0.36	0.36	-0.28	-0.19	0.19	0.23	0.36
Population (log)	0.36	1	0.67	-0.11	0.06	0.13	0.32	0.39
Trade (ln)	0.36	0.67	1	-0.18	0.11	0.24	0.26	0.43
Colony	-0.28	-0.11	-0.18	1	0.05	-0.39	-0.15	-0.22
Polity VI	-0.19	0.06	0.11	0.05	1	0.03	-0.06	-0.08
Ally	0.19	0.13	0.24	-0.39	0.03	1	0.10	0.13
HRtype	0.23	0.32	0.26	-0.15	-0.06	0.10	1	0.62
Word Count	0.36	0.39	0.43	-0.22	-0.08	0.13	0.62	1

Appendix B 4: Regional media coverage of human rights violations, 1999-2015



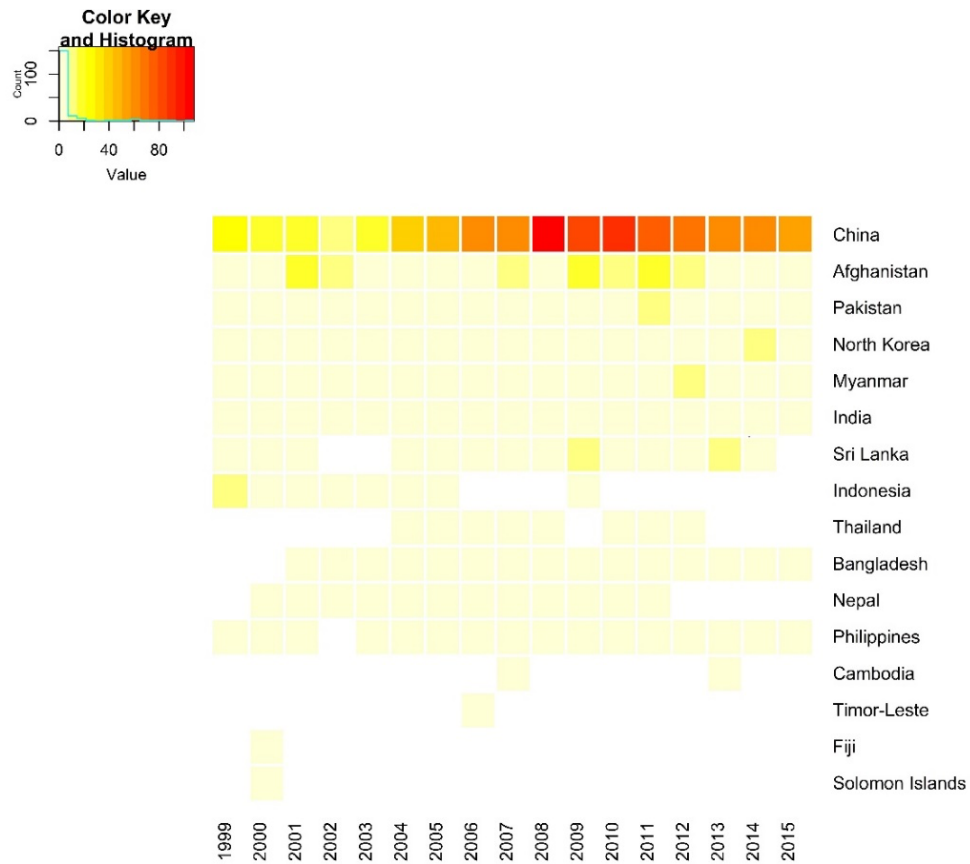
Note: media coverage ranging between 1-55 articles per year.

Appendix B 5: Media coverage of human rights violations in Central and Eastern Europe, 1999-2015



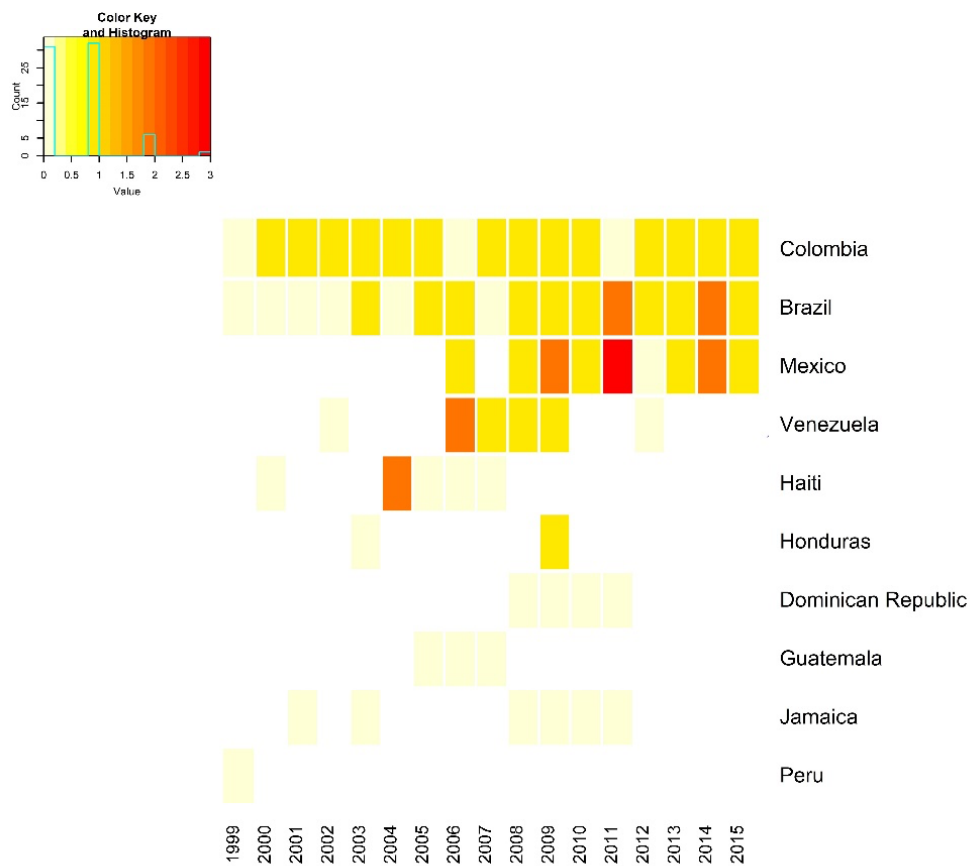
Note: media coverage ranging between 1-40 articles per year.

