EU Sanctions in Response to Intra-state Conflicts: A Comparative Approach

Iva Kopraleva & Maarten P. Vink*

Restrictive measures (or sanctions) form an important part of the European Union's (EU's) foreign policy toolbox. Studying the conditions under which the EU imposes sanctions is therefore imperative for understanding EU's role in the global arena. This article aims at modelling the use of EU sanctions particularly in response to intra-state conflicts in its neighbourhood. Four variables (trade linkage with the EU as whole; trade linkage with individual Member States; democracy level of the potential target state; and violence level of the intra-state conflict) are tested against data from ten intra-state conflicts from EU's neighbourhood using a comparative mixed-method methodology of fuzzy-set analysis and process-tracing. We identify the lack of strong trade linkage between individual Member States and the potential target state as a sufficient condition for the imposition of sanctions. In addition, the presence of bilateral trade links is a necessary, and if the potential target state is a democracy, sufficient condition for the non-imposition of sanctions.

1 INTRODUCTION

Sanctions, as a foreign policy instrument used to induce policy change, are an important topic in the field of International Relations research. Many scholars have identified a trend of increasing use of sanctions worldwide in recent decades.[1] In this context, it is important to analyse the use of sanctions on part of the European Union (EU).

In 2003, a document named 'Guidelines on implementation and evaluation of restrictive measures (sanctions)' was adopted. Later, in 2004 the first programmatic document on EU sanction policy appeared – 'Basic Principles on the Use of Restrictive Measures (Sanctions)'.[2] On the basis of these documents it becomes

* Iva Kopraleva is a recent graduate of the MSc European Studies at Maastricht University (i.kopraleva@student.maastrichtuniversity.nl). Maarten P. Vink is Professor of Political Science and Political Sociology at Maastricht University and Part-Time Professor at the European University Institute (m.vink@maastrichtuniversity.nl).

1 See D. Drezner, *Conflict Expectations and the Paradox of Economic Coercion*, 42 Intl. Stud. Q. 709–731 (1998); N. Marinov, *Do Economic Sanctions Destabilize Country Leaders?*, 49(3) Am. J. Pol. Sci. 564–576 (2005); T.C. Morgan, N. Bapat & V. Krustev, *The Threat and Imposition of Economic Sanctions, 1971—2000*, 26(1) Conflict Mgt. & Peace Sci. 92–110 (2009).

2 Both documents result from the primary legal basis for EU restrictive measures, which is Art. 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (ex Art. 301 of the Treaty Establishing the European Community).

Kopraleva, Iva & Vink, Maarten P. 'EU Sanctions in Response to Intra-state Conflicts: A Comparative Approach'. *European Foreign Affairs Review* 20, no. 3 (2015): 315–336.
© 2015 Kluwer Law International BV, The Netherlands

clear that EU restrictive measures are generally aimed at bringing about change in policy or activity by the target country, part of country, government, entities or individuals and do not have an economic motivation.[3]

Despite the existence of these guidelines and principles, variance can be detected when it comes to the initiation of sanctions on part of the EU. Brummer states that 'a comparison between potential and actual targets of European sanctions reveals a strong degree of selectivity on the part of the EU'.[4] As an example, he notes that '[i]n some cases deficiencies concerning the respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law were sufficient for the imposition of autonomous European sanctions, in other cases they were not'.[5]

In addition, sanctions are not consistently used as a response to armed conflicts in EU's neighbourhood. The Arab Spring uprisings prompted the imposition of sanctions against the regimes in four states – Egypt, Libya, Syria and Tunisia.[6] At the same time, no sanctions are used as a response to the Georgia-Abkhazia and Georgia-South Ossetia conflicts in 2008 or to react to the ongoing Israel-Palestine tensions. It becomes obvious that the imposition of sanctions varies in accordance to certain conditions.

Intra-state conflicts can be considered a major security threat for the EU, especially when they occur in its neighbourhood.[7] The majority of the restrictive measures when it comes to the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) countries for the period 2004–2012 are, in fact, put in place by the EU in response to intra-state conflicts. The conditions under which restrictive measures are used in cases of intra-state conflicts are therefore extremely relevant in the context of EU's neighbourhood.

The article examines the variance in EU's sanction policy by creating and then empirically testing a model, which depicts the conditions under which the EU imposes sanctions in cases of intra-state conflicts. Since the 'EU behaves differently as a sanctioning actor towards its geographic vicinity than to regions further afield'[8] the analysis considers only cases of intra-state conflicts in the countries which form part of the ENP in order to ensure maximum comparability in terms of geographical proximity.

---

3 See Council of the EU, *Guidelines on Implementation and Evaluation of Restrictive Measures (Sanctions) in the Framework of the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy*, 15579/03 (2003).

4 K. Brummer, *Imposing Sanctions: The Not So 'Normative Power Europe'*, 14(2) European For. Affairs Rev. 192 (2009).

5 *Ibid*.

6 For an overview of all sanctions in force see European Commission. *'Restrictive Measures in Force (Article 215 TFEU).' Regulations based on Article 215 TFEU and Decisions adopted in the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy* (2014).

7 See X. Solana, *A Secure Europe in a Better World. European Security Strategy* (2003).

8 C. Portela, *Where and Why Does the EU Impose Sanctions?*, 3 Politique européenne 83 (2005).

The question addressed by this article is: under which conditions does the EU impose sanctions in case of an intra-state conflict in a neighbouring state?

The article proceeds as follows: The first section outlines the theoretical model and formulates a number of hypotheses regarding the conditions under which sanctions are initiated by the EU. The second section discusses the methodology and operationalization of the analysis. The third section is dedicated to the results from the fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) analysis and a short comparison between two analytically interesting conflicts. Finally, a conclusion summarizes the findings of the analysis, discusses the limitations of the research design and proposes avenues for further investigation.

