

Understanding the EU's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022

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Introduction

“The hour of Europe has come” starts many studies and news coverage whenever there is a particularly significant event on the continent where the European Union (EU) is expected to act as a unitary and major power in international relations. However, the quote of Jacques Poos has not come true in 1991 during the Yugoslav War and neither did it in 2014 after the Russian annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and the ensuing war in the Donbas. Despite these failures in unity and the construction of a comprehensive and enduring foreign policy, the expectations arise during such crises, albeit with somewhat of a lull as time goes on. And it was no different on the morning of the 24th of February 2022 when the world woke up to the news of a war breaking out on the European continent for the first time in 30 years. This war, passing its first anniversary, has become the costliest and most impactful conflict in Europe since the Second World War. However, apart from its scale, there is another stark contrast to be drawn between the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea in 2014. This difference is in the reactions of the EU during the two events.

After so many failures in foreign and defence policy, the Hour of Europe seems to have actually come and the European Union has succeeded in standing up to Russia as the major power in international relations that it actually is. However, despite the expectations of the public, most analysts in academia, in the media and in general, in public discourse did not predict this reaction. Referring to the events of 2014, they assumed that since the biggest perceived indicators of the EU’s response such as the block’s energy dependence on Russian exports or the prioritising of self-interests from the member states stayed the same, the nature of the collective response would be the same too as the EU has not taken any meaningful action to reduce the dependency. This was the conclusion of many studies and analyses in public discourse¹². This would be a fair assessment if these indicators were indeed the ones that influence the outcome. However, the outcome was quite the opposite, which begs the question, are energy dependence, national interests or trade the factors that determine the EU’s response to a hostile action from Russia?

¹ Paillard, C.-A. (2010). Russia and Europe’s mutual energy dependence. *Journal of International Affairs*.

² Sabbaghian, A., & Rasooli, R. (2021). Stability Analysis of Russia-EU Energy Relations after the Ukraine Crisis from Perspective of the Interdependence Theory. *Journal of Central Eurasia Studies*.

In this research, we will be examining new factors that we argue are more important in influencing the EU's reaction to Russian hostilities than it was thought before. This factor, or one of the most important at least, is the difference in the levels of integration in 2014 and 2022 and the spillovers that drive the integration process. In this period of time, a significant integration process has gone underway which caused different outcomes as the EU institutions, some of the governments and indeed a common European society decided to stand up for the core principles. Furthermore, the spillovers, outlined by the neofunctionalist framework, can potentially influence the policy directly. The impact of the integration process, and the spillovers in particular has not been properly addressed by the current literature on the Ukraine conflict and the EU's response to it. In this research, we aim to fill this gap in the theory and gain a better understanding of the underlying dynamics.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine on the 24th of February 2022 was followed by a number of historic actions by the EU in which it managed to position itself as an important power in international relations and impossible to circumvent in regional politics. These events ended a period of general peace in Europe and brought back an atmosphere of conflict that has not been seen since the breakup of Yugoslavia, or in some respects, since the Second World War. This event is unique in many regards, one of the most apparent of which, is the way in which the European Union has reacted to it. There have been a number of "Hours of Europe" as Jacques Poos phrased it in 1991, however, the Union has failed to live up to the expectations and become a leader in foreign policy. Or at least, this is how most analysts concluded, particularly after the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the following war in the Donbas. The 2022 invasion, however, was remarkably different in this regard. The EU succeeded to act quickly and in a unified and widely impactful manner, already enacting 10 packages of sanctions against Russia and individuals involved in the war. Moreover, the block has been aiding Ukraine with arms deliveries both on the member states' account and with a common ammunition purchasing mechanism and in general, positioned itself as a largely cohesive unit standing against Russian aggression. Yet, at the breakout of the war, very few expected such a comprehensive and unified reaction, largely referring to the lacklustre sanctioning in 2014 and onwards. In this research, we will be examining how the integration of the EU since 2014 has led to its ability to respond in such an effective manner to the invasion in 2022. We argue that one of the biggest factors that led to the EU's reaction is the increased level of integration

in the form of two features; European society and EU institutions, which are products of an 8-year-old process in particular. This integration, often examined only at the level of the institutions, comes with the development of a more unified “European society” that is able to pressure both governments around the continent and the EU institutions to pursue specific policies. For example, one of the most important achievements in this regard was the German government folding under both domestic and international pressure to change its foreign policy principles and supply lethal aid to Ukraine.

Throughout this research, we find substantial evidence that the spillovers are indeed impactful when it comes to both the EU integration that has happened between 2014 and 2022 and they also have direct effects on the policy itself. We find that one of the spillovers in particular, concerning itself with NGOs, pressure groups and the wider civil society has a larger impact than in has been expected before. These findings are important both for academia, as they fill a gap in the theory and suggest further research, and also for policymakers as they add to the explanation of why the EU reacted starkly differently in 2022 and in a more comprehensive manner.

Literature review

Academic research on the grand topic of the Ukraine conflict has understandably grown significantly since 2014. However, as it is laid out in this section, it has negated some actors and processes and thus, doesn't paint a clear picture of the dynamics, which is one of the reasons why predictions about the EU's response to the invasion were so often incorrect.

In the 8 years that elapsed since the annexation of Crimea and the following war in the Donbas, academic literature on the topic has grown significantly. There are many areas of focus that are prominent such as general international relations, security, economy, energy and sociology. However, there is a significant disparity when looking at the literature focusing on the war. When trying to explain the causes of the war, it is rather Russia-centric, looking mostly at history and sociology³. When switching away from this understanding, the most commonly cited explanation is that of John Mearsheimer, who is one of the leading academics of the neorealist tradition and lays a great share of responsibility for the conflict at NATO's

³ D'anieri, P. (2018). *Politics and society in Ukraine*. Routledge.

feet⁴. On the other hand, the bulk of the literature is focused on the two participants of the conflict, Ukraine and Russia.

However, particularly since the start of the invasion in 2022, the EU cannot be omitted from any analysis of the now nearly a decade-old conflict. When looking at the current situation, one of the biggest mostly unanswered questions regarding the EU is, why it reacted to the invasion in such a remarkably different manner as described above. Here, the literature is even more scarce, particularly regarding an overarching theoretical framework. While the nature of the EU's integration at the point of the event is crucial to its response, very few have examined this aspect in 2014 and since. There are indeed a few, mostly standalone works, regarding the effects of integration on the conflict and vice versa, but there is a lack of overarching theory being used. Most of the studies, while often not explicitly outlining, conceptualise the integration-conflict interplay in the historical institutionalist framework, looking at 2014 and 2022 as critical junctures such as Genschel⁵ who looks at the effect of wars on integration. Another study that represents this trend is Anghel and Johns⁶ who argue that European integration evolved through crises which in essence builds on the often-cited work of Jones et al.⁷ They understand these events as windows of opportunity, where the actors (states) can choose to take an action that will further integration or block it.

While these junctures are objectively important for integration as significant points that show involvement or the lack thereof, and thus can be used to measure the level of integration, the historical institutionalist conceptualisation does not recognise two crucial elements. First of all, as Riddervold et al outline, as the framework can be traced back to the rational choice tradition, it understands institutions in their most narrow definition as the "rules of the game" and treats actors as largely independent in their decisions from each other and the institution itself. This negates the arguably existent element of the "self-interested" institution that may be able to pursue its own goals and socialise actors into a different community, with different

⁴ Mersheimer, J. M. (2014). Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault The Liberal Delusions That Provoked Putin.

⁵ Genschel, P. (2022). Bellicist integration? The war in Ukraine, the European Union and core state powers. *Journal of European Public Policy*.

⁶ Anghel, V., & Jones, E. (2023). Is Europe really forged through crisis? Pandemic EU and the Russia – Ukraine war. *Journal of European Public Policy*.

⁷ Jones, E., Kelemen, R. D., & Meunier, S. (2016). Failing Forward? The Euro Crisis and the Incomplete Nature of European Integration. *Comparative Political Studies*.

principles. The other factor that the theory fails to account for is the time elapsed between the examined junctures as it treats them as isolated events.