Appendix B 6: Media coverage of human rights violations in Asia and the Pacific, 1999-2015



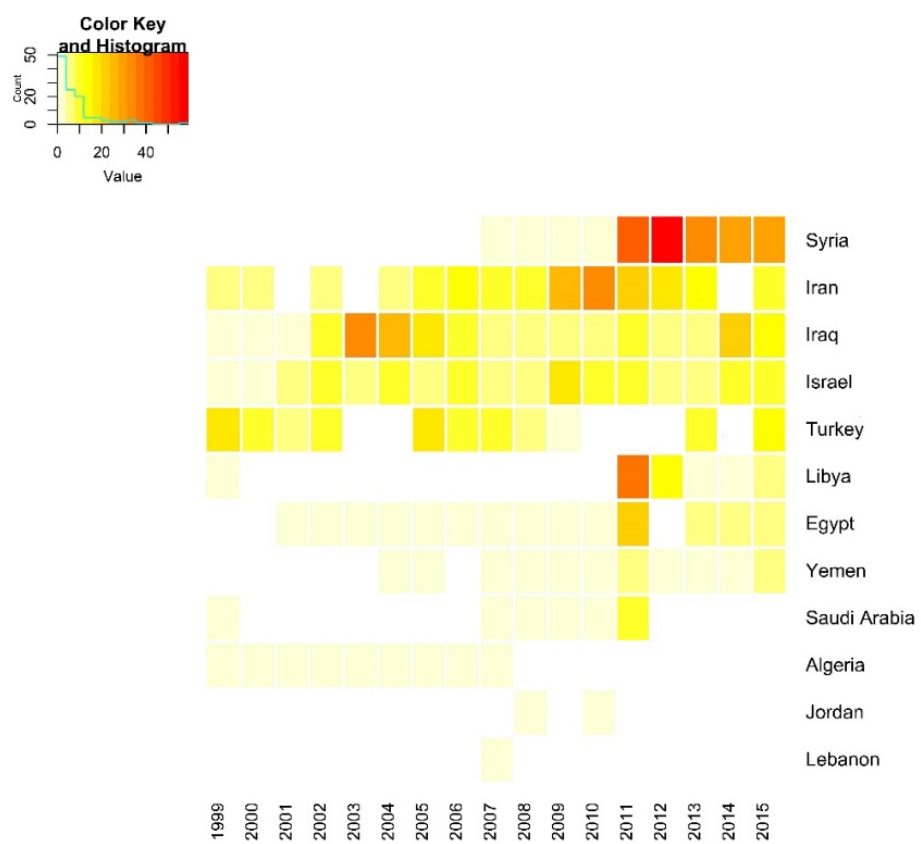
Note: media coverage ranging between 1-105 articles per year.

Appendix B 7: Media coverage of human rights violations in Latin America and the Caribbean, 1999-2015