2 THEORY

In the context of a relatively peaceful international environment in terms of inter-state conflicts in the post-Cold War period, intra-state conflicts can be characterized as the primary global security threat.[9] The EU security strategy also recognizes that regional conflicts are a serious security challenge. The international community in the face of the United Nations (UN), but also other international organizations and even individual states, have become increasingly engaged in the processes of conflict management and conflict resolution.[10] The trend of increasingly taking action in response to intra-state conflicts is also matched by the increase in the use of international sanctions in the period after the Cold War.

According to EU's Guidelines on the imposition of sanctions 'measures are imposed by the EU to bring about a change in policy or activity by the target country, part of country, government, entities or individuals'.[11] The scope of international sanctions, imposed by the EU can vary significantly but it is important to state that the Union is prone to impose targeted (as opposed to comprehensive) restrictive measures in order to only harm the individuals or groups which are responsible for the situation in the target state or have the power to change it and not the general population of the state.

The literature on the conditions that lead to economic sanctions is relatively limited.[12] The current model focuses on four variables which can theoretically account for the imposition of sanctions: the strength of the trade linkage between the EU and the target state, the strength of bilateral trade links between EU

---

[9] B. Lacina, *From Side Show to Centre Stage: Civil Conflict after the Cold War*, 35(2) Sec. Dialogue 191–205 (2004).

[10] *Ibid*.

[11] See Council of the EU, *supra* n. 3, at 5.

[12] A. C. Drury, *Sanctions as Coercive Diploimacy: The U.S. President's Decision to Initiate Economic Sanctions*, 54 Pol. Res. Q. (2001).

Member States and the target state, the democracy level of the target state, and the level of violence of the intra-state conflict.

2.1 Trade linkage

By imposing sanctions on the target, the sender is likely to harm its own economy as well. Therefore, it can be estimated that the sender will be more likely to impose sanctions if the domestic cost of these measures are relatively low. A number of empirical studies find that the effectiveness of sanctions depends on the existing trade linkages between the sender and the target.[13] The logic is that the greater trade linkages would imply greater leverage for the sender, making sanction costly for the target. Nevertheless, this would also mean higher cost for the sender and would render the sanction less likely to be imposed in the first place.[14]

Another theoretical approach to sanctions, namely public choice theory, follows a similar line of reasoning from a slightly different perspective. This theory argues that the decision for the imposition of sanctions is influenced by certain influential sender interest groups.[15] This implies that 'interest groups will attempt to tailor the form which sanctions take so as to minimize the costs which sanctions impose upon them'.[16] Therefore if there are large trade linkages between the sender and the target, the potentially affected by the sanctions sender interest groups will have a greater incentive to lobby against sanctions as such policies may ultimately result in welfare losses for these groups. This renders the imposition of sanctions on a country with which the sender has large trade linkages politically costly and therefore less likely to occur.[17] Bonetti tests this assumption and comes to the conclusion that in fact 'the probability of trade and export sanctions is inversely related to trade linkage'.[18]

In addition to this, when we discuss the EU sanctioning policy, it is important to take into account the fact that it is currently developed in the largely intergovernmental framework of the CFSP. Essentially, this means that whether to impose restrictive measures or not and the nature of these measures is decided by the EU Member States by unanimity. Due to differences in the level of interdependence between the economies of the different EU Member States,

---

13 A.C. Drury, *Economic Sanctions and Presidential Decisions* (Palgrave/Macmillan 2005); R. Eyler, *Economic Sanctions: International Policy and Political Economy at Work* (Palgrave Macmillan 2007).

14 D. Cox & A.C. Drury, *Democratic Sanctions: Connecting the Democratic Peace and Economic Sanctions*, 43(6) J. Peace Res. 709–722 (2006).

15 W.H. Kaempfer & A.D. Lowenberg, *The Theory of International Economic Sanctions: A Public Choice Approach*, 78(4) Am. Econ. Rev.786–793 (1988).

16 S. Bonetti, *A Test of the Public Choice Theory of Economic Sanctions*, 4 Applied Economics Letters 729 (1997).

17 *Ibid*.

18 *Ibid*., at 732.

sanctions on a certain target state may affect some Member States more than others. This, in turn, might have influence on the decision of whether to impose sanctions or not.[19] On this basis, two hypotheses can be formulated:

> **H1a:** The absence of strong trade linkages between one or more EU Member States and the target country is a necessary condition for the imposition of sanctions in case of an intra-state conflict in the EU neighbourhood.
> **H1b:** Weak trade linkage between the EU as a whole and the potential target country in combination with the lack of substantial trade linkages between one or more EU Member States and the potential target state is a sufficient condition for the imposition of sanctions in case of an intra-state conflict in the EU neighbourhood.

2.2 Democracy level

A third potentially relevant condition in the imposition of sanctions is the democracy level of the target state. Lektzian and Souva argue that it is unlikely for democracies to impose sanctions on each other because democratic leaders are responsive to large constituencies, which gives them incentives to implement successful policies and avoid welfare losses if they wish to remain in office. In addition, democratic institutions facilitate communication which makes it more likely for the dispute to be resolved in the negotiation phase. They conclude that 'democracies are less likely to impose sanctions against a democracy than to impose sanctions on a non-democracy'.[20] Cox and Drury confirm the findings of the previous analysis by using more contemporary data (1978–2000 as opposed to 1950–1990 for the Lektzian and Souva study).[21] The European Union as a sender is not a conventional democratic state. Nevertheless, the decision about the imposition of sanctions is taken unanimously by the EU Member States, all of which are democracies. Therefore the arguments presented above are also applicable to the EU as an entity.