However, integration cannot be looked at as a product of a few key decisions by constant actors. It has to be understood as a product of multiple interconnected dynamics that create integration through a long period of time, therefore a process. This is why we will examine why the EU responded to the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 using the neofunctionalism conceptualisation of integration. Neofunctionalism, in contrast, as laid out by Niemann⁸, understands integration as a product of a process first and foremost. This is crucial as, while critical junctures are arguably important milestones of integration, they are not the only influencing factors. They are defined as “brief phases of institutional flux...during which more dramatic change is possible”⁹. This leads to the question, where is the cut-off point between a non-significant event and a critical juncture? Thus, making historical institutionalism rather arbitrary when establishing the junctures. Furthermore, neofunctionalism takes the self-interests of the institutions and their ability to socialise the actors into a new community into account. These processes are observable in the case of the EU institutions and should not be negated if we are to understand integration.

And finally, another crucial part of the integration, that the current literature on the topic fails to take into account, is the development of the aforementioned “European society” which puts the interests of the EU community ahead of the national interests. This is an integral difference between the two cases, as in 2014, lacking the current level of integration, the governments of the member states simply pursued national interests and neglected the principles that the Union was centred around.

Background of the conflict and previously suggested factors

There have been many explanations provided throughout the years why the EU failed to adequately support Ukraine in 2014 ranging from the attempts to preserve trade relations to the negative perception of Ukraine in the West. Furthermore, another aspect that makes understanding the Ukraine conflict significantly more difficult for any reader is the astute

⁸ Niemann, A. (2006). *Explaining Decisions in the European Union*. Cambridge University Press.

⁹ Capoccia, G., & Kelemen, R. (2007). The Study of Critical Junctures: Theory, Narrative, and Counterfactuals in Historical Institutionalism. *World Politics*. pp.341.

complicatedness of the situation. The events of 2014 are only a culmination of a number of diverse factors, mostly stemming from history since the fall of the Soviet Union and some are even more structural dating back to Russian imperial times. These factors not only influenced what happened during the Revolution of Dignity or why Russia decided to annex the Crimean Peninsula, but they also gave important context to why the EU responded to the crisis the way it did. In this section, we will provide some background information to help understand the conflict itself. Furthermore, we will explain a few factors or indicators that were commonly argued, rightly or wrongly, to have been determining the EU's response in and after 2014. These factors come from a number of sources such as academic analyses of the conflict, contemporary explanations and public discourse.

The elements we analyse thus are:

- Energy relations
- Perception of Western institutions
- Governments in the EU
- Government in Ukraine
- Nature and perception of the conflict

Energy relations

Energy relations between many of the EU member states, including some of the most important ones such as Germany, and Russia have been at the centre of discussion when it comes to the EU's ability to counter the Kremlin's aggressions. Domestic actions designed to root out dissent such as the imprisonment of Alexey Navalny¹⁰, an opposition politician who garnered international renown for shooting a documentary about "Putin's Palace", a luxury estate on the Black Sea coast¹¹. And actions that are purposed to enhance Russia's position on the regional or world stage. These are the efforts, most visible to the public such as the alleged meddling in the 2016 US elections¹² or, most importantly for this research, the conflicts with Ukraine since 2014.

¹⁰ Alexei Navalny sentenced to 9 more years in prison after fraud conviction. (2022, March 22). The Guardian

¹¹ Navalny team releases investigation into 'Putin's Palace'. (2021, January 19). Deutsche Welle.

¹² Abrams, A. (2019, April 18). Here's What We Know So Far About Russia's 2016 Meddling. TIME.

These actions, particularly the latter ones prompted outrage among the European public, however, up until 2022, the EU institutions and governments failed to follow suit. The inability to take meaningful action was often said to boil down to a very clear and simple feature of EU-Russia relations, the heavy dependence of many of the member states on Russian energy exports, gas in particular. As early as 2007, Baran pointed out that *“the EU relies on Russia for more than 30 percent of its oil imports and 50 percent of its natural gas imports”*¹³. He also reminded, that as one goes to the East this reliance grows even higher to the extent that *“seven eastern European countries receive at least 90 percent of their crude oil imports from Russia, and six EU nations are entirely dependent on Russia for their natural gas imports”*¹⁴. This landscape has not changed significantly in the coming 13 years, despite the many signs that the Russian leadership doesn’t shy away from weaponizing its trade relations. This became clear during the number of gas disputes between Ukraine and Russia when the Kremlin decided the completely shut off pipelines towards Ukraine due to its outstanding debt. By extension, the dispute impacted the EU as well since Ukraine was a crucial transit country¹⁵. In 2020, according to Eurostat, the EU as a whole relied on Russia in energy import for 24,4% of its consumption, with Lithuania leading the line with 96,1% of its energy mix sourcing from the East. While this number, at first glance, may not seem particularly large, when looking at natural gas, the picture is quite different. In 2020, 41,1% of the EU’s natural gas consumption was provided for by Russian imports and the general consumption of the block has skyrocketed in the past decade.

¹³ Baran, Z. (2007). EU Energy Security: Time to End Russian Leverage. Washington Quarterly.

¹⁴ Baran, Z. (2007). EU Energy Security: Time to End Russian Leverage. Washington Quarterly.

¹⁵ EU Feels Impact Of Russia-Ukraine Gas Dispute. (2009, January 3). Radio Free Europe.

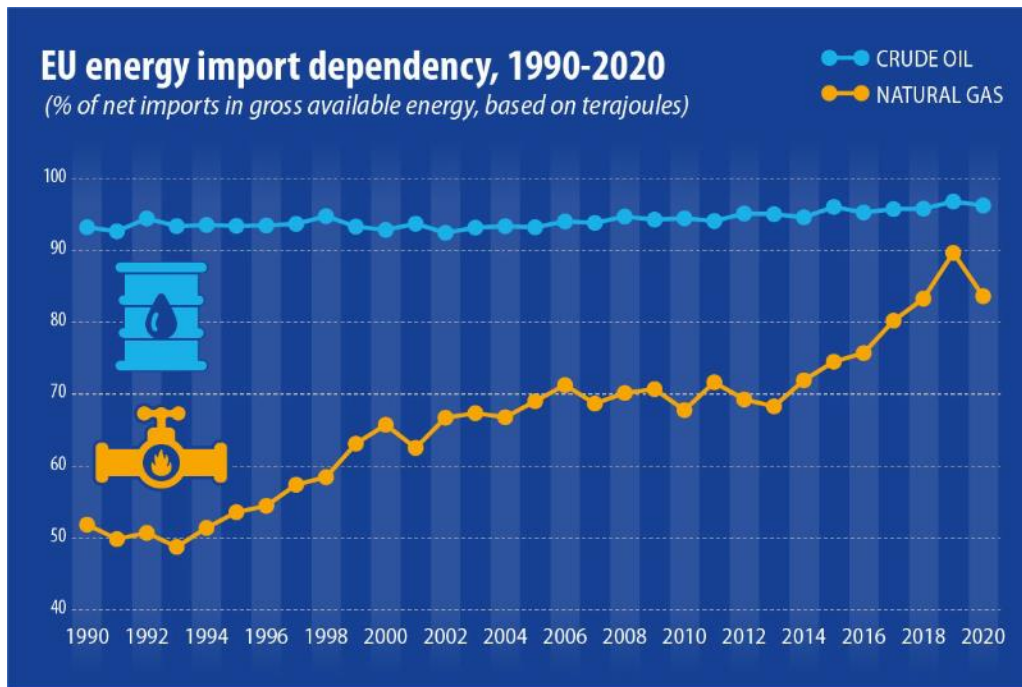


Figure 1

Source: Eurostat (nrg_ind_id)

Looking at these figures, it would be a logical conclusion to draw, that the EU is substantially limited in its capacity to stand up to Russia in political and international matters, fearing retaliation and a collapse of the European consumer market. Indeed, this conclusion has been made on countless occasions, both when analysing the block’s lacklustre reaction to the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the following war in the Donbas, and when forecasting what it would be to the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, during the first weeks of the war. Stulberg¹⁶, among many others, has pointed to the very complicated energy relationship between the EU and Russia and how it impacts the former’s ability to take political action. As it is highlighted in the wake of 2014, the EU has acted resembling much more of a mediator, a neutral ground, than an active participant, despite Russia breaching international law, and the most basic principles the EU was founded upon. While Brussels and some of the leading members, notably France, whose position in the conflict, as it will be elaborated on later in this section, have pushed Russia to create platforms for negotiations such as the Minsk Agreements, they were largely unsuccessful and have only managed to ensure energy trade but did little to solve the conflict.

