



Department of Political Science

Chair of Security Studies

Double Degree Program with MGIMO

**ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AS A SECURITY
INSTRUMENT IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
(THE CASE OF RUSSIA)**

Lt. Gen. Carlo Magrassi

SUPERVISOR

Prof. Igor Pellicciari

CO-SUPERVISOR

Chiara Manfredi

Matr. 637972

CANDIDATE

Academic Year 2019-2020

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Chapter I – Sanctions: Economic Instrument for Security Purposes	13
1.1. What are economic sanctions?.....	13
1.2. Primary, secondary and tertiary objectives of sanctions	17
1.3. Effects of economic sanctions	21
1.4. The efficiency of sanctions	29
Achieving primary objectives	29
Achieving secondary objectives.....	32
Achieving tertiary objectives	33
1.5. Conclusions to the Chapter.....	39
Chapter II – Western Security Objectives in Imposing Sanctions on Russia	43
2.1. The rationale of 2014 sanctions on Russia: the security threat	44
2.2. US objectives	53
2.3. EU objectives.....	59
2.4. Conclusions to the Chapter	65
Chapter III- The Perspective of a Middle Power: Italy’s position regarding Russia..	67
3.1. Italian Security Agenda	67
3.2. Why imposing sanctions?	70
3.3. Italy’s current position regarding Russia.....	75
3.4. Conclusions to the Chapter: Are sanctions efficient in achieving the security objectives of Italy?	80
Chapter IV – The impact of Sanctions on Russia	82

4.1. Russian narrative.....	82
4.2. Economic impact and domestic reaction	87
4.3. Geopolitical re-orientation: Russian foreign and security strategy	92
The near abroad.....	93
Pivot to the East, or to Beijing	95
The new broker in the Middle East.....	98
Russia in the rest of the world.....	101
4.4. Amplifying factors of sanctions efficiency: Covid19 and the Oil War.....	102
Conclusions	106
Are economic and related sanctions efficient in achieving the security objectives of the sanctioning countries in the case of Russia?	106
Can sanctions be considered the best instrument to attain security objectives of countries in the international relations?	110
Bibliography	111
Summary.....	124

Introduction

Relevance

In the past, transnational disputes, notwithstanding the due exceptions, were generally settled through the use of force. However, the technological development permitted to engage in very serious conflicts that were the main agents of drastic bloodsheds and brought the international community to consider alternative ways to settle inter-states disputes. Economic sanctions, and related measures, have been widely used by the Western countries across the twentieth century to the point that they became one of the main instruments to quickly respond to international crises. In turn, the different performances of sanctions opened a long-lasting debate about the efficiency of this measure.

Today, the issue is extensively discussed among the scholars because they can assert the long-term consequences of sanctions and judge the level of their efficiency. Despite the criticisms, sanctions remain a common practice to pursue foreign and security objectives. Moreover, the argument acquired relevance when the West decided to impose sanctions on Russia in response of the annexation of Crimea and the military activities in Eastern Ukraine that were attributed to the Russian Federation.

The main difference from the other cases is that economic coercive measures were implemented on a great power that, differently from the former Soviet Union, is more embedded in the global economy, particularly in the energy sector, and a deep economic downfall could imply substantial costs to the sanctioning countries. Second, the long promulgation of sanctions seems not to push the target to compel with the senders' demands. Rather, they provide him the incentive to diversify its relations and adapt to the presence of sanctions. The difference from precedent cases of sanctions is that, when a great power starts to promote a new foreign agenda, it intrinsically indicates the willingness of diverge from the current status of international relations and transit to a new balance of powers that better represents him. Such transition could implicate significant security issues for those states that still obtain benefits from the current international structure. Consequentially, Russia's interest in the conflict is very

high because it does not only concern the Ukrainian crisis but questions the prominence of United States and its allies over the rest of the world. Despite the opposing views, Western countries not only continue to adopt sanctions against Russia, but they even widened their scope, suggesting that the objectives of sanctions are broader and more complex than it could seem.

The purpose of this dissertation is to provide an opinion on the efficiency of sanctions as a security instrument in the international relations by applying the main academic findings to the case of Russia. The perseverance of adopting such measure suggests that there are multiple security objectives of the countries in question. Analysing the case of Russia can be useful to assert whether sanctions can be a useful mean to settle conflicts with great powers, or they require the implementation of alternative measures, like diplomatic or military efforts, to actually achieve the security agenda of the sanctioning countries. At the same time, the outcome of this dissertation could reveal the best scenarios in which sanctions work to settle conflicts and the possible recommendations for their use in the other issues.

Scope of the Analysis

The scope of this dissertation will consider in depth the case of Russia, from asserting the security objectives of the sanctioning countries to the political and security impact they had on the Eurasian giant. In order to ensure a better analysis, this dissertation will consider the academic opinion of the abovementioned scholars who studied several cases of sanctions and proposed several arguments in assessing their efficiency. However, the research presents few limits that should be outlined.

First, several countries have imposed economic restrictions against Russia in response of the annexation of Crimea. However, including all of them into the analysis would be too long and risk to miss the point of the research, which is evaluating the efficiency of sanctions. Therefore, I decided to limit the research on the two main sanctioning entities that, despite not being directly involved in the conflict, consider the Ukrainian issue a threat to their security. These entities are the United States and the European Union.

Second, the European Union is composed of sovereign countries whose security agenda, sometimes, concede and, other times, conflicts with each other. In the case of Russia, they demonstrated to have more common security objectives than diverging ones, but the cultural and economic differences of the members imply that they might be willing to achieve other points of their political agenda in the future. To make more effective the analysis, it would be necessary to consider the security objectives of all the EU members and why they promote measures that could be conflicting with their main security interests. Yet, also in this case it would be redundant and risk of getting out the scope of the research. Therefore, I found convenient to take the example of one single EU middle power, namely Italy, that will give a quick insight of the internal dynamics of the union.

Finally, this dissertation is limited on the case of sanctions imposed on Russia in 2014 and it does not make appropriate parallels with other cases. However, the first chapter of this dissertation considers the opinions of scholars that had studied several precedent cases and provides the opportunity to construct solid grounds to comprehend the impact of sanctions on Russia. Hence, despite the lack of an effective comparison of various cases, the thesis will generally consider the existing academic literature, allowing to draw conclusions on the efficiency of sanctions in pursuing security objectives.

Aim and Tasks of the Research

The aim of this author is to understand the reasons that bring countries to impose sanctions and assess the efficiency of the same in pursuing their security objectives.

The tasks of the thesis are:

- Explaining what economic sanctions are and how they became a tool of foreign policy.
- Clarifying what are the security objectives of countries that impose sanctions and how they influence the target state.
- Exploring and determining the circumstances in which economic sanctions can be an effective security instrument.

- Explaining the rationale of the 2014 sanctions against Russia.
- Determining whether the security objectives of the Western countries concede and how their objectives affect the efficiency of sanctions.
- Analysing the perspective of an EU middle power, notably Italy.
- Understanding the Russian narrative of the conflict and evaluating the consequences that sanctions provoked on the target.
- Considering third factors that could have eventually amplified the effects of sanctions.

Object and Subject of the Research

The **object of the research** is the use of economic sanctions as a security instrument in international relations.

The **subject of the study** will be the sanctions imposed by the United States and the European Union on Russia in 2014 and the consequences of these sanctions.

Research Questions

The research questions are:

- Are economic and related sanctions efficient in achieving the security objectives of the sanctioning countries in the case of Russia?
- Can sanctions be considered the best instrument to attain security objectives of countries in the international relations?

General Hypothesis

The initial hypothesis is that the current sanction regime against Russia is not efficient in pursuing the security interests of sanctioning states. It is mainly because of the importance of the conflict for the target, the economic and geopolitical size of the sanctioned country and the differences in the US and EU security agendas. This would confirm the great criticism behind the use of sanctions in the twenty-first century and give reasonable grounds of why sanctions are not an efficient security instrument in the international relations.

Methodology of the Research

Scholars have produced several studies with the purpose of analysing the efficiency of sanctions on various cases. However, the considerable number of variables that affect the success of sanctions brought the scholars to have different opinions. Therefore, in the first place, this thesis will consult the academic literature to define a methodology, that would try to be objective and consider all the factors relevant to the case. This brought to identify various levels of objectives that push the countries to impose sanctions. Thanks to this hierarchy, it will be possible to identify the main variables that influence the success of these objectives, especially in the security framework.

Once the methodology is found, it will be applied on the sanctioning entities that are subject to this research, notably United States, European Union, and Italy. Then, the economic, political and security variables that were identified as relevant to the case will be considered in assessing the impact of sanctions on the Russian Federation. Finally, this dissertation will briefly include possible factors that could have amplified the effect of sanctions.

Literature Review

I will use a broad literature that studies the nature of the economic sanctions and the history of their gradual implementation as a foreign policy strategy. This part is useful to see how sanctions come in different forms and they do not affect only the economic sphere, but they can also hit the financial and diplomatic sectors. However, they are often referred with the term of economic sanctions because it is within this framework that the consequences of this measure are the most evident. To this purpose, I studied the works of Davis and Engerman, in *History Lessons, Sanctions: neither War nor Peace*, Kern Alexander, in *Economic Sanctions: Law and Public Policy*, Margaret Doxey, in *International Sanctions in Theory and Practice*, and the revised paper of Hufbauer, Schott and Elliott who analysed the subject of sanctions all across the 80s and proposed updated versions of their work in *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered*.

Once the historical grounds on the use of economic sanctions are explained, this dissertation will analyse the academic literature to search the right methodology to determine the success of sanctions and assess their efficiency. In order to guarantee the most objective analysis on the case of Russia, I decided to consult the works of scholars that did not treat the 2014 sanctions. The work made by James Barber in *Economic Sanctions as a Policy Instrument* is a comprehensive study on the use of sanctions and their efficiency on various levels and it is very convenient to the purpose of this research. Moreover, Barber considered the following cases of sanctions in his analysis: League of Nations against Italy when invaded Abyssinia; The British sanctions against Rhodesia; and the US sanctions against Cuba. I will also include the opinions of other scholars, among which I report here Anna Schreiber, in *Economic Coercion as an Instrument of Foreign Policy*, and John Galtung, *On the Effects of International Economic Sanctions: with Examples from the Case of Rhodesia*.

On the effects of economic sanctions, I will list the variables identified by Oxenstierna and Olsson, in *The Economic Sanctions Against Russia*, which was an empirical study built on two main data sets. Both of these include successful and failed sanctions as well as series of potential explanatory variables. The most widely cited, the HSEO13 dataset, has been created and updated by Hufbauer et al. (2007). It contains cases from 1915 to 2000 of which the majority were imposed by the US. The later *Threat and Imposition of Economic Sanctions (TIES)* data set was constructed by Morgan et al. (2009) and contains cases of threatened and imposed sanctions during the period 1971–2000 and is used by Bapat et al. (2013) as well. Obviously, I will also include other sources of the academic literature that I found relevant to assess the variables that contribute to the success of sanctions, such as Daniel Drezner, in *Bargaining Enforcement, and Multilateral Sanctions*, Miers and Morgan, in *Multilateral Sanctions and Foreign Policy Success*, and Kaempfer and Lowenberg, in *The Political Economy of Economic Sanctions*.

On the efficiency of sanctions, I will propose the conclusions of most of the scholars abovementioned. In particular, regarding the efficiency of achieving primary sanctions, I will consult the work of the scholars that are the most cited on this

argument, among which there are Otto Wolff von Amerongen, in *Economic Sanctions as a Foreign Policy Tool?*, Robert Pope, in *Why Economic Sanctions Do Not Work*, Doxey, Galtung and Elliott et al. that were previously mentioned. On the efficiency of the secondary objectives of sanctions, I will introduce the research of MacLean and Whang, who studied how voters' preferences can influence and design the foreign policy of a democratic country. Finally, the efficiency of tertiary objectives will be assessed through the analysis of the ideology that dominates the current international system, namely liberalism. To this purpose, it will be made an insight of the liberal vision on the security issues, considering the main exponents, such as Deutsch et al. (1957), Burton (1972) Rosenau (1980s and 1990s), Russett and Oneal (2001), Haas (1964).

Completed the part concerning the theories of using the economic sanctions, this dissertation will consider the studies made on the specific case of Russia. It will focus on the works of those authors that gave more attention on the reasons that brought the Western states to consider Russia as a threat and the security implications of the sanctions. To this purpose, I will propose the studies of Prezelj and Harangozo, in *Confidence and Security-Building Measures in Europe at a Crossroads*, Angela Stent, in *Putin's World*, and Larrabee, Wilson and Gordon IV, in *The Ukrainian Crisis and European Security: Implications for the United States and the US Army*.

In addition, I will insert the official statements of the countries in question (such White Papers, Foreign Policy Concepts, Brief Reports of the Parliament and speeches of the highest representative of the state) and articles available online that I found relevant to this research. Especially in the case of the United States and European Union, I will try to focus on the official documents produced by their institutions.

In the literature review is also present the paperwork of the most prestigious research centres of the countries in concern because they well reflect their own national interests and the dynamics of their relations before and after the imposition of sanctions. In the case of Italy, I will particularly consider the studies produced by the *Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale (ISPI)*, *Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)* and *Limes*, an important Italian magazine about geopolitical issues. While in the

case of Russia, I will focus on the research made by the *Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC)* and the *Valdai Discussion Club*.

These sources will contribute to comprehend the consequences of sanctions and assess the level of their efficiency.

Structure of the Dissertation

The following dissertation will have four chapters. The first chapter will explore the existing academic literature concerning the nature of sanctions and their efficiency as political and security instrument. This chapter is not only useful to understand the opinions of the scholars from other sanctions cases, but it will attempt to figure the ideal scenario in which sanctions can be effective.

The second chapter will analyse the reasons that brought the Atlantic alliance to consider Russia a threat and implement sanctions to safeguard their security. In detail, the chapter will explore the various levels of security objectives of the USA and the EU. It will also be considering the eventual changes that occurred in their security agenda since 2014. The aim is to understand whether the Atlantic bloc shares the same goals, or they pursue different objectives.

The third chapter is a short insight in the position of Italy on the Russian question. Italy represents an EU middle power which has interests in both imposing sanctions but would also benefit in loosen them up or completely lift them. Such insight is necessary to understand that EU members have to come to terms with the security regime that regulated Europe since the end of World War Two, sometimes at the expenses of their national interests. But it also outlines how delicate is the unitary consensus of the EU on the question of sanctions.

The fourth and last chapter will focus on the Russian narrative and the impact of sanctions. It will briefly explore the economic consequences and, later, it will analyse the impact on the population and the national interests after the fatidic 2014. This chapter will not only outline the Russian Foreign policy priorities, but the strategy that was implemented to counter the restrictions and that probably would not have been adopted if the sanctions were not imposed in the first place.

In conclusion, there will be made considerations on the level of efficiency of sanctions in pursuing the security objectives of the senders in the case of Russia. Finally, it will be made a reflection whether economic and related sanctions can be considered as a useful instrument to enforce security in the international relations.

Chapter I – Sanctions: Economic Instrument for Security Purposes

The promotion of national interests has been at the basis of countries' foreign policy for centuries. Trade and scientific cooperation have demonstrated to be useful means to achieve peace and focus on the economic and cultural development of the countries that adopt them. At the same time, history has shown how often national interests collide with the policies of other states or they are source of security concern. However, where leaders preferred not engaging in warfare to settle a conflict, they opted the adoption of economic coercive measures demonstrating that, throughout history, economic sanctions have been an integral part of foreign policy of most nation-states¹.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the definition of economic sanctions in all its forms. What are economic sanctions? How did economic sanctions become a tool of foreign policy? What are the security objectives and how they influence the target state? Is an effective instrument for security enforcement? In what circumstances can economic sanctions be effective? When are they not effective?

By answering to these questions, it will be possible to construct solid grounds to understand the consequences of the sanctions imposed on Russia in 2014 and assess whether they had fulfilled their purpose as a security instrument of international relations or, on the contrary, they were unable to attain their objectives, demonstrating that economic sanctions are not an efficient security tool.

1.1. What are economic sanctions?

There exist different definitions of economic sanctions, but they generally agree that sanctions are restrictive economic measures implemented in the pursuit of foreign and security policy aims. The definition offered by the *Council on Foreign Relations* is quite simple and intuitive, "Economic sanctions are defined as the withdrawal of

¹Kern Alexander, *Economic Sanctions: Law and Public Policy* (Palgrave: Macmillan, 2009) p. 8.

customary trade and financial relations for foreign and security policy purposes²”. They can take a variety of forms and target either specific individuals or entire countries. In the nineteenth century, economic sanctions consisted primarily of pacific blockades, notably the deployment of a naval force whose purpose is interrupting commercial intercourse with certain ports or coasts of a state with which these countries were not at war³. However, sanctions also include the refusing of diplomatic recognition, the boycotting of athletic and cultural events and confiscating individuals’ properties of targeted countries. Those that usually attract the greatest attention and seem to have higher impact are those composed of various restrictions on international trade, like the embargoes abovementioned, limits on financial flows or the movement of people⁴.

In principle, sanctions may seem appealing when compared to wars. They may provide lower-cost strategy of punishing countries that deviate from international standards of conduct and of resolving disputes between states. Yet, it took centuries before such instrument of security enforcement became an integral part of the foreign policy of countries. This because the rules regulating the correct behaviour of implementing sanctions were late in emerging and not clearly defined as those for wartime.

Before the nineteenth century, economic sanctions were used for a variety of reasons but mainly as subordinate tools of military policy during war times⁵. Several examples date back to the ancient Greece, when Athens banned trade with the city-state of Megara in 432 B.C. during the Peloponnesian War. During the religious wars of Europe’s reformation, trade embargoes and other economic sanctions were a useful mean to compel compliance with treaty obligations and, therefore, provide protection to the Christian minorities⁶. Yet, the adoption of economic sanctions was not a common practice as it is nowadays.

²Jonathan Masters, ‘What are Economic Sanctions?’, *Council on Foreign Relations*, August 7 2017. Available at: <https://www.cfr.org/background/what-are-economic-sanctions> [Accessed 28.02.2020]

³Lance Davis and Stanley Engerman, ‘History Lessons// Sanctions: neither War nor Peace’, *Journal of Economic Perspective*, 2003, 17 (2), p. 188.

⁴Lance Davis and Stanley Engerman, ‘History Lessons// Sanctions: neither War nor Peace’, p. 187.

⁵ Kern Alexander, *Economic Sanctions: Law and Public Policy*, p. 8.

⁶ *Ibid.*

Since the end of World War One, the absolute and legitimate right of nation-states to resort to war came to an end and it was generally recognized that modern warfare implied mass destruction of human life and the devastation of nations' cultural heritage⁷. Following the enactment of the League of Nations Covenant, states were authorized to use economic coercive measures to punish countries' aggressive actions against other states. The word "sanction" does not feature in the text of the League Covenant or later in the UN Charter, although it has always been used to describe the measures envisaged⁸. Despite a relative success in solving some conflicts in post WWI, the League of Nations was unable to provide an efficient economic sanctions regime. Together with the lack of real engagement of its members and the support of USA as main economic actor at that time, it meant the collapse of the League and the outbreak of new unprecedented bloodshed⁹.

The shortcoming of the weak sanction regime proposed by the League of Nations were mostly solved in the aftermath of World War Two. First, export controls and asset blocking orders were largely used during the conflict and mostly maintained for a short period following the end of war. However, in the case of the United States, economic controls were later extended into a comprehensive system of economic and financial restrictions against the Soviet Union, other communist countries of concern and international terrorists¹⁰. The need of establishing alternative coercive measures that would not trigger the use of nuclear weapons brought the USA and its allies to consider the economic sanctions as one of their foreign policy tools. This practice gradually contributed to the formation of a sanction regime. Second, the use of economic sanctions as political punishment became an internationally accepted practice within the United Nations. According to art. 39 of Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the Security Council (UNSC) is charged of identifying the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations to maintain or restore international peace and security. In this regard, the UNSC was enabled to decide

⁷Makio Miyagawa, *Do Economic Sanctions Work?* (Palgrave: Macmillan, 2016) p. 4.

⁸Margaret Doxey, 'International Sanctions in Theory and Practice', *Western Reserve Journal of International Law*, 1983, 15(iss2) p. 274.

⁹Kern Alexander, *Economic Sanctions: Law and Public Policy*, p. 9.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

what measures shall be taken in accordance with Articles 41 and 42, whose words leave intended the ability to recommend sanctions. Moreover, the prerequisite for the use of sanctions was simplified to the sole agreement of the five permanent members and at least four non-permanent ones in the Security Council. This implied that, differently from the previous League Covenant, the grounds for UN sanctions were broad and easier to be adopted. Sanctions were expected to serve a wider community with the purpose establishing peace and good order and not accomplish the interests of individual states¹¹. Finally, following the 9/11 attack, US President George W. Bush declared war on terror, and he was immediately supported by several leaders like the Russian President Vladimir V. Putin. Consequentially, a vast international regime of financial and economic sanctions was established against recognized terrorists and the entities that supported them¹².

Considering all the above mentioned points, the sanctions imposed since the end of World War Two registered a dramatic increase along the twentieth century. Considering eleven cases of sanctions imposed by the United Nations (often implemented thanks a significant US role), there were 15 cases in the 1950s, 20 in the 1960s, 37 in the 1970s, 23 in the 1980s and at least 50 in the 1990s¹³. At this point, economic sanctions became the most acceptable and attractive mean to refrain states from the threat or use of force but, in any case, able to respond to the rule-breaking act of another state. Since the 1960s, economic sanctions have been usually imposed unilaterally by the United States, but, starting from the 1990s, intergovernmental coalitions started cooperating in such framework to increase the impact of their actions on the sanctioned country. Thus, the European countries and their regional organization has a legacy of coordinated sanctions with the United States that continued until today.

Nevertheless, great criticisms still exist regarding its efficiency. Analysing what determines the success of sanctions and, consequentially, assess their efficiency as instrument of security policy will be the focus of the next sections. Before all, it is

¹¹Margaret Doxey, *International Sanctions in Theory and Practice*, pp.274-275.

¹²Kern Alexander, *Economic Sanctions: Law and Public Policy*, p. 10.

¹³Gary Clyde Hufbauer, Jeffrey J. Schott, and Kimberly Ann Elliott, *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered*, 2d rev. ed., 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Institute for International Economics [IIE], 1990).

necessary to discuss what sanctions can achieve and what are the main objectives in the pursuit of foreign and security aims. In this regard, the academic literature focuses on several perspectives, reason for which scholars' assessment of the efficiency of economic sanctions varies significantly. In the attempt of offering the best analysis of this argument, I consider the work made by James Barber in *Economic Sanctions as a Policy Instrument* very complete. Together with the evaluations of other scholars, it is possible to propose a comprehensive study on the use of sanctions and their efficiency on various levels.

1.2. Primary, secondary and tertiary objectives of sanctions

In his article, James Barber made an analysis of some cases of sanctions¹⁴ and realized that the reasons for which such instrument is imposed are far from simple and straightforward. Generally, they can be grouped into three categories. There are '**primary objectives**' which consider the actions and behaviour of the *target state* – the state or regime against whom the sanctions are directed¹⁵. In this concern, scholars usually identify the purpose of sanctions to achieve at least one of the following aims. First, whenever the purpose is to **deter future behaviour**, that is dissuading a country from carrying out further unacceptable actions. Deterrence can occur within two modalities. *Deterrence by punishment* which imposes further costs if the target state continues to transgress the accepted code of conduct. Otherwise, countries may deploy the *deterrence by denial* whose purpose is weakening the capabilities of the sanctioned state by imposing costs or refusing to transfer fundamental tangible or intangible assets¹⁶. For example, a technology transfer embargo or acquiring energy from third-markets may impose impossible costs on the target state and oblige it to adopt an acceptable behaviour. Second, sanctioning countries may be not only concerned in

¹⁴James Barber considered the cases of sanctions imposed by the League of Nations against Italy when invaded Abyssinia; The British sanctions against Rhodesia; and the US sanctions against Cuba. See James Barber, 'Economic Sanction as a Policy Instrument', *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944)*, 1979, 55 (3), pp. 367-384.

¹⁵*Ivi.*, p.370.

¹⁶Nigel Gould-Davies, 'Economic Effects and Political Impacts: Assessing Western Sanctions on Russia', *Bank of Finland: BOFIT Institute for Economies in Transition*, 2018, Policy Brief (8), p.6.

preventing future transgressions but also willing to **reverse past behaviour**. Then, the purpose in this case is not deterrence, but compellence¹⁷. However, actions taken in this regard tend to be inefficient. For example, Russia was punished for the annexation of Crimea which, according to the Western view, it violated the integrity of Ukraine's territory. Yet, despite the costs imposed by the sanctions, it is very unlikely that Russia would reverse its decision because it has already created new political realities, stakes and commitments. It is inherently easier to persuade a country not to attempt a wrong action rather than undo a *fait accompli*. Third, sanctions can target a specific political authority and push toward a **regime change**. The threat or the imposition of economic restrictions can translate into unbearable costs, to the point that the government steps down voluntarily or following the popular pressure¹⁸. Fourth, the purpose of sanctions may be willing to **condemn transgression** of generally accepted norms and standards. In this sense, they can translate into sporting boycott or limited military strike¹⁹. Furthermore, the measures implemented have not only concrete consequences, but as well include symbolic repercussions, reason for which they could easily fit into the secondary objectives explained by Barber. Indeed, all the points before mentioned may not be part of the primary objectives and, therefore, not given the most emphasis. However, they could be considered a secondary or tertiary purpose.

Driving away the attention from the most evident reasons of imposing sanctions, there are '**secondary objectives**.' They concern the status, behaviour and expectations of the imposing state or sender– the one or multiple governments imposing the sanctions²⁰. They are related both to home and international levels and have positive and negative aspects. On the positive side, imposing countries seize the opportunity to demonstrate at national and international level the effectiveness of their policy. On the other hand, "the purpose may simply be to anticipate and deflect criticism²¹". Countries may impose sanctions to be coherent with the public opinion or their allies. For instance, the USA was willing to punish Russia for what it perceives as a breach of the

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰J. Barber, *Economic Sanction as a Policy Instrument*, p.370.

²¹*Ivi.*, p.380.

international law. On the other hand, USA would not have undertaken military action against Russia unless strictly necessary and it would not have deployed the NATO forces in defence of Ukraine that is not even a member. Therefore, imposing sanctions was the best immediate solution. It gave the illusion at national and international level of USA taking care of the issue and avoiding substantial criticism, at least in the first period²².

Secondary objectives may be symbolic and contain elements that express a sense of morality. The importance of secondary objectives should not be undermined. Several scholars justify the persistence of introducing and applying economic sanctions because they accomplish secondary purposes. Anna Schreiber maintains that “it is mainly its symbolic functions that makes economic coercion a tempting policy for governments²³”. Equally Johan Galtung remains sympathetic to the use of sanctions because whenever “[they] do not serve instrumental purposes, they have expressive functions²⁴”. Consequentially, sanctions remain a popular foreign policy tool. Indeed, they can accomplish a considerable number of goals in the respect of the international norms and national interests. For example, countries appreciate economic sanctions because they can be designed and implemented quickly. Second, the initial impact is immediate and visible. Third, it is easy to explain their rationale when they respond to unwanted international actions. Fourth, economic sanctions can be implemented to a relatively small or large international incident. Finally, sanctions provide an invasive yet non-military response when military action is impossible for one reason or another²⁵. Yet, if sanctions are meant to accomplish both foreign and security aims, when analysing their efficiency, it is necessary to assess whether security policy can be achieved through symbolic functions²⁶.

²²Further analysis on the case-study of Russia will be made in the next chapter.

²³See Anna P. Schreiber, 'Economic Coercion as an Instrument of Foreign Policy', *World Politics*, 1973, 25 (3), p.413.

²⁴Johan Galtung, 'On the Effects of International Economic Sanctions: with Examples from the Case of Rhodesia', *World Politics*, 1967, 19(3) p. 412.

²⁵John Forrer, 'Economic Sanctions: Sharpening a Vital Foreign Policy Tool', *Atlantic Council: Global Business & Economics Program*, June 2017, Issue Brief, p. 2.

²⁶Further discussion on this point will be made on 1.4. *The Efficiency of Sanctions*.

Finally, there are ‘**tertiary objectives**’ related to broader international considerations, such as the structure and operation of the international system which may reflect a unipolar or multipolar world²⁷. Consequentially, tertiary objective may have the purpose of ensuring that a certain pattern of behaviour in the international relations is imposed. For instance, the League of Nations was created with the attempt of outlawing aggression as undeniable instrument of states in setting disputes. Despite the failure of the organisation, international law developed substantially throughout the twentieth century. In the late 1930s, the Chantam House group maintained that “[international law] could not be analogous to criminal law within a state because there was no way in which a state could be perceived or treated as a criminal²⁸”, but this perspective is now challenged and considered too restrictive. Countries can be considered as criminals by the international community when they breach generally accepted norms. Hence, sanctions have become an international pattern of deterrence for the respect of international norms and punishment of those who violate them²⁹.

Another aspect of tertiary objectives regards the support for a particular international structure, which depends on the way the international relations are perceived. Sanctions may be used to protect the current balance of power, or to safeguard the status quo of regional grouping and their interests, or to prevent the spreading of ideological and religious doctrines³⁰. This kind of behaviour is recurrent in US and Russian foreign policies. The former takes actions in Central and South American and the latter in former Soviet states in order to preserve their interests in the regions and maintain the balance of powers unchanged. Moreover, preserving the diplomatic structure concerns also the international organisations that regulate such system. Indeed, if countries do not retain useful to handle common issues through international forum, like the UN, then that organisation in question results inefficient and it is necessary to establish a new one. The transition may bring periods of great uncertainty and threat to peace. Therefore, countries willing to preserve the

²⁷J. Barber, *Economic Sanction as a Policy Instrument*, p.370.

²⁸*Ivi.*, p.382.

²⁹*Ibid.*

³⁰*Ivi.*, p.383.

international system are also incentivized to support existing international organizations.

Finally, tertiary objectives may be used to furthering existing structure or organizations, intended both as an alliance or an international body. Consequentially, those that deviate from the existing model or challenge the new trend proposed by the most important actors of the international community are subjected to the sanctions. The case of sanctions against Rhodesia, for example, could be interpreted as the attempt of implementing a new international norm that promoted racial equality³¹.

In sum, economic sanctions are imposed for a variety of reasons that range from international and domestic considerations. The more the aims of the other international actors are taken into account, the more imposing sanctions finds a justification. Stating this, the next session will consider the factors that contribute to the success of sanctions.

1.3. Effects of economic sanctions

Assessing the factors that contribute to the success or failure of economic sanctions is fundamental to draw conclusions on their efficiency. Susanne Oxenstierna and Per Olsson identified several variables within the literature³². Departing from the simple model proposed by Blanchard and Ripsman (2015:16-17), Oxenstierna and Olsson have analysed the international factors and domestic features of the target that strengthen or weaken sanctions costs and they made a list of ten variables.