Based on the findings from the studies discussed above, the following hypothesis is introduced to the analysis:

> **H2:** The target country being a democracy is a sufficient condition for the non-imposition of sanctions by the EU in case of an intra-state conflict in the neighbourhood.

---

[19] Cox & Drury, *supra* n. 14.
[20] D. Lektzian & M. Souva, *The Economic Peace between Democracies: Economic Sanctions and Domestic Institutions*, 40(6) J. Peace Res. 657 (2003).
[21] Cox & Drury, *supra* n. 14.

2.3 Level of violence

In the current analysis sanctions are analysed as a tool employed by the EU as a response to intra-state conflicts in its neighbourhood. Despite their controversy in terms of adverse humanitarian and public health consequences, sanctions can be considered a relatively effective tool for conflict management as 'sanctions and their durations are statistically associated with shorter intrastate conflicts'.[22] Intra-state conflicts can vary greatly in their levels of violence.

The EU's security strategy explicitly states that regional conflicts are a serious security threat for the Union and, in addition, building security in the neighbourhood is identified as a key priority.[23] Therefore, a high level of violence is likely to prompt the EU to react to internal conflicts with decisive measures such as sanctions, especially when these conflicts unfold in its neighbourhood. Following this logic, the final hypothesis is formulated:

> **H3:** High level of intra-state violence is a necessary condition for the EU to impose sanctions in case of an intra-state conflict in the neighbourhood.

3 METHODOLOGY AND OPERATIONALIZATION

3.1 Methodology

The research question of this article refers to the conditions under which the EU imposes sanctions in cases of intra-state conflicts in neighbouring states. In order to identify these conditions, fsQCA is used.

Fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis is a social science method which performs systematic comparisons between empirical cases.[24] The term fuzzy-set refers to the situation where cases have partial membership in a certain set (an outcome variable or one of the explanatory conditions). Cases are thus assigned values in the interval between 0 and 1 in accordance to the degree to which they belong to the set (this is termed 'calibration').[25] On the basis of calibrated data, fsQCA searches for necessary and/or sufficient conditions which are connected to the presence or the absence of the outcome. A necessary condition implies that whenever the outcome is present, the condition is present as well. In other words, the outcome is a subset of the condition. A sufficient condition implies that

---

22 A. Escribà-Folch, *Economic Sanctions and the Duration of Civil Conflicts*, 47(2) J. Peace Res. 129 (2010).

23 Solana, *supra* n. 7.

24 See C.C. Ragin, *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies* (Univ of California Press 1989); C.C. Ragin, *Fuzzy-Set Social Science* (University of Chicago Press 2000); C.C. Ragin, *Redesigning Social Inquiry: Fuzzy Sets and Beyond* (Wiley Online Library 2008).

25 B. Rihoux & C.C. Ragin, *Configurational Comparative Methods: Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and Related Techniques* (Sage 2009).

whenever the condition is present, the outcome is also present or, in set-theoretical terms, the condition is a subset of the outcome.

Two parameters of fit are used: consistency and coverage. Consistency indicates the extent to which a perfect subset relation is approximated between a given condition (or configuration of conditions) and the outcome.[26] This parameter can vary between 1 (perfect subset relationship) and 0 (no subset relationship). Although there are no agreed standards on what is consistent, no consistency values lower than 0.75 should be accepted.[27] In addition, '[i]n the case of necessary conditions, the consistency value should be set much higher' with a benchmark of 0.9.[28] Coverage represents a second parameter which indicates 'the degree to which a cause or causal combination "accounts for" instances of an outcome'.[29] Coverage helps us assess to which extent a certain condition (or a configuration of conditions) is empirically relevant, especially if there is more than a single path to the same outcome. Coverage is meaningful only for consistent subset relations.

Two final comments on the method are needed. First, in this article the interpretation of the results from the fsQCA analysis concentrates on the 'parsimonious solution', which represents the only solution that is meaningful for causal interpretation.[30] Using the parsimonious solution is also the best, or even the only, guarantee against reporting spurious results.[31] Second, fsQCA can be used to inform the selection of case studies for in-depth process-tracing which could, in turn, reveal conditions that were omitted from the original theoretical model.[32] In a brief process-tracing analysis we present a comparison between two cases with similar analytical configurations, which display different empirical outcomes.

3.2 Case selection, timeframe and geographical scope

Conflict is defined as a 'positional difference, regarding values relevant to a society […] between at least two decisive and directly involved actors, which is being carried out using observable and interrelated conflict measures that lie outside established regulatory procedures and threaten core state functions, the

---

26 Ragin (2008), *supra* n. 24.
27 *Ibid*.
28 C.Q. Schneider & I. Rohlfing, *Combining Qca and Process Tracing in Set-Theoretic Multi-Method Research*, 42(4) Sociological Methods & Res. 10 (2013).
29 Ragin (2008), *supra* n. 24, at 44.
30 M. Baumgartner, *Parsimony and Causality*, Quality & Quantity 49, 6 (2015).
31 S.Vaisey, *Comment: QCA Works – When Used with Care*, Sociological Methodology 44 (2014).
32 Schneider & Rohlfing, *supra* n. 28.

international order or hold out the prospect to do so'.[33] Only intra-state conflict with a high intensity level – 4/5 (Severe Crisis) or 5/5 (War) – according to the Conflict Barometer classification of the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research will be included in the case selection. The cases of intra-state conflicts where the imposition of sanctions predates the initial point of this analysis will not be considered in the current case selection. Because the analysis focuses on intra-state conflicts rather than states per se, it is possible that more than one conflict is taking place in a certain country. Table 1 summarizes the cases and the respective restrictive measures.