¹⁶ Stulberg, A., N. (2015). Out of Gas?: Russia, Ukraine, Europe, and the Changing Geopolitics of Natural Gas. *Problems of Post-Communism*. Volume 62, Issue 2

Based on this long and rather negative track record, when the Russian troops crossed the Ukrainian border from directions ranging from Crimea all the way to Belarus, most analysts and in general, the public discourse expected the EU to react similarly as before citing energy dependency¹⁷. This fear was underlined by the Russian leadership, claiming “Europe will freeze”¹⁸. Between March and November of 2022, the EU’s gas import from Russia dropped from 37,1% to 12,9%¹⁹. Yet, the collapse never came. This can partly be credited to the mild autumn and winter of 2022-23²⁰, but the fact that the EU could cut down on gas consumption by 13-20%²¹ and that it managed to diversify its imports from Norway and the Middle East and by building LNG terminals²², the possibility of decoupling from Russian energy dependence has always been there. This leads us to wonder, if there has always been a way out for Europe, why has no one taken it before the war?

Governments in the EU

After dismissing the first and most common assumption of the energy dependence barring the EU from taking meaningful action against Russia, one would arrive at the conclusion that there was simply no political will. Thus, the difference in outcomes may be explained by a difference in political principles and will. To gain a deeper understanding of the political landscape of the EU, we will examine the changes, or the lack thereof, of governments in the major EU member states. While the analysis of all the governments of the EU in the 8-year period of the conflict is beyond the scope of this research, we will cover arguably the most important ones when it comes to driving the foreign and security policy of the EU towards Russia; France, Germany and Poland.

First of all, looking at arguably the most influential member of the EU when it comes to Russia relations, France. During the events of 2014, up until 2017, French policymaking was presided over by Francois Hollande leading the Socialist Party. Like many of his predecessors, he maintained strong diplomatic ties and backchannels with Russia. This attitude seemingly has not been changed even by the annexation of Crimea as, in 2016, he described Russia as “*not*

¹⁷ Cooper, C. (2022, October 22) Putin threatens Europe again as Brussels braces for winter. Politico.

¹⁸ Gazprom CEO Says Europe Could Freeze Even With Full Gas Storage. (2022, October 12). Bloomberg.

¹⁹ Yanatma, S. (2023, February 24) Europe’s ‘energy war’ in data: How have EU imports changed since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine?

²⁰ Kardaś, S. (2023, February 13). Conscious uncoupling: Europeans’ Russian gas challenge in 2023. ECFR.EU.

²¹ *ibid*

²² Third floating LNG terminal arrives in northern Germany. (2023, January 20). Deutsche Welle.

*an adversary, not a threat*²³. He went on to argue that *“Russia is a partner which, it is true, may sometimes, and we have seen that in Ukraine, uses force which we have condemned when it annexed Crimea”*²⁴, which is a rather precise description of the European politics’ attitude toward the conflict. His predecessor, Emmanuel Macron, while not coming from the same ideological territory, continued this policy of revising EU-Russia relations. He argued that the EU should repair ties with its neighbour to the East and strongly disagreed with new sanctions being introduced due to the annexation of Crimea²⁵. He often acted as the mediator between Ukraine and Russia, particularly in the continuation of the Minsk Agreements. In general, it can be concluded, that French foreign policy towards Russia has been moving on a very similar pattern in the period of 2014-2022 structured around historic cordiality and a rather neorealist approach.

Second, Germany, which is the most important economic power in the EU but has positioned itself as a driver of European foreign policy, has followed somewhat of a similar route as France. During the bulk of the period examined, Germany was led by the centre-right coalition with Angela Merkel at the helm. She was famous for devising Germany’s foreign policy, arguably solely centred around trade relations. Under her tenure, Nord Stream 1 came into operation and by the start of the war in 2022, Nord Stream 2 has nearly been finished. Her policy was to prioritise the import of cheap Russian gas over most of the foreign policy principles laid out by the EU Commission, to which she stuck until the very end²⁶. The Chancellor of Germany changed however in 2021 and Olaf Scholz, leading the Social democratic party took over, creating a coalition with the Greens and the neoliberal Free Democrats. He found himself in the midst of the invasion of Ukraine within the first few months of his tenure. In the beginning, Germany was very reserved in its support for Ukraine, following the long-established principle of not sending lethal aid and retaining from involvement in foreign conflicts, which angered the country’s allies and the European public in particular. One of the famous moments of this tiresome turn in policy was when Germany offered to send helmets to Ukraine which only added insult to injury resulting in Vitali Klitschko, the mayor of Kyiv, lashing out against the German government asking, “What will

²³ Hollande: Russia Is A Partner, Not A Threat. (2016, July 8). Radio Free Europe.

²⁴ Hollande: Russia Is A Partner, Not A Threat. (2016, July 8). Radio Free Europe.

²⁵ Keeping Russia out of Western fold a ‘strategic error’, Macron says in key speech. (2019, September 27). France24.

²⁶ Karnitschnig, M. (2021, July 26). Why Merkel chose Russia over US on Nord Stream 2. Politico.

they send next? Pillows?²⁷". In the end, however, Scholz caved to the pressure and broke the no-lethal aid principle, resulting in the sending of crucial equipment such as the Leopard tanks²⁸. The pattern in German policy toward Russia and the conflict in Ukraine, thus, was similar to France's as Berlin tried to manage its relations with Moscow until pressure from allies and the public rendered it impossible.

Finally, analysing Poland's attitude towards Russia is crucial to understanding the landscape within the EU and the East-West divide in particular. Poland has held a consistent policy towards Russia ever since 1989. It can be best described as staunch distrust and hawkishness. Mostly based on the history between the two countries, the impact of the Second World War, the memory of Katyń, the Communist era and the death of Lech Kaczyński fundamentally underlines the relations between the two. This can generally be said for the larger region, including the Baltic States. Poland has been a strong proponent of actions taken against Russia following the start of the Ukraine Crisis. While being led by a Eurosceptic government, its history and geographical location predestined Poland to be a staunch Atlanticist²⁹. Unsurprisingly, this has not changed in 2022 and Poland, along with its Baltic neighbours became the frontrunners of sanctioning Russia and sending arms to Ukraine often setting the ground for discussion such as in the case of sending aircraft³⁰. To conclude, in comparison to other major EU members, Poland's attitude towards Russia since 2014 can be best summed up with the line of James O'Brien often used in analysing the breaking down of Brexit: "I told you so".

To sum up, while the assessment of the governments of the major EU member states that influence Russia-policy is important for understanding the conflict, it does not explain the stark contrast between 2014 and 2022. The biggest change came in Germany with the end of the Merkel era. However, as it has been expanded upon above, the new government needed societal pressure to revise its policies as well. It shows that the governments themselves, at least individually, do not determine the EU's policy towards the Russia-Ukraine conflict as it is

²⁷ Huggler, J. (2022, January 26). 'What will they send next? Pillows?': Kyiv mayor Vitali Klitschko hits back at Berlin over helmets. The Telegraph.

²⁸ Camut, N. (2023, February 3). Germany to send 88 Leopard I tanks to Ukraine. Politico.

²⁹ Dempsey, J. (2015, April 13). Grounded: Poland-Russia Relations. Carnegie Europe.

³⁰ Poland promises fighter jets to Ukraine, 1st for a NATO member. (2023, March 16). PBS.

often suggested by analysts on the intergovernmental side of the aisle in EU foreign policy academia.