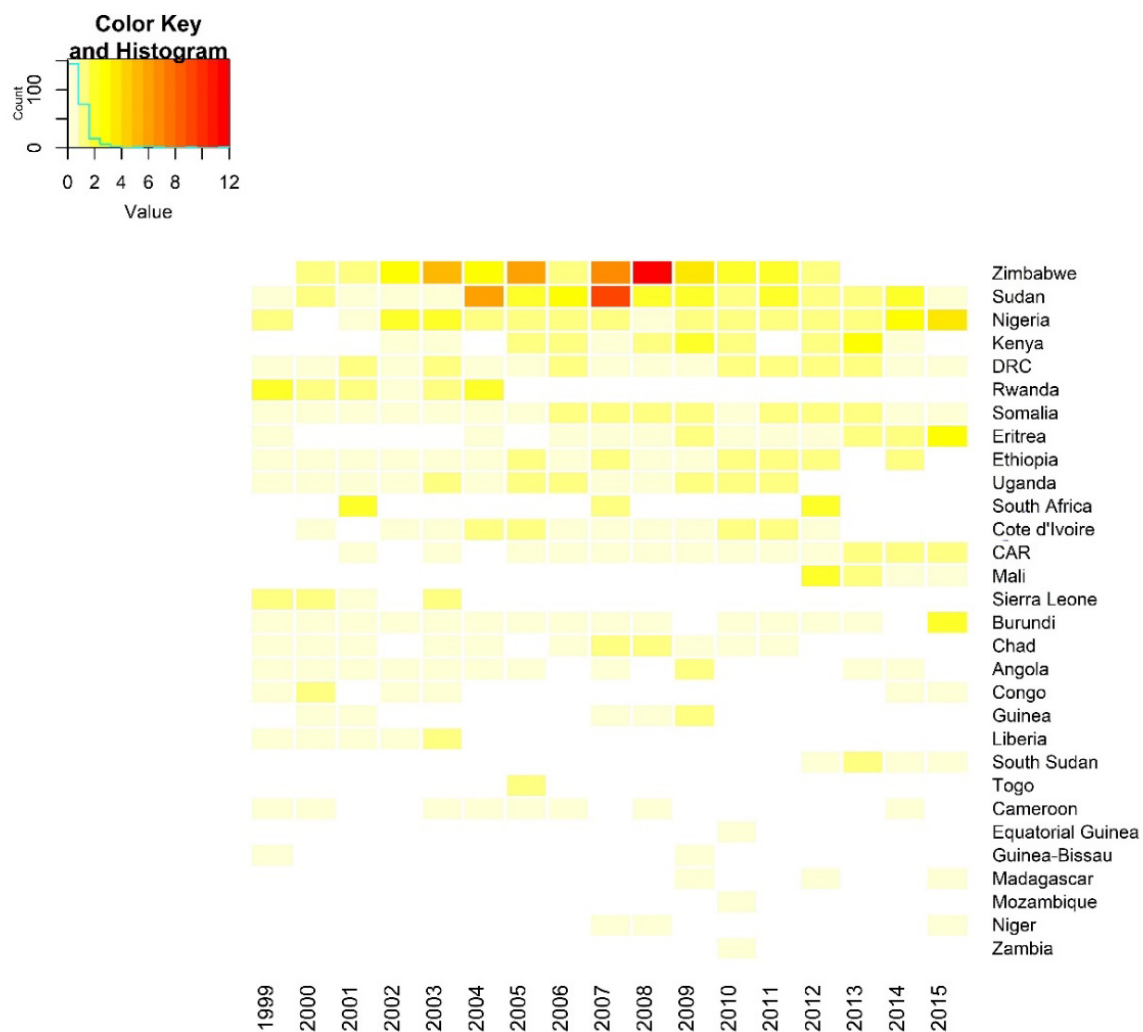
Note: media coverage ranging between 1-3 articles per year.

Appendix B 8: Media coverage of human rights violations in the MENA region, 1999-2015



Note: media coverage ranging between 1-55 articles per year.

Appendix B 9: Media coverage of human rights violations in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1999-2015



Note: media coverage ranging between 1-12 articles per year.

Appendix B 10: Binary Logit Regression (Lagged dependent variable, t-1)

	EU sanctions			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Coverage	0.10*** (0.02)	-0.03 (0.32)	0.87 (0.57)	0.87 (0.60)
Population		-0.31*** (0.08)	-0.45*** (0.10)	-0.46*** (0.10)
Trade		-0.07 (0.05)	-0.14** (0.07)	-0.14** (0.07)
Colony		0.38* (0.23)	0.69** (0.29)	0.70** (0.29)
Polity IV			-0.17*** (0.02)	-0.17*** (0.02)
Ally			-0.08 (0.25)	-0.08 (0.25)
HRtype				0.13 (0.25)
Word count				-0.0003 (0.001)
Population:coverage		0.05*** (0.02)	0.11*** (0.04)	0.11*** (0.04)
Trade:coverage		-0.03*** (0.01)	-0.10*** (0.03)	-0.10*** (0.03)
Colony:coverage		-0.02 (0.05)	-0.20** (0.09)	-0.20** (0.09)
<i>Observations</i>	1,133	1,130	1,039	1,039
<i>Log likelihood</i>	-544.48	-515.73	-370.11	-369.97
<i>AIC</i>	1,122.96	1,077.46	790.22	793.94

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < 0.0001$, ** $p < 0.001$, * $p < 0.01$.

Appendix B 11: Binary Logit Regression (German sample)

	EU sanctions			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Coverage	0.09*** (0.01)	-0.19 (0.34)	0.07 (0.52)	-0.01 (0.52)
Population		-0.22*** (0.07)	-0.25*** (0.08)	-0.26*** (0.09)
Trade		-0.11** (0.05)	-0.21*** (0.06)	-0.21*** (0.06)
Colony		0.17 (0.20)	0.42 (0.26)	0.44* (0.26)
Polity IV			-0.18*** (0.02)	-0.18*** (0.02)
Ally			-0.06 (0.23)	-0.05 (0.23)
HRtype				0.12 (0.36)
Word count				0.0002 (0.0003)
Population:coverage		0.07*** (0.02)	0.09** (0.04)	0.09** (0.04)
Trade:coverage		-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.07*** (0.02)	-0.06*** (0.02)
Colony:coverage		0.11* (0.06)	0.04 (0.10)	0.02 (0.10)
<i>Observations</i>	1,204	1,200	1,104	1,104
<i>Log likelihood</i>	-593.60	-560.78	-414.83	-414.35
<i>AIC</i>	1,223.20	1,169.56	881.67	884.69

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < 0.0001$, ** $p < 0.001$, * $p < 0.01$.

Appendix B 12: Binary Logit Regression (UK sample)

	EU sanctions			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Coverage	0.09*** (0.01)	-0.19 (0.34)	0.07 (0.52)	-0.01 (0.52)
Population		-0.22*** (0.07)	-0.25*** (0.08)	-0.26*** (0.09)
Trade		-0.11** (0.05)	-0.21*** (0.06)	-0.21*** (0.06)
Colony		0.17 (0.20)	0.42 (0.26)	0.44* (0.26)
Polity IV			-0.18*** (0.02)	-0.18*** (0.02)
Ally			-0.06 (0.23)	-0.05 (0.23)
HRtype				0.12 (0.36)
Word count				0.0002 (0.0003)
Population:coverage		0.07*** (0.02)	0.09** (0.04)	0.09** (0.04)
Trade:coverage		-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.07*** (0.02)	-0.06*** (0.02)
Colony:coverage		0.11* (0.06)	0.04 (0.10)	0.02 (0.10)
<i>Observations</i>	1,204	1,200	1,104	1,104
<i>Log likelihood</i>	-593.60	-560.78	-414.83	-414.35
<i>AIC</i>	1,223.20	1,169.56	881.67	884.69

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < 0.0001$, ** $p < 0.001$, * $p < 0.01$.