Table 1 Intra-state Conflicts and the Imposed EU Restrictive Measures

Conflict	*Country*	*Conflict Period*	*Restrictive Measures*
Various opposition groups versus government	Egypt	2011	Sanctions imposed on individuals
Abkhazian separatists versus government	Georgia	2008	No sanctions
South Ossetian separatists versus government	Georgia	2008	No sanctions
Palestinian groups versus Israeli government	Israel	2004–2012	No sanctions
Fatah versus Hamas	Israel	2007	No sanctions
Hezbollah, Fatah al-Islam versus government	Lebanon	2007–2008	Sanctions imposed on groups or entities
Opposition versus Government	Libya	2011–2012	Sanctions imposed on groups or entities
Inter-factional violence	Libya	2012	No sanctions
Opposition groups versus Government	Syria	2011–2012	Sanctions imposed on groups or entities
Various opposition groups versus Government	Tunisia	2011	Sanctions imposed on individuals

The starting point of the analysis is 2004 as this year marks the creation of a legal framework for the use of restrictive measures by the EU and the beginning of the ENP. In order to ensure the comparability of the cases, only sanctions that are imposed from 2004 onwards (and therefore in accordance with the Guidelines and the Basic Principles) are considered. The timeframe concludes in 2012.

[33] *Conflict Barometer*, Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK) 21, 120 (2012).

The geographical scope of the analysis covers intra-state conflicts in all the countries that participate in the ENP. The ENP encompasses the following sixteen countries: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine. The geographical proximity of the countries under consideration to the EU contributes to the comparability of EU's response in case of an intra-state conflict in them.

3.3 Operationalization

3.3[a] *Outcome*

The outcome of interest for this analysis is the imposition of sanctions. Sanctions can have different levels of severity and scope which can range 'from diplomatic wrist-slaps such as travel bans on specific persons to arms or fuel restrictions to comprehensive economic embargoes. As such, differentiation among the various types of sanctions events provides significantly more information than a simple dichotomous indicator'.[34]

EU sanctions can generally be divided into comprehensive and targeted. In the broad category of targeted sanctions, two sub-categories can be introduced – sanctions which target individuals and sanctions which target groups or entities. Since the EU did not use comprehensive sanctions in the neighbourhood for the period 2004–2012, only the two sub-categories of targeted sanctions will be considered in the current article.

Sanctions that are targeted at individuals have a smaller scope and are less severe than sanctions that are targeted at groups or entities. Sanctions targeted at individuals affect only the individuals themselves (through freezing of assets or visa bans) as opposed to sanctions, targeted at groups or entities which could affect whole industries (oil embargoes, arms embargoes, embargo on luxury goods, etc.) or financial, governmental and other institutions (freezing the funds and economic assets of banks, the government of the target state, companies, etc.)

Since no comprehensive sanctions form part of the analysis, sanctions that are targeted at groups or entities receive the maximum fuzzy-set score of 1. The 0.5 threshold is set between the categories of 'no sanctions' (0) and 'sanctions, targeted at individuals' (0.75) because even the mildest restrictive measures are more in the set of countries where EU sanctions are present than in the set of countries where EU sanctions are absent. Council Decisions imposing restrictive measures adopted

[34] R.M. Wood, *A Hand Upon the Throat of the Nation: Economic Sanctions and State Repression, 1976–2001*, 52 Intl. Stud. Q. 499 (2008).

in the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy will serve as the data source for this variable.

3.3[b] *Trade Linkage*

Trade linkage between the EU and the potential target country will be measured through the total amount of trade (exports + imports) which takes place between the two entities. More specifically, the total trade with the target country as a percentage of the total EU trade will be taken into account.

Intra-state conflicts can last for long periods of time during which trade dynamics might change. This article is dedicated to the conditions which can be linked to the imposition of sanctions, which means that it assesses the existing trade linkage at the onset of the internal conflict. For this reason, the data from the year when the conflict begins is taken into account. In cases when the onset of the conflict occurs before the initial point in the timeframe of the analysis, the values from 2004 will be considered. The data for the period 2004–2012 are extracted from the Eurostat database.

With regard to the fuzzy-set calibration of this variable, the fuzzy-set score of 1 corresponds to the highest value in the dataset. Respectively, the fuzzy-set score of 0 is assigned to the lowest value from all the cases. The 0.5 threshold for this variable corresponds to the mean of all values: 0.5% of the total EU trade. The mean value (0.5%) does not create an artificial division between the cases that are in and out of the set.

When it comes to the individual EU Member States, a dichotomous variable is used to indicate whether one or more EU Member States have substantial trade linkages with the potential target. Individual EU Member States are considered to have substantial trade linkage with the potential target state of sanctions if during the year of the onset of the internal conflict the potential target state ranks among the top ten non-EU trading partners of the Member State. A value of 1 will be assigned to the cases where such substantial trade linkages exist. A value of 0 will be given in case there is a lack of substantial trade linkages. The bilateral trade data were obtained from Eurostat.

3.2[c] *Democracy Level*

In order to measure the democracy level of the target countries of EU sanctions, the dataset composed by the Polity IV Project on political regime characteristics is used. In the dataset, the countries are assigned a Polity Score based on a 21-point

scale ranging from -10 (fully institutionalized autocracies) to +10 (fully institutionalized democracies).[35]

The Polity IV score from the year of the onset on the conflict is taken into account. In cases when the onset of the conflict occurs before the initial point in the timeframe of the analysis, the values from 2004 will be considered. When it comes to the fuzzy-set calibration of the variable, the maximum value of the Index (+10) is given a fuzzy-set value of 1. Regimes labelled as 'anarchies' are considered to be fully outside the set of democracies and receive a fuzzy-set score of 0.[36] Since our interest lies with the regimes that can be classified as democracies (and not in the regimes with mixed characteristics) the 0.5 cut-off of the variable is set at 5.5. Regimes which score lower than this value cannot be considered consolidated democracies and are therefore placed outside the set of democracies. Regimes in transition due to the intra-state conflict receive the score from the year before the transition.