Government of Ukraine

There is one more government that should be examined to understand the EU's willingness to take action against Russia, which is the government in Kyiv. Since its independence in 1991, Ukraine's presidents have been elected on either of two platforms: moving towards the EU or Russia. At the time of the annexation of Crimea, the president of Ukraine was Viktor Yanukovich, who was widely regarded as a Russia-friendly and deeply corrupt politician. One of the most important developments of his tenure was the signing of the Kharkiv Agreement, which included the leasing of docks in Sevastopol for Russia's Black Sea Fleet. It also allowed for Russian personnel to be stationed in the peninsula which many regard as setting the ground for the annexation 4 years later. His presidency ended with the Revolution of Dignity (known as the Euromaidan) after which he fled the country and the depth of his corruption was presented to the wider public through the opening of his luxury estate, the Mezhyhirya Residence, where many bizarre items were found such as golden toilets and a golden loaf of bread that Yanukovich received as a present. After the revolution, Petro Poroshenko took over, on an under the circumstances inevitably anti-Russia and Ukrainian nationalist platform. While the country initially had the sympathy and support of Western audiences it was soon overshadowed by the rampant corruption that persisted even after the fall of Yanukovich. Furthermore, the dissolution of minority rights in Ukraine fuelled many narratives that attempted to legitimise the Kremlin's actions. Indeed, after the Revolution of Dignity, the Ukrainian parliament attempted to repeal LL2012, a law allowing southern and eastern oblasts to adopt Russian as a second official language in administration, a move which contrasted EU principles and also served as a casus belli for Putin, to "protect Russian minorities". In 2019, however, Volodymyr Zelensky, a comedian and star of the domestically famous show, *Servant of the People* (Слуга народу) playing a teacher turned politician. His outsider perception and his success in clamping down on systemic corruption earned a better image for the country abroad. The most impactful change, however, came in the first week of the invasion of February 2022. As the Russian troops were closing in on Kyiv, and the battle of Hostomel Airport, a turning point in the first phase of the war, was raging on, the US offered Zelensky

evacuation from the capital to which he replied: “I need ammunition, not a ride”³¹. This line has since become famous and secured the support of the Western public. The evolution in its imagery and outside perception of Ukraine has arguably shown a lot of positive signs in the period of 2014-2022. This variable is important for explaining the EU’s different reaction in 2022, however, not because the member states’ governments were more receptive to Ukraine’s situation, but because the European public was substantially more impacted by the notion of a new war breaking out on the continent and forced their governments and the EU institutions to take meaningful action.

Nature of the conflict

The scare of a new ‘war’ breaking out on the European continent brings us to examine, how the conflict that started in 2014 is different from the events of 2022. After the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014, two breakaway regions, in the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts declared independence. The Donetsk People’s Republic (Донецкая Народная Республика) and the Luhansk People’s Republic (Луганская Народная Республика) respectively. Situated in the Easternmost region of the Donbas, neighbouring Russia and inhabited by a significant Russian minority population. This conflict, by all accounts, can be defined as a civil war. The definition of what a civil war is is heavily debated in academic circles. The most common authors to cite are, as summed up by Sambanis³², Small and Singer³³, Gleditsch et al.³⁴ and Fearon and Laitin³⁵. The commonly accepted criteria are:

- military action internal to the metropole of the state system member;
- with the active participation of the national government (civil wars require a group or multiple groups fighting against the state);
- effective resistance by both sides
- a total of at least 1,000 battle deaths during each year of the war – this is where most of the debate occurs as the cut-off point is rather arbitrary and begs the question of

³¹ Braithwaite, S. (2022, February 26). Zelensky refuses US offer to evacuate, saying ‘I need ammunition, not a ride’.

³² Sambanis, N. (2004). What Is Civil War? Conceptual and Empirical Complexities of an Operational Definition. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*.

³³ Small M. & Singer J. D. (1982). *Resort to arms : international and civil wars 1816-1980* ([2nd ed.]). Sage Publications.

³⁴ Gleditsch, N. P., Wallensteen, P., Eriksson, M., Sollenberg, M., & Strand, H. (2002). *Armed Conflict 1946-2001: A New Dataset*. *Journal of Peace Research*.

³⁵ Fearon, J. D., & Laitin, D. D. (2003). *Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War*. *The American Political Science Review*.

why a conflict with 999 battle deaths a year is not a civil war, or what happens if there is a fluctuation of intensity in the fighting. However, the academic debate on civil war literature is beyond the scope of this research.

After looking at these criteria, the conflict in Ukraine between 2014 and 2022 can arguably be classified as a civil war, with covert foreign support, as Russia retained plausible deniability after sending unmarked soldiers “little green men” or private military contractors (PMCs) to aid the war effort.

However, 2022 brought a change in the nature of the war as well. While Russia categorised the invasion as a “Special military operation” it was no longer confined to the internality of Ukraine and no longer included only domestic actors. It became a conventional interstate war. This is an important difference not only from an international law perspective, as Russia violated a plethora of conventions by crossing the Ukrainian border, but also, and perhaps more importantly from the perspective of the EU’s reaction, it is an important difference on the perception of Ukraine as a victim in the conflict. Prior to the invasion, Putin’s narrative of solely protecting Russian minorities³⁶ had some traction in the West and the struggle for independence in the East was perceived as somewhat legitimate, at least enough not to get involved. In 2022, however, as the whole of the country was invaded, the European public suddenly saw Ukraine as a clear victim of aggression by its neighbour striving to occupy a part, or the whole of another country. A country, whose borders it has recognised not long ago.

It must be addressed, however, that despite the many similarities between the two armed conflicts, there is a fundamental difference which is that before 2022, it was a civil war by all accounts and a frozen conflict. However, with the invasion by the Russian forces, it turned into a conventional war which changes the context in which the EU has to respond. The image of a conventional war is arguably more threatening to both the political elite and the wide public, thus it could be argued that it was an important component of the differences in outcomes. At the same time, as it is explained throughout this research, there are a number of factors that can potentially influence the EU’s response and they can’t and shouldn’t be isolated.

³⁶ Transcript: Putin says Russia will protect the rights of Russians abroad. The Washington Post.

Image of the Western institutions: the EU and NATO

Since 2014, the European Union has gone through a string of crises. Starting with the migration crisis in 2015, the unity of the block was put to the test. While there were some institutional developments towards integration such as the strengthening of Frontex, the EU's border protection agency, or the creation of the Dublin Accords to distribute refugees and coordinate burden sharing, it also gave rise to Eurosceptic parties all over the continent who ran on anti-migration platforms.

Next, on June 23, 2016, the UK public held a referendum and decided to leave the European Union in an unprecedented move. This decision was followed by 4 years and countless rounds of negotiations at the end of which, in 2020 the UK finally left. In this crisis, the EU institutions have shown remarkable unity and strength to preserve the integrity of the common market and protect the interests of the member states, most notably, the free movement of people between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, forcing the UK to concede moving its regulatory border to the Irish Sea. At the same time it must be addressed that, while the EU has undoubtedly come out a winner in this tussle, the example of one of its most important members leaving did not elevate the image of the block.

Finally, the Covid-19 pandemic also strained relations between the member states and towards the EU institutions. Again, the picture is mixed. There were significant agreements signed to help integration, most notably the NextGenerationEU³⁷. This stimulus package helped members to look more towards Brussels to provide for their post-pandemic recovery. On the other side of the fence, in order to slow the spread of the virus, the Schengen Area was suspended and border controls that have not been for decades were reintroduced.

For NATO, the most important development in the examined period of time was the withdrawal from Afghanistan. The rather disastrous manner in which the US has conducted the operation has raised many questions in the West about the integrity of the alliance and the reliability of the US. This situation gave rise to Macron's "NATO is braindead"³⁸ comment and the issue of the EU's strategic autonomy was back on the table.

³⁷ Recovery plan for Europe. European Commission.

³⁸ Emmanuel Macron warns Europe: NATO is becoming brain-dead. (2019, November 7). The Economist.

Concluding these two points, the period between 2014 and 2022 shows a very mixed bag with regard to the EU's and NATO's image. While there indeed were signs of integration, the rise of Euroscepticism in France, Germany, Italy or Hungary cannot be omitted from consideration.

Theoretical Framework

In this research, we will be examining the EU's response to the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and compare it with its actions taken after the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the following war in the Donbas. We argue that examining the level of integration within the EU can add to our understanding of why there have been vastly different reactions in 2014 and 2022. EU integration in itself can potentially lead to differences in foreign policy because there is more agreement within the institutions. Since EU foreign policy remains one of the most intergovernmental realms of policy within the Union, where member states retain a high level of autonomy as to what they wish to do, unity among the members is crucial to creating impactful foreign policy. As Tonra points out in the context of Dutch, Danish and Irish foreign policy, "the member states have progressively deepened their own political commitment to the process [of integration]"³⁹. This integration suggests that over time the member states will be more likely to commit to deeper cooperation as integration happens in a more passive manner. However, in the case of Ukraine, in a span of 8 years there has been significant change in foreign policy, which may not be explained by this passive integration over time. In order to gain a better understanding of this change in outcomes, we will reach for neofunctionalism to explain the integration that has happened since 2014.