1. the academic literature generally agrees that **sanctions costs** are fundamental in determining their success. The higher the cost of sanctions, the more likely it is that the target will change its political behaviour³³. Nevertheless, high costs on

³¹*Ibid.*

³²Susanne Oxenstierna, Per Olsson, 'The Economic Sanctions Against Russia', *Swedish Defence Research Agency*, Sep. 2015, pp. 23-27. Their empirical study was built on two main data sets; both of these include successful and failed sanctions as well as series of potential explanatory variables. The most widely cited, the HSEO13 dataset, has been created and updated by Hufbauer et al. (2007). It contains cases from 1915 to 2000 of which the majority were imposed by the US. The later Threat and Imposition of Economic Sanctions (TIES) data set was constructed by Morgan et al. (2009) and contains cases of threatened and imposed sanctions during the period 1971–2000 and is used by Bapat et al. (2013) as well.

³³Navin A. Bapat, Tobias Heinrich, Yoshiharu Kobayashi & T. Clifton Morgan, 'Determinants of Sanctions Effectiveness: Sensitivity Analysis Using New Data', *International Interactions*, 2013, 39 (1), p.89.

the target do not ensure success. The sanctions against Iraq, despite they were considerably high and impacting the entire population, were not sufficient to overthrow Saddam Hussein. On the contrary, achieving the main political objectives came at enormous human costs. This is why scholars started to support sanctions whose costs are borne by the right people in the target state and not by the entire country (Cortright and Lopez 2002; Morgan and Schwebach 1996).

2. The level of **trade dependency** between target and sender prior to sanctions plays an important role. High mutual trade increases the effect of sanction, making them more efficient. At the same time, the sender state could be hurt as well and, therefore, be disincentivised from adopting an economic strategy. Empirical studies show different results, but the research of Major (2012) and Bapat et al. (2013:90) support that trade dependency is positively associated with sanction success.
3. The **duration of sanctions** can be ambiguous in the determining their success or failure. If sanctions are not lifted for a long time, the target faces higher accumulated costs and is pushed toward compliance. On the other hand, once passed a first period of disorder, the target may reorganize its internal and external structure and adapt to the sanctions. The literature reveals that the last scenario is more likely to occur when sanctions are not lifted, undermining the success of this measure. Yet, by the late 1990s, it became clear that the US sanctions against Libya, in place since 1969, was depriving the target of necessary technology. Thus, in this case, the duration of sanctions has impacted positively the outcome of the policy.
4. As a matter of fact, as we considered the costs for the target, we have to take into account the **sanction costs for the sender**. High costs can severely hurt the sender's economy and prevent it from sustaining or escalating sanctions. Yet, sanctioning state may be willing to accept considerable costs if this contributes to further pressure on the target. In any case, it is rare that countries impose sanctions when their population would bear serious costs as a result. In this

- regard, Hufbauer et al.³⁴ maintain that there is no conclusive support that cost for the sender can influence positively or negatively the outcome of sanctions.
5. Counterintuitively, empirical studies have demonstrated that **multiple senders** do not contribute to the success of sanctions, but rather the opposite³⁵. Where the common sense suggest that multilateral cooperation may be more effective, it forgets that countries have different agendas and, therefore, they create confusion and competition which can be used at the advantage of the sanctioned state. Multiple senders but each with their own individual sanctions decrease the pressure on the target to correct its behaviour. Dawid Walentek (2019) presented his research with the purpose to analyse the negative correlation between multilateral economic sanctions and their effectiveness. He extracted three theoretical frameworks from the literature to explain this anomaly³⁶. First, the selection effect (Drezner 2003) suggests that only issues of high importance stimulate joint action. Coalitions are difficult to manage, and only critical threats sufficiently motivate states to organise and implement multilateral sanctions. Second, multilateral coercion can be considered a public good (Martin, 1992) and, consequentially, each sender has incentives to deviate. With the lack of appropriate supervision mechanisms, multilateral effort is less effective than unilateral sanctions. Finally, Miers & Morgan (2002) proposed the spatial theory which links the success of sanctions on the number of demands made by the senders. In other words, if there are several countries backing a single demand, it is expected to be more effective than a unilateral action. On the contrary, on multi-issue demands are better performed by unilateral sanctions.
6. **International institutions** usually play an important role in coordinating multilateral action, thereby alleviating the negative effect associated with multiple senders that act unilaterally. Organisations like the UN can outline the guidelines for its members and serve as a platform for negotiations and comprise,

³⁴Gary C. Hufbauer, Jeffrey J. Schott, Kimberly A. Elliott, Barbara Oegg, *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered* 3rd edition, (Washington DC: Peterson Institute for International Economics), 2007, p. 177.

³⁵Bapat et al., 'Determinants of Sanctions Effectiveness: Sensitivity Analysis Using New Data'. pp. 88-89

³⁶Dawid Walentek, 'Instrumental or Symbolic? The Role of Multilateral Economics Sanctions', presentation paper to ECPR General Conference, Warsaw, 4-7 Sep. 2019.

reducing the costs of senders. Moreover, they provide sufficient supervision and prevent countries from deviation³⁷. Finally, within international organisations multi-issue demands can be more effective than unilateral sanctions³⁸.

7. Black knights or **third-party countries** may mitigate the cost of sanctions for the target³⁹. Indeed, some countries may disagree with the imposition of sanctions for several reasons, either because they sympathise with the target, they do not retain necessary the use of such coercive measure, or because sanctions provide them important commercial opportunities. They can be alternative markets for exports and investment and undermine the efficiency of sanctions.
8. The literature approves the idea that sanctions tend to have a greater negative effect on democracies, while **authoritarian regimes** have, in principle, little political opposition and the capability to repress eventual domestic protests. As a consequence, authoritarian regimes tend to be tougher in dealing with sanctions than countries whose system is based on popular consensus⁴⁰. Certainly, state control over media and resource distribution greatly contribute to prevent criticism against the regime. Yet, they are not completely immune to economic sanctions. Research like the one presented by Major (2012) demonstrates that also authoritarian regimes are sensitive to domestic protests, strikes and elections, although on a lower level. The demand for free election, whether it is consented or not, poses a symbolic danger to the stability of the regime.
9. **State capacity** of the target is important in determining its vulnerability. “Vulnerability to economic sanctions is defined as a country’s susceptibility to

³⁷Daniel Drezner, ‘Bargaining, Enforcement, and Multilateral Sanctions: When Is Cooperation Counterproductive?’, *Cambridge University Press*, 2000, 54 (iss1), pp. 73-102.

³⁸Anne Miers, T. Morgan, ‘Multilateral Sanctions and Foreign Policy Success: Can Too Many Cooks Spoil the Broth?’, *International Interactions*, 2002, 28(2), pp. 117-136.

³⁹William Kaempfer and Anton D. Lowenberg, ‘The Political Economy of Economic Sanctions’, *Handbook of Defence Economics*, 2007, 27 (2), p. 894.

⁴⁰See David Cortright and George Lopez, *The Sanctions Decade*, (Boulder CO: Lynne Reiner) 2000; Irfan Nooruddin, ‘Modeling Selection Bias in Studies of Sanctions Efficacy’, *International Interactions*, 2002, 28 (1), pp. 59–75; Risa Brooks, ‘Sanctions and Regime Type: What Works and When?’, *Security Studies*, 2002, 11 (4), pp. 1–50; Susan Allen, ‘The Determinants of Economic Sanctions Success and Failure’, *International Interactions*, 2005, 31 (2), pp. 117–138.

economic losses resulting from an economic sanction⁴¹”. The real economic losses are determined by the unique circumstances of any given country, such as its economic size, its market structure, the geographical characteristics and so on. The stronger the political infrastructure and the economic system, the higher will be its resilience against the sanctions.

10. Finally, despite the factors listed until now have a considerable impact on the success of sanctions, it must be taken into account **the importance of the conflict**, for both the target and the sender, for which sanctions were imposed in the first place. It is generally assumed that a sanctioned country is less likely to compel with the requests of the sender when the conflict is very significant for its foreign policy and conceding in the face of sanctions could damage its reputation at international and domestic level. The same discourse is valid for the sanctioning state. Empirical evidence in support of these assumptions are offered by the study of Bapat et al.⁴²

Susanne Oxenstierna and Per Olsson did not consider the secondary or indirect effects in their report. Nevertheless, they acknowledge that international and domestic factors do not work in isolation from each other and they suggested to extend the model for further research. For instance, the sender may take the domestic development of the target into account throughout the sanctions process. Equally, domestic actors within the target state will position themselves according to the international response to economic sanctions⁴³. In other words, the factors above mentioned should be seen in the perspective of a globalized economy, which poses significant challenges to design successful economic sanctions. Despite the growing opinion that globalization is reversing, the scale, volume and efficiency of interstate trade steadily increased since the 1970s, when the modern transportation systems and distribution networks made possible and very profitable to trade across great distances⁴⁴. Consequentially,

⁴¹Hossein Askari, John Forrer, Jiawen Yang, Tarek Hachem, ‘Measuring Vulnerability to US Foreign Economic Sanctions’, *Business Economics*, 2005, 40 (2), p. 43.

⁴²Bapat et al. ‘Determinants of Sanctions Effectiveness: Sensitivity Analysis Using New Data’, 2013, pp. 89–90.

⁴³Susanne Oxenstierna, Per Olsson, ‘The economic sanctions against Russia’, p.24.

⁴⁴John Forrer, ‘Economic Sanctions: Sharpening a Vital Foreign Policy Tool’, p. 6.

countries can easily adjust and find black knights to mitigate the negative effects of sanctions. If the sanctions disrupt the economic structure of the target in the short-run, it does not imply they will not adapt and exploit new openings of the global market and be better off in the long run within the new setting of the international relations. John Forrer duly refers to this problem, maintaining that “in a globalized economy, sanctioned countries have many more opportunities to evade sanctions [...], including *dark pools* of global financing that exist outside the reach of domestic regulations or international policing⁴⁵”. On the other hand, the interconnectedness of countries can make industries highly dependent on business sectors of specific states, recalling the research of Major and Bapat and al. Therefore, a complex global economy can undermine the purpose of sanctions as much as it can strengthen them turning into an effective foreign policy tool.

The long-term effect of sanctions is difficult to assess unless many years have passed from their implementation or their end and it is also the reason why their effectiveness is still object of debate. Usually, the sanctions against South Africa in protest of the apartheid have been considered successful. Iran has accepted to negotiate a deal regarding its nuclear program, the JCPOA, after years of costly sanctions. On the contrary, the long and restrictive sanctions against Cuba have not reached the political change the USA wished, and, for this reason, they are believed to have failed. Similarly, North Korea has not come yet to terms with other countries and it remains a regional and global threat. For the cases of Myanmar and Russia, the success of sanctions is widely contested⁴⁶.

Another reason why the success of sanctions is debated is its association with internal changes in a target. Most of the studies emphasize the state as key actor and, from this perspective, the behaviour of a state, with its capabilities and strategies are the focus of sanctions policy. Considering the complexity of contemporary international relations and global economy, such state-centric approach could appear reductive. Private companies and business corporations are targets too, especially with

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p.7.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* pp.4-5.

the rise of **smart sanctions** in the last years⁴⁷. Indeed, concerns about human security emerged at the same time of the terrible humanitarian and political consequences that Iraq sanctions caused to its population. The failure of the sanctions to yield immediate desired effects against Saddam Hussein brought the scholars to rethink sanctions strategy, concluding that comprehensive economic measures “disproportionately hurt political weak groups and benefited target regime sympathizers⁴⁸”. Consequentially, the regime sympathizers are able to manipulate the sanctions at their advantage and the aggregate cost of the economic restrictions have minimal impact on the target government. Such discourse recalls what abovementioned, authoritarian regimes are less inclined to change behaviour with comprehensive sanctions. This is why smart sanctions have emerged as a better instrument of foreign policy. The first main advantage is they hurt key elites and spare the mass public, which appears to increase the chances of success. Furthermore, smart sanctions provide the opportunity of cooperation among hegemonic actors and recalcitrant members of the Security Council⁴⁹. Recent research seems to support the target sanctions as a more humane policy tool⁵⁰ and such label brings little criticism from the civil society. However, supporters of a state-centric approach have highlighted the shortcomings of smart sanctions. For instance, Drezner (2011) maintains that targeted sanctions are more humanitarian respectful but tend to be less effective than comprehensive measures. If the target state is a democracy, full-scale sanctions are more likely to trigger quick concessions. If the ultimate purpose is regime change, then measures yielding large costs have greater chances of success. These considerations suggest that the modality of sanctions depends on the hierarchy of sender’s goals. If the sender relies more importance on the symbolic functions of sanctions, that is demonstrating the state is ‘doing something’ against the wrong actions of the target state but it does not want to hurt excessively its populations, then smart sanctions are preferable. On the other hand,

⁴⁷Ivan N. Timofeev, ‘Rethinking Sanctions Efficiency’, *Russia in Global Affairs*, 2019, 17 (3), p. 89.

⁴⁸Daniel W. Drezner, ‘Sanctions Sometimes Smart: Targeted Sanctions in Theory and Practice’, *International Studies Review*, 2011, 13, p. 99.

⁴⁹*Ibid.* p. 100.

⁵⁰Ella Shagabudinova, Jeffrey Berejikian, ‘Deploying Sanctions While Protecting Human Rights: Are Humanitarian “Smart Sanctions Effective?”’, 2007, *Journal of Human Rights*, 6 (1), pp. 59-74.

if the sender perceives the actions of the target state as a threat to its security or the international security regime, smart sanctions are too blunt to be effective and the sender would definitely adopt a tougher economic measure where a military action is impossible to be deployed.

The effect of *secondary sanctions* should not be underestimated too. They are the punishment of individuals and entities that are dealing with sanctioned states or entities violating the restrictions⁵¹. The United States often threat or impose secondary sanctions against American and foreign businesses and can result in affecting their behaviour and pushing them to abstain from cooperating with target states, reducing the number of black nights. According to the business-based approach analysis offered by Ivan Timoteev, there is enough evidence to suggest businesses tend to show conformity and agreeableness with sanctions, fearing costs that could result from the violation. Non-conformism cases are exceptional or denouncing reckless behaviour. States, on the contrary, act more rationally and may violate regulations for the sake of national or security interests at the expenses of the economic sector⁵². Despite the limits of Timofeev's analysis, his research suggests that indirect effect of sanctions may adversely impact their success. Business centres whose main purpose is making profits will certainly prefer complying with sanctions measures if this means avoiding additional costs. Yet, if the state or the globalized economy provide opportunities to evade sanctions and increase incomes, corporations and similar would try to take it advantage.

In sum, there are several variables that contribute or mitigate the success of sanctions. At the same time, these international and domestic factors cannot be considered in isolation and the state is not the only actor involved. Rather, the analysis

⁵¹Ivan N. Timofeev, 'Rethinking Sanctions Efficiency', p. 89.

⁵²*Ibid.* p. 104. However, Timofeev underlines that his results are still limited. First, the data on businesses cover only those of them which experienced OFAC investigations. There are far more companies that may change their intentions to violate the regulations, being threatened by an investigation or communicating with OFAC and other regulators in other ways. Also, the database presented in this study does not cover OFAC's SDN-measures against violators, which could reveal different patterns of behavior. There are some important methodological issues. The first and most acute one is the lack of information and a considerable amount of missing values. Future research could aim at a more sophisticated statistical analysis of the existing data.

of sanctions should consider both the humanitarian and the business aspects and how they can contribute to the success of sanctions. Recalling the stratifications of objectives, the efficiency of sanctions depends on what the sender(s) wants to achieve. Moreover, the effects of sanctions can be amplified by side factors. Events such as oil price crisis, the denial of international legitimacy and the encouragement of revolutionary groups may not have been intended when sanctions were designed but they can have an adverse impact upon the target.

Stating this, the next session will consider the efficiency of sanctions at every level, especially in pursuit of security policy aims.

1.4. The efficiency of sanctions

As previously anticipated, the efficiency of sanctions as instrument of foreign and security policy is widely discussed. The diversity in scholars' opinion depends on the factors on which they focus the most their attention. Although identifying the stratification of purposes for which sanctions have been applied helps analysing their consequences, it remains difficult to estimate their effectiveness. Indeed, it is almost impossible to isolate all the variable at stake, the effect of circumstances and objectives which change over time.

Achieving primary objectives

Even if able to consider all these difficulties, “there is a striking consensus in the literature that economic sanctions alone have been ineffective in the fulfilment of their primary objectives⁵³”. Margaret Doxey concluded that in none of the cases she analysed “the economic sanctions succeeded in producing the desired political results”, rather they reduce the chances of settling the conflict because they provoke a limitation of the channels of communications and reaching an understanding becomes more

⁵³James Barber, ‘Economic Sanction as a Policy Instrument’, p.374.

difficult to achieve⁵⁴. Otto Wolff von Amerongen duly criticized embargo policies because they are spontaneous reaction in a case of tension rather than based on a careful cost-effective analysis. Thus, sanctions “resemble a tiger without teeth or claws, a tiger unable to do more than growl a little⁵⁵”. In the section above, it was shown that the effects of sanctions can be controversial and, consequentially, it is difficult to design a successful strategy even if able to consider all the variables. Robert Pope was very hard in judging the efficiency of sanction and seriously doubted that economic restrictions can achieve major foreign policy goals. In most of the cases that he has examined he concluded that were wrongly labelled as examples of success because it had not been made a clear distinction between the effects of economic sanctions and the use of force. Indeed, Pope believed that usually the use of force or the threat of it was both sufficient and necessary to oblige the target to make concessions, while economic sanctions had played a little role⁵⁶. As concluding remark, Pope asserted that, despite their inefficiency, sanctions can cause economic pressure and should be employed together with force. Therefore, Pope assumed that sanctions alone cannot attain security goals.

Nevertheless, despite the numerous scholars underlining economic sanctions are rarely efficient, such measures are still implemented in foreign and security agenda. According to Pope, leaders may overestimate the prospects of sanctions. They contemplate the use of force as ultimate resort and economic sanctions can enhance credibility of subsequent military threats, or sanctions have greater domestic benefits⁵⁷.

From a different perspective, Johan Galtung noted that, despite the inefficacy of sanctions in the case of Rhodesia, it does not imply they are not a useful instrument and cannot work under any condition⁵⁸. What most authors claim is that it is a mistake to expect economic sanctions alone to accomplish the desired primary objectives, instead of implementing this measure in a broader strategy that could involve different

⁵⁴Margaret Doxey, *Economic Sanctions and International Enforcement* (London: Oxford University Press for the RIIA), 1971, p. 140.

⁵⁵Otto Wolff von Amerongen, ‘Economic Sanctions as a foreign Policy Tool?’, *International Security*, 1980, 5 (2), p. 160.

⁵⁶Robert Pope, ‘Why Economic Sanctions Do Not Work’, *International Security*, 1997, 22(2), pp. 90-136.

⁵⁷James Barber, ‘Economic Sanction as a Policy Instrument’ p. 109.

⁵⁸J. Galtung ‘On the Effects of International Economic Sanctions: With Examples from the Case of Rhodesia.

types of diplomatic efforts⁵⁹. For example, the American policy of nonrecognition of territorial changes in violation of international treaties was developed between 1931-1933 as response to the Japanese invasion of Manchuria and it is still considered as a significant coercive diplomatic tool. However, when the *Hoover-Stimson doctrine* was implemented, President Hoover did not support the League of Nations in emanating sanctions against Japan. He considered the nonrecognition policy as a sufficient measure and a substitute of economic pressure or military force. On the other hand, in the thinking of the Secretary of State, Stimson, nonrecognition policy was rather part of a broader strategy and became not a substitute but a preliminary measure to economic and military sanctions. In the end, his vision prevailed, reason for which the Stimson doctrine bears the name only of the Secretary of State⁶⁰. In this light, the economic sanctions can be a contributing factor when it is not the main element that oblige the target to make concessions and such qualification avoids creating excessive expectations upon its efficiency⁶¹.

Scholars are unable to give a simple answer to why primary objectives are difficult to achieve. However, it widely depends on the variables that the most affect the behaviour of the target and the capability and the incentives of the sender to impose the sanctions. If the multilateral action is well coordinated through an international organisation and the senders perceive as critical the threat, then the primary objectives of sanctions could be achieved. At the same time, if the issue is very significant for the target too, it will make little or no concessions in order to safeguard its credibility at home and abroad. Moreover, if the state capacity is sufficiently strong to handle the sanctions and the target has the possibility to accede to third-markets, the measures result to be little effective. Therefore, as Von Amerongen suggested, there is an absolute need to make careful analyses and consult economic experts before deploying economic weapons for the pursuit of policy and security purposes⁶². At the same time,

⁵⁹James Barber, 'Economic Sanction as a Policy Instrument' p.374.

⁶⁰Richard N. Current, 'The Stimson and the Hoover Doctrine', *The American Historical review*, 1954, 59 (3) pp. 541-542.

⁶¹James Barber, 'Economic Sanction as a Policy Instrument' p.374.

⁶²Otto Wolff von Amerongen, 'Economic Sanctions as a foreign Policy Tool?', p. 160.

if we consider sanctions part of a wider strategy and pursuing different objectives, then the manoeuvre may relieve to be more efficient.

Achieving secondary objectives

Scholars have often relied on secondary objectives to justify the introduction of sanctions. It will be recalled that secondary objectives of sanctions concern the status, behaviour and expectations of sender. As well in this case, secondary purposes are difficult to reach, and they are obviously related to the primary objectives. For instance, if the latter are accomplished it would be easier to achieve the status the sender wants to get at domestic and international level, as well as the symbols is trying to condemn have greater significance. However, although primary goals cannot be achieved, it does not imply that secondary objectives have also failed to be attained⁶³. Sanctions provide the possibility to take a general stance in the international relations and, therefore, demonstrating to be active and concerned of the issue at stake. But most importantly, imposing sanctions gives government precious time to evaluate the circumstances and, simultaneously, deflects criticism at home and abroad that could emerge if the sender does not act at all. Policymakers also focus on avoiding negative distributional consequences for special interest groups. Indeed, the risk of implementing sanctions is increasing economic distortions and give comparative advantage to some domestic groups at the expense of others. Therefore, policymakers tend to include measures in the package of sanctions with the purpose of minimizing special groups' economic losses and, hence, government's political costs⁶⁴. This behaviour suggests that policies affecting international trade depend in part on the trade policy preferences of their core constituents and they aim to avoid detrimental actions to foreign commerce⁶⁵.

⁶³James Barber, 'Economic Sanction as a Policy Instrument', p.381.

⁶⁴Elena V. MacLean, Taehee Whang, 'Designing Foreign Policy: Voters, Special Interest Groups, and Economic Sanctions', *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 51, No. 5, pp. 589-602.

⁶⁵Scott Kastner, 'When Do Conflicting Political Relations Affect International Trade?', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2007, 51(4), p. 670.

We derive that democratic leaders cannot ignore the public opinion in foreign affairs if they want to maintain domestic support for government's actions abroad. Elections serve as instrument of assessment of leaders' accountability and voters use their power to check whether the policymakers respect their preferences regarding the disputes they are aware of. However, voters are also little involved in the bureaucratic process once the sanctions are implemented, meaning the public leaves it up to the political class to manage the course of action when it comes to the specifics of the policy⁶⁶. Therefore, an immediate response can help to maintain stability at domestic level in the short run, satisfying important political and security aims. The public opinion tends to retain more confidence in the government's ability to handle the situation. In the medium-long run, the popular support can slip away, but the issue of sanctions may be no more central in the domestic politics and the probability of internal destabilisation is lower. At this point, the effectiveness of economic sanctions is irrelevant, and the sanctions are merely a domestic political game. These considerations find echo in the empirical results of Whang (2011), where it was concluded that policymakers reliably benefit from sanctions because they increase public support. "Sanctions can be used to placate the domestic populace when few other options that cost as little are available and elevate the popularity of incumbent leaders⁶⁷".

Achieving tertiary objectives

We recall that tertiary objectives are related to the structure and behaviour of the international system and, within this context, sanctions usually aim to defend or furthering existing structures or organisations. Tertiary objectives have also a deterrent element. As the previous two sets of objectives, there are a lot of problems to evaluating the effects of tertiary goals, if not even more difficult. The variables at stake in the international system are too numerous to be able to isolate the effects provoked by the

⁶⁶E. V. MacLean, T. Whang, 'Designing Foreign Policy: Voters, Special Interest Groups, and Economic Sanctions', p. 591.

⁶⁷Taehee Whang, 'Playing to the Home Crowd? Symbolic Use of Economic Sanctions in the United States', *International Studies Quarterly*, 2011, 55 (3), p. 799.

sanctions, reason for which there are a variety of interpretations⁶⁸. Indeed, across the centuries, mainly the realist and liberal tradition have worked to construct theories of international relations and give their own interpretation of security.

Since the end of World War Two, the structure of the international system and the organisations within which countries cooperate have promoted mainly liberal values. Indeed, the G7 is supposed to be the intergovernmental organisation representative of the most influential countries in the political, economic and military spheres and its members have all constitutions based on liberal principles. As well international organisations, like the United Nations, have liberal bases. Therefore, we assume that the current international system is dominated by the liberal vision, reason for which it will be necessary to briefly overview the basic assumptions of liberalism before trying to interpret the tertiary objectives of sanctions.

The liberal tradition assumes that the agenda of the international relations is broad and diversified, and it derives that also the definition of security is not only comprehended in the military framework. Second, liberals believe that states are not unitary actors and, therefore, it is necessary to take a multicentric approach. Finally, states are not rational actors because their decision derive from bargaining processes between different domestic actors whose interests cannot be considered completely objective, but rather reflecting their preferences. Furthermore, decision makers can have incomplete or wrong information and, as a consequence, their decisions result biased.

From these basic assumptions departed various forms of liberalism, but which generally propose a similar framework of security. The sociological liberalism⁶⁹, developed since the 1950s, analysed impact of trans-national relations and concluded that the intensification of relations between individual and groups from different nation-states increases security and decreases nationalism. In the end, it forms a security community, a space in which war becomes unthinkable. A clear example are the European countries that have maintained a stable peace since 1945. The

⁶⁸James Barber, 'Economic Sanction as a Policy Instrument', p.383.

⁶⁹See Karl W. Deutsch et al. *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area*, (London: Lynne Rienner) 1957; John Burton, *World Society*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 1972; J. N. Rosenau 1980s-1990s.

transatlantic relations brought to share a set of common values and the USA provided stability ensuring the security umbrella to the old continent.

The commercial liberalism grounds on the economic interdependence and the stimulus toward further integration. The goal of people is (economic) wellness and international free commerce is a cheaper strategy to gain primary goods than it is an expansionary war or the mercantilist approach. The costs of war are generally greater than its benefits and its profits tend to be highly concentrated in the state hands. On the other hand, “international trade is good not just to bankers and captains of industry, but also to their workers, consumers, suppliers, and the whole network of secondary economic beneficiaries: the automobile dealer who sells cars to those who sell factories that export abroad, those workers’ grocers and restaurant owners, and many others⁷⁰”.

Functionalism⁷¹ and neo-functionalism⁷² promote the gradual process of inter-state association, integration through international agreements, in order to stimulate not only free trade, but designing joint solutions for common needs and technical issues. Therefore, a spill over effect jeopardizes the scope of the economic cooperation also in other technical sectors, increasing mutual trust and developing the grounds for political integration. This opens the doors to new benefits. First, it decreases nationalism and creates new international actors. Second, shared values foster peace and security. The ultimate scope is to maximize the concept of integration by forming a world government.

In brief, we can assume that the goal of the liberal tradition is to promote a platform for cooperation and integration starting from pursuing common economic benefits and slowly expand collaboration also in other sectors. In this way, common values and similar political structures allows to construct strong security frameworks whose members do not fight each other. Consequentially, the liberal rhetoric has developed the definition of **collective security**. It is something that all actors in the international system can make use of, even those who do not contribute to its origin

⁷⁰Bruce Russett John R. Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organisations*, (New York: The Norton Series in World Politics, 2001), p. 130.

⁷¹See David Mitrany 1942 and 1966.

⁷²See Ernst B. Haas, *Beyond the Nation State*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press), 1964.

and maintenance and reason for which several critics address the risk of free riders and high taxes. Collective security is based on two basic legal principles⁷³. First, the principle of nonaggression among its members. Any attempt of use of force, even the mere threat, is prohibited and, thus, all states renounce war as a means for solving disputes. The only two exceptions admitted war waged by a single state in self-defence, and in participation of a collective action that was started by the international community. The second fundamental principle is anti-(counter) aggression. All states commit themselves to reaction in case one or more actors violate the first rule. Any breach to the use or threat of force is legally a matter of concern to the whole community and not confined to the nations that are immediately affected or directly damaged in the first place. States should intervene to assist the countries victims of the violation and to contribute some way to the restoration of peace. These two principles work, in one hand, to ensure that all members of the community enjoy peace and security, on the other hand, the obligation of mutual assistance incentivises countries to respect the prohibition of force⁷⁴. There are several benefits of adopting such system. First, it becomes easy to identify those breaking the rules. Moreover, collective security provides states with procedures for handling crises and have clear guidelines to assist countries (or peoples) under aggression. From the ideological point of view, it promotes the idea that war is illegitimate, if not an exception, and reduces military conflicts. Finally, it can legitimate multinational military operations⁷⁵.

This discourse influenced the international order of post-WWII and it persisted until today. At the moment, the order brought concrete benefits to its member and deeply penetrated in the states' structures, both at political and economic level. Countries should encounter high costs if willing to abandon the system or eliminate it.

However, realists criticized the liberal model because they believe that the effect of interdependence on global security is quite limited. On the contrary, interdependence accentuates the vulnerabilities of countries to external shocks, such as

⁷³E. Hula, 'Fundamentals of Collective Security', 1957, *Social Research*, 24 (1), pp 1-2.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*

⁷⁵See Simone Pasquazzi, 'Liberalism and Security', lecture of Security Studies, (LUISS Guido Carli 2017-2018).

the crisis of 1929, the oil shock in 1973 and the economic and financial crisis in 2008. Constructivists⁷⁶, instead, bring the discourse beyond the material variables and emphasize the ideational factors and their effects. From this assumption, security is socially constructed and, for instance, depends on culture, discourses, languages and how people frame their reality. It derives that anarchy is what states make of it and peace can be built in the mind of people.