3.2[d] *Level of Violence*

As an indicator for the level of violence the number of deaths which occurred during the intra-state conflicts per year will be considered. In the current analysis, both battle-related deaths, defined as 'the use of armed force between warring parties in a conflict dyad, […] resulting in deaths'[37] and the victims on one-sided violence which is considered to be '[t]he use of armed force by the government of a state or by a formally organized group against civilians'[38] are taken into account.

If the intra-state conflict begins before 2004, only data on the deaths from 2004 onwards are taken into account. In addition, in the cases where sanctions are imposed by the EU, only the number of fatalities which occurred before the sanction was initiated are taken into account.

Since the current analysis only considers conflict with high intensity, one might argue that the cases with low casualties are a priori excluded from the analysis. Nevertheless, conflict intensity is measured by the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research on the basis of five distinct factors – use of weapons, use of military personnel, number of casualties, destruction, and

---

35 See M.G. Marshall, T.R. Gurr & K. Jaggers, *Dataset Users' Manual, Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800–2012* (2013).

36 Due to the calibration command in fs/QCA these maximum values receive fuzzy-set scores of, respectively, 0.95 and 0.05. This does not affect the substantive outcome of the analysis.

37 See, *Definitions*, Uppsala Conflict Data Program, at: <http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/definitions/>.

38 *Ibid*.

refugees.[39] Therefore, even though one of the factors is indeed the number of casualties, it is possible to have a conflict with high intensity and low (or no) casualties. An example of this is the conflict between the Abkhazian separatists and the Georgian government characterized as a 'severe crisis' which resulted in a large-scale military operation and zero casualties.[40]

The data for this variable was obtained from the UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset v.5-2013 dataset and the UCDP One-sided Violence Dataset v 1.4-2013 dataset. This condition was calibrated in such a way that the fuzzy-set score of 0 corresponds to 0 deaths and a fuzzy-set score of 1 corresponds to the highest value in the dataset (621 in the conflict between the Georgian government and the South Ossetia separatists). The 0.5 threshold is set at 100 victims as this is an accepted threshold in the research of armed conflicts.[41]

The calibration is summarized in Appendix 1.

4 ANALYSIS[42]

4.1 Analysis of necessary conditions

We start with the analysis of necessary conditions. Two hypotheses were formulated with regard to necessary conditions. Firstly, **H1a** states that the absence of strong trade linkages between one or more EU Member States and the target country is a necessary condition for imposition of sanctions in case of an intra-state conflict in the EU neighbourhood. Secondly, according to **H3** high level of intra-state violence is a necessary condition for the EU to impose sanctions in case of an intra-state conflict in the EU neighbourhood.

Table 2 present the results of the necessary condition analysis, where we report the consistency and coverage scores for all conditions and their negations, both for the presence and absence of sanctions. We find that no conditions can be identified as necessary for the imposition of sanctions due to the <0.90 consistency scores of all variables. We thus reject both hypotheses.

---

39 See *Conflict Barometer*, *supra* n. 33.

40 See *Conflict Barometer*, Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK) 17 (2008).

41 L. Themnér & P. Wallensteen, *Armed Conflict, 1946–2011*, 49(4) J. Peace Res. (2012).

42 The results reported here are based on the analysis performed with C. Ragin & S. Davey, *fs/QCA [Computer Programme], Version 2.5* (University of California 2014). Additional analyses have been performed with A. Thiem & A. Duşa, *QCA: A Package for Qualitative Comparative Analysis*, 5(1) The R Journal 87–97 (2013). The datafile and R script are available here: http://dx.doi.org/10.7910/DVN/JLKTEE.

Table 2 Results from Analysis for Necessary Conditions (Outcome Present and Absent)

	Sanctions		*~Sanctions*	
Conditions	*Consistency*	*Coverage*	*Consistency*	*Coverage*
trademes	0.17	0.13	**0.96**	**0.88**
~trademes	0.83	0.94	0.05	0.06
tradeeu	0.42	0.39	0.62	0.71
~tradeeu	0.69	0.60	0.47	0.50
victims	0.59	0.44	0.70	0.64
~victims	0.51	0.58	0.39	0.54
demo	0.26	0.28	0.63	0.80
~demo	0.81	0.64	0.43	0.42

We do, however, find one necessary condition for the absence of sanctions, namely trade linkage between individual Member States and the potential target state (consistency 0.96; coverage .088). In other words, for the EU not to impose sanctions on a potential target state it is necessary for this state to have substantial trade linkages with one or more of the EU Member States. The high coverage value indicates that the necessary condition is not trivial.[43]

4.2 Analysis for sufficient conditions

We then proceed with the sufficiency analysis. Two hypotheses were put forward in our theoretical model: **H1b** states that weak trade linkage between the EU as a whole and the target country in combination with the lack of substantial trade linkages between one or more EU Member States and the potential target country is a sufficient condition for the imposition of sanctions in case of an intra-state conflict in the EU neighbourhood. According to **H2**, the target country being a democracy is a sufficient condition for the EU not to impose sanctions in case of an intra-state conflict in the neighbourhood.

The sufficiency analysis, based on the truth table represented in Table 3 shows only a single sufficient condition for the presence of sanctions: the lack of strong bilateral trade links between individual EU Member States and the potential target state (consistency: 0.94; coverage: 0.83). In other words, it is sufficient for the potential target state in EU's neighbourhood not to have intensive trade linkage with any of the EU Member States for the EU to impose sanctions on this state.

