

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Since 2013, the relationship between Russia and Ukraine has been far from peaceful. One of the biggest events that led to the crisis in Ukraine is Euromaidan, a protest in Ukraine's capital, Kyiv that started on November 21, 2013 (Steinzova & Oliynyk, 2018). The peaceful demonstrations turned into three months of confrontation between civilians and Special Forces, and as a result, dozens of people were killed and thousands were injured. The initial cause of this deadly protest started from Ukraine's President, Victor Yanukovich's abrupt decision to end talks about Ukraine-European Union Association Agreement. Seeing Ukraine face an obscure situation because of the economic integration deal with European Union, Russia changed its customs on imports from Ukraine, which stopped the moving of all goods coming from Ukraine and made it seem like this was the start of a trade war against Ukraine to prevent Ukraine from signing a trade agreement with the European Union which caused the rates of Ukraine exports to drop (Interfax Ukraine, 2013). The relationship between Russia and Ukraine deteriorated as Russia formally annexed Crimea in 2014, a peninsula that is a part of Ukraine, but the majority of the residents are Russian.

Since then, more conflict has mushroomed in Ukraine. In a region called Donbas, pro-Russian separatists from Donetsk and Luhansk self-declared independence from Ukraine. Russia, being more advanced in terms of military strength than Ukraine, used heavy weaponry to back separatist forces in Eastern Ukraine to maintain their independence, causing thousands to die and thousands injured. This brought the attention of the European Union and in 2014, the EU attempted to take responsibility to mediate the conflict between Ukraine, Russia, and the people of Donetsk and Luhansk through the Minsk Agreement (Klijn, 2019). The agreement consists of provisions for a ceasefire, withdrawal of heavy weaponry, and full Ukrainian government control throughout the conflict zone.

However, these efforts have been unsuccessful because the protocols did not significantly change anything as the conflict continues although with less intensity and fewer casualties (Peters, Shapkina, 2019). Another effort that has been made by the European Union is to pull out the sanction card. The sanctions vary, there are diplomatic and economic sanctions as well as individual sanctions and even restrictions of business transactions in the conflict zones in Ukraine. The European Union considers Ukraine as a priority partner, specifically because Ukraine is one of the six countries that is included in the European Union's Eastern Partnership. This explains why the European Union is consistent in giving out sanctions to Russia, because not only is Ukraine a priority partner for the EU, what Russia did to Ukraine is simply not in line with the European values, even though Russia nor Ukraine is a part of the EU.

Russia's actions towards Ukraine are condemned by many countries, including countries that are member states of the EU. However, not all EU member states have the same reaction towards the EU's intervention in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. In 2017, European Values Think Tank through a program called Kremlin Watch studied the reactions of EU member states towards Russia to find out how much influence Russia has in the making of the foreign policy of each EU member states and whether Russia threatens the overall security of the European Union. Based on the study, out of 28 EU member states, 14 are concerned about Russia's aggression towards Ukraine, 3 does not have relations with Russia, 6 does not want to interfere in the issue, 2 still maintains the relationship with Russia for domestic reasons and 3 considers Russia an ally. Issuing a sanction is a big deal for the EU, not just because of the image it is trying to create, but it is also struggling internally to get a unanimous decision, which creates blocs. There are states like Italy, Spain, Austria, Greece, and Cyprus believing that the sanctions that are given to Russia directly affect their domestic economy (Temnycky, 2019). On the other hand, the Baltic States, Poland, and Romania worry that Russia is setting a trap for Ukraine that would strain Ukraine's ambition to join NATO and the EU.

The objective of this research is to explain the internal dynamics of the EU in response to the conflict between Ukraine and Russia and why the EU is consistent in giving out sanctions to Russia despite the internal condition of the EU.

1.2. Problem Statement

Concluding from the explanation above, the following is the question to which the thesis is hoped to discuss and assist in solving: how does the European Union member states reach a consensus despite the polarization that occurred due to the differences in the decisions regarding the restrictive measures that were given to Russia?

1.3. Aim

This research is conducted to find out how the political polarization that is present inside the European Union affects the handling of the Ukraine-Russia conflict.

1.4. Significance of Research

1.4.1. Academic Significance

Academic-wise, this research could help contribute to the study of International Relations, specifically on the researches related to the European Union or the study of Europe in general.

1.4.2. Practical Significance

Practically, this research is hoped to become a reference for further researches in the future that focuses on European Union and the conflict between Ukraine-Russia.

1.5. Theoretical Framework

Liberal Intergovernmentalism is one of the few theories that is used to study regional integration, especially European integration. Developed by Andrew Moravcsik in the 1990s, Liberal Intergovernmentalism is a derivation from its predecessor – Intergovernmentalism – where there is an emphasis on the role of the national government in integration and the identities of the states are not obsolete even if they are integrated. Although similar in the matter of recognizing the fact

that national governments are the biggest actors in integration, Liberal Intergovernmentalism also states that these states have their preferences and will pursue their preferences by bargaining with other states then finally create or adjust into institutions to commit to the decision or the agreement will be used during a time of political uncertainty (Moravcsik & Schimmelfennig, 2004).