Regarding collective security, critics to the liberal model also point out the shortcomings that the system has presented. For instance, it brought only minor changes in the international relations. Most importantly, it is missing a uniform criterion to take imperative decisions, revealing the different interests and objectives of each state. Furthermore, states continue to engage in internal and/or external balancing, which is particularly true when countries have to protect their interests in key regions. It is possible that such system increases insecurity because it incentivises states to reduce the military expenses and not invest into self-defence, or it pushes some countries to have wider military capabilities to protect the free riders. The multicentric approach can be beneficial when well-coordinated, but the presence of several actors slows down the entire decision-making process and favours crises escalation. Moreover, the cases in which a joint action appeared to have worked was in the context of small and peripheral crises. Collective security does not work when the aggressor is a great power⁷⁷.

Therefore, the current system of collective security has tried to combine realist and liberal elements, proposing the UN Security Council as intergovernmental decision-making centre rather than recurring to a supra-national body. Furthermore, the balance of powers established in the post-war required to implement five permanent members capable to veto fundamental issues, excluding the possibility to pass resolutions with the majority rule in all cases. As result, The UNSC is resolute in some circumstances but paralysed in others, especially when the permanent members

⁷⁶See Greenwood Onuf, *World of Our Making*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press), 1989; Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics', *International Organization*, 1992, 46 (2), pp. 391-425.

⁷⁷See Simone Pasquazzi, 'Liberalism and Security'.

are involved. Then, realists believe that collective security can only work when states' interests are compatible. In reply, liberals argue that, even accepting this assumption, coordinating joint actions is an impossible, ineffective or inefficient task unless collective security organs are involved. As empirical evidence stands the pacification processes which work much better within multilateral context.

We assume that countries supporting the current international structure will implement sanctions as coercive measure to protect the system from the violators, an aim that falls into the framework of tertiary objectives as it was explained in the previous sections. Therefore, we can consider the sanctions to be efficient when the structure of the international relations remains unchanged or the aggressor was unable to carry significant distortions. Another aspect of tertiary objectives that it was previously explained referred to the use of sanctions as to furthering existing structure or organizations, intended both as an alliance or an international body. In this case, efficiency of sanctions can be perceived when the new trend proposed by the international community (or the most important actors of this system) is implemented. Consequentially, those that deviate from the existing model or challenge the new trend proposed are subjected to the sanctions. It implies that the state-members of security organisations, such as NATO, whose decision making power is relatively low have to weigh the consequences of participating joint actions against the costs of not doing it. The conformation of the international relations and the responsibilities deriving from collective security sometimes oblige countries to take counterproductive actions in fostering other foreign policies, but the costs of not respecting alliances could be more damaging. A clear example is Japan and its sanctions imposed on Russia. Japan has followed the Western countries to signal complicity and respect to USA, as Japanese key ally in security matters. However, sanctions are an obstacle to solve the territorial issue of the Kuril Islands, a problem that have impeded the conclusion of a peace treaty between Russia and Japan since the end of World War Two. Both countries believe that investing in trade and economic cooperation would accomplish the goals of their

negotiations, but sanctions undermine such argument⁷⁸. In this case, if countries lack the political will to impose sanctions, they will probably try to circumvent them, factor that can undermine the entire efficacy of the sanctions.

In sum, the current international system mainly reflects the liberal rhetoric and promote the idea of collective security within international organisations, such as UNSC, or within multilateral or bilateral security agreements where the use or threat of force is severely prohibited and it is imperative to assist the members against the violators of such rule. USA is the leading country of this approach and provides the security umbrella to most of its allies. The European Union also shares this view. Although each European country has its own interests and may not agree to joint actions, The European Union undeniably provides economic benefits to its members. Hence, the common European foreign policy to regional and global issues is not dictated by the willing to take a step toward further political integration. Rather it comes by the need to present a stronger front against new threats and to avoid costs derived from not respecting European rules. Consequentially, the efficiency of tertiary objectives is reflected in the changes that occur in the international structure. If they eventually occur, success is perceived when the alternations reflect the preferences of the community or of its most important members.

1.5. Conclusions to the Chapter

Economic sanctions have developed since the end of the World War One as instrument to attain foreign and security goals. An international sanctions regime was determined slowly since the formation of the United Nations and reflected the liberal tradition of the most important countries of the international community. However, countries use such instrument also unilaterally, considering that under certain circumstances the unilateral action of one country is more effective than a disorganized multilateral effort.

⁷⁸Ivan N. Timofeev, *Russia-Japan Dialogue: the Sanctions Factor*, RIAC, Jan 21 2019. <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/russia-japan-dialogue-the-sanctions-factor/> [Accessed 7.04.2020]

Sanctions allow to attain three levels of objectives. The primary objectives aim to condemn the wrong actions of the target. In the pursuit of this security goal, sanctions are a valid alternative to military threat or use of force, reducing the probability of conflicts. Therefore, it can work as means of deterrence or to oblige the target to adopt a different behaviour or government. Another advantage derives from the flexibility of sanctions because they can be designed to target specific people when the sender prefers mitigating the negative impact of this measure on the rest of the population.

The second level of objectives concerns the sender itself and what it wants to demonstrate at home and abroad. With sanctions, countries are enabled to quickly respond to threats or the wrongdoing of a specific country. In this way, they gain time and analyse what to do next and, at the same time, deflect eventual domestic or international criticism that would rise from not acting at all. Moreover, countries can contemplate the negative distributional consequences sanctions can create to some special interest group and adjust the sanctions in order to avoid important economic distortions. In this context, sanctions play an important symbolic role in avoiding internal destabilization.

Finally, sanctions work to maintain or furthering existing structures or organisations at international level. These goals are referred in this text as tertiary objectives. At the present time, the international security regime is represented by the UNSC which provides a mix of the liberal and realist tradition in the attempt to respect the dominant liberal views of prominent countries, like the USA and EU, and observe the critics of other significant states, like China and Russia, that oppose such opinions. However, the liberal concept of collective security is promoted also in other organizations such as NATO or simply through bilateral and multilateral arrangements. As a consequence, the decision of a country to impose sanctions refers also to the desire to protect the current structure of international relations, or it could be dictated by diplomatic arrangements that regulate foreign and security relations among single countries.

In the right circumstances, all the above mentioned factors positively contribute to achieve security aims. Yet, great criticism emerged regarding its efficacy. The

variables that affect the success of sanctions are numerous and difficult to isolate, reason for which scholars mostly believe that primary objectives of sanctions are hard to be realized. The triumph of sanctions widely depends on the variables that the most affect the behaviour of the target and the capability and the incentives of the sender to impose the sanctions. Additionally, in certain circumstances, sanctions reveal to be a mere domestic and international political game. In the home front, democratic leaders cannot ignore the public opinion when the latter is active in the country foreign action, otherwise it could cost them the re-election or cause internal instability. In the long-run, voters tend to drive away their attention to more prominent issues and, at this point, the effectiveness of sanctions is irrelevant. Abroad, the efficiency of tertiary objectives reflects the status of international relations. Sometimes, imposing sanctions can be counterproductive for a country agenda but fundamental to maintain the international structure and security insurances that enjoyed until that moment. This discourse demonstrates that sanctions can be just a façade to avoid critics and instability in the short run.

Nevertheless, sanctions can result useless when the target is able to circumvent or adapt its economy to the presence of sanctions. The latter scenario is highly probable when sanctions are not lifted for a long time, and this could cost the credibility of sender(s)' policies. Furthermore, in the long run, policymakers are less concerned on the public opinion and they are likely to shift their attention to other issues, where sanctions could be regarded just as an obstacle. With this light, sanctions can be detrimental to pursue security aims.

In conclusion, what is the difference between successful or failed sanctions? Sanctions are successful or efficient when they are deliberately designed by sender(s) to be sufficiently costly for the target. Therefore, the decisionmakers who are the most involved in the issue and strongly wish to correct the wrong behaviour of the target cannot pretend sanctions alone to accomplish primary objective. On the contrary, sanctions should be part of a broader strategy that includes other diplomatic efforts. A joint action could positively contribute but only if managed within an international organization. Moreover, governments should invest in careful analyses of domestic and

international constraints of the sender and the target before the emanation of such measure. Their results could be fundamental in calculating the prospects of success of implementing sanctions in the pursuit of foreign and security purposes, or of its failure and, eventually, study an alternative strategy.

This chapter served to investigate the existing literature in the efficiency of sanctions. The next chapters will analyse the desired objectives and the consequences of the sanctions imposed on Russia in 2014 with the purpose of determining whether they had fulfilled their purpose as a security instrument of international relations. In the case of the opposite, it would analyse they were unable to attain their objectives, demonstrating that economic sanctions are not an efficient security tool.

Chapter II – Western Security Objectives in Imposing Sanctions on Russia

The 2014 sanctions on Russia have a clear link with the Ukrainian crisis. The outcome of the Crimean referendum was labelled as illegitimate by the Western countries and they subsequently condemned its annexation to Russia as an act of aggression and a violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity, while the Russian authorities believe that the recognition of the results of the referendum and the consequent unification with Crimea were legal⁷⁹. For the West, Russian behaviour posed a threat to peace and security in Europe and, in order to prevent future aggressions, Washington and Brussels decided to impose both economic and financial sanctions to Moscow⁸⁰. Later, also other countries joined the sanctions apparently to echo the critics made by the Western countries and reflect their support to the Euro-Atlantic alliance. On the other hand, Russia had a completely different perception of the events that characterised the Ukrainian crisis and describes its actions in Crimea as an attempt to protect the Russian ethnic and Russian speaking citizens who were endangered by the Ukrainian sensitive political situation. In the eyes of the President Vladimir Putin, the post-Soviet space is a fragmented Russian World that Russia has no right to forget⁸¹". The real threat in the European security are the Western countries themselves, whose activities led to the *coup d'état* in Kiev and the destabilisation in the region. These mutually contradictory narratives have one common ground: West-Russia relations cannot be normalised unless one of the actors reverses its actions. The West requires the Russians to withdraw from Crimea while, for Russia, the West should lift sanctions⁸².

⁷⁹Since this chapter analyses the Western approach, it will use the terminology widely accepted in the Western political community (e.g. annexation) and not the terminology used in Russia (e.g. reunification).

⁸⁰Iztok Prezelj, Daniel Harangozo, *Confidence and Security-Building Measures in Europe at a Crossroads*. (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2018) p. 44. Available at: <https://www.perlego.com/book/1064560/confidence-and-securitybuilding-measures-in-europe-at-a-crossroads>

⁸¹Sergey Utkin, *The Ukrainian Crisis: Russia's Official Position and How the Situation Can Be Resolved*, RIAC, October 22 2014. Available at: <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytcs-and-comments/analytcs/the-ukrainian-crisis-russia-s-official-position-and-how-the-/> [Accessed 15/04/2020]

⁸²Stefan Wolff, Philipp Remler et al., *OSCE Confidence Building in the Economic and Environmental Dimension: Current Opportunities and Constraints*, OSCE Network Study, 2017, pp. 4-11. Available at: https://www.fes-vienna.org/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/OSCE_Confidence_Building_in_EED_Full_Report.pdf

However, as we already noted in the previous chapter, the motivations behind sanctions are not as obvious as they can look. The Ukrainian crisis was the consequence of a chain of events that have characterised the West-Russia relations since the first expansion of NATO in 1999 and the bombing in Serbia in the same year. The evolution of the international scene in the 2000s brought the United States and Russia further apart and the expansion of the Western world into the Russian sphere of influence created tensions also with the European states.

Therefore, this chapter will focus to answer to the following questions: What is the rationale of the 2014 sanctions on Russia? Do the security objectives of the Western countries concede? How do their objectives affect the efficiency of sanctions?

2.1. The rationale of 2014 sanctions on Russia: the security threat

Territorial conflict and the change of borders by force had been forgotten in Europe and it was considered a practice belonging to the past⁸³. The Ukrainian crisis represents the biggest security threat to the post-Cold War era because it challenges the two main assumptions that were made after the dissolution of the Soviet Union: first, “Europe is essentially stable and secure, thereby freeing the USA to focus greater attention on other areas, particularly Asia and the Middle East” and, second, “Russia had become more of a partner than an adversary⁸⁴”. The annexation in Crimea and the conflict of Donbass pose a clear threat to the security regime of the continent and obliged the USA and EU to reconsider their policy agenda. A review of the escalation of events that triggered the Ukrainian crisis could help to better understand the rationale behind the sanctions and why the West considers Russia a security threat.

Russia has security interest in preserving the former-Soviet states within its sphere of influence. Since the Cold War, the Eastern European and Caucasus countries have been a buffer zone between USSR mainland and NATO forces. Despite the pro-

⁸³Eugene Rumer, Andrew S. Weiss et al., *What Implications of the Ukraine Crisis?*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 27 2014. Available at :<https://carnegieendowment.org/2014/03/27/what-are-global-implications-of-ukraine-crisis-pub-55112#europe> [Accessed 15/04/2020]

⁸⁴F. Stephen Larrabee, Peter A. Wilson, John Gordon IV, *The Ukrainian Crisis and European Security: Implications for the United States and US Army*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporations, 2015), p. VII.

Western attitude that was assumed after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia changed its foreign strategy with the minister of foreign affairs Yevgeny Primakov, who considered unacceptable the unipolar world proposed by USA. He offered a new doctrine which stipulated⁸⁵:

1. Russia should strive toward a multipolar world that would have counterbalanced US unilateralism.
2. Russia should insist on its primacy in the post-Soviet space and lead integration in the region.
3. Russia should contrast NATO enlargement.

This tougher attitude against the West resulted when NATO showed not to be trustworthy and planned, throughout the 1990s, the expansion of the institution to the East. Since 1990, Russia has struggled to improve relations with the West, but it could never accept a new security regime in which it was not included or not given equal voice. Russia needed to be assured that its interests were respected in Europe given that new state was smaller than ever and lacking the security space that was fundamental to its defence strategy. Strengthening ties with NATO undeniably brought benefits, but it did not manage to give equal voice in European security matters⁸⁶. The only ways to make it possible was either by including Russia in a reformed NATO; or construct a completely renewed security architecture where NATO ceased to exist and/or a new multilateral organisation was created; or OSCE had acquired new responsibilities. However, the Western bloc, especially the USA, was never keen to realize any of the above mentioned scenarios⁸⁷.

The first expansion in 1999 originated great criticism. Russian officials argued it was not in conformity with what USA promised to USSR before its dissolution⁸⁸ and went beyond what agreed with Yeltsin in 1993, when the Clinton administration

⁸⁵Eugene Rumer, *The Primakov (Not Gerasimov) Doctrine in Action*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 5 2019. Available at: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/06/05/primakov-not-gerasimov-doctrine-in-action-pub-79254> [Accessed 16/04/2020]

⁸⁶Dov Lynch, Misperceptions and Divergencies, in 'What Russia Sees', edited by Dov Lynch, *EU Institute for Security Studies*, 2005, Chaillot Paper (74), p. 9.

⁸⁷Prezelj, Harangozo, *Confidence and Security-Building Measures in Europe at a Crossroads*, p. 46.

⁸⁸Angela Stent, *Putin's world: Russia Against the West and with the Rest*, (New York: Twelve, 2019), p. 115. The US Secretary of State, James Baker, promised to the last Soviet President, Mikhail Gorbachev, that Russia should not have feared NATO's expansion even of one inch to the East.

assured Yeltsin that the Partnership for Peace (PfP) offered to former Warsaw Pact countries did not imply future membership in NATO. The following bombing to Serbia, compromised Russia position as pro-Western state and started to promote the return to a new concert of powers. However, the West believes that it could not have acted differently in the Balkans. The disintegration of Yugoslavia and the chaos that emerged risked bringing instability to the rest of the continent and undermining the image of Europe as whole, free and at peace that was able to maintain since the end of World War II. On the other hand, Russia, as promoter of the integrity of national sovereignty and an ally of Serbia, always opposed a foreign intervention in Yugoslavia. Yet, the European security regime, represented by NATO and OSCE, disregarded Russian interests and principles⁸⁹.

Despite the positive climate for cooperation after the 9/11 and from which resulted an intense collaboration in counter-terrorism matters, other events contributed to the slow deterioration of West-Russia relations. The withdrawal of USA from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) and of Russia from the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) endangered the global status quo that regulated the Cold War and, additionally, encouraged both governments toward a modernisation to its nuclear potential, especially Russia⁹⁰. The Big Bang NATO enlargement of 2004 engulfed the Baltic States, usually considered by the Kremlin a red line and dangerously close to the Kaliningrad exclave. Russia eventually accepted their membership into NATO but, after the Ukrainian crisis, Moscow initiated a campaign of naval and air harassment of the Baltic states, together with cyberattacks. The aim was to raise questions whether NATO was a trusted ally and would have come to countries in critical positions as Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius. In response, Obama flew to Tallinn, in September 2014, assuring that USA would have defended every NATO ally recalling the wording of article 5⁹¹. Finally, the wave of democratization and westernisation also contributed to the hard response that came from Moscow in the Ukrainian crisis. With the Bucharest

⁸⁹Prezelj, Harangozo, *Confidence and Security-Building Measures in Europe at a Crossroads*, p. 47.

⁹⁰Sergei Karaganov, Russia and the International Order in 'What Russia Sees', edited by Dov Lynch, *EU Institute for Security Studies*, 2005, Chaillot Paper (74), p. 31.

⁹¹ White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 'Remarks by President Obama to the People of Estonia', news release, Sep. 3, 2014.

Summit of 2008, the Bush administration tried to reach out the Membership Action Plan (MAP) for both Georgia and Ukraine, when, at the same time, the NATO-Russia Council was trying to improve relations. The NATO meeting ended dramatically when the summit concluded by not offering the MAP to Georgia and Ukraine but welcomed them in the organisation, promising they would become members in the future⁹². From that moment, Russia could assert that two red lines would eventually join NATO in the future, threatening the Russia defence strategy. The subsequent recognition of Kosovo independence in 2008 created a dangerous precedent, especially when the same countries had an opposite opinion regarding Abkhazia and South Ossetia⁹³. Shortly after, following months of mutual provocations, Russian troops marched into Georgia in response of the latter attack to South Ossetia and the bloody clash between Georgian guerrillas and Russian peacekeepers. It was the first time Russia had breached its commitment of respecting post-Soviet border, but it justified its action in the name of self-determination, invoking Kosovo example⁹⁴. Therefore, the West started to realize that Russia would have attempted any action, including military ones, to see its interests respected. Yet, Western countries did not fully comprehend how far Russian action could go to protect its interests. In 2009, EU launched the Eastern Partnership (EaP)⁹⁵ persevering its initiative of democratisation of former Soviet states. This further attempt to create a stronger economic cooperation with the EU and transfer Western values to the partners was disliked by Russia, which found the EU was trespassing on its sphere of influence⁹⁶.

Nowadays, the role of Ukraine in the eyes of Russia did not change, and Moscow needs Kiev to stand between the Western democratic lifestyle and the Russian state-centric approach. Putin never hid the importance of Ukraine in this role. Referring to the mass protests that characterised the Orange Revolution, Putin affirmed “We saw the West expanding their political power and influence in those territories, which we

⁹²“Bucharest Summit Declaration”, April 3 2008. Available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm

⁹³ Angela Stent, *The Limits of Partnership: US-Russian Relations in the Twenty-First Century*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), p. 161.

⁹⁴ Angela Stent, *Putin's world: Russia Against the West and with the Rest*, p. 162.

⁹⁵ It included Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

⁹⁶ Susanne Oxensierna, Per Olsson, ‘The Economic Sanctions Against Russia’, p. 14

considered sensitive and important for us to ensure our global strategic security⁹⁷”. The pro-Western approach promoted by President Yushchenko disturbed Russian security strategy in the continent. Nevertheless, Moscow retained an important leverage over Kiev: the gas trade. Gas from Russia was significantly subsidized with Ukraine paying only one third for Russian gas as Europe. Moscow showed off his energy leverage for the first time in 2006, when Ukraine refused the new higher price proposed by Gazprom and the latter turned off the gas tap, repeating the same manoeuvre in 2009. Such leverage disrupted Kiev’s freedom to decide its own foreign and security agenda throughout the entire Yushchenko presidency⁹⁸. At the same time, such coercive approach directed to Ukraine, involuntary damaged the Russia-EU energy relations. In 2006, 80 percent of the exports to Europe passed through Ukraine and Kiev siphoned off gas destined to Europe to safeguard itself, contributing to the further deterioration of relations between its neighbours. This event left Europe to wonder whether Russia could represent a threat to EU security energy in the future. Eventually, the EU found necessary to reduce the energy dependency on Russia. This is why, when the Gazprom turned off gas again in 2009, European countries were more prepared and continued a policy of diversification of the energy supply⁹⁹.

Despite the West challenged the legitimacy of the Pro-Russian President back in 2004, the Obama administration decided to work with the Yanukovych government elected in 2010, with the aim not to endanger the reset policy undertaken with Russia. Yanukovych was decisive to improve ties with Moscow and, therefore, reversed all the policies implemented during Yushchenko time. Moreover, he asserted that Ukraine would not have attempted to accede to NATO. However, Yanukovych demonstrated to have interests in the European markets, specially to satisfy the Eastern oligarchs who aspired to accede to metals and industrial equipment and sought closer ties with the European Union regardless of the Russian opinion. At this point, President Obama

⁹⁷Oliver Stone, *The Putin Interviews: Oliver Stone Interviews to Vladimir Putin*, (New York: Hot Books, 2017), p. 175.

⁹⁸Angela Stent, *Putin’s world: Russia Against the West and with the Rest*, pp. 189-194.

⁹⁹*Ivi.*, pp. 74-77.

changed its foreign strategy and encouraged the EU allies to improve relations with Ukraine and motivate it toward new democratic reforms.

Specifically, the EU-Ukraine talks started to work to initiate the Association Agreement and a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement. If Russia was indifferent to these activities in the first moment, in 2013 the negotiations were nearly concluded, and Moscow realized the consequences of Ukraine signing such agreements. First, it would have impeded Kiev to participate in the Eurasian Economic Union, an organisation that wanted to compete with the EU market. Second, the Russian and Ukrainian economies are quite interdependent, and the EU deal implied a series of economic measures that would have damaged Ukraine's economy in the short run, in return for a prosperous future that would have come some undefined day¹⁰⁰. Third, from 2009 to 2013, Russia was the third-largest buyer of Ukrainian defence equipment. Although the overall amount of Russian military imports coming from Ukraine is quite small (between 2-4 percent), it was reckoned that several branches of the military sector would have suffered without those products and services, slowing down the entire process of modernisation of the defence arsenal¹⁰¹. Immediately, the Kremlin acted and deployed a mix strategy of sticks and carrots to dissuade Yanukovich to sign the deal with the EU. Indeed, on November 21, 2013, Ukraine suspended the talks in favour of building up improved cooperation with Russia, which involved a loan of 15 billion US dollars¹⁰².

If, on one side, Moscow believed to have stopped Ukraine to slip away from its sphere of influence, it did not consider the possible reaction of that part of the population that protested in the streets during the Orange Revolution. When the Yushchenko left office, Ukraine ranked down from 122nd to 146th of the Transparency International's corruption perception index, on a par to Russia and Zimbabwe, and

¹⁰⁰Ivi., p. 195.

¹⁰¹F. Stephen Larrabee, Peter A. Wilson, John Gordon IV, *The Ukrainian Crisis and European Security: Implications for the United States and US Army*, pp. 3-4.

¹⁰²Sputnik, 'Ukraine Ditches Plans for EU Deal, Turn to Russia', 21/11/2013. Available at: <https://sputniknews.com/russia/20131121184845623-Ukraine-Rejects-Laws-to-Free-Tymoshenko-Jeopardises-EU-Deal/> [Accessed 16/04/2020]

seemed to have only slightly improved in the following years¹⁰³. However, the reality is, Yanukovych administration became increasingly corrupted, spending public savings for everything but helping Ukrainians. A clear example of its excesses was the palatial estate in north of Kiev, which housed zoo with wild bears and hold luxury goods such as vintage automobiles and golden toilets¹⁰⁴. The pro-Euro Ukrainians believed that signing an agreement with EU would have fostered more democracy and less corruption in the country. Then, they poured into Kiev's main square, naming their movement the EuroMaidan, and after three months the protestors grew to 800,000 demanding to reverse the latest policy. The protests were alternated from episodes of violence from the police forces on the crowd, but the worse occurred between February 18 and 20, 2014, when Ukrainian snipers of the special forces were ordered to shoot on Maidan square, killing one hundred people and wounding even more.

The efforts of European and Russian brokers which engaged to settle the conflict through an agreement, that Russia decided not to sign, seemed to be vain when Yanukovych fled to Rostov, in Southern Russia, and the relation between Ukraine's neighbours inflamed. Both parties gave a different narrative and blame the other to be behind the disorders in Ukraine. Putin supported Yanukovych as legitimate elected leader of Ukraine that was removed by force and, as ally, Russia helped him. Putin also blamed the West for fomenting protestors against the government and outstanding Yanukovych¹⁰⁵. On the contrary, the West supports the line that Yanukovych left the country before any attempt to overthrow him were made and he just fled the country fearing to face the consequences of the bloodshed he provoked.

Within days after Yanukovych fled, Putin ordered a surprise military exercises of ground and air forces on Ukraine's borders. All at a sudden, hundreds of *little green men* walked through Crimea and seized Sevastopol's municipal buildings, raising the Russian flag, and repeated such gesture throughout the peninsula, intimidating the Ukrainian naval forces in Sevastopol. Sergei Lavrov, the minister of foreign affairs,

¹⁰³Transparency International, 'Corruption Perceptions Index 2014: Results', Available at: <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2014/results>

¹⁰⁴"In Pictures: Inside the Palace Yanukovych Didn't Want Ukraine to See", *The Telegraph*, February 27, 2014.

¹⁰⁵Angela Stent, *Putin's world: Russia Against the West and with the Rest*, pp. 197-198.

was apparently not consulted but seemed to be the independent action of unidentified soldiers who intervened to protect the Russians in Crimea from the oppression of the “illegal fascist junta” in Kiev. The Ukrainian forces in Crimea did not challenge the military men, on advice of the United States. Shortly after, Crimea held a referendum whose results claimed that 96 percent of the 82 percent of the eligible population voted to be annexed to the Russian Federation. The annexation took the entire world by surprise. Such events declared the end of the post-Cold War consensus on European security¹⁰⁶. The West never considered legitimate the referendum and considered it as an aggression against the sovereignty of Ukraine.

On 18 March 2014, two days after Russian annexation of Crimea, the USA and EU imposed the first restrictions, which assumed the form of smart sanctions. On March 27, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 68/262 which stressed that the Crimean referendum was not valid, and the international community was invited not to acknowledge as legitimate¹⁰⁷. Moreover, the Kremlin was accused of supporting the separatists in Donbass, who favoured closer ties to Russia and to be behind the disorder that occurred in Donetsk and Luhansk. In April 2014, it was proclaimed The Donetsk People’s Republic and Luhansk People’s Republic, to which the separatists referred with the shorter name of Novorossiia, recalling Catherine The Great¹⁰⁸. The immediate concern verted to the former Soviet states in Central and Eastern Europe, particularly Poland and the Baltic countries, which feared that the wave of destabilization could reach their borders.

The downing of the Malaysia Airlines on July 17 just complicated the security situation. Russia always denied any involvement, while the West assumed that it was launched by Russian-backed rebels, who probably believed MH17 was a Ukrainian military jet¹⁰⁹. Consequentially, EU decided to extend the sanctions imposed in June and introduce new economic sanctions, while the US had already implemented harder

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷See “Resolution adopted by the General Assembly 68/262”, 27 March 2014. Available at: <https://undocs.org/A/RES/68/262>

¹⁰⁸Angela Stent, *Putin’s world: Russia Against the West and with the Rest*, pp. 199-200.

¹⁰⁹Simon Calder, ‘MH17 Crash: Everything We Know Five Years After Plane was Gunned Down’, *The Independent*, 17 July 2019. Available at : <https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/mh17-crash-malaysia-airlines-anniversary-ukraine-russia-what-happened-a9007826.html>

sanctions targeting banks, the energy sphere, and the armament categories¹¹⁰. In retaliation, the Kremlin imposed counter-sanctions on European agricultural imports. Among the several reasons, Moscow wanted to signal the international community that Russia can react and to strive advantage of the situation by stimulating the home production¹¹¹.

In sum, the Ukrainian war is the first security crisis that endangered the post-Cold War consensus and revealed the tensions that emerged between the West and Russia since the years of the 1999 NATO expansion and the Kosovo conflict. The crisis concerns a hybrid war against Ukraine, which includes acts of military aggression and targeted disinformation campaigns¹¹². Following the Western perspective, Russia slowly decided to stop cooperating and disrupted the process of integration into the West. The fear of the spread of democratic movement in the post-Soviet space and the eventual expansion of NATO close to Russian borders brought the Kremlin to start using force in parts of Ukraine and Crimea. This behaviour has been considered in contrast with the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, which respects the sovereignty of any single state.

The perception of Alexander Vershbow, the NATO Deputy Secretary General, is that Russia is opting to return to a kind of Yalta 2 based on spheres of influence. In other words, it is auspicing to re-create a concert of powers on the example of the post Vienna Conference 1815. Therefore, Russia and NATO have conflicting visions of how the European security should be performed, but diplomatic effort is still in force. The West is trying to address the problem through the appropriate negotiation channels, and the OSCE is the first of the list. Moreover, it was proposed to renovate the Vienna Document to promote transparency and risk reduction among the actors that regulate the European security framework. The prospects of settling the conflict rely also on the success of Minsk II agreement, a cease fire and package of measures negotiated by the Normandy Four. However, the political stand adopted by Russia represents a great obstacle for the normalization of relations. Alexander Vershbow

¹¹⁰Susanne Oxensierna, Per Olsson, 'The Economic Sanctions Against Russia', pp. 15-19

¹¹¹Further details will be provided in the section dedicated to Russia

¹¹²European Parliament, "Ukraine: The Minsk agreements Five Years On", Plenary, March 2020.

maintained “as long as Russia is not ready to back away from its aggression against its sovereign neighbour, Ukraine, the suspension of practical co-operation that’s been in place in recent years in the NATO-Russia framework will remain. The implementation of the Minsk Agreements would be one step away from the current impasse. But Crimea will still be illegally annexed, and that will not be solved overnight – it might take years, even decades¹¹³”.

At this point, it was acknowledged why Russia represents a security threat to the West. However, despite the evident common objectives to adopt this measure, USA and EU are dictated by different domestic and international actors. Therefore, in the next sections there will be analysed the objectives that these two entities want to pursue with the implementation of sanctions.

2.2. US objectives

Since 2014, the United States has imposed more than 60 rounds of sanctions covering nine issue areas, namely defence, energy, financial, government, intelligence, metals and mining, technology, transportation and Russian individuals that were found related to human rights violations, corruption, involved in the Crimea annexation and so on¹¹⁴. From Obama to Trump, the essentials of the sanctions did not greatly change, and are reflected in the national security strategy of each administration. Both of them described the increasing level of distrust toward Russia that could undermine the stability of the European and global security regime. Nevertheless, within the Trump administration, the objectives of sanctions addressed also other security issues different from the Ukraine crisis, such as the interference in the 2016 US elections.