[43] See Ragin (2008), *supra* n. 24.

Cases with greater than 0.5 membership in this solution are Lebanon, Syria, Libya (government-opposition) and Tunisia.

Table 3 Truth Table: Set-Theoretic Consistency of Causal Combinations as Subsets for Presence of Sanctions

Trademes	*Tradeeu*	*Victims*	*Demo*	*Consistency*	*Cases*
0	0	1	0	1.00	Libya (government-opposition); Syria
0	1	0	0	1.00	Tunisia
0	0	0	1	1.00	Lebanon
1	1	1	0	0.41	Egypt; Libya (inter-factional)
1	0	1	1	0.18	Georgia-South Ossetia
1	0	0	1	0.18	Georgia (Abkhazia)
1	1	1	1	0.10	Israel (Palestine); Israel (Fatah – Hamas)

Linking this result back to the theoretical model, neither H1b nor H2 are confirmed by the analysis. Interestingly, however, according to H1b, the lack of trade linkage between the individual EU Member States and the potential target state is one of the two variables which together were hypothesized to form a sufficient condition., According to H1a, the same variable was hypothesized to be a necessary condition for the outcome to occur. These results imply that overall the importance of the trade between the EU as a whole and the potential target state is not as significant as expected by the theoretical model. What seems the most important factor when it comes to the presence of the outcome is the trade linkage between the individual Member States and the potential target state. In addition, both the number of victims from the conflict and the democracy level of the potential target state do not appear to be necessary or sufficient for the imposition of sanctions.

Subsequently, based on the truth table represented in Table 4, we find also one sufficient condition for the absence of sanctions, which is a combination of two factors: the presence of strong bilateral trade links with potential target state being a democracy is a sufficient condition for the EU not to impose sanctions (consistency: 1.00; coverage: 0.60). Cases with greater than 0.5 membership in this solution are Israel (Palestine), Israel (Fatah-Hamas), Georgia (Abkhazia) and Georgia (South Ossetia).

Table 4 Truth Table: Set-Theoretic Consistency of Causal Combinations as Subsets for Absence of Sanctions

Tradems	*Tradeeu*	*Victims*	*Demo*	*Consistency*	*Cases*
1	0	0	1	1.00	Georgia-Abkhazia
1	0	1	1	1.00	Georgia S Ossetia
1	1	1	1	1.00	Israel-Palestine; Fatah-Hamas
1	1	1	0	0.73	Egypt; Libya inter-factional
0	1	0	0	0.25	Tunisia
0	0	1	0	0.14	Libya government-opposition; Syria
0	0	0	1	0.14	Lebanon

Once again this finding underlines the importance of the trade linkage between the individual Member States and the potential target state. In fact, the trade linkage between individual Member States and the potential target state (which was already identified as a necessary condition for the lack of sanctions) can be characterized as a so-called INUS condition – an insufficient but necessary part of an unnecessary but sufficient combination of conditions. This means that strong bilateral trade links are not individually sufficient for not imposing sanctions – they matter only in case the target state is also a democracy.

4.3 Comparative process tracing

The results from the fsQCA analysis can be used to identify deviant cases for comparative process-tracing which, in turn can reveal conditions that are missing from the original theoretical model.[44] For this purpose we compare what Schneider and Rohlfing coin as a 'deviant case for coverage' (Libya inter-factional violence) with an 'individually irrelevant case' (Egypt government v. opposition). We focus on these two cases because in the truth tables presented in the previous section, both cases appear in a similar truth table row (which means that they are analytically identical, within our theoretical model), yet result in different outcomes. After all, the EU imposed sanction in the case of Egypt, but not in Libya.[45]

[44] For an overview see Schneider & Rohlfing, *supra* n. 28.
[45] For the raw data and fuzzy-set partial membership scores of the two conflicts, refer to Appendix 2.

Several tentative observations are made here in order to resolve the logical contradiction. Firstly, it is important to discuss the nature of both intra-state conflicts. The evidence suggests that the intra-factional conflict in Libya in 2012 is much more fragmented than the conflict between the opposition and the regime in Egypt. Even though in Egypt several opposition groups demanded the resignation of the president,[46] in Libya the armed groups that clashed with each other were more numerous and did not have a common enemy unlike the Egyptian opposition, which was united against the regime.[47] In addition, the Egyptian opposition already had experience in consolidating and organizing itself.[48] When it comes to the imposition of targeted sanctions, therefore, it is arguably easier for the EU to impose sanctions on Mubarak and persons affiliated with him than to target individuals or entities which pertain to the hundreds of tribal structures, brigades and militias, participating in the inter-factional conflict in Libya. An additional difficulty in designing targeted sanctions in the case of Libya would arguably be the lack of reliable information regarding the clashes which take place as the different conflict parties tend to blame each other for the violence. In conclusion, the difficulty of identifying concrete groups, entities or individuals at which the sanctions should be targeted might be a condition that prohibits their imposition.

A second observation can be made with regard to the salience of both conflicts for the European public. It is reasonable to assume that the conflict in Egypt received more media and public attention in comparison to the inter-factional conflict in Libya, partly due to the extensive use of social media during the Egyptian demonstrations.[49] As a consequence the public pressure on the EU for action in the Egypt conflict will be higher compared to the conflict in Libya, which might, in turn, prompt the imposition of sanctions in the former case.[50] Another argument, closely related to this one, can be derived from the work of Whang on the symbolic use of sanctions. Sanctions can be used for domestic political gain as they allow policymakers to display strong leadership in crisis situations.[51] In the context of the EU, Member States might be expected to agree on the imposition of sanctions for symbolic purposes, namely to

---

46 E. Kienle, *Egypt without Mubarak, Tunisia after Bin Ali: Theory, History and the 'Arab Spring'*, 41(4) Economy and Socy. 532–557 (2012); M. Lynch, *America and Egypt after the Uprisings*, 53(2) Survival 31–42 (2011).