Liberal Intergovernmentalism has two basic assumptions about international politics. According to Andrew Moravcsik and Frank Schimmelfennig in their writing about the basics of Liberal Intergovernmentalism, the first basic assumption is that states are critical actors. In short words, states achieve a certain goal by negotiating and bargaining with other states as opposed to asking for help from other institutions to do the negotiating and bargaining for them. The second basic assumption is that states are rational actors, which simply explains that states act rationally when it comes to deciding a certain decision that would be best for each state's condition – or in the words of both Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig, states are “purposive”. When there is a collective outcome between the states, it means that all the states have worked together and have considered the benefits for each of the states as well as how best the decision complements each member state's preferences. To further explain that states act rationally, there is a Liberal Intergovernmentalism framework that is made up of three stages to explain how states cooperate. The three frameworks are preferences constellation, interstate bargaining, and institutional choice.

The first and the most important stage on the Liberal Intergovernmentalism framework, where it all begins, is defining or explaining national preferences or as has been mentioned before, preferences constellation. Preference is a significant aspect here because it could help explain a state's motivation to adopt a certain policy and strategies. Preferences are personal for every state because it depends on the condition and how each state perceives a particular situation, which is why preferences may vary for each state, even neighboring states could have different preferences – after all, this is why Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig wrote that states are “purposive”. Preferences do not just cover a preferred outcome (ideal point),

but also other possible outcomes (ordering), the support for an outcome (intensity), the advantages of the outcomes (risk acceptance), how long it would take for the outcome to be realized (time horizon) and lastly, how would the preferred outcome affect the behavior of the citizens of the states (trade-offs) (Moravcsik, 2018).

The second stage of the Liberal Intergovernmentalism framework is interstate bargaining. On this stage, there is a highlight on the fact that international regimes exist because it accommodates the interests of the states. Interests shape preferences and these preferences are what the states use to bargain on the international – or in other words, European – level. Bargaining is necessary given the fact that there are a variety of preferences that each member state has depending on the issue and this stage helps the member states to reach a united outcome, although it depends on what each state offers the other.

In this stage, Liberal Intergovernmentalism highlights two things about the process of bargaining: the efficiency and the distribution of gains (Moravcsik, 2018). The process of bargaining is usually efficient because each state are already aware of their capabilities and condition, which is why the member states could choose to negotiate at any given time if the condition fits their agenda. Furthermore, the process is said to be efficient because the member states are the initiators of the process and they do not need the help of a third party to do the job for them, but there is no way of telling if the distribution of gains is equal for all member states and when the distribution of gains are unequal, cooperation efforts would be a challenge as the member states who are aware that they are not getting much benefit from the outcome may threaten non-cooperation (Hadvabova, 2006). Although Liberal Intergovernmentalism pays attention to the efficiency of the process and the distribution of gains the member states get from bargaining, the theory also highlights the fact that it is not only the most powerful or larger states that could influence the outcome of the decision because powers may vary and there are no correlations between influence and the size of the state (Ludlow, 2018).

The third and last stage of the Liberal Intergovernmentalism framework is institutional choice. This stage uses the regime theory to explain how international

cooperation is done. When all the state's preferences are accommodated and they have agreed on a decision, the states could choose an institution to help monitor the implementation of the decision as well as the enforcing, extending, and terminating of an interstate agreement (Moravcsik & Schimmelfennig, 2004). The institutions that the states chose could also form a process to make reaching collective outcomes easier in the future as well as creating rules and regulations for states to follow to ensure order. The states could also choose a different institution depending on the severity of the conflict and the kind of outcome they are looking for (Koremenos, et al., 2001).

In sum, Liberal Intergovernmentalism explains that member states have national preferences and those preferences could be used to bargain with other governments to unify their points of view in pursuit of integration. When a decision or outcome has been achieved, that is where the member states seek for institutions to ensure that all member states are committed to enforce the certain decision as well as to ensure that member states keep their promises to stick to their own bargains when the decision is implemented.

1.6. Hypotheses

Based on previous explanations, the hypothesis for this research is that eventually, EU member states will change their decisions on Russia because of their interests. As a whole, the European Union depends on Russia for energy resources and some others even depend on Russia for their internal stability. If the EU continues to prolong the sanctions, it will not only affect the economic condition of some of the member states that depend on Russia but the EU integration will also be challenged.