Examining the US National Security Strategy (NSS) of 2015, it explicitly refers to Russia’s aggression as “ a violation of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as its belligerent stance toward other neighbouring countries, endangers international norms that have largely been taken for granted since the end of the Cold

¹¹³“Security Community”, *The OSCE magazine*, Issue 2016. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/magazine/285596>

¹¹⁴The entire list is available at: <https://russianactionstracker.csis.org/>

War¹¹⁵”. Therefore, the first and most evident primary objective of sanctions is **condemning a transgression of generally accepted norms**, reason for which the sanctions were not only economic in nature but also implied the nonrecognition of Crimea, travel bans and restrictive financial measures for specific targets. Moreover, US wants to impose considerable costs in order to encourage Russia to comply with the Minsk agreement. Second, the Obama administration wanted to use soft and, if necessary, hard powers to **detering future acts of aggression and provocation**, demonstrating to its allies and partners that they can rely on the US security commitments. Such assertion implies that US sanctions are part of a wider strategy that could involve diplomatic efforts and military means. Indeed, the NSS 2015 clearly states that USA would have invested in their capabilities of coercion, use sanctions or other means to impose costs on the actors that breach international norms and develop wider regional strategies in order to strengthen the Western bloc¹¹⁶. Finally, US sanctions are also intended to provoke a **regime change** in Russia. US fears the security implications of Russian deceptive propaganda¹¹⁷ and dependency of Europe on Russian energy supply. In this regard, US declared the willingness to fight misinformation and promoted “the diversification of energy fuels, sources, and routes, as well as encourage indigenous sources of energy supply¹¹⁸”. With the new administration, these objectives have not greatly changed. However, the most recent sanctions¹¹⁹ showed to be less related to specific policy objectives, denouncing greater scope.

The secondary objectives, at the time of Obama administration, addressed the importance of the United States in leading the world during this time of significant political change. The values that dictate US citizens lifestyle were threatened by authoritarian states that oppose democratic forces and the USA had to help the advance of liberty and rule of law worldwide¹²⁰. With the Trump administration, the approach changed from a liberal to a realist strategy, but which basically proclaimed the same

¹¹⁵“National Security Strategy of the United States of America”, February 2015, p. 10

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹¹⁷*Ivi.*, p. 25.

¹¹⁸*Ivi.*, p. 16.

¹¹⁹Including the 2017 Countering American Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) and April 6, 2018, “Oligarch sanctions”.

¹²⁰“National Security Strategy of the United States of America”, February 2015, p. 19.

values for its citizens. However, Trump's campaign was more explicit to promote first and foremost the national interest and well-being of US citizens and the first pillar of its NSS of 2017 stressed to protect Americans and the American way of life. In order to satisfy its electorate, Trump strives for a balance of powers in which the USA is strong enough to compete with its rivals, such as Russia and China, that promote anti-Western views. Such approach implies an administration more focused on the outcomes rather than ideology, hence a realist approach. Trump's strategy involves revitalising the US economy, preserving peace through strength by rebuilding its military capability, protecting borders and sovereignty, and advancing US values¹²¹. The renewal of sanctions with the CAATSA 2017 were made in response of the Russian interferences in the 2016 US presidential campaign and were extended to other single individuals, with the oligarch sanctions, to prevent them from profiting from a "corrupt system" and persevering their wrong behaviour around the world¹²².

At this point it is possible to already draw few conclusions in the accomplishment of the secondary objectives, given that they are related to the home front and there will not be specifically addressed in the next sections. The 2015 Chicago Council Survey demonstrated that American foreign policy preferences remained committed to engagement in the world. Regarding the Ukrainian crisis, Americans generally opposed direct US military involvement, with only one third favouring the deployment of US troops in the case Russia extended its aggression to the rest of Ukraine¹²³. Regardless of their political affiliation, US citizens in 2015 polls did not perceive Russian territorial ambitions as a direct threat to the United States, especially if compared with other more prominent issues such as terrorism, Iran's nuclear program and Islamic fundamentalism. Therefore, the US engagement in Ukrainian crisis through coercive not military means reflected the security preferences of its electorate and not only its national agenda.

¹²¹Prezelj, Harangozo, *Confidence and Security-Building Measures in Europe at a Crossroads*, pp. 51-52.

¹²²Cyrus Newlin, 'US Sanctions Against Russia: What You Need to Know', Centre of Strategic & International Studies, October 31 2018, Available at: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/us-sanctions-against-russia-what-you-need-know> [Accessed on 20/04/2020]

¹²³Dina Smeltz, Ivo Daalder et al., 'America Divided: Political Partnership and US Foreign Policy', *Chicago Council Surveys*, 2015. Available at : https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/sites/default/files/CCGA_PublicSurvey2015.pdf pp. 27-28.

On the contrary, US public opinion radically changed in the following years. The Chicago Council Survey of 2017 recorded that a solid majority of the US electorate supported maintaining (39 percent) or increasing (38 percent) US sanctions on Russia “in response to its actions in Ukraine and its interferences in the 2016 presidential election¹²⁴”. Those supporting sanctions believe that Russia is working against USA also in the areas of common interests, like Syria and cyberterrorism¹²⁵. In February 2019, 78 percent of the Americans viewed Russia as a rival and the perception of Moscow as greatest threat to US security has risen significantly since 2017. Because of the mutual suspicious, Americans believe that Washington should contain Russia’s power rather than striving for cooperation¹²⁶. Therefore, despite Trump’s campaign of 2016 was willing to improve ties with Russia, the public opinion and the strong opposition of Democrats obliged the administration to adopt a harder policy against Russia and, eventually, expand the scope of sanctions in order to punish those actions that directly and indirectly threatened US security.

As often happens, there are several factors that could be linked to tertiary objectives of imposing sanctions. In this case, the main tertiary objective reflects the Buzan theory¹²⁷ about the power-security dilemma. In brief, the dilemma emerges when countries compete for power and security at each other expenses, meaning that country X cannot be stronger unless making Y weaker. This struggle can be easily referred to as the conflict between revisionists and status quo powers, where the latter supports the existing structure of international relations because it receives great benefits from it, while the former feels dissatisfied and not well represented. Knowing this, the USA, and to some extent the West in general, can be considered the status quo

¹²⁴However, in this case there are strong partisan differences, with the Democrats and Independents mostly believing in Russian interference. See Dina Smeltz, Lily Wojtowicz, Stephan Goncharov, ‘American and Russian Opinion at a Standoff on Crimea Sanctions’, *The Chicago Council on Global Affairs*, January 24 2018. Available at : <https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/publication/american-and-russian-opinion-standoff-crimea-sanctions> [Accessed on 20/04/2020]

¹²⁵*Ibid.*

¹²⁶Dina Smeltz, Lily Wojtowicz, ‘Russians Say Their Country is a Rising Military Power; And a Growing Percentage of Americans View Russia as a Threat’, *The Chicago Council on Global Affairs*, March 21, 2019. <https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/publication/lcc/russians-say-their-country-is-rising-military-power#2> [Accessed on 20/04/2020]

¹²⁷Berry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), pp. 295-325.

power that wants to preserve the post-Cold War consensus in which Washington prevailed over the others. On the contrary, Russia under Putin is the revisionist power that considers the current status of the international community as alienating and aspires to change it.

From Obama to Trump, despite opposite approach to international relations, they have reflected this objective in the political and security agenda. The NSS 2015 stressed that America had the opportunity, or even an obligation, to lead the way in wave of democratisation that has characterised the 21st century. “The modern-day international system currently relies heavily on an international legal architecture, economic and political institutions, as well as alliances and partnerships the United States and other like-minded nations established after World War Two. Sustained by robust American leadership, this system has served us well for 70 years, facilitating international cooperation, burden sharing, and accountability¹²⁸”.

Within the Trump administration, such objective is even more evident. The emphasis on promoting a more competitive country with the slogan “Make America Great Again” announces that the main tertiary objective is preserving and strengthening the security architecture that saw the USA as the world leading country since the Cold War. However, Trump brought a new unaccepted approach to the international and security affairs that has been widely criticised. Instead of respecting the traditional foreign policy of the previous presidents, the new security agenda “resembles a business strategy of a company struggling to increase its market share¹²⁹”. In this regard, Donald Trump continuously denigrated NATO members for not spending enough on the shared costs of defence and leaving the USA to carry the entire burden. During a closed-doors NATO meeting in Brussels, 2018, it seems that Trump had warned that United States would have “gone on their own way” unless the Atlantic alliance had stopped to be a drain of US savings¹³⁰. Although there are not official recordings and the EU and US governments did not confirmed such statement, the

¹²⁸ “National Security Strategy of the United States of America”, February 2015, p.23.

¹²⁹Prezelj, Harangozo, *Confidence and Security-Building Measures in Europe at a Crossroads*, p. 52.

¹³⁰Julian E. Barnes, Helene Cooper, ‘Trump Discussed Pulling US From NATO, aides Say Amid New Concerns Over Russia’, *The New York Times*, January 14, 2019. Available at : <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/14/us/politics/nato-president-trump.html> [21/04/2020]

Brussels Summit Declaration asserted that the allies would have progressively increased their spending in order to meet the goal of 2 percent of their GDP on defence by 2024¹³¹. Moreover, Trump administration not only engaged into a war trade with an economic rival of the US, namely China, but he was intentioned to turn its “trade bazooka” on Europe if they could not find a more favourable trade agreement soon¹³². In contrast to the previous administration, Trump appeared not to agree with sanctions and willing to improve ties with Russia. Trump often referred to Putin as a great leader and even phoned to congratulate him for his re-election, against the suggestions of his national security team¹³³. However, the Russiagate and the opposition of the democrats complicated their relations.

This surprising strategy of approaching the Russian enemy and criticising the allies highlights two other tertiary objectives. The NSS 2017 aims to advance American influence in the world with the purpose to enhance the conditions for peace and prosperity and develop successful societies. Despite Russia is destabilising Europe by restoring its great power status and establish its sphere of influence on its border¹³⁴, the United States wishes to improve relations with revisionist countries by creating enduring relationships that advance common political and security interests. Indeed, Russia and United States continued to cooperate in space and cybersecurity, but there are also other areas in which higher collaboration would not only improve their ties but also result in a re-stabilisation of the world order, namely in Syria, Ukraine, North Korea¹³⁵ and, recently, Iran. Second, the hard approach on the allies can be justified only in the perspective of preventing unfavourable shift in Europe, both in the case the latter gets closer to Russia and/or that EU acquires more independence in the security framework. Trump wants to implement new norms that pursue a realist perspective and in which USA remains dominant. Always to this concern, the USA is enabled to impose

¹³¹NATO, “Brussels Summit Declaration”, July 11 and 12, 2018. Available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156624.htm

¹³²Keith Johnson, ‘Europe is the New Front in Trump’s Trade War’, *Foreign Policy*, January 23, 2020. Available at: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/01/23/europe-new-front-trump-trade-war-davos-wef/> [Accessed on 21/04/2020]

¹³³Angela Stent, *Putin’s world: Russia Against the West and with the Rest*, p. 334.

¹³⁴Russia as a threat to national security is extensively discussed in “The National Security Strategy of the United States of America”, December 2017.

¹³⁵Angela Stent, *Putin’s world: Russia Against the West and with the Rest*, p. 338.

secondary sanctions on foreign entities that violate the restrictive measures taken against Russia¹³⁶.

Yet, Trump administration was extensively and repeatedly criticised by the European leaders. “These positions and actions actually started to disintegrate the unity also in the Western bloc, NATO and the EU¹³⁷”. An anonymous senior EU diplomat believes that EU is a paralysis to the Ukrainian crisis and to solving the Russian threat, while the US is emerging as the weakest point of the Western bloc¹³⁸. Is it possible that the European Union would emancipate its defence industry in order to strive for more autonomy in the security decisions?

2.3. EU objectives

The European Union has imposed three sanctions regimes in response to Russia’s aggressive behaviour against Ukraine and to related events (like the downing of MH-17). First, they made a list of individuals and legal entities that were found involved in compromising the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine and they have frozen their assets in the EU areas. Second, they were implemented restrictions, and later total embargo on the EU imports of products coming from Crimea or Sevastopol. Finally, they were implemented economic sanctions against Russia with the purpose of restricting the use of EU financial markets, forbidding the export of armaments, dual use goods and of equipment and services to the oil industry. Differently from USA, the European sanctions affect EU citizens and EU registered firms and organisations and cannot extend their scope to other entities that violate the norms¹³⁹. The EU Commission has worked as facilitator and cohesive entity of the multi-agenda of its members and given the diversity of EU countries it

¹³⁶Nigel Gould-Davies, ‘Economic Effects and Political Impacts: Assessing Western Sanctions on Russia’, p. 9.

¹³⁷Prezelj, Harangozo, *Confidence and Security-Building Measures in Europe at a Crossroads*. p. 53.

¹³⁸*Ibid.*

¹³⁹Nigel Gould-Davies, ‘Economic Effects and Political Impacts: Assessing Western Sanctions on Russia’, p. 9.

shall be considered a great achievement¹⁴⁰. In March 2016, EU's Foreign Affairs Council agreed on five guiding principles for EU-Russia relations¹⁴¹:

1. The key condition for any substantial change in the EU's stance towards Russia is in the implementation of the Minsk agreement.
2. Increasing relations with the EU's Eastern Partners and other neighbours, particularly in Central Asia.
3. Improving the EU resilience (for example in the areas of energy security, hybrid threats, or strategic communication).
4. Need for selective engagement with Russia on issues of interest to the EU which could enhance better ties with the two parties.
5. Need to engage in people-to-people contacts and support Russian civil society.

The Council of the EU renewed the restrictive measures for a further six months in order to leave the possibility to the Council to assess whether Russia complied with the Minsk agreement or not. Obviously, the wording and the policies implemented are broader and smaller in scope than USA because, on one hand, Russia and EU had more intensive relations than the USA at the time of the Ukrainian crisis and it faced more costs in consequence of this decision. On the other hand, the EU is not a single unitary entity, but a supranational union of sovereign states, with common ideals but different national agendas. Yet, as abovementioned, the EU-members have not concretely diverged from the sanction regime highlighting that, despite the different interests, they support the same security agenda.

The primary objectives of the European Union are almost the same as those of USA. EU **condemned the actions** undertaken by Russia at the expenses of Ukraine, namely the annexation of Crimea and the support of rebels in Donbass, Donetsk, and Luhansk. Second, posing the implementation of the Minsk agreements as the key condition to improve EU-Russia relations implies that EU aims at **detering future aggressive behaviours from Russia** toward its continent. Finally, according to the

¹⁴⁰Susanne Oxensierna, Per Olsson, 'The Economic Sanctions Against Russia', p.20.

¹⁴¹See "EU Sanctions Map", Available at :

<https://www.sanctionsmap.eu/#/main/details/26/guidances?search=%7B%22value%22:%22Russia%22,%22searchType%22:%7B%22id%22:1,%22title%22:%22regimes,%20persons,%20entities%22%7D%7D>

Sanctions Guidelines of the Council of EU¹⁴², restrictive measures are generally applied to bring about a change in policy or activity of the target country or government and so on. Not at the same extent as United States, the EU **aims to provoke a regime change** which compels with the internationally agreed norms and would not pose a threat to the European security framework. Following the Western perception, the EU unity on sanctions has annoyed Moscow, reason for which it has been supporting any movement or national trends that would undermine the union. The emergence of political parties from the Right and the Left that do not support the European Union have usually found approval from the Kremlin, given that the key to Putin's policy relies on the untouchability of state sovereignty¹⁴³. Several Western analysts often claimed that Russia would have been glad for Brexit to happen, although the Kremlin tried not to give his opinion on this topic. Instead, it criticised those media and politicians that would make claims on Russia's positions and role in the results of the referendum¹⁴⁴. Despite the certainty of these facts, the West perceives Putin's government as supporting and working to weakening the union. The Skripal case¹⁴⁵ just added tensions in this delicate situation¹⁴⁶. The Skripals survived but, almost immediately, the British government blamed the Kremlin of the poisoning. The foreign Secretary at that time, Boris Johnson, echoed the death of Alexander Litvinenko as another example of Russian aggression on UK soil. Johnson maintained "It is clear that Russia is, I am afraid, in many respects now a malign and disruptive force [...] I increasingly think that we have to categorise... as acts of war¹⁴⁷". Whatever were the reasons behind the poisoning, it gave the West another excuse to wish for a regime

¹⁴²Council of the European Union, "Sanctions Guidelines- Update", May 4, 2018. Available at: <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-5664-2018-INIT/en/pdf>

¹⁴³Angela Stent, *Putin's world: Russia Against the West and with the Rest*, p.61.

¹⁴⁴Russia Today, 'Putin on Brexit: No One Wants to Support Weak Economies', June 24, 2016. <https://www.rt.com/news/348201-putin-brexit-weak-economies/> [Accessed on 21/04/2020]

¹⁴⁵Angela Stent, *Putin's world: Russia Against the West and with the Rest*, pp. 71-73.

¹⁴⁶Sergei Skripal was a former GRU double agent of MI6 and was arrested in Russia in 2004. He was later released during a spy exchange of 2010, which involved ten sleeper agents in the United States. Despite the normal practice of leaving the former agents alone, Skripal and his daughter had been poisoned in 2018 with a nerve agent, at the medieval cathedral of Salisbury in Southern England. The nerve agent used was the Novichok, usually developed in the Soviet Union.

¹⁴⁷James Landale, 'Russian Spy : What Now for the UK/Russia Relationship?', BBC News, March 7, 2018. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-43318103> [Accessed on 22/04/2020]

change and attack Russia with not military means, namely the expulsion of Russian diplomats and through new rounds of economic sanctions.

The secondary objectives reveal an important symbolism. Generally speaking, EU sanctions are imposed not only to safeguard its fundamental interests and security, but also to preserve EU values and peace in the continent¹⁴⁸. Therefore, the union wanted to demonstrate to its members and its citizens that it would stand together against external threats that touch the stability of the continent, both on the security and political level.

The EU managed to remain united, although the economic consequences have touched more this sender than the US. Indeed, in 2015, Russia was third largest trade partners for EU, representing the 8.4 percent of total trade, and the latter was the largest trading partner for Russia, constituting 48 percent of Russia's foreign trade¹⁴⁹. However, because of sanctions and the recession on the Russian, the trade volume between EU and Russia largely decreased. Moreover, Russia retaliated with an embargo on certain EU agricultural products which undeniably caused some losses. Between 2013 and 2016, EU exports to Russia annually declined by 20.7 percent (while it had increased by 20 percent per year between 2009 and 2012). The shares of Russia in total exports of the Baltic States, as also Poland, Czech Republic, Austria and Hungary decreased significantly and much more than for the EU as whole. In absolute terms, the major EU exporters lost the most, such as Germany¹⁵⁰. Despite the European Commission usually summarises the economic losses of sanctions and countersanctions as contained and various economists believe that EU had easily reconfigured its trade market¹⁵¹, the impact of adopting this measure was greater than its ally across the ocean. Consequentially, the imposition of sanctions implies, on one

¹⁴⁸Council of the European Union, "Sanctions: How and when the EU Adopts Restrictive Measures", Last Reviewed on March 6, 2020. Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/>

¹⁴⁹European Parliament, "Economic Impact on the EU of Sanctions over Ukraine Conflict", Briefing October 2015. Available at:

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/569020/EPRS_BRI\(2015\)569020_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/569020/EPRS_BRI(2015)569020_EN.pdf)

¹⁵⁰Ivan Timofeev, "The Sanctions Against Russia: Escalation, Scenarios and Countermeasures", RIAC Report, 2018 (37).

¹⁵¹Oliver Fritsz, Elisabeth Christen, Franz Sinabell, Julian Hinz, "Russia's and the EU's Sanctions: Economic and Trade Effects, Compliance and the Way Forward", European Parliament: Directorate-General for External Policies, 2017. Available at:

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/603847/EXPO_STU\(2017\)603847_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/603847/EXPO_STU(2017)603847_EN.pdf)

hand, that the costs on EU were not unsurmountable, but it decided not to target those sectors on which it depends the most, namely the gas sector. Second, this factor remarks the common concern of the European Union regarding the Ukrainian conflict. Despite the costs, the EU preferred assuming a non-military coercive policy against Russia demonstrating that the consequences of its actions inherently brought political and security consequences that EU could not ignore.

Finally, the EU sanctions needed to have a cohesive measure of all members to demonstrate that the EU internal issues did not affect the union in this situation. Following the implementation of the first rounds of sanctions, the main security concerns for the European Union were directed to migration, the protection of the Southern-borders and terrorism, issues that were undermining the cohesion and the efficiency of the European institutions and brought the rise of Eurosceptics. Moreover, Putin often discussed the importance of improving ties with Europe, but only a fragmented Western alliance would best serve Russia's interests¹⁵², adding more concern on those EU diplomats that still believe in the European project and the security structure constructed with the USA. In a moment of uncertainty for the future of the union, the EU had to demonstrate to have a unitary external action at least in the matter of Russia. At the present, it appears to have attained its secondary objectives.

The tertiary objectives aim to consolidate and support the Post-Cold War consensus. Indeed, among the key objectives when adopting sanctions¹⁵³, it is found the importance of preventing conflicts and strengthening international security. However, this assertion has a positive and negative connotation. Collective security, in the liberal sense of the term, was always at the basis of the reconstruction of the European societies since the end of the World War Two. Therefore, enforcing a unitary front against those countries that seem to undermine the collective security is consistent with the security regime of NATO, OSCE and UN that the EU always supported. On the negative side, the Cold-War permitted the EU to rely on the security umbrella provided by the United States, but it brought the former to not sufficiently invest in its own defence industry. Saving up on the defence industry, European countries were

¹⁵²Angela Stent, *Putin's world: Russia Against the West and with the Rest*, p. 348.

¹⁵³Council of the European Union, "Sanctions: How and when the EU Adopts Restrictive Measures".

motivated to invest more effort in soft powers and the growth of the European Community in the economic, political and social spheres. Still, the actual EU bargaining power remains lower than USA, which retains more discretionary power in the international affairs¹⁵⁴.

This gap in bargaining power becomes evident when the foreign policies of the two allies do not concede. For instance, US new sanctions on Iran in 2018 were in net contrast to EU interests, which believes that the JCPOA can prevent further chaos in the Middle East. Despite the implementation of countermeasures to the US legislation, lessons from the past taught that, without the US support, EU effort might be insufficient to achieve the expected goals¹⁵⁵. The Trump administration is promoting a new model of relations with the allies that does not necessarily reflect EU needs. Highlighting the differences in the approach of foreign affairs, it brought the European countries to wonder whether it would be more responsible to take the lead of its own defence¹⁵⁶.

With all these stated, it is evident that the tertiary objectives between US and EU are different because the former is dictated by the need of maintaining its leading position and the other to protect its territory within the institutions that always regulated security matters, that is collective security. The US has been promoting a new uncertain model of international relations that emphasized more the outcomes than the ideologies. On the contrary, the EU remains closer to the past liberal dictation. Yet, despite the increasing differences between the allies, the EU is generally not willing to change its security regime. It is not ready and sufficiently united to deal with the long-term costs of emancipation¹⁵⁷. Therefore, EU countries remain partially conditioned to US strategy when planning their external action.

¹⁵⁴See Daniel Fiott, 'The Poison Pill: EU Defence on US Terms?', *European Union Institute for Security Studies*, January 14, 2019. Available at: <https://www.iss.europa.eu/content/poison-pill-eu-defence-us-terms> [Accessed on 22/04/2020]

¹⁵⁵Aniseh Bassiri Tabrizi, 'Europe-Iran Relations: Back to the Future?', ISPI, February 8, 2019. Available at: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/europe-iran-relations-back-future-22232> [Accessed on 22/04/2020]

¹⁵⁶See Daniel Fiott, 'Strategic Autonomy: Towards European Sovereignty in defence?', *European Union Institute for Security Studies*, 2018, Brief Issue 12.

¹⁵⁷*Ibid.*

2.4. Conclusions to the Chapter

The Western sanctions have been designed to target as many individuals and entities are connected to the regime and minimise the impact on the population¹⁵⁸. Primary objectives mostly concede but the motivations behind secondary and tertiary objectives diverge.

Indeed, as defined by Bebler¹⁵⁹, the contextual interests and aims of sanctions of EU and US are somewhat different. The USA use the sanctions to reflect its global strategy in which Russia is a revisionist power trying to destabilise the post-Cold War equilibrium. Obama believed it was an opportunity to promote US values around the world and strengthen the Atlantic alliance. Trump assumed a different approach that aims to protect American values, like Obama did, but also wanted to revitalize US global position at the expenses of the enemies and, eventually, allies. Moreover, the concern of Americans toward Russian behaviour increased with the latest development of US-Russia relations and, consequently, Trump's strategy tried to reflect the electorate preferences and its security agenda by widening the scope of sanctions.

On the contrary, the EU sanctions do not treat Russia as an enemy and creating an economic damage to the latter is not really in its interests. Russia was third largest trade partner, and despite the lower intensity of their exchange, EU continued to have important energy relations with Russia. Rather, EU wants to maintain the collective security guarantees that enjoyed until this moment. This is why EU sanctions are focused to solve the Ukrainian conflict and strive for the implementation of the Minsk Accords. It wants to promote its values in Eastern Europe with the purpose of maintaining peace across the continent and preserving the support of the members for the EU institutions. Not all European countries perceive Russia as a threat, but all rely on the same security regime. A good example is Italy. There were never events that directly brought Rome to contrast Moscow or vice versa, but Italy always had to come to terms with the Atlantic alliance¹⁶⁰.

¹⁵⁸Susanne Oxensierna, Per Olsson, 'The Economic Sanctions Against Russia', p. 20.

¹⁵⁹Anton Bebler, *Izzivi Vojne in Miru*, (Ljubljana: Založba FDV, 2017), pp. 424-425.

¹⁶⁰Pietro Figuera, L'Italia Può e Deve Aiutare La Russia a Rientrare in Europa, in 'Una Strategia per L'Italia', *Limes*, February 2019, pp. 91-99.

Therefore, what abovementioned reveals that sanctions on Russia are not dictated by an international organisation, but they remain unilateral in nature. They addressed mostly common areas (like finances, oil sectors, defence industry and violation of human rights) but the US sanctions are wider in scope (they can impose secondary sanctions) and addressed also Gazprom, while EU decided not to target the gas sector given its dependency on Russia's supply¹⁶¹. As mentioned in section 1.3, multiple senders tend to hinder the success of sanctions, especially when they present a multi-issue agenda. Moreover, the costs on the sender have been larger for the EU than USA, compromising the efficiency of such measure. At the same time, the conflict is quite important for the EU, but it became a greater issue to US electorate only when Russia seemed to have interfered in the 2016 presidential elections. This means that, first, the purpose of the sanctions has been changing for the EU and USA. Second, they will probably remain in place for many years, hindering even further the probability of success. Finally, despite the common action, the EU is facing the dilemma of US aspirations and the divergences of its members which could bring the EU to revise its strategy. Bebler believes that the EU finds itself caught up into a trap and the sanctions have become somehow counterproductive and not helping to find a solution to the Ukrainian crisis.

To assert whether this is true or not, it could help to analyse the perspective of a middle power that is involved in this situation but does not completely agree with the hard position of its allies against Russia, notably Italy. The next chapter will consider the security agenda of Italy and the reasons that pushed the Republic to impose sanctions on Russia.

¹⁶¹Susanne Oxensierna, Per Olsson, 'The Economic Sanctions Against Russia', p.20.

Chapter III- The Perspective of a Middle Power: Italy's position regarding Russia

The external perception of the European Union is of a well accomplished regional integration that stands as a model to other organisations in the world. However, it often forgets to consider that the union is not a federation and its members still retain significant sovereign powers. This implies that unitary action of the union is a great accomplishment but also very difficult to maintain, especially when the national interests of its members do not completely concede and are subject to change as time passes. The sanction regime imposed on Russia is no exception. This is why, it should be analysed the security agenda of the middle powers that compose the union in order to better comprehend the reasons that, despite the different interests, brought them to support the same sanction regime. However, fearing of getting out of the scope of the thesis, I decided to analyse only one country and I took, for instance, the case of Italy.

All this stated, the following chapter will attempt to answer the following questions: what is Italy's security agenda as middle power in the Atlantic alliance? What are the objectives of imposing sanctions on Russia and to what level it supports such measure? Does Italy consider the sanctions efficient in achieving its main security objectives?

3.1. Italian Security Agenda

Differently from major powers, like the United States and the Russian Federation, "Italy does not have a National Security Strategy on the strict sense of the word¹⁶²", or at least, at the beginning of the 2000s it did not felt the necessity to produce such document to identify the medium to long term security threats to its country.

¹⁶²Federica Di Camillo, Lucia Marta, 'National Security Strategies: The Italia Case (WP)', *Real Instituto Elcano*, 2009. Available at: http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano_en/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_in/zonas_in/dt39-2009

Rather, Italy preferred producing several documents that would instruct the institutional responsibilities for the external and internal security threats.

The reason of paying little attention to the defence sector was dictated by the conditions of the Cold War, in which Italy had chosen to belong to the Atlantic alliance and took full advantage of that security framework. Enjoying the security benefits of such alliance, Italy and the other Western democratic countries gradually decreased the level of defence investments. Despite the emergence of new security threats, they had further reduced the sensitivity toward defence topics given that the consequences of the financial and economic crises created greater concerns¹⁶³.

In 2015, the Italian defence ministry published a new White Paper, a more elaborate document than the one issued in 2002 which just collected the reforms in the military and defence sector that occurred since the White Paper released in 1985¹⁶⁴. It claimed that the setting of the international relations was quickly changing and brought to the emergence of new significant security threats that Italy was unprepared to handle because of the little attention the Republic paid to reforming the defence structure across the new century. Particularly, the White Paper denounced three main areas of the international security and defence sectors in which Italy was lagging behind: political and institutional participation in the defence debate; the structure and functioning of the administration; and the relationship between Italian citizens and Defence¹⁶⁵.

Reforming the Italian defence structure implies cooperation for stability and international security. Of course, such a concept is part of the collective responsibility of the international organisations Italy belongs to, notably NATO, the EU and the UN, and the bi/multilateral agreement that have been signed *ad hoc*, such as in occasion of the US-led mission in Iraq which concluded for Italy in 2007¹⁶⁶. The engagement of

¹⁶³“White Paper for International Security and Defence”, The Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Italy, July 2015, p. 8. Available at: https://www.difesa.it/Primo_Piano/Documents/2015/07_Luglio/White%20book.pdf

¹⁶⁴Ester Sabatino, ‘The Innovation of the Italian White Paper: Defence Policy Reform’, *Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)*, July 2017. Available at: <https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iaiw1734.pdf>

¹⁶⁵“White Paper for International Security and Defence”, The Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Italy, p. 7.