Appendix B 13: Binary Logit Regression (French sample)

	EU sanctions			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Coverage	0.09*** (0.01)	-0.19 (0.34)	0.07 (0.52)	-0.01 (0.52)
Population		-0.22*** (0.07)	-0.25*** (0.08)	-0.26*** (0.09)
Trade		-0.11** (0.05)	-0.21*** (0.06)	-0.21*** (0.06)
Colony		0.17 (0.20)	0.42 (0.26)	0.44* (0.26)
Polity IV			-0.18*** (0.02)	-0.18*** (0.02)
Ally			-0.06 (0.23)	-0.05 (0.23)
HRtype				0.12 (0.36)
Word count				0.0002 (0.0003)
Population:coverage		0.07*** (0.02)	0.09** (0.04)	0.09** (0.04)
Trade:coverage		-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.07*** (0.02)	-0.06*** (0.02)
Colony:coverage		0.11* (0.06)	0.04 (0.10)	0.02 (0.10)
<i>Observations</i>	1,204	1,200	1,104	1,104
<i>Log likelihood</i>	-593.60	-560.78	-414.83	-414.35
<i>AIC</i>	1,223.20	1,169.56	881.67	884.69

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < 0.0001$, ** $p < 0.001$, * $p < 0.01$.

Appendix B 14: Binary Logit Regression (Italian sample)

	EU sanctions			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Coverage	0.09*** (0.01)	-0.19 (0.34)	0.07 (0.52)	-0.01 (0.52)
Population		-0.22***	-0.25***	-0.26***
Trade		(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.09)
Colony		-0.11** (0.05)	-0.21*** (0.06)	-0.21*** (0.06)
Polity IV		0.17 (0.20)	0.42 (0.26)	0.44* (0.26)
Ally			-0.18*** (0.02)	-0.18*** (0.02)
HRtype			-0.06 (0.23)	-0.05 (0.23)
Word count				0.12 (0.36)
Population:coverage				0.0002 (0.0003)
Trade:coverage		0.07*** (0.02)	0.09** (0.04)	0.09** (0.04)
Colony:coverage		-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.07*** (0.02)	-0.06*** (0.02)
		0.11* (0.06)	0.04 (0.04)	0.02 (0.02)
<i>Observations</i>	1,204	1,200	1,104	1,104
<i>Log likelihood</i>	-593.60	-560.78	-414.83	-414.35
<i>AIC</i>	1,223.20	1,169.56	881.67	884.69

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < 0.0001$, ** $p < 0.001$, * $p < 0.01$.

Appendix C

Appendix C 1: Descriptive statistics

Variable	Observation	Mean	Median	Min	Max	Scale
<i>Dependent variables</i>						
EU policy	4103					categorical
US policy	4103					categorical
<i>Independent variables</i>						
Coup	4095	0.04	0.00	0.00	1.00	binary
Clean elections	4103	0.26	0.23	0.00	0.87	continuous
Political terror	4037	3.05	3.00	1.00	5.00	categorical
EU Trade (ln)	4073	20.78	20.68	14.73	26.87	continuous
US Trade (ln)	4053	5.62	5.42	0.00	13.39	continuous
GDPpc (log)	3745	7.39	7.17	4.75	11.22	continuous
Population (log)	4069	16.04	16.09	11.14	21.03	continuous
Civil Society	4103	0.48	0.49	0.01	0.95	continuous
EU ally	4103	0.26	0.00	0.00	1.00	binary
US ally	4103	0.24	0.00	0.00	1.00	binary
EU vote similarity	3918	0.66	0.65	0.00	1.00	continuous
US vote similarity	3918	0.30	0.28	0.00	1.00	continuous
EU colony		0.73	1.00	0.00	1.00	binary
One-sided violence	4103	0.12	0.00	0.00	1.00	binary

Appendix C 2: Correlation matrix of independent variables

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
(1) Coup	1												
(2) Clean elections	0.00	1											
(3) Political terror	0.07	-0.28	1										
(4) EU Trade (ln)	-0.09	0.2	0.07	1									
(5) US Trade (ln)	-0.09	0.2	0.05	0.81	1								
(6) GDPpc (log)	-0.11	0.25	-0.26	0.59	0.55	1							
(7) Population (log)	-0.03	-0.04	0.49	0.55	0.49	-0.15	1						
(8) Civil Society	0.06	0.35	-0.12	-0.05	0.08	-0.17	-0.07	1					
(9) EU ally	-0.03	0.07	-0.16	0.14	0.01	0.14	-0.04	0.06	1				
(10) US ally	-0.02	0.17	-0.05	0.15	0.19	0.13	0.11	0.13	0.59	1			
(11) EU vote similarity	-0.02	0.19	-0.18	0.02	0.01	0.06	-0.14	0.33	0.33	0.35	1		
(12) US vote similarity	0.00	0.11	-0.10	-0.02	-0.04	-0.03	-0.08	0.24	0.21	0.31	0.63	1	
(13) EU colony	0.06	-0.03	-0.03	-0.17	-0.06	-0.08	-0.21	0.04	-0.42	-0.52	-0.33	-0.26	1
(14) One-sided violence	0.09	-0.14	0.44	-0.09	-0.08	-0.22	0.18	-0.06	-0.12	-0.08	-0.09	-0.02	0.05