As has been shown in the literature review section, the significant majority of academic work examining European integration in the context of the Ukraine conflict is based on the historical institutionalist framework and critical juncture theory. In contrast, we will be explaining the differences in outcome from the perspective of neofunctionalism. There are a number of fundamental divergences between the two strands of theory:

³⁹ Tonra, B. (2001). *The Europeanisation of National Foreign Policy: Dutch, Danish and Irish Foreign Policy in the European Union*. Routledge. pp.320.

Historical institutionalism

- As the theory can be traced back to realist and rational choice traditions, it assumes that states are unified actors and that they are the only relevant actors and these actors have access to complete and accurate information, based on which they make decisions solely considering their own interests devoid of emotions and normative pressures.
- As it understands integration as a product of key decisions at critical junctures, it looks at these specific freezeframes

Neofunctionalism

- Neofunctionalist theory, being closer traditionally to constructivism, takes into account the existence of incomplete information available to decision-makers as opposed to historical institutionalism, which stemming from its rational choice roots, assumes fully informed and rational decisionmakers
- As Hooghe and Marks point out, it is deeply influenced by two theories: pluralism and functionalism
 - From pluralism neofunctionalism borrows “the idea that government could be disaggregated into its component group actors”⁴⁰
 - Niemann asserts that “neofunctionalism shares with functionalism a focus on technocratic decision-making, incremental change and learning processes”⁴¹
- It doesn’t negate the existence of other actors apart from states, such as institutions, pressure groups and other societal actors
- As the theory gives greater importance to institutions, it also looks at their ability to pursue their own interests, grow their power and socialise the actors into new interests and principles that are more important from the aspect of integration instead of the self-interest of the actors
- Explains integration through a variety of (often interconnected) dynamics called ‘spillovers’

⁴⁰ Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. (2019). Grand theories of European integration in the twenty-first century. *Journal of European Public Policy*, pp.1114.

⁴¹ Niemann, A. (2006). *Explaining Decisions in the European Union*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.12.

We argue that neofunctionalism is a better fit for explaining the differences in outcomes as EU integration that happened over a longer period of time between 2014 and 2022 instead of a few arbitrary points of time we would examine based on looking at critical junctures. Furthermore, examining the behaviour of non-state actors and the civil society can unveil dynamics that have been overlooked by previous analyses. To this end, studying the spillovers in the two cases is integral to this approach. While, as argued by neofunctionalism, the below explained spillovers explain how integration deepens over time, they can also directly affect the foreign policy itself as it will be demonstrated in the analysis of the cases.

The concept of spillover

When looking at neofunctionalism as a theoretical framework to understand EU integration, the most important dynamic to explain how the member states, their economy and political and civil society draw closer to one another, is the concept of spillover. The notion of spillover is a common occurrence in international relations, international administration (in the form of 'mission creep') or in state building. It is also crucial to analyse EU integration and explain how and why sectors, policies and institutions draw closer to one another. Spillovers have been the core mechanism of neofunctionalism since Haas's and Lindberg's studies who have identified three main types, later extended by Niemann:

- Functional spillover
- Political spillover
- Cultivated spillover
- Later, Niemann added a fourth category that was previously partly integrated into the political divergent: social spillover
- Countervailing forces

Functional spillover

Functional spillover describes the most common and longest-standing integration mechanism within the EU and its predecessors. Haas has considered it in a rather narrow understanding, due to the era and the nature of the European institutions at the time. As in the 60s and 70s, when Haas wrote his most fundamental works on neofunctionalism, the focus of the EEC was much more on economic aspects, Haas also defined functional spillover as sector integration.

This means that as a specific economic sector becomes integrated between members, there will be an incentive to integrate further sectors that are closely connected such as levels of a supply chain. While this understanding is important to explain a small chunk of economic connection, it is by no means exhaustive. Lindberg defined functional spillover on a more meta level. He “refers to a situation in which the original goal can be assured only by taking further actions, which in turn create a further condition and need for more action, and so forth”⁴². Niemann argues that there are two different pressures: ‘*spillover pressure*’ (meaning the spillover into other fields) and ‘*pressure from within*’ (spillover to integrate further within a field). Furthermore, he points out that there is another perspective of analysis, the breadth and depth of integration. Here ‘*breadth*’ refers to the number of issues that are tackled on the European level and ‘*depth*’ means the extent of supranational cooperation. The crucial difference between the spillover pressure-spillover from within and the breadth-depth aspects is that the former addresses the causes of integration while the latter explains the outcome.

When looking at how functional spillover may influence EU foreign policy decisions, intuitively, one would consider foreign relations that are tied to trade, however, its scope goes beyond that⁴³. The most intriguing and recent example of this would be the long negotiations around the UK’s withdrawal from the EU. As of January 1st, 2021, the UK was considered a third country in the eyes of EU member states. However, it has a unique trait compared to most other third countries, namely that it shares a land border with the EU. The difficulty this caused was made painstakingly clear during and after Brexit as the UK wished to no longer abide by the EU’s trading standards and the oversight of the institutions (practically cutting most previous functional spillover). However, introducing a “hard” border between the Republic and Ireland and Northern Ireland would have meant the end of the Good Friday Agreement, hailed for ending the Troubles, the conflict over the unification of Ireland spanning over decades. The long rounds of negotiation and resulting complicated agreements to settle the issues exemplify well how functional spillover can influence EU foreign policy, particularly when such ties are cut.

Political spillover

When defining political spillover, how to differentiate between its subcategories and what constitutes it, there is significant debate among academics. In general, political spillover denotes the interactions and evolving connections among political and civil society actors.

⁴² Lindberg, L. N. (1963). *The Political Dynamics of European Economic Integration*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

⁴³ Niemann, A. (2006). *Explaining Decisions in the European Union*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.5.

Riddervold et al distinguish between two strands of political spillover: non-governmental spillover and governmental spillover.

They refer to Haas to argue that non-governmental spillover refers to “altered perceptions of political parties, business and professional associations, trade unions or other interest groups”⁴⁴. Later, Niemann widened this group and pointed out that at the time of Haas writing this definition these were the most prominent groups, currently other societal organisations and NGOs equally importantly cannot be excluded from consideration. The next step after is that “integration in a particular sector leads the relevant interest groups to move part of their activity to a higher level of aggregation and therefore gradually shift their focus and expectations to European institution”⁴⁵. This shift of expectations will eventually result in their support for further integration, creating an integratory cycle resembling the one laid out by Lindberg in the case of functional spillover.

What Riddervold et al classify as governmental spillover is built on Lindberg’s work who “attributed greater significance to the role of governmental elites and socialization processes ... drew attention to the proliferation of EU working groups and subcommittees which, by bringing thousands of national officials into frequent contact with each other and Commission officials, had given rise to a complex system of bureaucratic interpenetration”⁴⁶. This atmosphere of community results in a process of socialisation that Lindberg claims increases the likelihood of community decision-making where actors (representatives of the states and institutions) will negotiate less like in an intergovernmental setting, prepared to walk away from the table, and more as representatives within one political entity. However, here there is a divergence in how political spillover can be divided. Unlike Lindberg and Riddervold et al, Niemann conceptualises the socialisation process outside of the political spillover and gives it a significantly more important role in integration.

It is not difficult to argue why political spillover can have substantive effects on the foreign policy of the EU. If we take a look at non-governmental elites and actors moving to the EU level, interest representation, lobbying and advocacy become more and more important in Brussels. This is particularly well exemplified by the proliferation of environmental advocacy from NGOs and other actors on the EU level, especially following the Green New Deal and the Commission’s goals of climate preservation and carbon neutrality. we will address the case of

⁴⁴ Riddervold, M., & Trondal, J., & Newsome, A. (2021). *The Palgrave Handbook of EU Crises*. pp.119.

⁴⁵ *ibid* pp.119.

⁴⁶ Riddervold, M., & Trondal, J., & Newsome, A. (2021). *The Palgrave Handbook of EU Crises*. pp.119.

the governmental elites and the socialisation process at the end of the next section as it elaborates on the dynamics more extensively.