1.7. Research Method

1.7.2. Type of Research

In an effort to answer the questions above, the writer opts for a qualitative research method as well as a descriptive-explanatory approach to explain the research. The writer opts for qualitative research because qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social

phenomena, to understand the world and why things are the way it is (Hancock, Ockleford, Windridge, 2009). Furthermore, the writer chooses a descriptive approach to the research because in the beginning of every study, a clear picture of a situation must be drawn, so that the readers know what to expect later (Robson, 1993). The description of the situation will then generate questions like ‘why’ and ‘how’, which will then be answered with an extensive explanation. In sum, this method is chosen because the writer wants to carry out an in-depth analysis on how the European Union manages to resolve the conflict between Ukraine and Russia is influenced by the more powerful member states inside the EU, so EU’s way of handling the conflict could change anytime, depending on the interests of the more powerful member states.

1.7.2. Scope of Research

This research is limited by time and space. In regards to time, this research will focus on the period where the conflict between Russia and Ukraine started up until the present time where the European Union intervenes in the conflict of the two states by imposing sanctions to Russia, meaning this research will be limited only from the year 2013 until now.

Regarding spatial limitations, this research focuses on the European Union, mainly the internal situation of the organization.

1.7.3. Data Collecting

The data collecting technique is one of the most important stages in writing a research. In qualitative research, the data collecting technique could be done directly through interviews, observation, and focus group discussion (FGD) or indirectly through documents. Guided interviews, observation and focus group discussion are primary data, where information is taken directly from the source whereas documents is a secondary data because the information is taken indirectly through a mediator such as books, notes, archive, *etc.* that could dig up information from the previous years.

The data collecting technique for this research will be done conventionally by referring to history books that are available online and offline as well as journals, reports, online articles from a credible website, and accessing information from the official European Union Website. The writer thinks that this method of data collection is more advantageous because it saves time and expenses.

1.7.4. Data Analysis

The process-tracing method will be used to analyze data. This method is used observe the causes that influences change in a certain situation (INTRAC, 2017). In this case, all the data that the writer finds will be laid out in chronological order to help understand the process of how the EU member states eventually reached a consensus on how to handle the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. This method, while helpful for potential future readers to understand the cause and effect of a certain situation, also has a weakness that lies on the fact that the data that would be provided will be limited as there as it would be impossible to investigate in-depth information of the variable that is being covered.

Process-tracing is one of the most widely used method to analyze data but it is rarely known that there are a few types of process-tracing methods that could be used in a research: theory testing process-tracing, theory building process-tracing and last but not least, explaining outcome process-tracing. These methods, though different in a way, shares a similarity in that the outcome is usually already known. When using theory testing process-tracing, the research uses a theory to prove the outcome of a certain cause. Meanwhile the theory building process-tracing method tries to find a theory that could explain what causes the outcome, although it is already known that the cause and the outcome are linked. Lastly, the explaining outcome process-tracing method is used when the outcome is already known but the research aims to find the cause of outcome.

To conduct an in-depth analysis of the case, the writer will use the five steps of process-tracing method that developed by Beach and Pedersen (2013) which are:

- a. **Developing Hypothesized Causal Mechanism:** In this step, the writer identifies changes that causes an outcome.
- b. **Operationalizing the Causal Mechanisms:** Lays out evidence that change has happened which could be done using account evidence (interviews, discussions, observations), trace evidence (official meetings), pattern evidence (statistics) and/or sequence evidence (past or future events).
- c. **Collecting Evidence:** Once it is determined that there has been a change, a documentation of the process that lead to the change is needed.
- d. **Assessing the Inferential Weight of Evidence:** Create hypotheses for how a change came about.
- e. **The Conclusions of A Process-Tracing Exercise:** Assess the evidence for each hypotheses.

1.7.5. Research Outline

This research consists of four chapters. The first chapter, the introduction, explains how this research will be conducted: starting from the background of the research, problem formulation, aim and benefits of the research, theoretical framework, methodology, and lastly, the overall outline of this research.

The second chapter will discuss the internal polarization in the European Union, how and why polarization could happen as well as how the internal polarization in the European Union affects the way the EU handles the Ukraine-Russia conflict. Furthermore, this chapter will map out the differences between EU member states by dividing them into three clusters: those who are in favor of the sanctions and therefore are against Russia, those who are not in favor of the sanctions because they have

interests in Russia and those who do not have a fixed position on the matter due to other issues.

With information from the previous chapter, in the third chapter, the writer will analyze the situation by examining how the differences in points of view of the EU member states contribute to the internal polarization in the EU. Other than reconnecting each country's decision with their actions, the writer will also analyze each country's decision using liberal intergovernmentalism.

The fourth chapter will provide results and conclusions based on the research. Moreover, this chapter will contain an evaluation of the research by presenting the strength and weaknesses of the research as well as recommendations and suggestions for future researches on this particular subject, which the writer hopes will be useful for future uses.