¹⁶⁶Federica Di Camillo, Lucia Marta, ‘National Security Strategies: The Italia Case (WP).

Italy with the Atlantic and European initiatives was confirmed also in the 2015 White Paper, reflecting the willingness of the Republic to be active not only in regions of its interest but also in other security theatres. Indeed, the commitment of its allies in dealing with major issues that threaten the Italian security (such as counterterrorism and the instability of the Balkans) requires, in exchange, Italy's engagement elsewhere, like in Iraq or Afghanistan. Consequentially, Italy's defence policy "cannot be separated from a broad and diverse vision of ongoing problems and global dynamics, with multiple dimensions¹⁶⁷".

Among the main threats that concerns Italy's security¹⁶⁸ there is terrorism, whose attacks in the continent undermine the stability and the freedom of the Western states. The Mediterranean area where the country is historically, politically, and economically located cannot ignore the rising of new and violent criminality and bloodshed that is provoking a dramatic flow of immigration and militants into Europe¹⁶⁹. Finally, preserving stability and security in the Euro-Atlantic region. Italy acknowledges that the world has deeply changed, and several factors are adversely affecting the future of the international security scenario. In particular, the White Paper mentioned the variation of the global balance of power, resulting from the entrance of new emerging nations that could pose political, economic or military challenges to the existing institutions¹⁷⁰. Those challenges require a coordinated reaction from all the members and the institutions that compose the EU, NATO and UN, the main points of reference of Italy's security framework.

The White Paper was among the first proposals of strengthening the industrial cooperation in defence at the EU level. Although it not an immediate necessity, Italy believed it could be a great advantage, on the one hand, to build sophisticated technologies that would be too expensive to bear at national level and, on the other hand, to consolidate the EU defence market. The propensity of Rome to develop the defence structure at EU level is recalled also in the initiatives of the Europeans Defence

¹⁶⁷“White Paper for International Security and Defence”, The Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Italy, p. 21.

¹⁶⁸See *Ivi.*, p.8.

¹⁶⁹*Ivi.*, p.27.

¹⁷⁰*Ivi.*, p.22.

Agency (EDA) and the Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation (OCCAR), as well as in the decision of the European Commission in 2016 to allocate 90 million euros on defence research until 2020¹⁷¹.

The Euro-Atlantic area is vital for Italy from the economic point of view, considering the high level of industrial interdependence and that 68 percent of the imports and 75 percent of exports are made in this area¹⁷². Therefore, despite the willingness of deepening cooperation in the European Union, strengthening the fundamentals of collective security is a cornerstone of the Italian security strategy and NATO remains the “sole international actor able to deter, dissuade and defend against any kind of threat¹⁷³”.

Nevertheless, the financial and economic crisis and the need to contain the public debt have been an obstacle to provide the country all the necessary resources to address these challenges and perform the improvements proposed in the White Paper. Then, the document remains a laudable effort and retains significant strategic importance¹⁷⁴, but implementation lags behind and the defence sector remains of low concern in the Italian politics.

3.2. Why imposing sanctions?

The Italian position regarding Russia is quite eclectic. Often, other EU countries considered Rome’s approach to Moscow as excessively accommodating but only because Italy’s relations with the Eurasian partner were always limited to the economic sphere. At the time of the Ukrainian crisis, Italy had deep economic and energy ties with Russia and was never extremely concerned with the political dynamics of those countries that Russia considers part of its sphere of influence¹⁷⁵. Italy’s main interests lay in the Mediterranean region, which is source of profits for the Republic but also

¹⁷¹Ester Sabatino, ‘The Innovation of the Italian White Paper: Defence Policy Reform’.

¹⁷²“White Paper for International Security and Defence”, The Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Italy, p. 26.

¹⁷³Ester Sabatino, ‘The Innovation of the Italian White Paper: Defence Policy Reform’.

¹⁷⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵Nathalie Tocci, ‘How Should Europe Respond to Russia? The Italian View’, in *ECFR’s Wider Europe Forum*, November 18, 2014. Available at:

https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_how_should_europe_respond_to_russia_the_italian_view353

of several issues. Consequentially, the Italy-Russia relations were always very pragmatic.

During the Cold War, Italian companies, namely ENI and FIAT, began to import gas and oil from the Soviet Union and Rome maintained a good working relationship with the Eurasian partner. After its dissolution, it became the second largest customer in the EU, after Germany, of Russian energy supply¹⁷⁶. Italian politicians were usually the greatest supporters of Russian integration in the Western structures. Rome cheered of the creation of the NATO-Russia Council in 2002 and it attempted to mediate and preserve the relations with Russia during delicate events, such as NATO's expansion to the East and the 2008 Russian-Georgian war¹⁷⁷. Together with the significant trade and energy relations, their relation was stable thanks to “the belief among Italian policymakers that European Security could not be achieved without the inclusion and active participation of Russia¹⁷⁸”.

Nevertheless, the Ukrainian crisis posed a dilemma on the Italian cooperative approach in the foreign policy toward Russia. When the military presence in Donbas increased in the summer 2014, the Western media asserted that troops present in the territory belonged to the Russian army and also the Italian Prime Minister at that time, Matteo Renzi, maintained that Russia's action was triggering an intolerable escalation whose consequences were very serious¹⁷⁹. Indeed, Italy condemned the annexation of Crimea and have been supporting the EU sanctions regime renewed every six months. The following year, the Italian defence ministry published the White Paper abovementioned and the proximity of these events leaves intended that Italy understood the deep geopolitical implications that the Ukrainian crisis provoked and concluded that, if summed together with other emerging threats, there could be serious

¹⁷⁶Marco Siddi, *Privileged partners? Italy should use its leverage for constructive policies towards Russia*, FIIA Briefing Paper 197, (Helsinki: Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 2016).

¹⁷⁷Marco Siddi, 'Italy's Middle Power Approach to Russia', *The International Spectator*, 2019, 54 (2), pp. 123-124.

¹⁷⁸Marco Siddi, *EU Member States and Russia: National and European Debated in an Evolving International Environment*, FIIA Report 53, (Helsinki: Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 2018), p.60.

¹⁷⁹“Ucraina, Renzi a Putin: ‘Intollerabile escalation’. Obama: ‘Gravi costi per Russia’”, Rainews, 29 August 2014. Available at: <http://www.rainews.it/dl/rainews/articoli/Ucraina-Renzi-a-Putin-Intollerabile-escalation-9e0e498e-7528-45e5-9d1d-3cafc90f2aca.html> [07/05/2020]

problems in maintaining the Euro-Atlantic institutions that are at the bases of its security regime.

Bearing this in mind, the primary objectives that I consider in conformity with the line of EU and USA are condemning the annexation of Crimea and deterring future aggression on the continent. The disapproval of the Crimean referendum was widely criticised by the Italian policymakers, especially when the Kosovo question was used as precedent by the Russian officials to legitimize such action. Italy was always concerned on the stability of the Balkans, given their proximity to the peninsula, and since September 6, 2013, the Italian forces assumed the leadership of Mission KFOR¹⁸⁰. The high involvement in the Kosovo question brought Italy to deny any assimilation of the Crimean independence process to the one that occurred in the Balkans. The Italian Senate noted that the advisory opinion issued by the Court of International justice in 2010, which legitimized the independence of Kosovo and was also recalled during a statement in the Parliament of Crimea, actually highlighted that the autonomy of Kosovo was a consequence of decade-long discriminations against the Albanian majority and occurred only after years of administration as protectorate of the International Community¹⁸¹. Hence, the Crimea referendum is considered by the Italian legislation as breaching the norms of international law and not comparable with the case in the Balkans.

On the other hand, the 2015 White Paper never directly mentions Russia as a security threat. However, it asserts that Italy and its allies should create the conditions to establish a sufficient deterrence that would be functional in preventing future conflicts both in the Euro-Atlantic and Mediterranean areas¹⁸². Considering that Italy fully supports the European sanctions, it can be assumed that the policy of deterrence is directed also toward Russia. At the same time, Italy did not demonstrate any interest

¹⁸⁰“Kosovo-KFOR-Joint Enterprise”, Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Italy. https://www.difesa.it/OperazioniMilitari/op_intern_corso/KFOR/Pagine/default.aspx [Accessed on 08/05/2020]

¹⁸¹The Italian Senate, “Gli Sviluppi della Crisi Ucraina”, 17th Legislation, Dossier n.33, April 1, 2014. Available at: https://www.senato.it/japp/bgt/showdoc/17/DOSSIER/0/757700/index.html?part=dossier_dossier1-sezione_sezione2-h1_h13&spart=si

¹⁸²“White Paper for International Security and Defence”, The Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Italy, p. 14.

in supporting a regime change as other Western countries. The friendly stance that characterise Russia-Italy relationship before the Ukrainian crisis continued in the following years where it was possible. Indeed, Italy decided not to sign the multilateral declaration within which USA, Germany, UK, France, and Canada solicited Moscow to disclose its defence programme on Novichok as part of the investigations of the Skripal case¹⁸³. Italy also refuted the Western assumptions that Russia attempted to interfere in the referendum hold in 2016, that brought to the resignation of the Italian Prime Minister Renzi¹⁸⁴.

The secondary objectives are not very clear. According to the surveys issued by the *Laboratori Analisi Politiche e Sociali* (LAPS) in 2019, the Italian opinion on the foreign policy toward Russia is very divided¹⁸⁵. With only 6 percent of the population believing that the Russian interferences in political events of third country are just propaganda made by the enemies of Moscow, the rest of the sample is equally divided in two. One part thinks that concerns on Russian interferences are well motivated and the other part, instead, perceive them as an exaggeration. Simultaneously, the opinion on annexation of the Crimean referendum is very confused. The majority does not have a precise opinion, while 34 percent of the sample generally disagree, and the remaining 14 percent approves it.

Finally, the topic of sanctions did not assert a clear position of the Italian public opinion either. On one side, 42 percent of Italians remains favourable to maintaining sanctions, with four points higher than the one registered in 2017. On the other side, it also increased the percentages of those willing to loosen up sanctions, from 32 to 37 percent. Any drastic options, from completely lifting to strengthening sanctions, found low consent in the sample. The LAPS also examined the personal opinions of the sample with their political affiliation and found that the centre-left electorate tends to be oriented toward maintaining the sanctions. On the contrary, the voters of the Five

¹⁸³Maurizio Caprara, 'L'Italia e il caso Skripal, una Poco Dignitosa Acquiescenza con Mosca', *Il Corriere della Sera*, September 22, 2018. Available at : https://www.corriere.it/opinioni/18_settembre_22/italia-caso-skripal-poco-dignitosa-acquiescenza-mosca-b43a1a20-be9c-11e8-b1b9-790a44cac897.shtml [Accessed on 08/05/2020]

¹⁸⁴Marco Siddi, 'Italy's Middle Power Approach to Russia', p. 128.

¹⁸⁵See LAPS-IAI 2019 pp. 40-43

Star Movement and the League prefer to loosen up the sanctions. Controversially, the centre-right electorate counts people who favour maintaining sanctions but also a substantial number of voters willing to completely lift them.

Therefore, the public opinion is confused on the right approach to adopt regarding Russia, or generally does not pay enough attention on the issue. Indeed, LAPS also asserted that the three main topics of concerns of the Italian are ordinally the relations of Rome with the European Union, the migratory question, and the decisions adopted by the Trump administration in commercial and security field, confirming that also the Italian social sphere is highly embedded in the Euro-Atlantic dynamics. In this regard, Italians generally distrust the ability of their country to have a substantial influence on the international scene and feel a mix of frustration and hope regarding the foreign policy of its allies.

The tertiary objectives that brought Italy to impose sanctions are the most relevant to this case. As abovementioned, the Italian security policy cannot be apart from the Euro-Atlantic context and the 2015 White Paper highlighted the need to increase the engagement of its members to defend the security framework that always regulated Europe. Therefore, Italy is not only interested in preserving the Euro-Atlantic institutions in place since World War Two, but it strives to reinforce them. Moreover, such economic and security interdependence always obliged Italy to consider the positions of the great powers in the alliance, namely USA, and to coordinate its foreign decisions with the general opinion of the EU members.

The only fact that Italy never attempted to obstruct the renewal of sanctions, notwithstanding the losses, implies that there are intrinsically higher political risks of not aligning the Italian policy with the rest of the union. In the first instance, vetoing the next renewal of sanctions would set a precedent and would seriously undermine the credibility of the European Union within the international community. In addition, using its veto power would isolate Italy in the union and hindering the support of the

EU institutions in other issues that are more prominent in the Italian security agenda, such as migration¹⁸⁶.

In brief, Italy shares at least two of the three main primary objectives of imposing sanctions that are condemning a wrong action that breaches international law and deterring future aggression on the continent, although it was not strictly referred to Russia. The home front does not have a clear opinion on the sanctions and it is reflected in the claims of the Italian political parties, with the centre-left favourable to maintaining sanctions as they are and the green and yellow parties which prefer to loosen up the economic restrictions. This confusion on the foreign policy toward Russia is also dictated by the fact that sanctions and the Eastern countries do not fall in the main security concerns of Rome as, instead, EU-Italy relations and illegal immigration do. Finally, the tertiary objectives are connected to Italy's commitment to the Atlantic alliance. The high economic and security interdependence with the Euro-Atlantic countries is a double-edged sword. On the positive side, Italy strives to maintain the current security regime and proposed a series of internal reforms to reinforce it. On the negative side, such interdependence implies limits on the political policies that Italy can adopt, despite it theoretically retains the powers to bloc and implement a different strategy.

3.3. Italy's current position regarding Russia

The Ukrainian crisis might have changed the foreign policy toward Russia, but it did not change the Italian approach. Since the outbreak of the conflict, Italy invited the other allies to carefully weigh the pros and cons of implementing sanctions. On one hand, economic and financial sanctions are quick to implement and guarantee an immediate response without the deployment of military forces. On the other hand, although sanctions seem to have a negative effect on Russia's economy, Italy believes

¹⁸⁶Eleonora Tafuro Ambrosetti, Matteo Villa, Francesco Rocchetti, 'Fact Checking: Russia e Sanzioni', *ISPI*, January 31, 2019. Available at: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/fact-checking-russia-e-sanzioni-22134> [Accessed on 08/05/2020]

they are also accelerating Moscow's pivot to the East, hindering the main goals of sanctions. Therefore, Italy sought to propose a cooperative approach with Moscow. Especially when the Ukraine's conflict is settled, The European Union should prioritize a positive engagement with Russia to avoid the setting up of new dividing lines as at the time of the Cold War¹⁸⁷.

As abovementioned, Italy's approach was often criticized by its allies and to be in contrast with the interests of the alliance. However, there are three features that encourage Rome and Moscow to maintain friendly ties in spite of the Western opinion. First, some scholars argue that the Italian stance towards Russia is dictated by the concept of middle power, meaning that "Italy is a middle-ranking power with limited natural and military resources and one that can only achieve its foreign policy goals by expanding its influence in international organizations and through bilateral relations with larger powers¹⁸⁸". Considering this definition, it becomes easier to understand why Rome has been seeking ties with a larger power and, specifically, with Russia.

With economic contacts already established in the past, the Eurasian partner turned to be a good recipient for specific products 'Made in Italy' and sought to maintain these relations during the 1990s and 2000s. Although it did not represent the main trading partner, Italy was the second largest EU exporter to Russia, and it was a good source for trade diversification from the other Western countries. Aligning with the sanction regime meant that the Italian exports to Russia basically halved in few years, moving from 14.3 billion of dollars in 2013 to 7.4 billion in 2016, with a contained improvement in 2017 with 9 billion of total exports¹⁸⁹. Obviously, in relative values, the economic losses costed only 1 percent of the total export and it had a low negative impact to the overall economy of the Republic. However, it does not imply that the impact at sectorial and local level was equally insignificant.

Differently from the political opinion, the agribusiness was not largely damaged by the implementation of Russian countersanctions and it does not even figure among the 10 most hit sectors. Italian machineries, instead, registered a contraction of over 2

¹⁸⁷Nathalie Tocci, 'How Should Europe Respond to Russia? The Italian View'.

¹⁸⁸Marco Siddi, 'Italy's *Middle Power* Approach to Russia', p. 124.

¹⁸⁹Eleonora Tafuro Ambrosetti, Matteo Villa, Francesco Rocchetti, 'Fact Checking: Russia e Sanzioni'.

billion of euros, representing the most hit sector by the implementation of economic and financial sanctions. Immediately after, the fashion, footwear and furniture industries appear as the most damaged and, still in 2017, the contraction of their exports amounted to 35-55 percent respect to 2013¹⁹⁰. Together with the exports, the service sectors also enjoyed the presence of Russia in the Italian market. Between 2008 and 2013, Russian tourist flows nearly doubled and, despite the economic crisis, it remained quite substantial in the following years. These data suggest why the public opinion is very divided and the category of Italians that support to loosen up sanctions usually belongs to the commercial sector¹⁹¹.

The energy relations have also been a fundamental point of Russia-Italy interactions. On average, Italy acquires around 15 percent of its oil and 30 percent of its gas from Russia¹⁹², registering peaks and downs since 2014. At the time of the Cold War, Rome was one of the first Western countries to agree to long-term energy relations with the Soviet Union and they were maintained even with its collapse. ENI and Gazprom, for instance, remained close partners and worked together at the construction of the Blue Stream pipeline that would have crossed Russia and reached Turkey. They continued to cooperate even during the sanctions, as demonstrated by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in March 2017, which reflected the mutual interests of the two energy companies of developing the Southern European corridor for gas supply¹⁹³.

Consequentially, the commercial and energy ties fostered a good and stable political relationship, based on the pragmatic interests of the two countries. The centre-left governments of Romano Prodi, Mario Monti and Enrico Letta¹⁹⁴ stand as examples, and particularly during the Silvio Berlusconi's three mandates¹⁹⁵ it was developed a close friendship among the leaders of the two states. Even during the sanction regime, Italy tried to maintain cooperation in some strategic fields. Hence, the Italian stance

¹⁹⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁹¹Marco Siddi, 'Italy's *Middle Power* Approach to Russia', p. 125

¹⁹²*Ibid.*

¹⁹³ENI.com, 'ENI signs MoU with Gazprom' Media Press Release, March 21, 2017. <https://www.eni.com/en-IT/media/press-release/2017/03/eni-signs-mou-with-gazprom.html> [Accessed on 08/05/2020]

¹⁹⁴Ordinately Prime Ministers of the Republic of Italy in 2006-08, 2011-13 and 2013-2014.

¹⁹⁵1994-95, 2001-06, 2008-11.

toward Russia is generally positive because based on pragmatic economic and energy relations. In 2019, the Italian Ambassador to Russia, Pasquale Terracciano, confirmed these assumptions. Putting beforehand that Italy supports the European policy and it is not willing to depart from it, he claimed that the economic consequences are much stronger on Italy's economy than the rest of union and that the country strives to solve the Ukrainian crisis and lift sanctions afterwards¹⁹⁶.

The second feature that describes the collaborative approach of Italy toward Russia is dictated by the common fact that the two countries perceive the lack of international recognition of their national aspirations¹⁹⁷. This characteristic is fundamental to understand Russian stance in the Ukrainian crisis and its foreign policy in general and ,although at a different level, Italy is also frustrated by the lack of support and authority in the decision-making process of Europe and the Mediterranean. Historically, Russia always wanted to be more integrated with Europe and, since the glorious return of Russia to the Middle East, it has been slowly engaging in the Mediterranean region. It is obvious, then, two countries complaining about the lack of support and recognition would seek for mutual support when their interests concede in the same regions.

Finally, quite relevant to their relations is the absence of Russophobia in Italy's politics¹⁹⁸. Some scholars argue that it is due to cultural affinities, but definitely the lack of historical invasions or occupations by either the Russian empire or the Soviet Union prevented Italy to see the Eurasian giant as the enemy at the same level that its allies did and some still do. It also contributed the geographical distance that never saw Moscow and Rome in a direct conflict. Neither they fought for the global leadership, as with France, United Kingdom, Germany and, obviously, the United States. Therefore, Italy lacks the geopolitical need to create an anti-Russian narrative and these

¹⁹⁶“Le Sanzioni alla Russia Dimezzano l'Export Italiano” The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Italy, July 27, 2019. Available at: https://www.esteri.it/mae/it/sala_stampa/interviste/2019/07/le-sanzioni-alla-russia-dimezzano-l-export-italiano-ambasciatore-pasquale-terracciano-il-sole-24ore.html

¹⁹⁷Pietro Figuera, ‘L'Italia Può e Deve Aiutare la Russia a Rientrare in Europa’, *Una Strategia per l'Italia-Limes*, 2019, 2, p. 91.

¹⁹⁸*Ivi.* p. 92.

three characteristics always brought Italy to seek for cooperation rather than confrontation with Russia.

Yet, Italy never used its veto power to halt sanctions, neither during the yellow-green or Giuseppe Conte's governments, but the choice of acting in continuity with or the other executive powers should not be surprising¹⁹⁹. As abovementioned, Italy main security interests are maintaining a good position in the current security framework and the Russian question does not fall into its main priorities. Even Vladimir Putin recognized that Italy is legally and politically tied to the European institutions and, consequentially, cannot pretend too much from their Italian friends²⁰⁰. At the same time, some of Italy's actions toward Russia retain important political symbolism that seem contesting the line of its allies. The Prime Minister, Matteo Renzi, was the first European leader to visit Moscow after the Ukrainian crisis, Enrico Letta participated to the ceremony of Sochi Olympics and several times Italy attempted to decrease the pressure of the economic restrictions on Moscow. All moves that were little appreciated by Washington, but which denounce the frustration of Italy regarding its current status in the Euro-Atlantic relations.

Finally, the complex situation of the Russian question brought to the emergence of some paradoxes. In particular, the intertwined use of aids and sanctions by both the West and Russia highlighted the conflict within the Euro-Atlantic alliance and the different national interests of its members²⁰¹. A recent example was presented by the Russian aides to Italy in support of the sanitary crisis of Covid19 that broke out in February 2020. Such action was very controversial and some criticized Moscow to have put Italy in a difficult situation with the other allies, while others greatly welcomed Russian aid especially considering the cold absence of Europe²⁰². The paradoxes are present also with the other EU countries. Germany, for example, is

¹⁹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰⁰Andrea Carli, 'Asse Italia-Russia per Stop alle Sanzioni: Sì a Pressing Diplomatico, NO a Veto', *Il Sole 24 Ore*, July 5 2019. Available at: https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/asse-italia-russia-stop-sanzioni-si-pressing-diplomatico-no-veto-ACdFzuW?refresh_ce=1

²⁰¹Igor Pellicciari, 'Aiuti ai Nemici, Sanzioni agli Amici', *Il Mondo di Putin - Limes*, 2016, 1, p. 6.

²⁰²Eleonora Tafuro Ambrosetti, 'Italia-Russia: Pragmatismo e Ancoraggio UE, Indispensabili Anche in Tempi di Pandemia', *ISPI*, April 20, 2020. Available at: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/italia-russia-pragmatismo-e-ancoraggio-ue-indispensabili-anche-tempi-di-pandemia-25832> [09/05/2020]

clearly divided by its rigid position against Russia to condemn its actions in Crimea and Ukraine and the economic benefits of maintaining ties with Russia²⁰³. Indeed, Berlin was the main EU exporter for Russia and the construction of the Nord Stream and Nord Stream 2 visibly is an advantage for Germany.

3.4. Conclusions to the Chapter: Are sanctions efficient in achieving the security objectives of Italy?

As far as the sanctions have been imposed, it seems they have been efficient in achieving the most important primary objective, punishing Russia for the annexation of Crimea and denounce the act as no in conformity with the precedent of Kosovo. Regarding the tertiary objectives Italy finds itself into a dilemma. Rome mainly wants to respect and protect the interests of the Atlantic alliance but, simultaneously, cannot accept the status quo. Indeed, Rome fears that the Ukrainian conflict could deteriorate if the Minsk Agreements are not implemented in the short-run and maintaining sanctions will only push further Russia into China's hands. Given the steep decline in US-Russia relations and the limited progress made within the European institutions, it seems that it would be the case.

Nevertheless, Italy will not renounce to the Euro-Atlantic security umbrella and it denies any attempt from the Kremlin to use Italy as its way through to halt sanctions. Recently, Conte confirmed this position and claimed to be offended about those media and politicians which assumed that Russian aids to cope with Covid19 were issued as leverage on sanctions²⁰⁴. Besides, Western criticism and the difficulties of promoting its interests in the Euro-Atlantic relations should not stand as motives to get aside in the Ukrainian crisis. Italy should not leave the others the task to negotiate with Moscow, but rather should take advantage of its pragmatic and positive relationship to let Russia approach Europe again²⁰⁵.

²⁰⁴FarodiRoma, 'Il Premier Conte Indignato dalla Campagna Stampa Contro gli Aiuti Russi. "Putin Mai si è Sognato di Usare gli Aiuti come Leva sulle Sanzioni"', April 9, 2020. Available at: <http://www.farodiroma.it/il-premier-conte-indignato-dalla-campagna-stampa-contro-gli-aiuti-russi-putin-mai-si-e-sognato-di-usare-gli-aiuti-come-leva-sulle-sanzioni/> [Accessed on 10/05/2020]

²⁰⁵Pietro Figuera, 'L'Italia Può e Deve Aiutare la Russia a Rientrare in Europa', p. 98.

Scholars like Pietro Figuera suggests that Italy should take a different approach, which is not limited only in commercial and energy affairs, but it would stress common values and the historical position of Russia in the Old Continent. Both features that cannot be ignored by the European security institutions, that are the Council of Europe and OSCE, to which Russia is still a member. In the framework of NATO-Russia Council and the G8, Italy's middle power strategy can do little because in these cases the United States should be involved²⁰⁶. Therefore, Italy's role as mediator should focus on the European framework and solving the Ukrainian crisis could be the opportunity to regain credibility within its institutions and turn this zero-sum game to a positive one.

Now that the security objectives of the Western countries were asserted, the next chapter will examine the Russian position in this matter and the geopolitical consequences provoked by sanctions.

²⁰⁶*Ivi.*, p. 99.

Chapter IV – The impact of Sanctions on Russia

Finally, after having analysed the rationale behind the sanctions and the main goals that the senders want to pursue to protect and improve their security agenda, it is the moment to examine the question through the Russian perspective.

It was already anticipated in the second chapter that Russia had a completely different perception of the events that have characterised the Ukrainian crisis. Russia does not perceive its actions as a violation of the international law. Rather, as an attempt to protect the Russian ethnic and Russian speaking citizens who were endangered by the Ukrainian sensitive political situation. The tensions that resulted between Russia and the West are a consequence of not having included Moscow in the European security framework in spite of the collapse of the Soviet Union. At the present moment, the Kremlin claims that the real threat to the European security are the Western countries themselves, whose activities led to the *coup d'état* in Kiev and the destabilisation in the region. Yet, the economic and financial consequences of sanctions were perceived and oblige Moscow to change approach.

Therefore, this chapter does not merely aim to describe the Russian Foreign policy priorities, but to analyse the response adopted by the Kremlin to counteract the objectives of sanctions. Russia worked to demonstrate home and abroad that its behaviour was not wrong, and it will not accept to settle the conflict unless Western countries prove to be willing to come toward Russian requests. To this purpose, the chapter will focus to answer to the following questions: What is the Russian narrative? What were the consequences for Russia? Would the Russian Foreign policy have been the same without the implementation of sanctions? Have third factors amplified the effects of sanctions?

4.1. Russian narrative

Where there is a wide narrative that sees Russia as the aggressor, it exists also a different tale that is in full contrast with the Western view. Russia blames the Atlantic alliance for the deterioration of their relations and for having supported destabilising

actions that brought to the Ukrainian crisis. Russia believes that Western countries did not seriously engage in creating a common European security system, leaving their values and interests to takeover. The end of the Cold War brought Western institutions to expand at the expenses of Moscow, regardless of its opinion on the European security matters that directly involves it given Russia's presence on the continent.

Generally speaking, two events are identified as the beginning of the slow decline in West-Russia relations, the NATO enlargement in 1999 and the Kosovo conflict that brought the Atlantic institutions to military intervene in the Balkans. Both events triggered great criticism from Russia. On one side, modern Russia considers NATO expansion as one of the main reasons of discord with the West²⁰⁷, given that it was not in conformity with what decided with Soviet and Russian leaders. On the other side, as promoter of the integrity of national sovereignty, Moscow always opposed a foreign intervention in Yugoslavia. The attack on Serbia, "destroyed the perception that NATO was a benign and defensive alliance²⁰⁸".

The Primakov's doctrine was the Russian response to an international community that alienated a great power. Russia would have been pursuing its national interests, whether it found the West approval or not. Since that moment, Russia made its views clear and known at the right time, but as often happened in the West-Russia relations, nobody listened. The existing multilateral institutions, from OSCE to UN, are West-oriented and did not well addressed or punished the actions of these actors in the international scene, such as the US-led invasion of Iraq and the West involvement in the turmoil of the Middle East and Libya²⁰⁹.

As the 2000s went through, Russia had the increasing belief that the West was adapting the international structure to its own interests, discarding the emerging and historical great powers. Information and media clearly have become the key theatres of international confrontation and Western countries have been using the information

²⁰⁷Angela Stent, *Putin's world: Russia Against the West and with the Rest*, p. 114.

²⁰⁸Prezelj, Harangozo, *Confidence and Security-Building Measures in Europe at a Crossroads*, p. 48

²⁰⁹*Ibid.*

campaigns to discredit Russia²¹⁰. For instance, Putin criticised the European reluctance to acknowledge the legitimacy of Russian actions and the integration process that is progressing in the post-Soviet space, that is the Customs Union and the Eurasian Economic Union, when it is completely alike the European project. However, if it takes place in Europe, the process is referred to as integration, but in the case of the former territories of the Soviet Union, it is seen as an attempt to restore the old empire²¹¹. Considering these facts, it becomes logic that Russia assumed a defensive, rather than aggressive, approach where the international institutions did little or nothing to protect its interests at regional and global level. “The very notion of national sovereignty became a relative value for most countries [...]. The greater the loyalty towards the world’s sole power centre, the greater this or that ruling regime’s legitimacy²¹²”. According to Angela Stent, the core of Putin’s world is getting the West to treat Russia as it remained the Soviet Union. Such quest was summarised in seven key propositions which, together with other sources, can explain Russian foreign policy²¹³ and the counter-strategy to sanctions:

1. Russia has the right to seat at the table on all major international decisions and will insist on inclusion if the West prevents it.
2. Russia’s interests are as legitimate as those of the Western countries and will urge the Atlantic alliance to recognize such assertion.
3. Russia has the right to a sphere of privileged influence in the former-Soviet countries because it is vital to its security strategy. Indeed, Russia perceives the post-Soviet space as a fragmented “Russian World” that Moscow has the obligation to safeguard²¹⁴. Any attempts from NATO and EU to include these countries in their institutions would be regarded as a threat to Russian interests. In this regard,

²¹⁰Andrey Sushentsov, ‘Three Fronts of Russian Foreign Policy’, *Valdai Discussion Club*, October 5, 2018. Available at: <https://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/three-fronts-of-russian-foreign-policy/> [Accessed on 23/04/2020]

²¹¹Luciano Fontana, ‘Vladimir Putin’s Interview to the Italian Newspaper Il Corriere della Sera’, *Il Corriere della Sera*, June 6, 2015. Available at: <https://rusemb.org.uk/foreignpolicy/3184>

²¹²Vladimir Putin, Speech at the XI meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club, October 24, 2014.