Social spillover

The concept of social spillover was introduced by Arne Niemann. He builds on “engrenage”, a concept already formed in neofunctionalism, most influentially defined by Lindberg⁴⁷, but there is a conceptual confusion around engrenage. First of all, as Niemann points out, “there were only a few explicit studies on engrenage, dating back to the early and mid-1970s”⁴⁸, secondly, he also mentions, that different academics define the word differently and sometimes refer to a different kind of spillover, most commonly a form of functional spillover. When explaining the concept of social spillover, Niemann reaches for the concept of communicative action by Habermans. Here, “participants are not primarily oriented to achieving their own individual success; they pursue their individual objectives under the condition that they can coordinate or harmonise their plans of action on the basis of shared definitions of the situation”⁴⁹. This resembles the socialisation concept in political spillover where the elites change the mode of negotiation and potentially their priorities and principles. According to Habermans, there are three validity claims that can be used to examine communicative behaviour, in practice, speeches and comments from the political leadership:

- a statement is true (it conforms to the facts)
- second, that a speech act is right with respect to the existing normative context
- the manifest intention of the speaker is truthful (they mean what they say)

Building on this, the concept of social spillover suggests that through the congruence of the elites’ communicative norms and their social interactions, links are formed that enhance integration.

When looking at the potential influence of social spillover on the EU’s foreign policy, there is significant potential, as the stance of the Union, and the addresses that the national leaders and the heads of the institutions make may serve as important pointers to what the policy will

⁴⁷ Lindberg (1963: ch. 4). ‘Engrenage’ has been defined on pp. 18–19, note 35 of this chapter in Niemann, A. (2006). *Explaining Decisions in the European Union*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁴⁸ Niemann, A. (2006). *Explaining Decisions in the European Union*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.54.

⁴⁹ Niemann, A. (2006). *Explaining Decisions in the European Union*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.55.

look like in a specific issue. However, it must be kept in mind, that as the EU's foreign policy is conceived in a rather intergovernmental manner, where the member states retain substantial autonomy, the official posture can often be misleading when it comes to the real actions they are willing to take.

Cultivated spillover

The last, but equally important type of spillover is cultivated spillover. In cultivated spillover, the Institutions such as the Commission or on the lower levels, the working groups for example will exploit the interactions and socialisation that happen between the political elites and the non-governmental agents to achieve their goals. As has been mentioned before, in the neofunctionalist understanding of international institutions, they "come to life" in the sense that their personnel and leadership will adopt the norms, principles and priorities of the community instead of the member states that they are from or have been delegated by. As integration moves forward and the institutions become more powerful and autonomous, moving away from an intergovernmental setting towards a supranational one, the institutions (that can be now understood as sovereign entities, to varying extents in different areas) will attempt to gain more power and pursue their own goals that may diverge from the goals of each member state. In this type of spillover, the institutions will cultivate the relationships and linkages between the actors to garner support for their interests. As it is laid out by Niemann, they point out interdependencies between areas or actors by facilitating logrolling or package deals for example. This type of spillover strongly combines the aforementioned ones, functional and political spillover in particular.

Looking at how cultivated spillover happens in the case of EU policy, the best way is to examine what mechanisms were created to address specific problems and how the EU leadership can use crises to extend the competencies of the existing institutions. At times of such crises, first of all, there are often windows of opportunities for the leadership to create new institutions to address the specific problem. This allows for the creation of an institution that has more competencies than if it was created during a time where there is no crisis. This is due to that at the time of crises, the member states may be more willing to approve the creation of such an institution because they want a quick solution and their attention and resources are divided and strained as well. Secondly, even if such an institutions is not created, already existing ones

can be extended to have new powers to address the crisis which the members are more likely to accept for the same reasons. This has been clearly visible at times of the recent crises. The two most important ones are the migration crisis since 2015 and how Frontex and the general border protection were enhanced and the other being the aid to Ukraine following the 2022 Russian invasion.

Countervailing forces

While the previous dynamics are parts of the process of integration, the forces that drive disintegration have to be assessed as well. The inclusion of countervailing forces is important in this case because domestic pressures and regional diversities as explained below, are influential in creating foreign policy. When examining foreign policy and the route that led to its creation, there are domestic realities that should not be ignored. Historical connections between countries, general sovereignty-consciousness or institutional barriers to send lethal aid can all obstruct integration and effective cooperation. This is particularly true in the case of Ukraine and Russia. For instance, France and Germany have always had close ties to Moscow either for historical or economic reasons. Countries such as Hungary or Slovakia have also tended to be unfriendly towards Ukraine. These factors, while very diverse, can all add to the other side of the scale and slow or ultimately stop meaningful action in support of Ukraine, even if there are a number of countries that show their backing.

Niemann identifies four different types of disintegrative forces:

- sovereignty-consciousness
- domestic constraints and diversities
- diversity
- negative integrative climate

Sovereignty consciousness stems from the specific country's history, traditions and domestic politics. The more the public focuses on self-determination, autonomy or even nationalism, the stronger this type of disintegrational force is. A fitting example of it is the case of Brexit where a coalition of non-governmental political actors (LeaveEU, UKIP) and other lobby groups exploited the domestic atmosphere in the UK to drive the country to leave the EU.

Domestic constraints and diversities are partially alike to sovereignty consciousness in that they cover a range of domestic factors that bar integration. The main difference is that while the previous category largely refers to ideological and normative constraints to integration,

this type covers the institutional and bureaucratic limits on the government's power to facilitate integration.

Diversity refers to the divergence among the members of the block that is to integrate. Intuitively, the higher the number of members and the higher their diversity, the harder it is to integrate effectively. It can contain both of the previous countervailing forces as the members may have (particularly in the case of the EU) vastly different histories, traditions, norms and domestic institutions.

Negative integrative climate can be described as an aggregate of the aforementioned forces as they all are factors that contribute to a general atmosphere where the public is not supportive of integration and the governments find it difficult to gather support or push reforms through the institutions. There can be a variety of such atmospheres mentioned, but just to name a few, times when the common institutions are not efficient or are strained (the migration crisis for example), if the economy of the block is under stress or is not growing according to expectations or it can also be created by domestic politics, where the government or opposition parties can whip up their support with anti-integration rhetoric (as it was the case during the Brexit negotiation phase, or in Hungary).

Summary and Expectations

After assessing each type of spillover, it is clear that these dynamics can potentially impact the EU's foreign policy through driving integration. As mentioned before, they can also directly affect the policy towards Ukraine as well, albeit to varying effects. There are a number of preliminary assumptions one might have about which spillovers are influential. Through this research, it is expected to arrive at a conclusion where we can assess which specific spillovers had the most effect on the EU's differing response and be able to explain the huge divergence between 2014 and 2022. The expectations of the impact of the different spillovers are understood in the case of 2022 as in 2014, there is only a very limited level of integration to begin with.

Functional spillover is expected to have a limited effect. While prior to the breakout of the war last year, many attributed a great amount of significance to the energy dependence and the functional spillover stemming from it, it was soon proven to be inaccurate as the EU succeeded in cutting itself off from Russian gas in a matter of months.

It is expected that the type of spillover with one of the highest levels of impact is the *political spillover*. Both subcategories; non-governmental and governmental political spillover are likely to substantially influence the outcomes. In the case of non-governmental spillover, we expect that the growing interest from civil society towards EU-level issues and policymaking and the resulting proliferation of NGOs and other pressure groups in Brussels causes this spillover to heavily impact policymaking. When it comes to governmental spillover, it is expected to be influential due to the fact that EU foreign policy is created in a rather intergovernmental setting, thus, the political leadership of the member states and the nature of their interactions impact the creation of said policy to a substantial extent.

Social spillover, as developed by Niemann, is an extension of the governmental political spillover. Social spillover is significantly harder to examine as one would need access to negotiations and discussions at the EU level. However, there are many secondary sources and past studies on the effect of socialisation at EU institutions, which we will be referring to in this research. Social spillover is expected to have a positive albeit modest effect on integration and the EU's response to the Ukraine crisis. Particularly since, as it will be explained further on, this atmosphere has some significant drawbacks when swift and stellar decision-making is required.

Cultivated spillover is another type that is likely to influence the outcome to a certain extent. This is due to the EU institutions' strengthening through the different crises the block had to tackle. The proliferation and gain of powers among the EU institutions help integration as more and more competencies are delegated to the supranational level.