47 C. Chivvis & J. Martini, *Libya after Qaddafi: Lessons and Implications for the Future* (Rand Corporation, National Security Research Division 2014).

48 Lynch, *supra* n. 46.

49 E. Iskander, *Connecting the National and the Virtual: Can Facebook Activism Remain Relevant after Egypt's January 25 Uprising?*, 5 Intl. J. Commun. 13–15 (2011); M. Lim, *Clicks, Cabs, and Coffee Houses: Social Media and Oppositional Movements in Egypt, 2004–2011*, 62(2) J. Commun. 231–248 (2012).

50 D. Drezner, *The Hidden Hand of Economic Coercion*, Intl. Org. 643–659 (2003).

51 T. Whang, *Playing to the Home Crowd? Symbolic Use of Economic Sanctions in the United States*, 55(3) Intl. Stud. Q. 787–801 (2011).

demonstrate their support for the democratic transition in Egypt by sanctioning Mubarak and his close affiliates. The symbolic use of sanctions could potentially help us explain the imposition of sanctions in Egypt despite the existing strong trade linkages between the country and individual Member States as public pressure for action against the Mubarak regime was perhaps in this case stronger than the concern of potential welfare losses and political costs brought about by sanctions. For comparison, sanctions in Libya would arguably be less profitable for policymakers due to the lower salience of the conflict.

A caveat needs to be introduced with regard to the case of Libya. Although no sanctions were imposed in response to the 2012 inter-factional conflict in Libya, certain measures implemented during the 2011 Libyan civil war, were still in force. Therefore we encounter path dependence between the two conflicts that occurred in Libya in 2011 and 2012 respectively which the theoretical model was not equipped to detect. Despite this limitation the results from the comparative analysis still yield interesting answers to the puzzle presented above.

This exploratory analysis does not claim to have examined all the potentially relevant variables for the (non-) imposition of sanctions that can be derived from this comparison. The comparison was conducted in light of the analysis, performed above and aimed at hinting at variables which might resolve the concrete puzzle which stemmed from the fsQCA findings. In addition, the factors identified here as potentially relevant, warrant additional examination before they can be considered conditions for the imposition of EU sanctions in cases of intra-state conflicts in the neighbourhood and should, therefore, be the subject of further research.

5 CONCLUSION

The central research question of this article addressed the conditions, under which the EU imposes sanctions in case of an intra-state conflict in a neighbouring state. The analysis encompassed all conflicts in countries which form part of the ENP for the period 2004–2012. Four variables were included in the theoretical model of the article: trade linkage between the EU as a whole and the potential target state; trade linkage between individual EU Member States and the potential target state; democracy level of the potential target state; and violence level of the intra-state conflict.

By applying fsQCA methodology, these conditions were tested against empirical evidence from ten cases of intra-state conflicts in EU's neighbourhood. As a result, no necessary conditions were found for the EU to impose sanctions. However, substantial trade linkage between individual EU Member States and the potential target state was identified as a necessary condition for the non-imposition of sanctions. When it comes to sufficient conditions, the absence of

substantial trade linkage between individual EU Member States and the potential target state was identified as a sufficient condition for the imposition of sanctions. Finally, substantial trade linkage between individual EU Member States and the potential target state in combination with the potential target state being a democracy is sufficient for the non-imposition of sanctions on part of the EU.

Overall, the results from the fsQCA analysis show that from the variables, included in the model, the trade linkage between individual EU Member States and the potential target state appears to have the greatest impact on the imposition of sanctions. This can be explained by the fact that the EU sanction policy is conducted in the intergovernmental framework of EU's CFSP where unanimity is imperative for the adoption of sanction measures. As a consequence, each Member State has the potential to block sanction measures against its major trading partners. When it comes to the non-imposition of sanctions, the democracy level of the target state is also important in the sense that democratic regimes are not likely to be a subject of EU sanction measures (especially in the context of strong bilateral trade links).

Turning to the other two variables, included in the theoretical model, the trade between the EU as a whole and the potential target state did not turn out to be a (part of a) necessary or a sufficient condition for both the imposition and non-imposition of sanctions. This could be due to the limited variance of this variable when it comes to the ENP countries, the trade with all of which individually forms no more than 1.3% of the EU total trade (refer to Appendix 2). The ENP countries are, therefore, not among the major trading partners of the EU as a whole despite the existence of substantial trade linkages between them and certain individual EU Member States. As a consequence, trade linkage between individual Member States and the potential target state and not trade linkage with the EU as a whole is the decisive factor when it comes to the (non-) imposition of sanctions. The level of violence of the intra-state conflict also proved to not be a (part of a) necessary or a sufficient condition. In fact, in a number of the cases which were examined in this article (the conflicts in Syria, Lebanon, Libya in 2011), sanctions were imposed before the violence has reached its peak. In the case of the intra-state conflict in Tunisia, sanctions were imposed even though the level of violence during the conflict was relatively low. As a consequence, the level of violence of the intra-state conflict does not appear to be a good predictor of the (non-) imposition of sanctions on part of the EU when it comes to the neighbourhood.

The conflicts in Egypt in 2011 and Libya in 2012 were selected for a brief comparison as they were most suitable for this purpose from a set-theoretical perspective. The results from the comparison showed that the fragmented nature of the conflict in Libya and the difficulty to identify the potential target of the

sanctions can potentially account for the lack of sanctions in this particular case. In addition, the higher salience of the conflict in Egypt in comparison to the one in Libya from 2012 might explain why European policymakers imposed sanctions on the regime in the former.