²¹³Angela Stent, *Putin’s world: Russia Against the West and with the Rest*, p. 348.

²¹⁴On the concept of the “Russian World”, See Oleksii Polegkyi, ‘Changes in Russian Foreign Policy Discourse and Concept of “Russian World”’, *PECOB’s Papers Series*, 2011, (16).

Russia has only responded to the threats and does not comprehend why American and NATO actions are not regarded as manifestation of aggression²¹⁵.

4. Some states are more sovereign than others. Great powers like China, India, Russia and United States enjoy absolute sovereignty, meaning they are free to choose which alliances they join. Other middle powers, instead, have to come to terms with their security regimes and economic dependency, reason for which they might undertake foreign policies that do not completely reflect their national needs. Russia, however, is powerful enough to face the countries that challenge its national agenda, such as US unilateralism, and cooperate with the same in other issues of global concern that requires a joint action, like the nuclear proliferation or counterterrorism.
5. Russia is a supporter of international conservatism and of an international structure that respects established leaders. Consequentially, the Kremlin's position in the settlement of conflicts will come in support of those leaders that were legitimately elected, such as Yanukovich in Ukraine, Assad in Syria and Maduro in Venezuela.
6. Russia believes its interests are best served by a fractured Western alliance. Not all European countries fear a possible aggression from Russia and the latter has always wished to be more integrated with Europe. "We never treated Europe as mistress" said President Putin in an interview "We have always proposed a serious relationship²¹⁶". Yet, the United States was often an obstacle to this purpose. In the same interview, Putin presumed that America does not want Russia's rapprochement to Europe and used the Ukrainian crisis to create an external enemy to ensure its leadership²¹⁷. Therefore, a fragmented Western alliance would contribute to reconcile at least with those European countries that do not place Russia among their top security threats.
7. Russia has no claims to world leadership but promotes a new multilateralism and a post-West order that reflects the current great powers. World stability could be only achieved if the key participants of the international affairs harmonise basic

²¹⁵Luciano Fontana, 'Vladimir Putin's Interview to the Italian Newspaper Il Corriere della Sera'.

²¹⁶*Ibid.*

²¹⁷*Ibid.*

interests, set reasonable limits to their power and give a positive and responsible example of leadership. Russia invited the world community to identify where unilateral actions end and increase the application of multilateral mechanisms to solve the dilemma of ensuring security and human rights and the principle of national sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs²¹⁸.

Bearing this in mind, the Russian narrative developed on the concept that Moscow was given the Versailles treatment. The Crimean annexation was a natural reaction given the increasing instability of Ukraine and the subversive actions of the West in the state. Moreover, Russian officials justified the actions in Crimea with the right of self-determination promoted by the UN Charter. In this concern, Russian authorities referred to the well-known Kosovo precedent – “a precedent our Western colleagues created with their own hands in a very similar situation, when they agreed that the unilateral separation of Kosovo from Serbia, exactly what Crimea is doing now, was legitimate and did not require any permission from the country’s central authorities²¹⁹”-.

Additionally, Russia takes a different position regarding the use of sanctions in the international relations. The Russian Federation considers the UN Security Council as the only legitimate source of sanctions²²⁰. As representant of the international security regime, the UN Security Council should jointly discuss the issues at stake and evaluate whether sanctions can accomplish the tasks of maintaining peace and security. Similarly, China and other developing countries take a similar position. Of relevance is the Declaration of the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Group of 77+ China that took place in Santa Cruz. The participant states affirmed their rejection of unilateral economic measures of coercion, proposing their eradication from the practice of international affairs²²¹.

²¹⁸Vladimir Putin, Speech at the XI meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club.

²¹⁹State Duma, “Address by President of the Russian Federation”, March 18, 2014. Available at: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603> [Accessed on 23/04/2020]

²²⁰“Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation”, November 30, 2016.

²²¹“Group of 77: Declaration of Santa Cruz”, June 14 and 15, 2014. Available at: <https://www.alainet.org/en/active/74644>

The Russian perspective clearly claims that the conflict in question is not only important, but it almost represents a struggle of the legitimization of its interests in the international community. Within this context, it appears improbable that Moscow will desist and compel with the requests of the senders. Therefore, what have been the consequences of sanctions? Has the Russian narrative gained popular support? Has Russia managed to adapt to sanctions? If yes, how does it affect the security agenda and the sanctions objectives of the Western countries?

4.2. Economic impact and domestic reaction

The opinion on the impact of sanctions regarding the Russian economy differs between Western and Russian analysts. Generally, the formers tend to figure greater losses than those estimated by the Russian counterparts²²². The different findings are the result of a different application of the methodology. However, the damages caused to the Russian economy were not only a consequence of sanctions, but the fall in oil prices and the weakening of the ruble are also responsible for the economic decline in 2015.

Nevertheless, Russia survived the sanctions in the short-term. According to Chris Miller, it occurred for three main reasons²²³. First, after the budget crises suffered in 1991 and 1998, Russia has prioritized macroeconomic stability. Since when Putin took office in 1999, the government has limited deficits and kept government debt levels low. Macroeconomic stability is now embedded in Russia's rulers, who understand the costs of deviating from such behaviour. Thanks to this strategy, Russia has saved up by paying down debt and accumulating reserves. Second, as beforementioned, the greatest economic problems for Russia did not derive from the sanctions, but from the oil crash of mid-2014. It was mainly caused by the US oil firms which unexpectedly doubled production between 2007 and 2015, leading to a surplus of oil in the world. As response, Putin kept its budget deficit low by adopting a sharp

²²²Ivan Timofeev, 'The Sanctions Against Russia: Escalation, Scenarios and Countermeasures'.

²²³See Chris Miller, 'How Russia Survived Sanctions', *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, May 2018. Available at: <https://www.fpri.org/article/2018/05/how-russia-survived-sanctions/>

ruble devaluation. “If the ruble falls against the dollar, each dollar of oil taxation brings in more rubles²²⁴”. Then, ruble devaluation is a deliberate strategy used to balance the budget. Third, privately owned banks were able to borrow dollars from Russia’s central bank, which were used to provide loans to sanctioned firms. Thus, even the most leveraged firms under the sanctions survived.

Notwithstanding the economic policies assumed by the Kremlin, sanctions did not aim to push Russia on its knees but to weaken those individuals and entities that were found responsible for the destabilization of Ukraine and related events. The international community is not indifferent to Russia’s position in the global economy²²⁵. Russia’s ranks as world’s sixth biggest economy (in terms of Purchasing Power Parity, PPP). Additionally, Russian trade/GDP ratio is around 40 percent, making the country only limitedly dependent on trade. Furthermore, the greatest share of exports of the Russian economy consists in raw materials. Consequentially, it is unthinkable an oil and gas export embargo on the levels applied in the case of Iraq and Iran. Pulling Russia out the global energy market would provoke great damages to most of the countries in the world. This feature links to the fact that Russia, as a great power, cannot be isolated in the way that smaller sanctions targets have been. With the West pursuing its sanctions policy, Moscow can create and deepen economic relations with other countries, notably China. Most importantly, Russia can retaliate with measures on its own. It has been one of the few countries having responded with countersanctions. The law was signed on June 4 which gives the government the authority to restrict or ban trade of most goods and services with countries that “implement unfriendly moves toward Russia²²⁶”. These measures did not break down the economy of the senders, but definitely provoked short-term losses, especially to those countries that were interacting the most with Russia. Germany and Italy can stand

²²⁴Chris Miller, *PUTINOMICS: Power and Money in Resurgent Russia*, (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018), p. 149.

²²⁵The following points refer to what maintained in Nigel Gould-Davies, ‘Economic Effects and Political Impacts: Assessing Western Sanctions on Russia’, p.8.

²²⁶Официальный интернет-портал правовой информации, *О мерах воздействия (противодействия) на недружественные действия Соединенных Штатов Америки и иных иностранных государств*, June 4, 2018. Available at:

<http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001201806040032?index=0&rangeSize=1>

as examples. Finally, the country as a whole is not dependent to the global economic and financial system as the economic elite that was targeted by sanctions.

At the same time, Russia faced significant economic losses following the imposition of sanctions. Trade encountered deficits, but the financial sector was severely hit in connection with the great decline of investment volumes²²⁷. Financial sanctions are usually more invasive because they are easier and quicker to implement and significantly more difficult to circumvent, especially when the US leading role in world finance ensures that those measures will be respected²²⁸. Moreover, despite owning the means of retaliation, Russia cannot afford to cut out all the senders' imports from its economy. Indeed, the countersanctions have only focused on the agricultural sectors. Although it has registered some initial difficulties, the EU seems only limitedly hit by the countersanctions. Then, it is logic that two main implication of adopting countermeasures were, first, to show to its citizens the economic leverage and political power of the country in contrasting the sanctions. Secondly, Moscow seized the opportunity to remove cheap imports and clear the way to re-boost domestic production, with the so-called import substitution policy. Despite the limited success of this measure²²⁹, it promotes the idea of Russian resilience.

Consequentially, these features imply that **Russia owns the state capacity** to deal with sanctions and retaliate with its own means, hindering the effectiveness of sanctions as whole. However, sanctions affected Russian foreign trade, the competitiveness of its companies and its investment attractiveness. Therefore, sanctions managed to disrupt Russian economy to some degree but, instead of pushing it toward compliance with Western terms, the Kremlin has been pushing for the diversification of trade and economic relations with non-Western countries.

The choice of privileging macroeconomic stability policies was mostly made at the expenses of the population. Indeed, the political costs have been a sharp decline in the real wages in 2015 and a lowering in the purchasing power of Russian consumers.

²²⁷Fritsz et al., "Russia's and the EU's Sanctions: Economic and Trade Effects, Compliance and the Way Forward", European Parliament: Directorate-General for External Policies, 2017.

²²⁸Ivan Timofeev, 'The Sanctions Against Russia: Escalation, Scenarios and Countermeasures', p. 8.

²²⁹Irina P. Filatova, 'Sergei Aleksashenko: Importozamesheniem potrebitelia ne obmanut', *DW*, September 9, 2015.

Despite this, it did not undermine popular support for President Putin, “in large part because Russia blamed its economic problems on external factors and foreign enemies²³⁰”. Indeed, a survey made by the *Levada-Center*, in October 2016, found that the majority of the respondents believed Russia should not be paying heed to Western criticism because their actions were moved by the willing of weakening the federation²³¹. A different survey, submitted later in April 2017, also showed that most of the people interviewed did not perceive sanctions creating serious problems for them and their families²³². Always in 2017, in a Chicago Council survey, Russians generally opposed making concessions toward lifting the sanctions, such as reversing the annexation of Crimea and renouncing to support rebel forces in Eastern Ukraine. The majority of Russians also say that their country is more respected now (55 percent) than it was 10 years ago. (See Fig. 1)

The View from Russia: Rivals or Partners?

At present, are the following countries mostly rivals or mostly partners? (%)

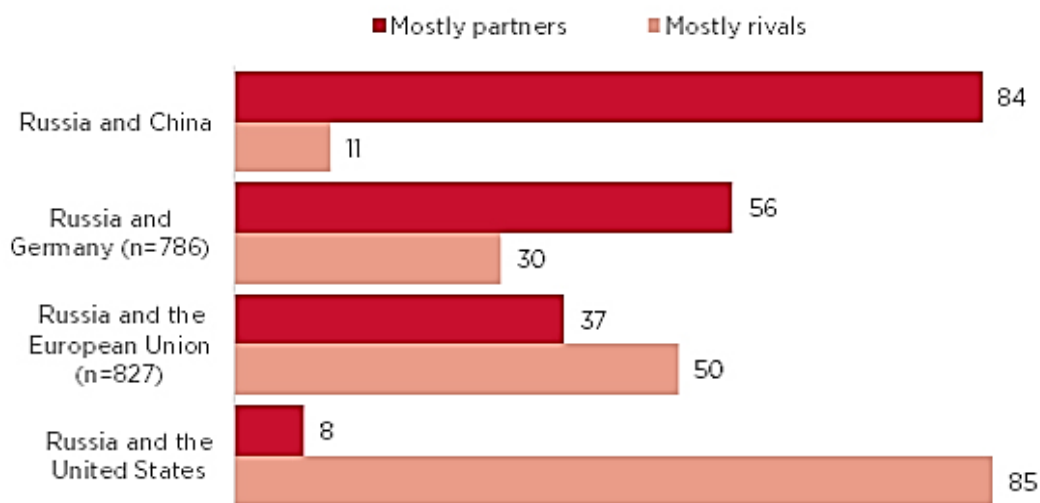


Fig.1 Levada-Analytical Centre, February 14-20, 2019 (n=1613)

Furthermore, the latest assessments show that Russians have greatly changed their perception toward other countries. 85 percent of Russians believe the United

²³⁰C. MILLER, *PUTINOMICS* cit., p. 161.

²³¹Levada-Center, ‘Sanctions’, December 2, 2016. Available at: <https://www.levada.ru/en/2016/12/02/sanctions-4/>

²³²Levada-Center, ‘САНКЦИИ И КОНТРСАНКЦИИ’, May 5, 2017. Available at: <https://www.levada.ru/2017/05/15/sanktsii-i-kontrsanksii-3/>

States and Russia are mostly rivals and they have perceived the deterioration of relations with EU too. On the contrary, Russians started to see positively the relations with China, meaning that the Kremlin demonstrated to be capable of adapting to sanctions and reconfigure the economic, political and security policy toward new partners. The positive opinion toward Germany reveals that, despite the *Frostpolitik* performed by the Chancellor Angela Merkel, Germans remain deeply divided regarding Russia. Moreover, the continuous attacks against Germany by the Trump administration marked a great distance between Washington and Berlin and left the latter to wonder whether to reassess relations with Moscow or not²³³. With all these stated, there three significant implications for the effectiveness of sanctions. First, Russians perceive sanctions as unjust and, consequentially, they perceive USA and EU mostly negatively and as pursuing policies to weaken their country. Second, Russian public opinion generally agrees that the government demonstrated to be resilient, especially in the short-run, increasing the support of the population. Third, the contradicting opinions regarding USA and single members of the EU leave intended that also the population believe a divided West retains more possibility of lifting sanctions without Russia making great concessions.

According to the Western perspective, such popular support is a consequence of the authoritarian regime, whose state-control on mass media permit to diffuse deceptive propaganda. Instead, from the point of view of Ivan Timofeev, “sanctions can often lead to the consolidation of the political system and society against external challenges; [they] are a convenient excuse for centralising power²³⁴”. Russia is no exception and sanctions have to be blamed for the higher centralisation of state control. Furthermore, widening the scope of sanctions does not help to hamper the support of Russians toward the government. For instance, the Skripal case did not damage Putin’s reputation in face of 2018 elections, in which he received more than 76 percent of the votes²³⁵.

²³³Angela Stent, *Putin’s world: Russia Against the West and with the Rest*, pp. 101-109.

²³⁴Ivan Timofeev, ‘The Sanctions Against Russia: Escalation, Scenarios and Countermeasures’, p. 20.

²³⁵See Russia Today, ‘2018 Presidential Election’ at: <https://www.rt.com/russian-presidential-election-2018/> and Rosalba Castelletti, ‘Elezioni in Russia, Putin Trionfa con Oltre il 76 %. Discorso alla Folla “Successo è Nostro Destino”, La Repubblica, March 18, 2018. Available at: https://www.repubblica.it/esteri/2018/03/17/news/la_russia_al_voto_nel_segno_di_putin_e_della_crimea_anna-191540393/

Therefore, it can be assumed that the Russian narrative is dominant in the target country. However, the economic consequences of sanctions have worsened the quality of life of citizens and the economic development of the country. If translated into a serious technological backwardness, economic sanctions can be very detrimental to target's national security in the long-term²³⁶. Hence, either Russia decides to compel with the senders' requests, scenario that is very improbably, or it manages to efficiently diversify its relations, which is the strategy adopted by the Kremlin since the imposition of sanctions.

4.3. Geopolitical re-orientation: Russian foreign and security strategy

Russia's attitude has not changed under the sanctions²³⁷. The historical objective of Russian foreign policy is pursuing the strategy as great power. The geopolitical re-configuration toward key regions, notably Euro-Atlantic, Eurasia and Asia-Pacific, was dictated by the unfriendly relations imposed by the Western countries.

The Minister of the Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov maintained that, before the Ukraine crisis, Russia has tried more than once to establish cooperative relations with Western partners. However, as beforementioned, the latter preferred to promote their own political and security agenda, ignoring Russian interests²³⁸. The Russia's Security Strategy to 2020 remarked the increasing network of US military equipment, from the deployment of strategic nonnuclear defence systems to biological laboratories, expanding on the territories of states adjacent to Russia and how this behaviour. Together with the expanding of NATO, Western actions have been creating a threat to Russian national security and Moscow provided to improve its national defensive potential and the allocation of sufficient resources for this purpose²³⁹. Consequentially, Russia has maintained the main economic and political relations with Europe where possible, notwithstanding the presence of sanctions and the countersanctions. Still

²³⁶Ivan Timofeev, 'The Sanctions Against Russia: Escalation, Scenarios and Countermeasures', p. 20.

²³⁷Vladimir Putin, Speech at the XI meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club.

²³⁸*Ibid.*

²³⁹“National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation to 2020”, May 12, 2009. Available at : <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/154915/Russia's%20National%20Security%20Strategy%20to%202020%20-%20Rustrans.pdf>

today, Russia is prompt to improve cooperation with European Union with all possible means, with the purpose of forming an open system of Euro-Atlantic collective security. At the same time, it strives to create an equitable and valuable strategic partnership with the United States, giving priority on the establishment of new disarmament and arms control agreements, and other issues of common concern²⁴⁰. Yet, NATO's behaviour remains unacceptable to Russia and, despite the willingness to improve relations, there will not be progress in the European security regime if NATO-Russia interactions are not based on equality.

The mutual suspicious only further deteriorates the confidence on the security building measures in Europe, notably OSCE and, in particular, the Vienna Documents. A clear example is the Russian and Belarus military exercise *Zapad 2017*. Western representants seriously doubted that the participant troops were truly below 13,000²⁴¹ and questioned the transparency of this exercise. Russian and Belarus officials claimed that the number corresponded to 12,700 troops and stated that NATO was, instead, strengthening its presence on the border with Russia. Eventually, it turned out that the *Zapad 2017* respected the terms of the Vienna Convention, demonstrating that the atmosphere of distrust across Europe are creating a security dilemma²⁴² and pushed Russia to diverse its relations.

The near abroad

Given the circumstances with the Euro-Atlantic players, it provided an impetus for strengthening partnerships in the Asian continent, in particular in the Eurasian area. Proponents of the Eurasian view were already existing before the sanctions, but Yeltsin preferred privileging a higher collaboration with the West. On the contrary, representatives of the statist and civilizationist thinking highlighted the historical role of Russia as geopolitical empire and how it should have preserved the Eurasian region

²⁴⁰*Ibid.*

²⁴¹According to the Vienna Documents, 2011, Section VI, "The military activities, like individual or joint military exercise, will be subject to observation of the other participating States whenever the number of troops engaged equals or exceeds 13, 000 [...]"

²⁴²Prezelj, Harangozo, *Confidence and Security-Building Measures in Europe at a Crossroads*, pp. 61-65.

as part of its sphere of influence²⁴³. By choosing discontinuity in its identity, Russia lost its role as centre of the Eurasian continent and most of political analysts agree that its geopolitical situation changed for the worse²⁴⁴. Later, Russia came to realise that its survival and prosperity were dictated by the quality of partnership with all its neighbours, notably both the Euro-Atlantic and Asia-Pacific communities. Already with the Primakov Doctrine, it was requested to give higher attention on the “near abroad”. The supporters of the Eurasian strategy argued, first, that Russia is a bridge between two continents and should take advantage of this position to achieve its national interests. Second, they saw in the Eurasian model as the optimal economic solution for keeping its status of great power. Finally, this strategy, if efficiently developed, could foster cooperation toward the European Union, the Asian countries and North America²⁴⁵. Therefore, the Eurasian project was initiated to pursue a greater plan of integration, the “Greater Europe²⁴⁶”, a vision supported even immediately after the 2014 events. Following sanctions, fostering the development of the Eurasian Economic Union became the new strategic goal to avoid isolation. “Eurasian integration is a chance for the entire post-Soviet space to become an independent centre for global development, rather than remaining on the outskirts of Europe and Asia²⁴⁷”.

To this end, Russia aims to build up cooperation within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to deal with common challenges and threats. In particular, the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) works as “one of the main elements of the modern security system in the post-Soviet space²⁴⁸”. The task of the Russian foreign policy 2018 was transforming the CSTO into a universal international organisation able to respond to the pressure of global and regional actors and remained

²⁴³Andrei Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, (London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013), pp. 57-94.

²⁴⁴Tatiana Shakleina, *Russia Between West and East*, in *International Relations: From Local Changes to Global Shifts*. Ed. by D. Katsy. (St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg University Press, 2007), pp. 125-136.

²⁴⁵*Ibid.*

²⁴⁶Stratfor, ‘Russia and the Creation of the ‘Greater Europe’, May 7, 2003. Available at: <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/russia-and-creation-greater-europe>

²⁴⁷Vladimir Putin, Speech at Valdai International Discussion Club, September 19, 2013, Available at: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19243>

²⁴⁸“Concept of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation”, February 2, 2013.

consistent in the foreign and security strategy in the following years. It is worth to mention that Russia's objective is not only strengthen the security perimeters with the CIS countries, but also to foster a new regional community that could compete with EU and USA. The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) was established in 2014, to increase the economic integration already initiated with the Eurasian Economic Community found in 2000. In this regard, if EAEU is compared to the most notorious European Union, the Eurasian integration looks little efficient and very slow. However, if the bar is set lower and EAEU is compared with other regional integration projects, such as NAFTA, MERCOSUR e ASEAN, we see that the organisation works generally well²⁴⁹. Definitely, EAEU is a significant framework where Russia enhances its leadership at regional level and develops its soft powers.

Pivot to the East, or to Beijing

Since Vladimir Putin took office, Moscow and Beijing consistently tried to enhance strategic trust and establish an institutional infrastructure to strengthen their cooperation in the military and general security issues²⁵⁰. The creation of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in 2001 was the attempt to improve relations between Central Asia and China focusing on regional security issues. With the deterioration of West-Russia relations, Sino-Russian collaboration in the framework of security and economic development was first enhanced through SCO, in order to accelerate the so-called Russian pivot to the East. The recent expansion of the organisation, with India and Pakistan as new members in 2017, has displayed a new model of international security cooperation, although it not intended, yet, to challenge the *status quo*²⁵¹. Moreover, the trade war initiated by the Trump administration rolled down US-China relations, pushing Russia and China to deepen even further their collaboration.

²⁴⁹Evgeny Vinokurov, Eurasian Economic Union: Current State and Preliminary Results, *Russian Journal of Economics*, 2017 (3), pp.54-70.

²⁵⁰Vasily Kashin, 'Russian-Chinese Security Cooperation and Military-to-Military Relations', *ISPI*, December 21, 2018. Available at: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/russian-chinese-security-cooperation-and-military-military-relations-21828> [Accessed on 26/04/2020]

²⁵¹Alessandro Arduino, 'Russia and China: An Enhanced Security Cooperation', part of *Russia and China: Anatomy of a Partnership*, edited by ISPI (Milano: Ledizioni LediPublishing, 2019), pp.62-63

Even prior to Ukrainian crisis, there were several advantages of a higher Sino-Russian relations. First, Russia would have reduced its security concerns regarding the “yellow peril” at its border. Second, Beijing has a high demand for Siberian natural resources and Russian armaments. China figures as the second largest importer of Russian military hardware and in 2018 it made a total expenditure of 1.30 billion US dollars for Russian military products²⁵². Despite Russia’s reluctance in the past to sell its most sophisticated arms to China, fearing it would have figured the engineering behind them, in 2015 Moscow agreed to sell to Beijing Su-35S fighter jets and S-400 surface to air missiles, upgrading its military defence system²⁵³. Currently, the two countries are each other’s closest partners in the defence and security field among the major powers. The participation of the Chinese to the Russian strategic level exercise Vostok 2018 is not only an example of the frequency of their joint military exercise, but it also reveals they are influencing their strategic cultures and adopting various trust-building measures²⁵⁴. China is also very interested to Russian energy supply, which indeed composes the majority of Russian exports directed to the Asian partner. In May 2014, it was financed a 400 billion US dollars deal to build a gas pipeline, “the Power of Siberia²⁵⁵”. Third, China represented a source for light manufacturing and its agricultural products could have compensated the supply problems in Eastern Russia. Forth, both countries had a common interest in reaching stability in Central Asia, given that both perceived the threat of spill-over of disorder in the rest of the continent²⁵⁶. Finally, but most importantly, both countries promote a multipolar world and are firm opponents of interfering in states’ internal affairs. China supported Russia in the Ukrainian crisis, although it remained tacit for most of it because its economic interests could have been damaged if it had openly defended Russia. In 2017, Putin welcomed

²⁵²China Power Team, ‘How Dominant is China in the Global Arms Trade?’, *China Power*, April 26, 2018. Available at: <https://chinapower.csis.org/china-global-arms-trade/> Updated March 13, 2020.

²⁵³‘S-500 in 2016?’, *Russian Defence Policy (blog)*, April 18, 2016. Available at: <https://russiandefpolicy.com/2016/04/18/s-500-in-2016/>

²⁵⁴Vasily Kashin, ‘Russian-Chinese Security Cooperation and Military-to-Military Relations’.

²⁵⁵Angela Stent, *Putin’s world: Russia Against the West and with the Rest*, p. 223.

²⁵⁶Neil MacFarlane, ‘Realism and Russian strategy after the collapse of the USSR’, in *Unipolar Politics*, edited by Ethan B. Kapstein and Michael Mastanduno, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 13.

the Belt and Road initiative²⁵⁷ with the double intent of fostering the Eurasian Economic Union and contribute to a global infrastructure that would challenge the economic supremacy of USA.

Are all these military and political interactions evidence that Russia and China are close to form a new bloc? The parties condemn the very idea of military and political alliances. Creating collective security is not part of the historical defence strategy of the two countries. Moreover, such alliance could be very dangerous from the NATO perspective²⁵⁸ and it is quite wise of the Chinese and Russian leaders to avoid giving wrong signals. But most importantly, Russia and China are just instrumental partners given the significant asymmetrical power balance that characterise their relations. They share common views in the international relations, but China is much more valuable trade partner for Russia than vice-versa. An alliance in the next future would oblige Russia to bandwagon to Chinese interests and adopt only a subordinated role in the world community²⁵⁹.

In order to balance Chinese influence, Russia tried to diversify its relations also in the rest of the continent by continuing to sell arms to India and Vietnam²⁶⁰. The Russian-Chinese Dialogue of 2019 highlighted that the development of Russia-India-China strategic triangle remains a priority of Russian strategy²⁶¹. Moscow also has been increasing interaction with multilateral fora, such as G8 and G20 and BRIC²⁶². Finally, it has been considering other important actors in the region, such as Japan and South

²⁵⁷“By proposing this initiative, President Xi Jinping has demonstrated an example of a creative approach toward fostering integration in energy, infrastructure, transport, industry and humanitarian collaboration, about which I have just talked at length”. Vladimir Putin, Speech at the opening of the One Belt, One Road International Forum in Beijing, May 14, 2017. Available at: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54491>

²⁵⁸Vassily Kashin, ‘Russia and China: Union or Strategic Uncertainty?’, *RIAC*, August 29, 2019. Available at: <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/russia-and-china-union-or-strategic-uncertainty/> [Accessed on 27/04/2020]

²⁵⁹Elina Sinkkonen, ‘China-Russia Security Cooperation: Geopolitical Signaling with Limits’, *Centre for Security Studies*, February 2, 2018. Available at : <https://isnblog.ethz.ch/international-relations/china-russia-security-cooperation-geopolitical-signalling-with-limits>

²⁶⁰*Ibid.*

²⁶¹S.G. Luzyanin et al.; Zhao Huasheng et al.; I.S. Ivanov; *Russian–Chinese Dialogue: The 2019 Model*, (Moscow: Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC), 2019) Report 46. <https://russiancouncil.ru/papers/Russia-China-Report46-En.pdf>

²⁶²National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation to 2020”, May 12, 2009.

Korea²⁶³. Indeed, Russia can be a useful player in deterring the nuclear power of North Korea and, in the case of Russia and Japan, new cooperation could help to solve the territorial issue of the Kuril Islands. However, the level of interaction with the rest of the Asian continent is not yet comparable to the relations between Moscow and Beijing. In this regard, if the Kremlin really wants a pivot to the East, and not only to Beijing, it should work harder to diversify its relations with the rest of the continent.

The new broker in the Middle East

The Middle East did not represent a top priority during the Soviet time as, instead, does nowadays. The return of Russia in the region is “one of Putin’s major foreign policy achievements²⁶⁴”. Attempts to restore the old ties and create new ones were part of the Kremlin’s strategy also before the Ukrainian crisis. Nevertheless, it was the military intervention in Syria in September 2015 and the uncertain American role in settling the conflict that brought Russia out of its isolation and inserted it as a major player in the region²⁶⁵. The main interest of Moscow in the Middle East and North Africa is to tackle the threat of international terrorism and the spread of extremist ideology that could jeopardize Russian borders. According to the foreign policy strategy of 2016, Russia consistently advocates strengthening international security and enhancing regional stability. It nominates the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) as top priorities for the establishment of free zones, to avoid the exchange of WMD and the spread of radicalism and terrorism by fighting it at its roots. Therefore, the first interest of Moscow in the region is about providing security to its borders and fighting against international threats²⁶⁶.

Bearing this in mind, Russia is trying to take advantage of its intervention in the Middle East to enhance also other interests. Differently from the past, Russia is not interested in an ideological fight with the USA, but it is engaged with a pragmatic

²⁶³Magnus Lundström, ‘Why Are US Allies Japan and South Korea Drawing Closer to Russia?’, *The Diplomat*, March 20, 2018. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2018/03/why-are-us-allies-japan-and-south-korea-drawing-closer-to-russia/> [Accessed on 04/05/2020]

²⁶⁴Angela Stent, *Putin’s world: Russia Against the West and with the Rest*, p. 259.