Appendix C 3: EU sanctioning policies following coups, 1989-2014



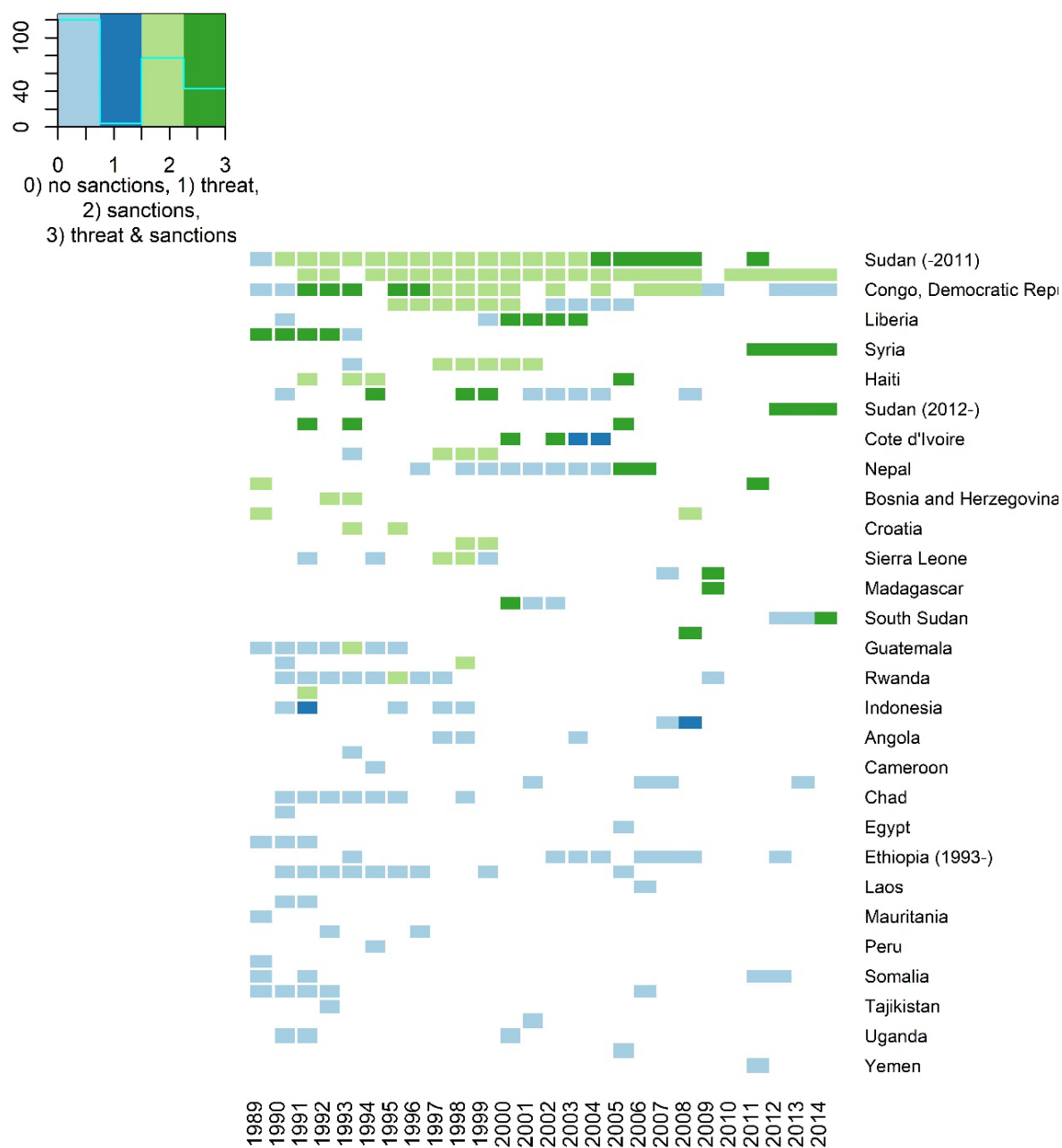
Note: Blank space if no norm violations. Data source: EUSANCT.