Countervailing forces can have puzzling effects. First of all, as there are a number of types, their impact on both the integration process and directly on foreign policy towards Ukraine and Russia. However, as it has been seen in 2014, diversity among the member states and their attitude towards Ukraine were the most obstructive to a cohesive policy. It could also be argued that domestic indifference towards Ukraine also did not push policymakers to change course, however, this is not a negative effect, rather a neutral one. Concluding, countervailing forces are expected to have a low impact on the EU's actions in the case of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The different types of spillovers, their brief definitions, the manner in which they potentially impact EU policy towards Ukraine and the extent they are expected to do so are summarised in the table below (Table 1).

Spillover type	Definition	How they may impact policy towards Ukraine	Expectations
Functional spillover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simply defined as sector integration Happens most often when economic sectors integrate which causes integration in related sectors and levels of production chain 	The EU's heavy dependence on Russian energy export and the infrastructural interconnectedness can obstruct meaningful action against the latter as Moscow may simply shut the pipelines.	While it was mentioned as one of the main factors in the EU's undecidedness, after the invasion the block decoupled within a few months. This suggests low real impact on policy.
Non-governmental political spillover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration in a particular sector leads the relevant interest groups to move part of their activity to a higher level of gradually shift their focus and expectations to European institution This includes lobby groups, NGOs, other pressure groups and the wider civil society 	The proliferation of such groups both in the Brussels Bubble and the wider EU can influence policymaking for instance through direct lobbying or organising protests in favour of Ukraine on a mass scale.	This type of spillover is expected to have a medium effect on policy as these groups represent the public opinion which affects both nation and EU level legislatures.
Governmental political spillover	National delegates and institutional staff meet and cooperate on a regular basis which results in a more agreeable negotiation climate where national delegates are more likely seek common ground.	As EU foreign policy is overwhelmingly constructed by the member states, common ground is crucial for agreements. Thus, the more integrated they are the more likely they are to agree.	As per the previous point, EU foreign policy is heavily reliant on agreement. Stemming from it, this type of spillover is expected to have a medium to high impact.

<p>Social spillover</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best described by the concept of socialisation • All participants within the EU institutions are expected to shift their priorities over time towards the common ones • This results in national interests potentially taking the backseat in negotiation 	<p>Socialisation can potentially ease disintegrative factors such as structural diversities and domestic constraints caused by the countervailing forces.</p>	<p>While this type of spillover may influence policymaking to some extent, it is very difficult to measure without close and large-scale access to the decision-makers. Thus, we attribute a low level of effect to it while acknowledging that it may be somewhat larger in reality.</p>
<p>Cultivated spillover</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This type of spillover is furthered by the EU institutions themselves • They exploit previous spillovers and take advantage of crises to create new institutions or extend the competencies of the current ones 	<p>Creating platforms such as the Collaborative Procurement of Ammunition Scheme helps more seamless aid flow to Ukraine therefore this type of spillover is more influential in the continuation of support than the initial reaction.</p>	<p>Creating channels which facilitate aid for Ukraine are important for the more effective support and policymaking. However, not particularly influential for making initial, on the spot decisions. So, we expect cultivated spillover to have a moderate but limited effect.</p>
<p>Countervailing forces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are disintegrative factors • Domestic or structural obstacles to integration or meaningful actions stemming from historical connection, hostilities or social realities 	<p>Domestic pressures such as anti-Ukraine and/or pro-Russia sentiment can block meaningful action by the EU. Furthermore, obstacles such as Germany's resistance to lethal aid or France's connection to Russia can also cause issues in drawing impactful foreign policy.</p>	<p>While these forces may seem significant in driving foreign policy, they have been largely unimpactful in 2014 as well as the larger society was mostly neutral towards the crisis. Historic connections and other related barriers may impact more but they can be overturned by decisionmakers or public opinion too. Thus, we expect countervailing forces to have low to medium impact in our case.</p>

Table 1 Summary of the spillovers

Methodology

The main aim of this research is to find out whether the differing levels of EU integration have had a significant impact on its reaction to the Ukraine conflict and its different phases. The two main phases that serve as the pillars of the research are the two most impactful milestones in the Ukraine conflict and the EU-Russia relations: the Annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. However, the research does encompass certain aspects of what has happened in the 8-year period in between, particularly as integration is understood as a process, thus not only singular events are examined but a longer span of time.

Case study

As there are two cases that are being examined and the underlying differences between the two are used to explain and add to our current understanding of the differences in outcomes, this research rests on a comparative case study structure. However, an important difference is that we do not only examine the two cases but also several events in the time interval between the two, between 2014 and 2022. This we aim to trace the process of integration from a number of different perspectives and aim to understand which dynamics (many of which are deeply interconnected) can be used to explain why the EU was able to act in a drastically different manner in response to the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine than in 2014 after the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula. The design and structure of this research is highly dependent on the specific case of the Ukraine conflict and the two different times when it is examined. However, we expect the study to have an extent of transferability as the spillovers which serve as the main pillars of the structure, exist in most cases of the EU foreign policy. The main difference when transferring this research to another topic, is that the spillovers are likely to be impactful to differing levels, thus the expectations have to be readjusted.

Data collection and analysis

Empirical data is collected from secondary sources as they are the ones that are widely available on such a variety of topics and from a wide range of authors and political actors. These include academic analyses of the events and the underlying mechanisms, news articles

explaining current and specific developments, official statements and published documents from governments and EU institutions and finally, but equally importantly, polling data from sources such as Pew Research and Eurobarometer. In some cases, such as in examining the governmental political spillover or in trying to find evidence of socialisation, we have to rely on previously conducted studies in the topic. This is due to the time and resource limitations of this research. This, however, opens doors for further research to dwell into this part of the topic and examine the aforementioned spillovers in a more comprehensive manner. Nonetheless, this is beyond the scope of this research.

Framework implementation

As the research leans heavily on the neofunctionalist theory and intends to add to it, the structure of the paper follows the concept of spillovers as well. As laid out in the previous section, the different types of spillover serve as the structure of the research within the two cases of 2014 and 2022. The comparison of the spillovers in the two cases allows us to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics which drive integration according to the neofunctionalist framework. On the other hand, we can also examine how some spillovers may have a direct effect on the EU's policy towards the Ukraine crisis as it is expanded on in the section on expectations.

Quality assessment

There are two main advantages of this research. First of all, it is aimed at uncovering a yet largely unresearched factor in EU foreign policy towards the Ukraine conflict. This is the impact of integration, more specifically, how civil society and in extension, non-governmental spillover influences foreign policy. This is an important introduction to the current studies as neofunctionalism is not particularly commonly used in this field of research. We argue that it should be more frequent because it is fit for examining civil society and a level of foreign policymaking that is usually overlooked. As it will be demonstrated throughout this research, this gap in the literature should be addressed due to the growing impact of civil action on foreign policy in the case of the EU. This does not mean that the current analysis of the event is wrong or misguided by relying on historical institutionalism and critical juncture theory. Instead, we argue that they explain different parts of the picture and one, increasingly big part of this picture, remains unexplored. It also suggests, that in the future, new research can be

conducted on how these two theories can be integrated and perhaps a grander and more comprehensive framework can be created.

Secondly, this research can serve as an insight for policymakers into how integration and popular opinion is growing in importance for creating foreign policy. This does not only concern lawmakers in Brussels, but in Kyiv too. Understanding why the EU has reacted starkly differently in 2022 than in 2014 can help the Ukrainian politicians to maintain the support that is currently coming from the West and has been proven to be vital for the war effort.

On the other hand, it is important to address the shortcoming of the study as well. First of all, partly due to the nature of the theoretical framework and the complicatedness of the Ukraine crisis, this research is not able to provide with a full explanation of all the dynamics that have had an influence in the outcomes. As neofunctionalism is a theory of integration not specifically designed to explain foreign policy, direct causality may not always be drawn between an interesting trend and an outcome. Furthermore, as mentioned before, due to the time and resource limitations of the study, we are not able to fully measure certain spillovers, ones that require the input of a large number of policymakers on the EU level, this we have to rely on studies that have been conducted in this realm, however, their findings may not be up to date.

In conclusion, while the design of the research has some shortcomings due to the resources and the theoretical framework, it can have a significant impact on both theory by suggesting a new approach and on the understanding of the Ukraine conflict and the EU's response to it as it opens up a new way of looking at the events and uncovering an aspect that may be influential but has not been widely studied before.