After the summary and discussion of the results, it is important to briefly reflect on the limitations of the research design of the current article. First, one should be cautious when generalizing the results of the analysis beyond the EU's response to intra-state conflicts in the neighbourhood. As already mentioned, the EU acts differently as a sanctioning agent in the neighbourhood and in other regions in the world. In addition, as the analysis is focused on intra-state conflicts, additional research is needed before the conditions for the imposition of sanctions can be generalized beyond this particular situation. Second, as the research model is comprised by only a limited number of explanatory variables, certain relevant conditions might have been omitted from it. This limitation is, however, at least partly addressed through the comparative process-tracing analysis which aims at identifying these omitted conditions and at improving the current theoretical setup. Thirdly, the model of the article assumes that there are certain (relatively constant) conditions under which the EU imposes sanctions in its neighbourhood. For this reason, if certain processes of learning occur in the EU when it comes to the use of sanctions, the current model is not equipped to detect them. Additionally, the historical factors which might play a role in the individual cases and the institutional factors that influence the decision-making processes in the EU are not considered in the model. Finally, the model is also not equipped to detect path dependence in the use of sanctions. As only sanction measures which are put in place after the initial point of each conflict are considered, measures which are already implemented (or not yet lifted) at the time when the conflict begins are not considered to be a response to the onset of the conflict. However, their existence might still have certain influence on the decision of whether or not to impose (additional) restrictive measures.

Despite these limitations, the current analysis is a first attempt to determine the conditions under which the EU imposes sanctions in cases of intra-state conflicts in the neighbourhood. The model, developed here, can therefore serve as a stepping stone for further research on the topic of sanctions. The current theoretical and methodological approach to sanction research can be applied for conducting additional research on the behaviour of the EU as a sanctioning agent beyond the neighbourhood or in different situations apart from the response to intra-state conflicts (ex. proliferation of weapons for mass destruction, terrorism). In addition, findings from the current article can be used to compare the behaviour of the EU to other sanctioning agents around the world in the face of both individual states and international organizations.

Appendix 1: Data Sources and Calibration of Outcome and Conditions

Restrictive Measures (Sanctions)

Source: Council Decisions imposing restrictive measures adopted in the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy

Data for: 2004-2012

Raw data categories (fuzzy-set membership scores):

1. No sanctions were imposed (0)
2. Sanctions are imposed only on individuals (0.75)
3. Sanctions are imposed on groups or entities within the target state (1)
4. Comprehensive sanctions (1)

Mode: 0 **Median**: 0.38 **Mean**: 0.45

Trade linkage: EU as a whole (tradeeu)

Source: Eurostat database

Data for: 2004-2012

Mode: 0.07 **Median**: 0.51 **Mean**: 0.54

Fuzzy-set calibration syntax in fsQCAsoftware: calibrate (tradeeu,1.12,0.5,0.07)

Trade linkage: Individual Member States (trademS)

Source: Eurostat database

Data for: 2004-2012

Raw data categories:

0 = Potential target state is not among top 10 trading partners of any EU member state

1 = Potential target state is top 10 trading partner of at least one EU member state

Mode: 1.00 **Median**: 1.00 **Mean**: 0.6

Democracy level (demo)

Source: Polity IV Index

Data for: 2004-2012

Categorization in original dataset:

The Polity IV Project composed a 21-point scale index in which countries are assigned a Polity score from -10 (fully institutionalized autocracy) to +10 (fully institutionalized democracy). The middle score of 0 signifies a mixed regime (or anocracy).

Mode: N/A **Median**: 2 **Mean**: 0.6

Fuzzy-set calibration syntax in fs/QCA software: calibrate (regime,10,5.5,-10)

Violence levels (victims)

Source: UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset v.5-2013 dataset and the UCDP One-sided Violence Dataset v 1.4-2013 dataset, Conflict Barometer

Data for: 2004-2012

Mode: N/A **Median**: 275.5 **Mean**: 255.1

Fuzzy-set calibration syntax in fs/QCA software: calibrate (violence,0,100,621)

Appendix 2: Raw Data and Fuzzy-Set Partial Membership Scores

Conflict	*Sanctions*		*Tradeeu*		*Tradems*		*Demo*		*Victims*	
	Raw Score	*Fuzzy Score*	*Raw Score*	*Fuzzy Score*	*Raw Score*	*Fuzzy Score*	*Raw score*	*Fuzzy Score*	*Raw Score*	*Fuzzy Score*
Various opposition groups versus government (Egypt)	Mild	0.75	0.72	0.74	yes	1	–2	0.19	316	0.78
Abkhazian separatists versus government (Georgia)	None	0	0.07	0.05	yes	1	6	0.58	0	0.05
South Ossetian separatists versus government (Georgia)	None	0	0.07	0.05	yes	1	6	0.58	621	0.95
Palestinian groups versus Israeli government (Israel)	None	0	1.07	0.94	yes	1	10	0.95	319	0.78
Fatah vs. Hamas (Israel)	None	0	0.95	0.9	yes	1	10	0.95	235	0.69
Hezbollah. Fatah al-Islam versus government (Lebanon)	Moderate	1	0.14	0.08	no	0	7	0.73	0	0.05
Opposition versus government (Libya)	Moderate	1	0.38	0.3	no	0	–10 (anarchy)	0.05	324	0.78
Inter-factional violence (Libya)	None	0	1.12	0.95	yes	1	–10 (anarchy)	0.05	415	0.86
Opposition groups versus government (Syria)	Moderate	1	0.19	0.1	no	0	–7	0.08	235	0.69
Various opposition groups versus government (Tunisia)	Mild	0.75	0.64	0.66	no	0	–4 (transition)	0.14	86	0.4