Appendix C 4: US sanctioning policies following coups, 1989-2014



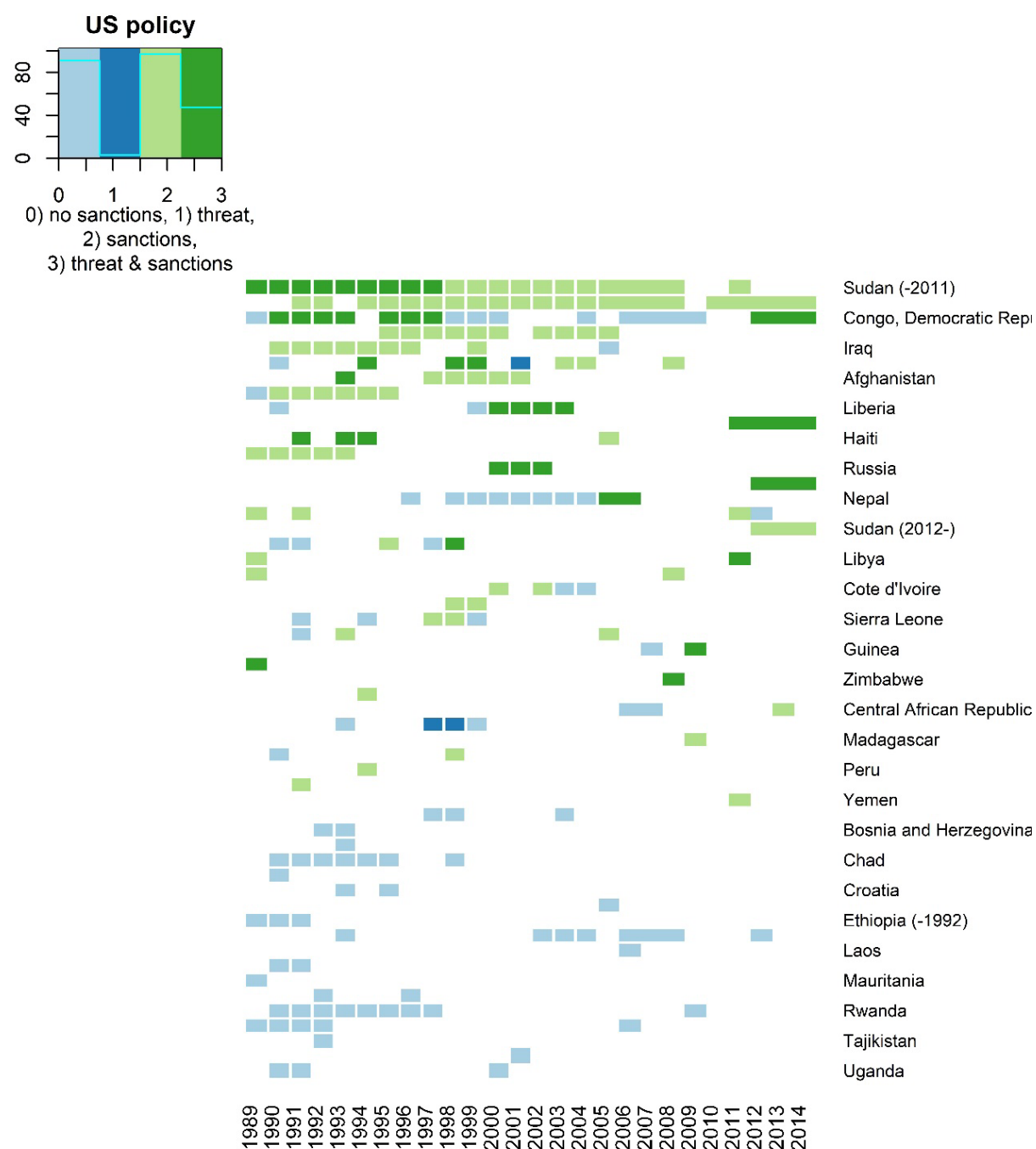
Note: Blank space if no norm violations. Data source: EUSANCT.

Appendix C 5: EU policy following one-sided violence, 1989-2014



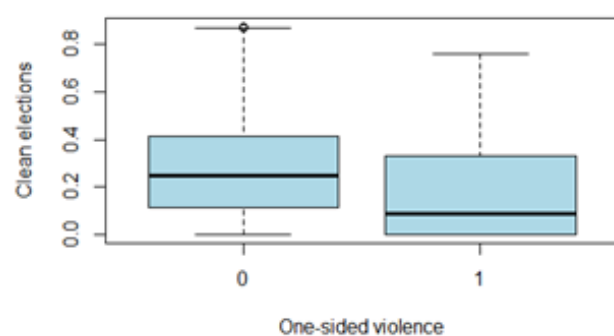
Note: Blank space if no norm violations. Data source: EUSANCT.

Appendix C 6: US policy following one-sided violence, 1989-2014



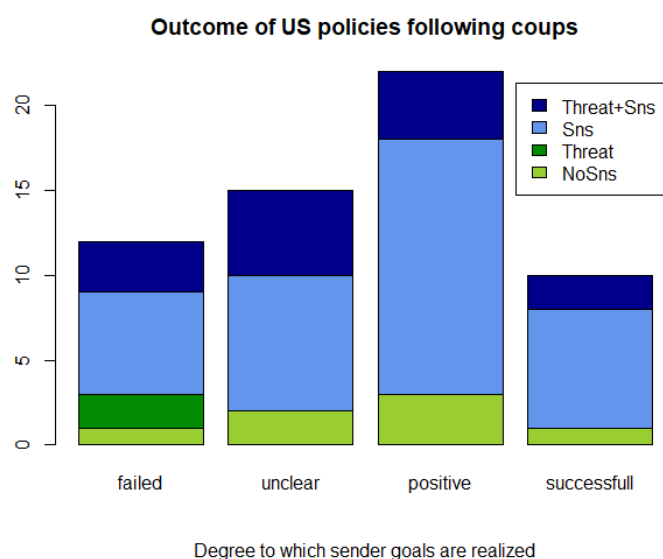
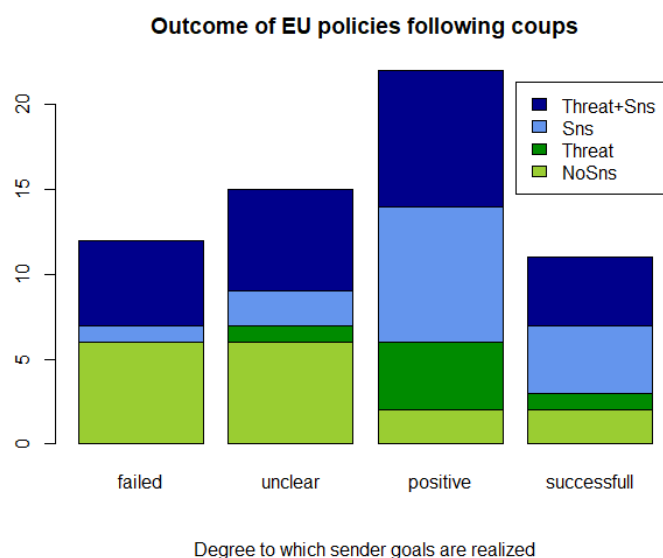
Note: Blank space if no norm violations. Data source: EUSANCT.