²⁶⁵*Ibid.*

²⁶⁶“Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation”, November 30, 2016.

approach. As promoter of stabilization in the region, Russia wants to enhance its role of mediator remaining consistent with its role as permanent member of the UN Security Council. Putin believes that the only way to achieve stability in the region is by reversing the Arab Springs of 2011 and restoring and strengthening the legitimate governments that still exist²⁶⁷. The return of Russia as active player in MENA, but especially the Middle East, was mostly seen positively by the countries involved and largely due to the disappointed reactions to US role in solving the crises. This is consistent with the promotion of the conservative values in the international affairs and moves another critic against the huge mistakes that Western countries made in the region. The failure of the American policy paved the way to Russia “to introduce itself as a decent broker and mediator while maintaining close ties with different players and factors²⁶⁸”. Indeed, Russia was able to build several relationships with all parties, despite the contradictions among them.

Regardless of the high tensions after the downing of the Russian fighter jet, Erdogan managed to loosen the friction between the two states and Putin seized the opportunity of the coup to normalize relations. The interactions between Putin and Erdogan was also a result of the international isolation of EU and USA against Ankara. Moscow is also a member of the Quartet since its formation in 2002 and several experts agree that Russia will become the main engine to resolve the Palestinian crisis, greatly due to the fact that it managed to have close ties with both Palestinians and Israel²⁶⁹. Indeed, the situation for Jews in Russia, nowadays, is the best than ever and it was fundamental to warm ties with Israel, where one sixth of the population emigrated from the USSR²⁷⁰. Similarly, Saudi Arabia understands the role of Russia as great power balancer in the region and tried to exploit its close ties with Teheran at Riyadh’s advantage, to foster higher energy collaboration and purchase Russian armaments to

²⁶⁷Anton Bespalov, ‘Russia’s Return to the Middle East: War and Diplomacy’, *Valdai Discussion Club*, July 8, 2019. Available at: <https://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/russia-s-return-to-the-middle-east-war-and-diploma/> [Accessed on 28/04/2020]

²⁶⁸*Ibid.* It was declared by Amal Abou Zeid, a member of the Lebanese parliament from the Free Patriotic Movement.

²⁶⁹*Ibid.*

²⁷⁰Angela Stent, *Putin’s world: Russia Against the West and with the Rest*, p. 279.

improve its defence system²⁷¹. The current security interaction between Iran and Russia is remarkable and the two states acknowledge each other as indispensable players in the region and to tackling threats emerged from the international order, that both believe needs revision²⁷². Such security convergence maximized the objectives of both states and enables them to respond to the issue of international misrecognition and other security threats. Finally, Russia is an active intermediary in Afghanistan, with the purpose of restoring stability and tackle the threat of Taliban, and it has been interacting with the main players in Libya presenting itself as a diplomatic arbiter²⁷³.

Intense activity in these territories represents the opportunity to export Russian multipolar vision in regions that are dealing with important changes in their political and security paradigms. The continuous Western interference in the MENA internal affairs and the attempt to establish the democratic model in this region have only worsen the situation and Russian approach seem to be more appealing. Finally, despite the opposite views, international terrorism and growing extremism are common threats between United States and Russia and the region could become a ground of cooperation between the two. At the same time, the two states have a different approach and strict collaboration remain problematic despite the common interests.

Therefore, the role and priorities of Russia in the MENA region has changed since the Soviet era and the pre-sanctions time. Now, Moscow is a mediator, an entrepreneur and a promoter of a new world order. Differently from the past is not interested in promoting an ideological system and extending its sphere of influence. Rather, the region represents the opportunity to exit the international isolation, to demonstrate its role as broker by mediating among different and controversial actors, to stress its position as great power and right to seat at the table of the international decisions, and to export its multipolar vision. Moreover, Russia does not exclude that MENA could function as a ground of collaboration given the important problem of terrorism and radicalization that concerns worldwide.

²⁷¹Ivi., p. 287.

²⁷²Abdolrasool Divsallar, 'The Pillars of Iranian-Russian Security Convergence', *The International Spectator*, 2019, 54 (3), pp. 107-122.

²⁷³Samuel Ramani, 'Russia's Strategy in Libya', *Rusi*, April 7, 2020. <https://rusi.org/commentary/russias-strategy-libya> [Accessed on 30/04/2020]

Russia in the rest of the world

Europe, Eurasia, Asia and Middle East are the regions on which Russia spent the most to stabilize or strengthen its relations and implement its strategy to counter the sanctions. Although not on the same level, Russia was interested to diversify and invest in other regions, taking advantage of relations inherited by the Soviet Union.

Strong ties with Latin America were established during the Soviet time and were suddenly interrupted after the collapse of the empire. With President Putin in office, the Kremlin started to have a more assertive approach policy to the world and renewed interest in the region before the Ukrainian crisis²⁷⁴. For the political point of view, Russia was able to promote successful long-term relations. Moscow had endorsed the idea of multipolarity and the symbolic capacity to engage actions against United States. Russia developed significant soft powers in the region, taking advantage of the past relations that the Soviet Union established at its time. In this context, the Russian media can be considered a real success. Moreover, it engaged with the so-called “pink tide²⁷⁵” ensuring the support of these countries whose leaders frequently reject US policy and welcome the idea of multipolarity. Finally, Russia aims to remain an energy superpower and believes that they accomplish this goal by expanding Russian megacompanies like Rosneft in new regions and increase the world production²⁷⁶.

However, the Russian approach in Latin America is very pragmatic and the commercial engagement is very low. Within the sanctions, Russia decreased even further the volume of trade with the region, preferring the pivot to the East, and especially to China. In 2018, trade accounted for about 1.8 percent of Russia’s merchandise exports and 3.8 percent of its imports. Furthermore, the commodity structure is chained to few specific products, namely raw materials and commodities like fertilisers, mineral fuels, iron and steel²⁷⁷. Even Venezuela does not appear among

²⁷⁴Alexandra G. Koval, Vladimir Rouvinski, ‘Russia in Latin America: Beyond Economic Opportunities’, in *Forward To the Past? New/Old Theaters of Russia’s International Projection*, Edited by Aldo Ferrari and Eleonora Tafuro Ambrosetti, ISPI, (Milano: Ledizioni Ledipublishing, 2020), pp. 108-129.

²⁷⁵They refer to those leftist governments that came to power in Venezuela, Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Chile, Uruguay and Bolivia in the end of the 1990s and 2000s.

²⁷⁶See International Energy Agency (IEA), “World Energy Outlook” 2019.

²⁷⁷Koval, Rouvinski, ‘Russia in Latin America: Beyond Economic Opportunities’, p. 121.

the Russian top priorities. Nevertheless, the Venezuela's political crisis had the attention of the entire international community and Russia took advantage of the situation to increase its role as re-emerging power and promote multilateralism and the respect of existing government. Moreover, Venezuela was the top buyer of Russian armaments in Latin America (and fifth at global level), before it drastically fell between 2014-2018²⁷⁸. But most importantly, relations with Venezuela are crucial in the energy sector where Rosneft has greatly invested.

In general, Russia's potential to increase in the region is very limited. Symbolically, Russia managed to develop a good image as international gamer, but it needs to pose more attention on the economic relations and diversifying its economy if it wants to effectively promote its multilateral ideas.

Sub Saharan Africa follows a similar discourse. However, Russia is investing more than in Latin America as an opportunistic reaction to US disengagement in the continent. Russian strategy is the result of a decade long renewed engagement. Moscow's relations in Africa targeted three main areas: mining and energy; security and counterterrorism; and multilateral engagement²⁷⁹. Although the Chinese investments in the continent are much higher respect to Russia, Moscow managed to create relations with various countries, and it was often criticized for its support for authoritarian regimes and PMC deployments in Sub-Saharan Africa.

4.4. Amplifying factors of sanctions efficiency: Covid19 and the Oil War

The plague of the coronavirus affected the economic and security stability worldwide. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the global GDP will shrink by approximately 3 percent in 2020. The pandemic will clearly have different economic costs for the countries and regions affected: the decline is predicted at 7–9 percent of GDP for the Eurozone states, about 6 percent for the United States, and 5.5–

²⁷⁸Ivi. p. 126

²⁷⁹Samuel Ramani, Russia's Enduring Quest for Great Power Status in Sub-Saharan Africa, in *Forward To the Past? New/Old Theaters of Russia's International Projection*, Edited by Aldo Ferrari and Eleonora Tafuro Ambrosetti, ISPI, (Milano: Ledizioni Ledipublishing, 2020), pp. 130-151.

6.6 percent of GDP for Russia, Brazil and Mexico²⁸⁰. Naturally, these are only predictions and they cannot be given for granted.

While some economists believe the world economy will recover in the next years, others suppose that this crisis will push the world toward a new technological paradigm. What is certain is that countries whose economy are raw materials export oriented, such as Russia, “will encounter greater difficulties in such a scenario than the rest of the world, since they failed to make the best use of the *fat years* and will have to diversify their economies in highly unfavourable external circumstances”²⁸¹. This crisis seems to be pushing countries to shift toward new environmentally friendly technologies, undermining the main source of profit of the Russian Federation.

In addition, the pandemic is changing the prioritisation of national projects. Last year, Russia proposed the projects “Healthcare” and “Demography”, which aimed to increase the life expectancy and quality of medical services. However, the current conditions dictate the prior need to further increase expenditures in these areas in order to stop the spread of the current epidemic, as well as increase the willingness of medical services in the event of a second or third wave. Moreover, there is the growing need to increase social spending in order to cope with both the health and economic crises. Considering all these factors, the budgetary consequences will be very harmful for the country as whole, but especially of the single regions of the federation ²⁸².

Together with the pandemic, Moscow was seriously damaged by the oil price war between Russia and Saudi Arabia. In March 2020, the Saudis called for a meeting of the OPEC+ meeting and required the members to cut down production of 1.5 million barrels to support oil price, given that the pandemic dramatically crushed economic activities and demand. However, Russia refused, claiming it did not respect Russian

²⁸⁰Andrey Kortunov, ‘Global Victory Over COVID19: What Price Are We Willing to Pay?’, *RIAC*, April 24, 2020. Available at: <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/global-victory-over-covid-19-what-price-are-we-willing-to-pay/> [02/05/2020]

²⁸¹*Ibid.*

²⁸²Natalia Orlova, ‘Russian National Projects During the Crisis Period’, *Valdai Discussion Club*, May 5, 2020. Available at : <https://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/russian-national-projects-during-the-crisis-period/> [02/05/2020]

interests and it would have just opened the way to American shale oil²⁸³. This opened the oil war between Riyadh and Moscow. Despite the significant damage already reckoned in the short term, Moscow did give the impression of backing down.

The long-term outcomes of these events are difficult to predict. Some Russian experts believe that it would be a triumph if the international organization will not collapse and, rather, strengthen. For instance, EAEU should exploit this time to take a unitary stand against the virus. In this perspective, the world might improve the international collaboration and promote a multilateral approach. In this scenario, Russia would come out victorious and promoter of a new security paradigm.

On the other hand, there are a lot of criticism of the work done by the international organizations to cope with the crisis and some fear that Coronavirus will hinder the confidence of sovereign states in these institutions. Moreover, if sanctions are not lifted and the oil war continues, Russia may encounter serious economic difficulties which would undermine its security apparatus. Furthermore, it should be acknowledged that, even before Covid19 became a global issue, Russian experts already expressed some concerns regarding the right strategy to cope with the sanctions and moved various suggestions that remain valid also to the present moment²⁸⁴. First of all, Russia had to further engage on trade diversification and emphasize the pivot to the East. Additionally, given the great losses that resulted from the financial sanctions and the only way to effectively shield the country is restructuring the global financial system, Russia should be investing and cooperating with BRICS partners to create an alternative payment and financial systems. Second, Russia must recover the relations with the West, starting with the European Union. In this context, it is suggested to promote the “selective cooperation” with EU and making progress in the implementation of the Minsk Accords. Reverting the negative trend of relations between USA and Russia is very unlikely to happen, but it is necessary to maintain

²⁸³Yale Global Online, ‘Oil Crisis Challenges Putin’s Power’, OilPrice.com, 2020. <https://oilprice.com/Geopolitics/International/Oil-Crisis-Challenges-Putins-Power.html> [Accessed on 02/05/2020]

²⁸⁴See Ivan Timofeev, ‘The Sanctions Against Russia: Escalation, Scenarios and Countermeasures’.

cooperation in dialogues in areas of common interest. Finally, any of these measures cannot work unless Moscow develops and diversifies the Russian economy.

In the scenario where Moscow fails to accomplish any of these objectives, it is possible that Russia will be obliged to comply with the senders' demand when the overall impact of these events will dramatically crush its economy. Yet, this eventuality does not imply that the security framework promoted by the Western countries will remain in place. In this case, it depends on the level of cooperation that the Atlantic alliance will implement to exit the Covid19 crisis.

Conclusions

Are economic and related sanctions efficient in achieving the security objectives of the sanctioning countries in the case of Russia?

Economic and financial sanctions were little efficient in achieving the primary objectives of the senders. The sanctions costs were not too invasive for the senders, but definitely the EU encountered higher costs than US, reason for which EU sanctions were not as broad in scope as USA. Despite the diversification on the energy sector, the European Union is still dependent on Russian gas exports. Moreover, single countries of the union which developed higher economic interaction with Moscow suffered economic losses because of the restrictions. Consequentially, the sanctions were similar but not the same and since they were not coordinated by an international organisation, it was not mitigated the negative effect of multiple senders acting unilaterally. The trade dependency between EU and Russia increased the impact of sanctions on the target. Indeed, the EU was the first trade partner for Russia, and it remains among its top commercial relations. Regardless on the level that sanctions disturbed Russian economy, they contributed to the sharp decline of the economic performance in 2014-2015. Yet, sanctions were not the only factors and the decline of oil prices and the depreciation of ruble were equally or more disrupting to its economy.

However, Russia owned the state capacity to prevent a deep crisis and, above all, its economic size and importance in the energy sector made impossible to completely isolate Moscow from the international scene. Indeed, Russia was able, on the one hand, to impose countersanctions, which symbolically demonstrated it was able to react to sanctions and it would have re-boosted domestic production with the import substitution policy. On the other hand, Moscow managed to diverse its relations with third-party countries that have no interest or contrast the Western opinion on the Ukrainian crisis. Russia has been pushing for further economic integration with the Eurasian region and enhanced significant collaboration with China in the energy and military field. Nevertheless, the very static conformation of Russian economy, that is rooted greatly on the energy and military sectors, prevents to boost its economy.

Despite the damage of sanctions on the population, Russians generally approve the government and believe in the Russian narrative, which dictates that the Western countries have been imposing coercive measures to mitigate Russia's role in the world. The Western medias believe it is the result of the authoritarian regime already in place before the sanctions. Russian experts consider the higher centralization of power ex-post the sanctions and brought the people together against a common enemy. Finally, and most importantly, Russia considers the annexation of Crimea a great achievement and made in conformity of the international norms. Compelling with the requests of the Western countries would hinder Russian reputation at home and abroad. It would rather wait and adapt to sanctions rather than retreat from Crimea.

Therefore, the Russian government and its citizens do not perceive sanctions as a punishment for its wrong actions, but rather the unfair response of the structure of the international relations that does not represent Russian interests. It is also very unlikely that a shift in the regime will occur any time soon. Finally, although a further escalation of the Ukrainian crisis did not occur, it is not possible to assess such achievement to sanctions. According to the Russian narrative, there is no need of deterring Russia because it is not in its interest to attack Europe, but only to protect Russian-ethnic people and prevent destabilisation at its border.

On the contrary, the analysis demonstrated that the secondary objectives of sanctions were mostly achieved. For the USA, Americans seemed little involved in the Ukrainian crisis and did not want their army to be directly involved. During the Trump administration, Americans changed their attitude when US officials demonstrated that Russia had interfered in the 2016 Presidential elections and started to demand a stricter approach against Moscow. Trump, despite he appeared to be willing to lift sanctions during the electoral campaign, well responded to the domestic expectations and jeopardize sanctions also in other sectors.

Similarly, sanctions were efficient to achieve the secondary objectives of the European Union. The EU managed to give a cohesive response to the Ukrainian crisis demonstrating that its members are interested in safeguarding the fundamental values of the union and the preserving the stability in the continent. Despite the possibility to

veto the extension of sanctions that occurs every six months, EU members never used this power. This means that there are interests and obligations regarding their membership in the union and maintaining the sanctions is the best way to preserve the unity of community, at least in this front of the international relations, as demonstrated also by the case of Italy.

The variables that concern the framework of the international relations are numerous and only time will give a clear answer whether the tertiary objectives have been attained or not. Nevertheless, the conclusion that it can be drawn to this moment is that sanctions were efficient in preserving the European security framework in the short and medium run, but the different and more realist approach adopted by the Trump administration highlighted the different goals between the United States and the European Union. The former is primarily oriented to revitalise US global position at the expenses of the enemies or, even, its own allies. In this regard, sanctions have been detached from the Ukrainian crisis and are used to punish also other offenses that Russia made to the USA.

Instead, the EU is primarily focused to resolve the conflict in Ukraine to restore stability and confidence in the security framework that protected the continent since the end of World War Two. Extending sanctions for too long, not only would allow Russia to adapt to them, but it would also lose significance in the long-run and the EU members, at some point, will be willing to lift sanctions and to pursue other national and security interests. The example of Italy demonstrates that, although it would not detach from the Western political and security line, Rome is aware of the benefits of maintaining good relations with the Eurasian partner and whose presence on the continent cannot be ignored. Then, it is willing to let Russia approach Europe again and, possibly, use it at his advantage to rebuild its reputation in the region.

Additionally, according to the Russian narrative, the problems raised with sanctions are not only connected to the annexation of Crimea or the support of militants in Eastern Ukraine, but the crisis questions the legality of using unilateral sanctions and the level of representativeness of the current security framework. Russia claims that the UN Security Council should function as the only legitimate body to impose

multilateral sanctions and that UN in general should stop promoting the Western approach and justify the illegal actions of powerful actors, like the USA, which designs international law as they please. The Russian approach is a serious threat to the international security configuration promoted by the USA, especially if other countries of the world are progressively supporting more this idea. It seems unlikely that in the short-run there will something similar to a Russia-China military alliance. Nevertheless, the high interaction between the two and the inclusion of other actors, such as India, leave intended the willingness to challenge the international structure at some point. Russia is also proposing itself as new broker in the Middle East and North Africa and success in this sector would undermine the American role as global leader.

Europe finds itself caught up in a security dilemma between two great powers that pursue different security agenda. Although it is improbable that it would happen in the next future, EU members have been questioning the need to emancipate from the traditional defence structure of the union. Then, I believe that sanctions were not efficient to attain tertiary objectives.

Preserving the world order and the security structure promoted by the Western countries will be a hard task unless:

1. USA and EU start considering Russia as an equal partner and collaborate to create a new security framework where Russia is fully participant.
2. A drastic economic crisis, like the one triggered by Covid19, will oblige the target to compel to the senders' requests only with the purpose to ease the burden of sanctions.
3. The inadequate collaboration between USA and EU in dealing with Covid19 will push EU further away from its historical ally. In this scenario, it is possible that the EU works to emancipate its defence structure and start to negotiate with Russia with the intent of creating a new security framework.

In any case, the security agenda of European countries cannot be attained exclusively with economic sanctions, but such measure has to be embedded in a wider strategy, recalling what was maintained in the first chapter. In this context, the EU was significantly more open to dialogue and greatly focused on the implementation of the

Minsk Accords. Within other and more serious diplomatic efforts and the involvement of EU middle powers as mediators, the European Union is more likely to exit the security dilemma, although it might happen at the expenses of the USA.

Can sanctions be considered the best instrument to attain security objectives of countries in the international relations?

In conclusion, the case of Russia confirms the opinion of the academic literature and teaches that economic sanctions are not the best instrument to attain security objectives and neither they are if implemented together with financial and diplomatic ones. However, sanctions should not be abandoned as security instrument in the international relations because they retain important advantages. They are quick response to crises, and they satisfy the domestic and international opinion in the short run, persevering stability and giving time to reflect a better strategy. Moreover, it was demonstrated that the security objectives are multiple and on different dimensions and they can be efficiently achieved by sanctions, such as in the case of secondary objectives. However, sanctions should be well analysed before implemented and be part of a wider strategy as suggested above. Otherwise, the risk is jeopardizing the effect of sanctions by expanding the scope on other issues that are not connected to the initial conflict and prolonging the economic restrictions would not help solving the dispute. Rather, it would deteriorate even more the relations between the sender and the target and, eventually, also between the senders when their security objectives do not completely concede.

Bibliography

OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS – REPORTS AND PRESS RELEASE

Address by President of the Russian Federation”, State Duma, Moscow, Russian Federation, March 18, 2014. Available at: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>

“Brussels Summit Declaration”, NATO, Brussels, Belgium, July 11 and 12, 2018. Available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156624.htm

“Bucharest Summit Declaration”, NATO, Bucharest, April 3 2008. Available at : https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm

“Concept of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation”, Moscow, Russian Federation, February 2, 2013. Available at: https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptICkB6BZ29/content/id/122186

“Economic Impact on the EU of Sanctions over Ukraine Conflict”, European Parliament, Brussels, Briefing October 2015. Available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/569020/EPRS_BRI\(2015\)569020_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/569020/EPRS_BRI(2015)569020_EN.pdf)

“EU Sanctions Map”, National Competent Authorities and European Commission, Last legal update December 19 2019. Available at: <https://www.sanctionsmap.eu/#/main/details/26/guidances?search=%7B%22value%22:%22Russia%22,%22searchType%22:%7B%22id%22:1,%22title%22:%22regimes,%20persons,%20entities%22%7D%7D>

“Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation”, Moscow, Russian Federation, November 30, 2016. Available at: https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptICkB6BZ29/content/id/2542248

“Gli Sviluppi della Crisi Ucraina”, The Senate, 17th Legislation, Dossier n.33, April 1, 2014, Rome, Italy Available at: https://www.senato.it/japp/bgt/showdoc/17/DOSSIER/0/757700/index.html?part=dossier_dossier1-sezione_sezione2-h1_h13&spart=si

“Group of 77: Declaration of Santa Cruz”, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Plurinational State of Bolivia, June 14 and 15, 2014. Available at: <https://www.alainet.org/en/active/74644>

“Le Sanzioni alla Russia Dimezzano l’Export Italiano” The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Italy, July 27, 2019. Available at:

https://www.esteri.it/mae/it/sala_stampa/interviste/2019/07/le-sanzioni-alla-russia-dimezzano-l-export-italiano-ambasciatore-pasquale-terracciano-il-sole-24ore.html

“National Security Strategy”, the United States of America”, February 2015. Available at:

https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy_2.pdf

“Resolution adopted by the General Assembly 68/262”, 27 March 2014. Available at:

<https://undocs.org/A/RES/68/262>

“Russia’s and the EU’s Sanctions: Economic and Trade Effects, Compliance and the Way Forward”, European Parliament: Directorate-General for External Policies, 2017. Available at:

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/603847/EXPO_STU\(2017\)603847_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/603847/EXPO_STU(2017)603847_EN.pdf)

“Sanctions Guidelines- Update”, Council of the European Union, Brussels, May 4 2018. Available at: <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-5664-2018-INIT/en/pdf>

“Sanctions: How and when the EU Adopts Restrictive Measures”, Council of the European Union, Last Reviewed on March 6, 2020. Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/>

“White Paper for International Security and Defence”, The Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Italy, Rome, Italy, July 2015, p. 8. Available at: https://www.difesa.it/Primo_Piano/Documents/2015/07_Luglio/White%20book.pdf

Barack Obama, “Remarks by President Obama to the People of Estonia”, Tallin, Estonia, Sep. 3, 2014. Available at: <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/03/remarks-president-obama-people-estonia>

Vladimir Putin, “Speech at the opening of the One Belt”, One Road International Forum, Beijing, China, May 14, 2017. Available at: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54491>

Vladimir Putin, “Speech at the XI meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club”, Sochi, Russian Federation, October 24, 2014. Available at: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46860>

Vladimir Putin, “Speech at Valdai International Discussion Club”, Novgorod Region, Russian Federation, September 19, 2013, Available at: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19243>

Официальный интернет-портал правовой информации, *О мерах воздействия (противодействия) на недружественные действия Соединенных Штатов Америки и иных иностранных государств*, June 4, 2018. Available at: <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001201806040032?index=0&rangeSize=1>

BOOKS AND ACADEMIC ARTICLES

Alexander, Kern, *Economic Sanctions: Law and Public Policy* (Palgrave: Macmillan, 2009).

Allen, Susan, 'The Determinants of Economic Sanctions Success and Failure', *International Interactions*, 2005, 31 (2), pp. 117–138.

Arduino, Alessandro, 'Russia and China: An Enhanced Security Cooperation', part of *Russia and China: Anatomy of a Partnership*, edited by ISPI (Milano: Ledizioni LediPublishing, 2019), pp. 61-85.

Askari, Hossein; Forrer, John; Yang, Jiawen; Hachem, Tarek, 'Measuring Vulnerability to US Foreign Economic Sanctions', *Business Economics*, 2005, 40 (2), pp. 41-55.

Bapat, Navin A.; Heinrich, Tobias; Kobayashi, Yoshiharu; Morgan, T. Clifton, 'Determinants of Sanctions Effectiveness: Sensitivity Analysis Using New Data', *International Interactions*, 2013, 39 (1), pp. 79-98.

Barber, James, 'Economic Sanction as a Policy Instrument', *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944)*, 1979, 55 (3), pp. 367-384.

Brooks, Risa, 'Sanctions and Regime Type: What Works and When?', *Security Studies*, 2002, 11 (4), pp. 1–50

Burton, John, *World Society*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972).

Buzan, Barry, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991).

Cortright, David; Lopez, George, *The Sanctions Decade*, (Boulder CO: Lynne Reiner) 2000.

Current, Richard N., 'The Stimson and the Hoover Doctrine', *The American Historical Review*, 1954, 59 (3), pp. 513-542.

Davis, Lance; Engerman, Stanley, 'History Lessons// Sanctions: neither War nor Peace', *Journal of Economic Perspective*, 2003, 17 (2) pp. 187-197.

Deutsch, Karl W., et al. *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area*, (London: Lynne Rienner, 1957).

Divsallar, Abdolrasool, 'The Pillars of Iranian-Russian Security Convergence', *The International Spectator*, 2019, 54 (3), pp. 107-122.

Doxey, Margaret, 'International Sanctions in Theory and Practice', *Western Reserve Journal of International Law*, 1983, 15(iss2), pp. 273-288.

Doxey, Margaret, *Economic Sanctions and International Enforcement* (London: Oxford University Press for the RIIA), 1971.

- Drezner, Daniel W., 'Sanctions Sometimes Smart: Targeted Sanctions in Theory and Practice', *International Studies Review*, 2011, 13, pp. 96-108.
- Drezner, Daniel, 'Bargaining, Enforcement, and Multilateral Sanctions: When Is Cooperation Counterproductive?', *Cambridge University Press*, 2000, 54 (iss1), pp. 73-102.
- Figuera, Pietro, 'L'Italia Può e Deve Aiutare la Russia a Rientrare in Europa', *Una Strategia per l'Italia- Limes*, 2019, 2, pp. 91-99.
- Figuera, Pietro, L'Italia Può e Deve Aiutare La Russia a Rientrare in Europa, in 'Una Strategia per L'Italia', *Limes*, February 2019, pp. 91-99.
- Fiott, Daniel, 'Strategic Autonomy: Towards European Sovereignty in defence?', *European Union Institute for Security Studies*, 2018, Brief Issue 12.
- Forrer, John, 'Economic Sanctions: Sharpening a Vital Foreign Policy Tool', *Atlantic Council: Global Business & Economics Program*, June 2017, Issue Brief.
- Galtung, Johan, 'On the Effects of International Economic Sanctions: with Examples from the Case of Rhodesia', *World Politics*, 1967, 19(3), pp. 378-416.
- Gould-Davies, Nigel, 'Economic Effects and Political Impacts: Assessing Western Sanctions on Russia', Bank of Finland: BOFIT Institute for Economies in Transition, 2018, Policy Brief (8).
- Haas, Ernst B., *Beyond the Nation State*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964).
- Hufbauer Gary C.; Schott, Jeffrey J.; Elliott Kimberly Ann; *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered*, 2d rev. ed., 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Institute for International Economics [IIE], 1990).
- Hufbauer Gary C.; Schott, Jeffrey J.; Elliott Kimberly Ann; Oegg Barbara, *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered* 3rd edition, (Washington DC: Peterson Institute for International Economics [IIE], 2007).
- Hula, Erich, 'Fundamentals of Collective Security', *Social Research*, 1957, 24 (1), pp. 1-36.
- Ilari, Virgilio; Della Torre, Giuseppe, 'Economic Warfare: Storia dell'Arma Economica', *Società Italiana di Storia Militare*, 2017.
- Kaempfer, William; Lowenberg, Anton D., 'The Political Economy of Economic Sanctions', *Handbook of Defence Economics*, 2007, 27 (2), pp. 867-911.
- Karaganov, Sergei, Russia and the International Order in 'What Russia Sees', edited by Dov Lynch, *EU Institute for Security Studies*, 2005, Chaillot Paper (74), pp. 23-44.
- Kastner, Scott, 'When do conflicting political relations affect international trade?', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2007, 51(4), pp. 664-688.
- Koval, Alexandra G.; Rouvinski, Vladimir, 'Russia in Latin America: Beyond Economic Opportunities', in *Forward To the Past? New/Old Theaters of Russia's*

- International Projection*, Edited by Aldo Ferrari and Eleonora Tafuro Ambrosetti, ISPI, (Milano: Ledizioni Ledipublishing, 2020), pp. 108-129.
- Larrabee, F. Stephen; Wilson, Peter A; Gordon, John IV, *The Ukrainian Crisis and European Security: Implications for the United States and US Army*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporations, 2015).
- Luzyanin, S.G. et al.; Huasheng, Zhao et al.; Ivanov, I.S.; *Russian–Chinese Dialogue: The 2019 Model*, (Moscow: Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC), 2019) Report 46.
- Lynch, Dov, Misperceptions and Divergencies, in ‘What Russia Sees’, *EU Institute for Security Studies*, 2005, Chaillot Paper (74), pp. 7-22.
- MacFarlane, Neil, ‘Realism and Russian strategy after the collapse of the USSR’, in *Unipolar Politics*, edited by Ethan B. Kapstein and Michael Mastanduno, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).
- MacLean, Elena V.; Whang, Taehee, ‘Designing Foreign Policy: Voters, Special Interest Groups, and Economic Sanctions’, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 51, No. 5, pp. 589-602.
- Miers, Anne; Morgan, T., ‘Multilateral Sanctions and Foreign Policy Success: Can Too Many Cooks Spoil the Broth?’, *International Interactions*, 2002, 28(2), pp. 117-136.
- Miller, Chris, *PUTINOMICS: Power and Money in Resurgent Russia*, (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018).
- Miyagawa, Makio, *Do Economic Sanctions Work?* (Palgrave: Macmillan, 2016).
- Nooruddin, Irfan, ‘Modeling Selection Bias in Studies of Sanctions Efficacy’, *International Interactions*, 2002, 28 (1), pp. 59–75.
- Onuf, Greenwood, *World of Our Making*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989).
- Oxensierna, Susanne, Olsson, Per, ‘The Economic Sanctions Against Russia’, *Swedish Defence Research Agency*, Sep. 2015.
- Pellicciari, Igor, ‘Aiuti ai Nemici, Sanzioni agli Amici’, *Il Mondo di Putin - Limes*, 2016, 1, pp. 1-9.
- Pellicciari, Igor, Guerra (e Pace) degli Aiuti nel Dopo-Covid-19, in *DOPO: Come la Pandemia può Cambiare la Politica, l’Economia, la Comunicazione e le Relazioni Internazionali*, edited by Alessandro Campi, (Soveria Mannelli (Italy): Rubbettino Editore, 2020).
- Pellicciari, Igor, ‘Perché il Cremlino ha Per Ora Vinto la Gara degli Aiuti a Roma’, *Il Vincolo Interno – Limes*, 2020, 4, pp. 85-95.
- Pope, Robert, ‘Why Economic Sanctions Do Not Work’, *International Security*, 1997, 22(2), pp. 90-136.