Appendix C 7: Electoral cleanliness and incidences of one-sided violence, 1989-2014



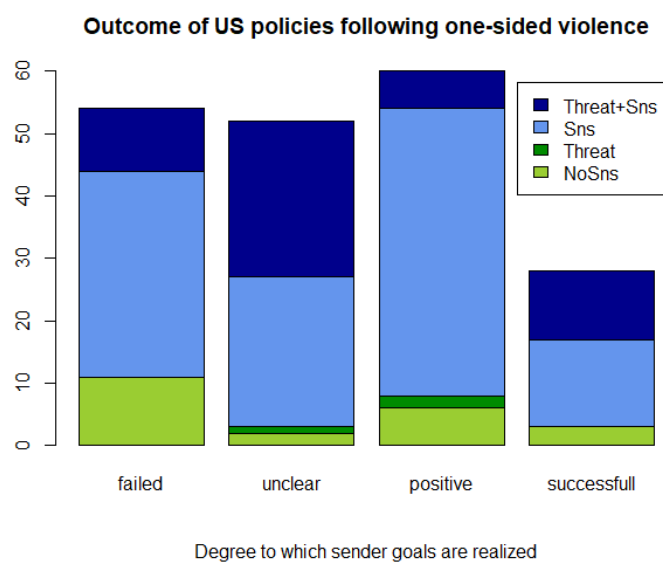
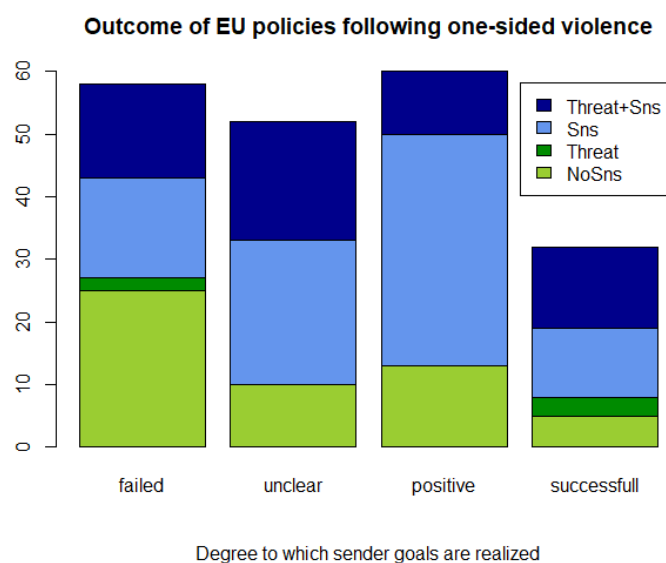
Note: 0 = no violence, 1 = one-sided violence. Data source: EUSANCT.

Appendix C 8: The success of EU and US policies following coups



Note: y-axis = number of coup cases. Data source: EUSANCT.

Appendix C 9: The success of EU and US policies following one-sided violence



Note: y-axis = number of coup cases. Data source: EUSANCT.

Appendix C 10: Multinomial logistic regression (including EU colony)

	EU policy		
	Threat	Sanction	Threat + Sanctions
Coup	2.38*** (0.58) [10.76]	1.28*** (0.39) [3.59]	1.66*** (0.33) [5.28]
Clean elections	1.31 (1.12) [3.72]	-1.78*** (0.55) [0.17]	-0.94* (0.51) [0.39]
One-sided violence	0.26 (0.63) [1.30]	1.92*** (0.23) [6.83]	1.46*** (0.25) [4.32]
Trade	-0.01 (0.29) [0.99]	0.20** (0.10) [1.22]	0.43*** (0.10) [1.54]
GDPpc	0.20 (0.38) [1.22]	-0.22* (0.13) [0.80]	-0.65*** (0.13) [0.52]
Population	0.53* (0.29) [1.69]	0.01 (0.10) [1.01]	-0.37*** (0.10) [0.69]
Civil Society	1.00 (1.11) [2.71]	-2.23*** (0.46) [0.11]	-0.70 (0.45) [0.50]
Ally	0.45 (0.59) [1.57]	0.51** (0.23) [1.67]	-0.12 (0.22) [0.89]
EU colony	0.35 (0.58) [1.41]	-0.47** (0.22) [0.62]	-0.18 (0.22) [0.84]
AIC		2321	
N		1884	

Note: Numbers are coefficients with standard error in parenthesis and odds ratio in brackets.