Prezelj, Iztok; Harangozo, Daniel; *Confidence and Security-Building Measures in Europe at a Crossroads*. (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2018).

Ramani, Samuel, Russia's Enduring Quest for Great Power Status in Sub-Saharan Africa, in *Forward To the Past? New/Old Theaters of Russia's International Projection*, Edited by Aldo Ferrari and Eleonora Tafuro Ambrosetti, ISPI, (Milano: Ledizioni Ledipublishing, 2020), pp. 130-151.

Russett Bruce, Oneal, John R., *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organisations*, (New York: The Norton Series in World Politics, 2001).

Schreiber, Anna P., 'Economic Coercion as an Instrument of Foreign Policy', *World Politics*, 1973, 25 (3), pp. 387-413.

Shagabudinova, Ella, Jeffrey Berejikian, 'Deploying Sanctions While Protecting Human Rights: Are Humanitarian "Smart Sanctions Effective?"', 2007, *Journal of Human Rights*, 6 (1), pp. 59-74.

Shakleina, Tatiana, Russia Between West and East, in *International Relations: From Local Changes to Global Shifts*. Ed. by D. Katsy. (St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg University Press, 2007), pp. 125-136.

Siddi, Marco, 'Italy's Middle Power Approach to Russia', *The International Spectator*, 2019, 54 (2), p. 123-138.

Siddi, Marco, *EU Member States and Russia: National and European Debated in an Evolving International Environment*, FIIA Report 53, (Helsinki: Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 2018).

Siddi, Marco, *Privileged partners? Italy should use its leverage for constructive policies towards Russia*, FIIA Briefing Paper 197, (Helsinki: Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 2016).

Smeltz, Dina; Daalder, Ivo et al., 'America Divided: Political Partnership and US Foreign Policy', Chicago Council Surveys, 2015.

Stefan Wolff, Philipp Remler et al., 'OSCE Confidence Building in the Economic and Environmental Dimension: Current Opportunities and Constraints', *OSCE Network Study*, 2017.

Stent, Angela, *Putin's world: Russia Against the West and with the Rest*, (New York: Twelve, 2019).

Stent, Angela, *The Limits of Partnership: US-Russian Relations in the Twenty-First Century*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015).

Stone, Oliver, *The Putin Interviews: Oliver Stone Interviews to Vladimir Putin*, (New York: Hot Books, 2017).

Timofeev, Ivan, 'The Sanctions Against Russia: Escalation, Scenarios and Countermeasures', RIAC Report, 2018 (37).

- Tsygankov, Andrei, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, (London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013), pp. 57-94.
- Vinokurov, Evgeny, 'Eurasian Economic Union: Current State and Preliminary Results', *Russian Journal of Economics*, 2017 (3), pp.54-70.
- von Amerongen, Otto Wolff, 'Economic Sanctions as a foreign Policy Tool?', *International Security*, 1980, 5 (2), pp. 159-167.
- Wendt, Alexander, 'Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics', *International Organization*, 1992, 46 (2), pp. 391-425.
- Whang, Taehee, 'Playing to the Home Crowd? Symbolic Use of Economic Sanctions in the United States', *International Studies Quarterly*, 2011, 55 (3), pp. 787-801.

ARTICLES AND WEB MATERIAL

‘S-500 in 2016?’, *Russian Defence Policy (blog)*, April 18, 2016. Available at: <https://russiandefpolicy.com/2016/04/18/s-500-in-2016/>

‘Kosovo-KFOR-Joint Enterprise’, Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Italy, Rome, Italy. Available at: https://www.difesa.it/OperazioniMilitari/op_intern_corso/KFOR/Pagine/default.aspx [Accessed on 08/05/2020]

‘National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation to 2020’, Moscow, Russian Federation, May 12, 2009. Available at: <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/154915/Russia's%20National%20Security%20Strategy%20to%202020%20-%20Rustrans.pdf>

‘Ucraina, Renzi a Putin: ‘Intollerabile escalation’. Obama: ‘Gravi costi per Russia’’, Rainews, 29 August 2014. Available at: <http://www.rainews.it/dl/rainews/articoli/Ucraina-Renzi-a-Putin-Intollerabile-escalation-9e0e498e-7528-45e5-9d1d-3cafc90f2aca.html> [07/05/2020]

Ambrosetti Tafuro, Eleonora, ‘Italia-Russia: Pragmatismo e Ancoraggio UE, Indispensabili Anche in Tempi di Pandemia’, *ISPI*, April 20, 2020. Available at : <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/italia-russia-pragmatismo-e-ancoraggio-ue-indispensabili-anche-tempi-di-pandemia-25832> [09/05/2020]

Ambrosetti Tafuro, Eleonora; Villa, Matteo; Rocchetti, Francesco, ‘Fact Checking: Russia e Sanzioni’, *ISPI*, January 31, 2019. Available at: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/fact-checking-russia-e-sanzioni-22134> [Accessed on 08/05/2020]

Barnes, Julian E.; Cooper, Helene, ‘Trump Discussed Pulling US From NATO, aides Say Amid New Concerns Over Russia’, *The New York Times*, January 14, 2019. Available at : <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/14/us/politics/nato-president-trump.html> [21/04/2020]

Calder, Simon, ‘MH17 Crash: Everything We Know Five Years After Plane was Gunned Down’, *The Independent*, 17 July 2019. Available at : <https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/mh17-crash-malaysia-airlines-anniversary-ukraine-russia-what-happened-a9007826.html>

Caprara, Maurizio, ‘L’Italia e il caso Skripal, una Poco Dignitosa Acquiescenza con Mosca’, *Il Corriere della Sera*, September 22, 2018. Available at : https://www.corriere.it/opinioni/18_settembre_22/italia-caso-skripal-poco-dignitosa-acquiescenza-mosca-b43a1a20-be9c-11e8-b1b9-790a44cac897.shtml [Accessed on 08/05/2020]

Carli, Andrea, ‘Asse Italia-Russia per Stop alle Sanzioni: Sì a Pressing Diplomatico, NO a Veto’, *Il Sole 24 Ore*, July 5 2019. Available at: https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/asse-italia-russia-stop-sanzioni-si-pressing-diplomatico-no-veto-ACdFzuW?refresh_ce=1 [Accessed on 08/05/2020]

Di Camillo, Federica; Marta, Lucia, ‘National Security Strategies: The Italia Case (WP)’, *Real Istituto Elcano*, 2009. Available at : http://www.realistitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano_en/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_in/zonas_in/dt39-2009 [06/05/2020]

ENI.com, ‘ENI signs MoU with Gazprom’ Media Press Release, March 21, 2017. <https://www.eni.com/en-IT/media/press-release/2017/03/eni-signs-mou-with-gazprom.html> [Accessed on 08/05/2020]

FarodiRoma, ‘Il Premier Conte Indignato dalla Campagna Stampa Contro gli Aiuti Russi. “Putin Mai si è Sognato di Usare gli Aiuti come Leva sulle Sanzioni”’, April 9, 2020. Available at: <http://www.farodiroma.it/il-premier-conte-indignato-dalla-campagna-stampa-contro-gli-aiuti-russi-putin-mai-si-e-sognato-di-usare-gli-aiuti-come-leva-sulle-sanzioni/> [Accessed on 10/05/2020]

Filatova, Irina P., ‘Sergei Aleksashenko: Importozamesheniem potrebitelia ne obmanut’, *DW*, September 9, 2015.

Fiott, Daniel, ‘The Poison Pill: EU Defence on US Terms?’, *European Union Institute for Security Studies*, January 14, 2019. Available at: <https://www.iss.europa.eu/content/poison-pill-eu-defence-us-terms> [Accessed on 22/04/2020]

Fontana, Luciano, ‘Vladimir Putin’s Interview to the Italian Newspaper Il Corriere della Sera’, *Il Corriere della Sera*, June 6, 2015. Available at: <https://rusemb.org.uk/foreignpolicy/3184>

Johnson, Keith, ‘Europe is the New Front in Trump’s Trade War’, *Foreign Policy*, January 23, 2020. Available at: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/01/23/europe-new-front-trump-trade-war-davos-wef/> [Accessed on 21/04/2020]

Kashin, Vassily, ‘Russia and China: Union or Strategic Uncertainty?’, *RIAC*, August 29, 2019. Available at: <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytcs-and-comments/analytcs/russia-and-china-union-or-strategic-uncertainty/> [Accessed on 27/04/2020]

Kashin, Vassily, ‘Russian-Chinese Security Cooperation and Military-to-Military Relations’, *ISPI*, December 21, 2018. Available at: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/russian-chinese-security-cooperation-and-military-military-relations-21828> [Accessed on 26/04/2020]

Kortunov, Andrey, ‘Global Victory Over COVID19: What Price Are We Willing to Pay?’, *RIAC*, April 24, 2020. Available at: <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytcs-and->

[comments/analytics/global-victory-over-covid-19-what-price-are-we-willing-to-pay/](#)
[02/05/2020]

Masters, Jonathan, 'What are Economic Sanctions?', *Council on Foreign Relations*, August 7 2017. Available at: <https://www.cfr.org/background/what-are-economic-sanctions> [Accessed 28.02.2020]

Miller, Chris, 'How Russia Survived Sanctions', *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, May 2018. Available at: <https://www.fpri.org/article/2018/05/how-russia-survived-sanctions/>

Newlin, Cyrus, 'US Sanctions Against Russia: What You Need to Know', Centre of Strategic & International Studies, October 31 2018, Available at: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/us-sanctions-against-russia-what-you-need-know> [Accessed on 20/04/2020]

Orlova, Natalia, 'Russian National Projects During the Crisis Period', *Valdai Discussion Club*, May 5, 2020. Available at : <https://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/russian-national-projects-during-the-crisis-period/> [02/05/2020]

Pasquazzi, Simone, 'Liberalism and Security', lecture of Security Studies, (LUISS Guido Carli 2017-2018).

Ramani, Samuel, 'Russia's Strategy in Libya', *Rusi*, April 7, 2020. <https://rusi.org/commentary/russias-strategy-libya> [Accessed on 30/04/2020]

Rumer, Eugene, Andrew S. Weiss et al., *What Implications of the Ukraine Crisis?*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 27 2014. Available at : <https://carnegieendowment.org/2014/03/27/what-are-global-implications-of-ukraine-crisis-pub-55112#europe> [Accessed 15/04/2020]

Rumer, Eugene, *The Primakov (Not Gerasimov) Doctrine in Action*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 5 2019. Available at: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/06/05/primakov-not-gerasimov-doctrine-in-action-pub-79254> [Accessed 16/04/2020]

Sabatino, Ester, 'The Innovation of the Italian White Paper: Defence Policy Reform', *Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)*, July 2017. Available at: <https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iaiw1734.pdf> [06/05/2020]

Smeltz, Dina; Wojtowicz, Lily, 'Russians Say Their Country is a Rising Military Power; And a Growing Percentage of Americans View Russia as a Threat', *The Chicago Council on Global Affairs*, March 21, 2019. <https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/publication/lcc/russians-say-their-country-is-rising-military-power#2> [Accessed on 20/04/2020]

Smeltz, Dina; Wojtowicz, Lily; Goncharov, Stephan, ‘American and Russian Opinion at a Standoff on Crimea Sanctions’, *The Chicago Council on Global Affairs*, January 24 2018. Available at : <https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/publication/american-and-russian-opinion-standoff-crimea-sanctions> [Accessed on 20/04/2020]

Sputnik, ‘Ukraine Ditches Plans for EU Deal, Turn to Russia’, 21/11/2013. Available at : <https://sputniknews.com/russia/20131121184845623-Ukraine-Rejects-Laws-to-Free-Tymoshenko-Jeopardises-EU-Deal/> [Accessed 16/04/2020]

Stratfor, ‘Russia and the Creation of the ‘Greater Europe’, May 7, 2003. Available at: <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/russia-and-creation-greater-europe>

Sushentsov, Andrey, ‘Three Fronts of Russian Foreign Policy’, *Valdai Discussion Club*, October 5, 2018. Available at: <https://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/three-fronts-of-russian-foreign-policy/> [Accessed on 23/04/2020]

Tabrizi, Aniseh Bassiri, ‘Europe-Iran Relations: Back to the Future?’, ISPI, February 8, 2019. Available at: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/publicazione/europe-iran-relations-back-future-22232> [Accessed on 22/04/2020]

The OSCE magazine, ‘Revitalizing Arms Control’, *Security Community Issue*, 2016, 3. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/magazine/285596>

Timofeev, Ivan N., ‘Rethinking Sanctions Efficiency’, *Russia in Global Affairs*, 2019, 17 (3). Available at: <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/rethinking-sanctions-efficiency/>

Timofeev, Ivan N., *Russia-Japan Dialogue: The Sanctions Factor*, RIAC, Jan 21 2019. <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/russia-japan-dialogue-the-sanctions-factor/> [Accessed 7.04.2020]

Tocci, Nathalie, ‘How Should Europe Respond to Russia? The Italian View’, in *ECFR’s Wider Europe Forum*, November 18, 2014. Available at: https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_how_should_europe_respond_to_russia_the_italian_view353 [07/05/2020]

Utkin, Sergey, *The Ukrainian Crisis: Russia’s Official Position and How the Situation Can Be Resolved*, RIAC, October 22 2014. Available at: <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/the-ukrainian-crisis-russia-s-official-position-and-how-the-/> [Accessed 15/04/2020]

Walentek, Dawid, ‘Instrumental or Symbolic? The Role of Multilateral Economics Sanctions’, presentation paper to ECPR General Conference, Warsaw, 4-7 Sep. 2019. Available at: <https://ecpr.eu/Events/PaperDetails.aspx?PaperID=45002&EventID=123> [Accessed on 02/05/2020]

Yale Global Online, 'Oil Crisis Challenges Putin's Power', OilPrice.com, 2020.
<https://oilprice.com/Geopolitics/International/Oil-Crisis-Challenges-Putins-Power.html> [Accessed on 02/05/2020]

Summary

In the past, transnational disputes, notwithstanding the due exceptions, were generally settled by force. However, the technological development permitted to engage in very serious conflicts that were the main agents of drastic bloodsheds and brought the international community to consider alternative ways to settle inter-states disputes. Economic sanctions and related measures have developed as instrument to attain foreign and security goals since the end of World War One, although they existed already in the ancient period but implemented with less frequency. An international sanctions regime was determined slowly since the formation of the United Nations and reflected the liberal tradition of the most important countries of the international community. At the same time, countries use such instrument also unilaterally, considering that under certain circumstances the unilateral action of one country is more effective than a disorganized multilateral effort.

In turn, the different performances of sanctions opened a long-lasting debate about the efficiency of this measure, especially now that scholar can assert the long-term consequences. Despite the criticisms, sanctions remain a common practice to pursue foreign and security objectives. The perseverance of adopting such measure suggests that there are multiple security objectives of the countries in question. A clear example of sanctions having controversial consequences for the countries that impose them is the case of Russia in 2014.

Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation is to provide an opinion on the efficiency of sanctions as a security instrument in the international relations by applying the main academic findings to the case of Russia. They can be derived the following research questions:

- Are economic and related sanctions efficient in achieving the security objectives of the sanctioning countries in the case of Russia?
- Can sanctions be considered the best instrument to attain security objectives of countries in the international relations?

The first chapter of this dissertation focused on exploring the existing academic literature on the definition and efficiency of economic sanctions. In the right

circumstances, all the factors mentioned by the scholars positively contribute to achieve security aims. Yet, great criticism emerged regarding its efficacy. The variables that affect the success of sanctions are numerous and difficult to isolate, reason for which scholars mostly believe that primary objectives of sanctions are hard to be realized. The triumph of sanctions widely depends on the variables that the most affect the behaviour of the target and the capability and the incentives of the sender to impose such measure. Additionally, in certain circumstances, sanctions reveal to be a mere domestic and international political game.

Nevertheless, this dissertation worked to identify the variables that the most affect the security agenda and the research concluded that senders impose sanctions to achieve three levels of objectives. The primary objectives aim to condemn or correct the wrong actions of the target. In the pursuit of these security goals, sanctions are a valid alternative to military threat or use of force, reducing the probability of conflicts. Therefore, it can work as means of deterrence or to oblige the target to adopt a different behaviour or government. Another advantage derives from the flexibility of sanctions because they can be designed to target specific people.

The second level of objectives concerns the sender itself and what it wants to demonstrate at home and abroad. With sanctions, countries are enabled to quickly respond to threats or the wrongdoing of a specific country. In this way, they gain time and analyse what to do next and, at the same time, deflect eventual domestic or international criticism that would rise from not acting at all. In this context, sanctions play an important symbolic role in avoiding internal destabilization.

Finally, sanctions work to maintain or furthering existing structures or organisations at international level. These goals are referred in this text as tertiary objectives. At the present time, the international security regime is represented by the UN Security Council which provides a mix of the liberal and realist tradition in the attempt to respect the dominant liberal views of prominent countries, like the USA and EU, and observe the critics of other significant states, like China and Russia, that oppose such opinions. However, the liberal concept of collective security is promoted also in other organizations such as NATO or simply through bilateral and multilateral

arrangements. Consequently, the decision of a country to impose sanctions refers also to the desire to protect the current structure of international relations, or it could be dictated by diplomatic arrangements that regulate foreign and security relations among single countries.

Once asserted the opinions of the scholars on the efficiency of sanctions as security instrument, the rest of the chapters applied the findings to the case of sanctions on Russia in 2014. Essentially, the West realised that the Ukrainian crisis and the annexation of Crimea were a consequence of the increasing tensions between the West and Russia. Indeed, its relations with Russia progressively deteriorated since the NATO expansion and the bombing in Serbia in 1999, to the point of becoming a security threat to the continent. Despite the attempts of reset throughout the 2000s, Russia adopted an aggressive attitude to protect its interests, at the expenses of positive relations with the Atlantic bloc and the democratisation process of its neighbours.

Therefore, Western sanctions have been designed to target as many individuals and entities are connected to the regime and minimise the impact on the population. Thanks to the conclusions of the academic literature, it is evident that the primary objectives of the United States and European Union mostly concede. They aim to condemn the annexation of Crimea and the breach of the territorial integrity of Ukraine, deter future acts of aggression and provocation in Ukraine and the rest of the continent, and push toward a regime change that would be more respectful of the current structure of the international relations.

However, the motivations behind secondary and tertiary objectives diverge, revealing that sanctions on Russia are not dictated by the Atlantic alliance as an international organisation, but they remain unilateral in nature. The USA use the sanctions to reflect its global strategy in which Russia is a revisionist power trying to destabilise the post-Cold War equilibrium. Obama believed it was an opportunity to promote US values around the world and strengthen the Atlantic alliance. Trump assumed a different approach that aims to protect American values, like Obama did, but also wanted to revitalize US global position at the expenses of the enemies and, eventually, allies. Moreover, the concern of Americans toward Russian behaviour

increased with the latest development of US-Russia relations and, consequently, Trump's strategy tried to reflect the electorate preferences and its security agenda by widening the scope of sanctions.

On the contrary, the EU sanctions do not treat Russia as an enemy and creating an economic damage to the latter is not really in its interests. Russia was third largest trade partner, and despite the lower intensity of their exchange, EU continued to have important energy relations with Russia. Rather, EU wants to maintain the collective security guarantees that enjoyed until this moment. This is why EU sanctions are focused to solve the Ukrainian conflict and strive for the implementation of the Minsk Accords. It wants to promote its values in Eastern Europe with the purpose of maintaining peace across the continent and preserving the support of the members for the EU institutions. Because of their different security agenda, the EU finds itself caught up into a trap and the sanctions have become somehow counterproductive and not helping to find a solution to the Ukrainian crisis.

Such dilemma is also reflected in the perspective of Italy, subject of analysis in the third chapter. As far as the sanctions have been imposed, it seems they have been efficient in achieving the most important primary objective but confused regarding the secondary objectives and quite ineffective regarding the tertiary ones. Rome mainly wants to respect and protect the interests of the Atlantic alliance but, simultaneously, cannot accept the status quo. Indeed, Rome fears that the Ukrainian conflict could deteriorate even further if the Minsk Agreements are not implemented in the short-run and maintaining sanctions will only push further Russia into China's hands. Consequently, Italian scholars believe that their country could use its friendly relationship with Russia to function as a mediator and improve its position within the Atlantic alliance.

In conclusion, after a deep analysis on the impact of sanctions on Russia, the dissertation answered to the first research question mainly negatively. In the first place, economic and financial sanctions were little efficient in achieving the primary objectives of the senders. The multiple senders tend to hinder the success of sanctions, especially when they present a multi-issue agenda. Moreover, the costs on the sender

have been larger for the EU than USA, compromising the efficiency of such measure. At the same time, the conflict is quite important for the EU, but it became a greater issue to US electorate only when Russia seemed to have interfered in the 2016 presidential elections. This means that the purpose of the sanctions has been changing for the EU and USA, and they will probably remain in place for many years, hindering even further the probability of success. Additionally, despite the common action, the EU is facing the dilemma of US aspirations and, together with the divergences of the political agenda of its members, could bring the EU to revise its strategy.

Also by observing the impact on Russia, it is evident that Moscow is not willing to reconsider its position in Crimea and will not come to terms with the West unless the latter will actively include Russia in the European security framework. Its position is dictated by a different narrative that justify its actions as an attempt to protect Crimean Russian ethnic citizens and preserve the Russian national interests in the continent, often disregarded by the Western countries since the dissolution of USSR.

Notwithstanding the impact on the economy that cannot be completely attributed to the effect of sanctions, Russia owned the state capacities to deal with the economic restrictions. Additionally, sanctions did not aim to disrupt the Russian economy because of its role in the global economy (especially in the energy market). These features allowed Moscow to adopt a policy of countersanctions with the purpose to symbolically signal its disapproval of Western stance and promote trade diversification and import substitution, mitigating the negative effect of sanctions. What really hurt Russia were the financial sanctions, but even in this case the short term consequences did not undermine the popular support for the Kremlin. Popular discontent could arise eventually in the long run, unless Russia is able to develop its economy and financial sectors, successfully diversify trade with third markets, and avoid lagging behind in the technological development.

The View from Russia: Rivals or Partners?

At present, are the following countries mostly rivals or mostly partners? (%)

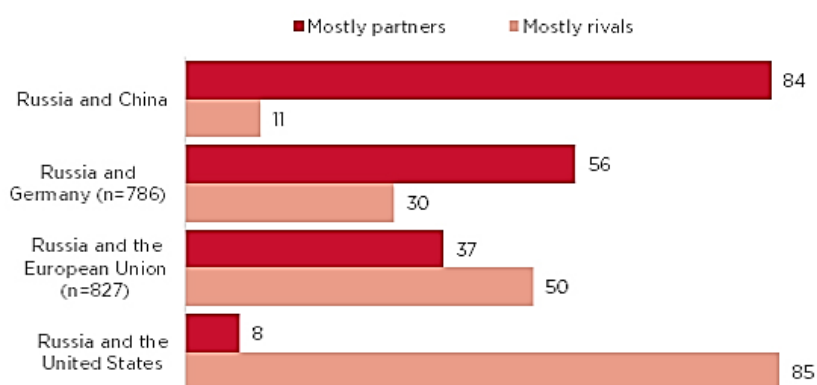


Fig.1 Levada-Analytical Centre, February 14-20,

Furthermore, the latest assessments (as shown in Fig.1) demonstrated that Russians' perception toward the sanctioning countries has worsened, which suggests three significant repercussions on future relations and the effectiveness of the Western strategy. Russians continue to consider sanctions as unjust and as an excuse of the USA and EU to weaken their country. Then, Russian public opinion generally agrees that the government demonstrated to be resilient, especially in the short-run, and believe the Crimean reunification as a great achievement. Finally, the contradicting opinions regarding USA and the single members of the EU leave intended that also Russians, and not only the Kremlin, think that a divided West would lift sanctions more easily without Russia making great concessions. Therefore, it is evident that a regime change is highly improbable to occur because of sanctions.

Second, differently from above, the analysis demonstrated that the secondary objectives of sanctions were mostly achieved. For the USA, Americans seemed little involved in the Ukrainian crisis and did not want their army to be directly involved. During the Trump administration, Americans changed their attitude when US officials demonstrated that Russia had interfered in the 2016 Presidential elections and started to demand a stricter approach against Moscow. Trump, despite he appeared to be willing to lift sanctions during the electoral campaign, well responded to the domestic expectations and expanded sanctions also in other sectors.

Similarly, the EU managed to give a cohesive response to the Ukrainian crisis demonstrating that its members are interested in safeguarding the fundamental values

of the union and the preserving the stability in the continent. Despite the possibility to veto the extension of sanctions that occurs every six months, EU members never used this power. This means that there are interests and obligations regarding their membership in the union and maintaining the sanctions is the best way to preserve the unity of community, at least in this front of the international relations, as demonstrated also by the case of Italy.

Finally, the variables that concern the framework of the international relations are numerous and only time will give a clear answer whether the tertiary objectives have been attained or not. Nevertheless, the conclusion that it can be drawn to this moment is that sanctions were efficient in preserving the European security framework in the short and medium run, but the different and more realist approach adopted by the Trump administration highlighted the different goals between the United States and the European Union.

Extending sanctions for too long, not only would allow Russia to adapt to them, but it would also lose significance in the long-run and the EU members, at some point, will be willing to lift sanctions and to pursue other national and security interests. The example of Italy demonstrates that, although it would not detach from the Western political and security line, Rome is aware of the benefits of maintaining good relations with the Eurasian partner and whose presence on the continent cannot be ignored. Then, it is willing to let Russia approach Europe again and, possibly, use it at his advantage to rebuild its reputation in the region.

Additionally, according to the Russian narrative, the problems raised with sanctions are not only connected to the annexation of Crimea or the support of militants in Eastern Ukraine, but the crisis questions the legality of using unilateral sanctions and the level of representativeness of the current security framework. Russia claims that the UN Security Council should function as the only legitimate body to impose multilateral sanctions and that UN in general should stop promoting the Western approach and justify the illegal actions of powerful actors, like the USA, which designs international law as they please.

The Russian approach is a serious threat to the international security configuration promoted by the USA, especially if other countries of the world are progressively supporting more this idea. It seems unlikely that in the short-run there will be something similar to a Russia-China military alliance. Nevertheless, the high interaction between the two and the inclusion of other actors, such as India, leave intended the willingness to challenge the international structure at some point. Russia is also proposing itself as new broker in the Middle East and North Africa and success in this sector would undermine the American role as global leader.

Europe finds itself caught up in a security dilemma between two great powers that pursue different security agenda. Although it is improbable that it would happen in the next future, EU members have been questioning the need to emancipate from the traditional defence structure of the union. For the reasons listed above, I believe that sanctions were not efficient to attain tertiary objectives.

Given the inefficiency to achieve primary and tertiary goals of countries security agenda, preserving the world order and the security structure promoted by the Western countries will be very difficult, unless:

1. USA and EU start considering Russia as an equal partner and collaborate to create a new security framework where Russia is fully participant.
2. A drastic economic crisis, like the one triggered by Covid19, will oblige the target to compel to the senders' requests only with the purpose to ease the burden of sanctions.
3. The inadequate collaboration between USA and EU in dealing with Covid19 will push EU further away from its historical ally. In this scenario, it is possible that the EU works to emancipate its defence structure and start to negotiate with Russia with the intent of creating a new security framework.

In any case, the security agenda of European countries cannot be attained exclusively with economic sanctions or related measures, but they have to be embedded in a wider strategy. In this context, the EU was significantly more open to dialogue and greatly focused on the implementation of the Minsk Accords. Within other and more serious diplomatic efforts and the involvement of EU middle powers

as mediators, the European Union is more likely to exit the security dilemma, although it might happen at the expenses of the USA.

In response of the second research question of this dissertation, the academic literature argues that sanctions are successful or simply efficient when they are deliberately designed by sender(s) to be sufficiently costly for the target. However, the case of Russia confirms the opinion of the scholars that economic sanctions are not sufficient and neither they are if implemented together with financial and diplomatic ones. Therefore, sanctions cannot be considered the best instrument to attain security objectives.

Nevertheless, sanctions should not be abandoned as security instrument in the international relations because they retain important advantages. They are quick response to crises, and they satisfy the domestic and international opinion in the short run, persevering stability and giving time to reflect a better strategy. Moreover, it was demonstrated that the security objectives are multiple and on different dimensions and they can be efficiently achieved by sanctions, such as in the case of secondary objectives. Therefore, the decisionmakers who are the most involved in the issue and strongly wish to correct the wrong behaviour of the target cannot pretend sanctions alone to accomplish primary objective. On the contrary, sanctions should be part of a broader strategy that includes other diplomatic efforts. A joint action could positively contribute but only if managed within an international organization. Moreover, governments should invest in careful analyses of domestic and international constraints of the sender and the target before the emanation of such measure. Their results could be fundamental in calculating the prospects of success of implementing sanctions in the pursuit of foreign and security purposes, or of its failure and, eventually, study an alternative strategy. Otherwise, the risk is jeopardizing the effect of sanctions by expanding the measure on other issues that are not connected to the initial conflict and prolonging the economic restrictions would not help solving the dispute. Rather, it would deteriorate even more the relations between the sender and the target and, eventually, between the senders when their security objectives do not completely concede.