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.00$

Appendix C 11: Multinomial logistic regression (lagged)

	EU policy			US policy		
	Threat	Sanction	Threat + Sanctions	Threat	Sanction	Threat + Sanctions
Coup	3.03*** (0.61) [20.79]	1.14*** (0.41) [3.14]	1.83*** (0.33) [6.26]	1.23 (1.07) [3.41]	1.97*** (0.31) [7.20]	1.37*** (0.41) [3.95]
Clean elections	2.18* (1.21) [8.86]	-1.58*** (0.56) [0.21]	-0.69 (0.51) [0.50]	-1.50 (0.93) [0.22]	-0.38 (0.40) [0.69]	-0.23 (0.59) [0.79]
One-sided violence	0.88 (0.59) [2.41]	1.77*** (0.23) [5.88]	1.09*** (0.25) [2.97]	-0.26 (0.77) [0.77]	1.08*** (0.20) [2.94]	1.19*** (0.25) [3.30]
Trade	0.07 (0.31) [1.08]	0.25** (0.10) [1.29]	0.50*** (0.10) [1.65]	0.28* (0.17) [1.32]	-0.36*** (0.05) [0.70]	-0.10 (0.08) [0.91]
GDPpc	0.08 (0.40) [1.08]	-0.31** (0.14) [0.74]	-0.75*** (0.13) [0.47]	0.11 (0.28) [1.12]	0.52*** (0.09) [1.69]	-0.08 (0.14) [0.92]
Population	0.45 (0.30) [1.57]	0.01 (0.10) [1.01]	-0.41*** (0.10) [0.67]	0.30 (0.21) [1.36]	0.87*** (0.08) [2.38]	0.62*** (0.11) [1.86]
Civil Society	0.33 (1.20) [1.38]	-2.59*** (0.48) [0.07]	-1.00** (0.46) [0.37]	-1.71* (0.99) [0.18]	-1.69*** (0.37) [0.19]	-0.47 (0.51) [0.63]
Ally	0.52 (0.51) [1.68]	0.67*** (0.21) [1.96]	0.04 (0.20) [1.04]	0.01 (0.43) [1.01]	0.20 (0.17) [1.22]	0.80*** (0.22) [2.21]
AIC	2231			2642		
N	1772			1717		

Note: Numbers are coefficients with standard error in parenthesis and odds ratio in brackets.

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.00$

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PERSONAL INFORMATION

Date of birth: 04/09/1987

Nationality: Austrian

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/martinafuerrutter>

5+ years of professional experience in project management and event organization
Broad thematic knowledge and extensive research experience in democracy & compliance related topics
Co-organizer of two international conferences, several workshops and lecture series
Planning, leading, and managing an independent research project with two assistants
Strong hands-on work ethic, adaptability, effective communication skills in a multicultural environment

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Doctoral researcher and chair assistant 09.2015-05.2021

Institute of Political Science, University of St.Gallen (Switzerland)

- Planning, designing and conducting independent research on EU sanctions
- Managing a data collection and analysis project with 20,000 newspaper articles
- Supervising and mentoring two student research assistants
- Writing grant proposals to fund fieldwork and participation in international conferences
- Assisting lecture and events at the chair of comparative politics by leading student communication, co-drafting teaching material and event programs, evaluating student papers and exams, and teaching bachelor tutorials

Higher education manager 09.2016-09.2018

Schools for Economics and Political Science, University of St.Gallen (Switzerland)

- Assisting the management of two study programs (BA and MA Economics), which included the communication with university administration, students, and alumni
- Organizing events, such as the welcome week for freshmen
- Maintaining the website (CMS) and social media channels

Doctoral researcher 09.2014-08.2015

Institute of Political Science, University of Innsbruck (Austria)

- Planning, designing and conducting independent research
- Organizing a lecture series with 10 national and international speakers
- Coordinating the Innsbruck Centre for European Research

Conference manager 03.2013-07.2014

Institute of Political Science, University of Innsbruck (Austria)

- Organizing two international political science conferences
- Coordinating the international event management team
- Event planning, sponsor acquisition, head of correspondence with participants

Political education intern 06.2011-09.2011

Akademie für Politische Bildung, Tutzing (Germany)

- Mentoring the participants and speakers of seminars and trainings
- Assistance in the conception, preparation as well as implementation of conferences
- Drafting conference reports

EDUCATION

Doctorate in International Affairs and Political Economy University of St.Gallen, Switzerland Thesis: The EU and the sanctioning of norm violations.	09.2015-09.2021
Doctoral Program in Democracy Studies (DPDS) University of Zurich, Switzerland External student of the DPDS program.	09.2015-05.2021
Master in International Economics and Business Studies University of Innsbruck, Austria Thesis: Do politics matter? A political economy explanation of regional trade agreements.	10.2007-11.2012
Bachelor in Political Science University of Innsbruck, Austria	10.2008-06.2013
Erasmus exchange year Universidad de Zaragoza, Spain	09.2010-06.2011

LANGUAGES & IT SKILLS

German: native proficiency
English: full professional proficiency (C1/ C2)
Spanish: good knowledge (B1)
French: basic knowledge (A1)

MS Office Suite: excellent knowledge in all windows office applications (Mac and PC)
Statistical software: advanced knowledge in data management and analysis with R and Stata

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Volunteer at the social gardening project 'Neue Gärten Ostschweiz' of the Swiss Church Aid (HEKS/EPER) which facilitates the integration of people with a migration background.
Member of the organization committee of the World University Championship (WUC) in Cross Country 2018 in St.Gallen, with main responsibility in recruiting and coordinating 150 volunteers.
Lead coordinator of a peer group of women in democracy studies (WIDE) at the University of Zurich.

INTERESTS

Sports: I find my balance in movement, such as practising yoga in the mornings, going for runs in the woods, or for a swim in the lake. I have trained as a yoga teacher in 2016/17 and enjoy teaching yoga classes ever since.

Nature: I recharge my batteries best in nature; be it hiking in the mountains, walking with our family dog, or reading a good book in the sun.

People and cultures: Leaving school, I spent a voluntary social year as an au pair in Tramore (Ireland) and have enjoyed getting to know foreign countries and people with different cultural backgrounds ever since.