The two cases of Ukraine and the EU-Russia relations

The years 2014 and 2022 were fundamental in many aspects. They were decisive for the Ukraine conflict with 2014 being the moment when the complicated and equally long-standing disputes between it and Russia have reached new heights and opened it up to the larger public with the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and the following civil war in the Donbas. 2022 marked a new stage with a conventional war breaking out on the European continent for the first time in 30 years. From the perspective of EU-Russia relations, both years

are heavily impactful as 2014 was when questions about Russia's intentions in the post-soviet sphere were raised seriously around Europe. EU and NATO expansion into this region has also been at the centre of contention. At the same time, the EU has received wide criticism for its lacklustre reaction to the Kremlin's actions, but few if any meaningful actions followed. In 2022, however, the reaction was vastly different and most member states have pledged their diplomatic, economic and military support to Ukraine. And finally, but equally importantly, the two events, particularly 2022, presented an insight into the state of EU integration and the extent to which foreign policy can be driven by the common institutions or arguably the wider society. After the invasion of Ukraine, protests in support of Kyiv proliferated all over the continent pressuring governments to pledge support, signalling the creation of a 'European society' that not only cares about domestic issues of their own nationality but looks at common problems and demands common solutions.

2014

In 2014, as has been mentioned on a number of occasions before, the EU failed to live up to the expectations held by both the international community and its own citizens. When looking at the events of the year, the picture is much more complicated and nuanced than in 2022. Starting with the Revolution of Dignity, then the annexation of Crimea and the civil war in the Donbas, there were many different approaches the EU could have to build peace. At the same time, the perception among the society was also different as Ukraine was embroiled in systemic and widespread corruption and ethnic conflicts, often not eased by the government. In this section, we will explain how the different spillovers, or to be more precise, the lack thereof has led to the EU's failure to adequately address the crisis.

Functional spillover

As it has been explained in the concept of spillover section, functional spillover is the most common type of spillover stemming from the fundamentally economic focus of the EU. However, it has a significant potential to influence the foreign policy of the EU, particularly in the case of Russia relations and the conflict in Ukraine. As it has been expanded on previously and was one of the most commonly cited barriers of EU action against Russian aggression, many explained that the substantial dependence of many EU member states on Russian energy exports stopped the block from standing up to its eastern neighbour. The rationale

behind this thinking was that not only are many members of the EU dependent on Russian gas, but their closest economic connections would also be heavily impacted. Furthermore, there are a number of countries that do not receive Russian energy exports directly, but do so through transit countries, thus there is a long chain of dependence. This was the case in both 2014 and 2022.

According to Statista and Eurostat, in 2014, 72% of the EU's natural gas was imported, 37,5% of which came from Russia⁵⁰. The second biggest supplier was Norway at the time fluctuating around 20% of all imported gas⁵¹. When Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula and fuelled the following war in the Donbas, the EU's lacklustre reaction was often accredited to this dependency and the memory of the Russia-Ukraine gas disputes around 2008 when Russia simply shut off the pipelines. Following the events of 2014, the dependence had only risen until 2022.

Political spillover

There are two components to political spillover as it is developed by Haas and Lindberg. Governmental political spillover, looking at the actions of political elites and the EU institutional level bureaucracy. Non-governmental political spillover, studying the working of trade unions and other organisations, extended by Niemann to cover NGOs and civil society. Following this expansion, we will include the perception of the citizens of the EU as well. While public support and opinion polls are not widely used in previous studies, we argue that it has to be added to non-governmental spillover for 2 main reasons. First of all, as Niemann adds NGOs and other civil society organisations to consideration, the source of such movements has to be addressed. Lobbying organisations or pressure groups are grown out of a wider need for change that is not picked up by politicians for one reason or another. Secondly, in the case of the Ukraine conflict, both in 2014 and 2022, public perception impacts heavily how the society and by extension, the governments react. For these reasons, we will be examining opinion polls on Ukraine and the EU in the two cases.

First, we will be examining the latter.

⁵⁰ Share of extra-EU natural gas import value from Russia from 2010 to 2nd quarter 2022. Statista.

⁵¹ Energy production and imports. (2022, January). Eurostat.

Non-governmental political spillover

In 2014, following the Annexation of Crimea and the following war in the Donbas, the opinion of the European public was very divergent. Such conflict was not unprecedented on the continent as the Russo-Georgian war and the Russian support for the breakaway regions such as Abkhazia and South Ossetia happened only a few years before but arguably the scale and outcome of the events in Ukraine were different. According to Pew Research conducted in 2015 on the perspectives of the EU and NATO public on the optimal responses, the lack of unity is evident. Economic aid to Ukraine was high among EU members. Poland showed the biggest support with 77% being in favour and Italy the lowest with 44%. However, there were huge disparities among influential members when it came to sending lethal aid to Ukraine. Poland again showed the highest support in favour, with 50%, followed by the UK (42%) and France (40%). On the other side of the fence, the German public felt heavily against such aid with only 19% supporting arms deliveries. Italy (22%) and Spain (25%) fell into the same bracket too. This data shows that, when it came to the public perception and support for Ukraine, the general European public showed a lack of unity over what the EU's reactions should be.

Governmental political

Governments and political elites will reflect public opinion to varying extents. So, stemming from what has been explained in the previous section, the division among the public translated into policy and any deeper support for Ukraine than sanctions and speeches were swept off the table. When it comes to what is described as the socialisation among elites and the convergence of priorities and principles was in a much earlier stage than in 2022. Foreign policy, particularly with regard to Russia and the Ukraine conflict was created along the lines of member state priorities and less among what is best for the EU as a whole, its principles and unity. Referring to the research in 2015 conducted by Pew, Kuzio points out that "Germany has always been strongly opposed to NATO and EU enlargement into the CIS"⁵². This translated into prioritising trade relations with Russia over the territorial integrity of Ukraine and making Russia accountable for breaching international law. While Germany's role in thwarting meaningful common actions against Russia is often pronounced, the general

⁵² Kuzio, T. (2017). Ukraine between a Constrained EU and Assertive Russia. *Journal of Common Market Studies*. pp.111

disunity among other member states has to be addressed as well. There were some members who have historically been against sanctions on Russia such as Greece or Cyprus. Some members have been or still are ruled by pro-Kremlin governments like Hungary most famously, but also the Czech Republic or Bulgaria. And crucially, states such as France, Italy and Austria, along with the previously mentioned Germany, had strong economic ties with Moscow. These factors combined paint a clear picture of a politically fractured EU. One that would inevitably be unable to agree on an action or policy that can simultaneously lead to a resolution of the conflict and be accepted by all the member states. Considering this, it is not surprising that the outcome were only lacklustre condemnations and watered up sanctions. The most meaningful attempt to resolve the conflict was the establishment of the Minsk Agreements.

As it is shown it both types of political spillover, there was a general disunity within EU society and the political elite over how the crisis should be handled. Ukraine's unfavourable perception in the West was arguably impacted by a number of variables. First of all, at the time Russia was treated by most countries as an important market and partner in trade despite its domestic encroachments on democracy, rights and liberties. When it came to taking action, "the divided EU was rallied around the imposition of sanctions by Germany, a country that has traditionally pursued close political, economic and energy ties with Russia and whose foreign policy had not prioritized Ukraine"⁵³. There was another important component that impacted the outside perception of Russia's actions. This was the domestic politics and society within Ukraine. First of all, as often voiced by pro-Russian politicians such as Viktor Orbán, or the Kremlin itself, successive Ukrainian governments have ignored minority rights within the country, particularly when it came to their ability to use language in education or local bureaucracy⁵⁴. This shortcoming has also been pointed out by the Venice Convention and has been voiced at EU institutions. And secondly, but no less importantly, the eastern half of Ukraine, being largely populated by Russian-speaking people, has historically been supportive of drawing towards Russia instead of the EU. This has been reflected on election maps ever since the independence of the country as the western side of Ukraine supported a pro-EU candidate and the east served as an electoral basis for the pro-Russia

⁵³ Kuzio, T. (2017). Ukraine between a Constrained EU and Assertive Russia. *Journal of Common Market Studies*. pp.111

⁵⁴ Cserniczó et. al. (2020). Ukrainian language policy gone astray: The Law of Ukraine "On Supporting the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language". *Termini Egyesület*.

runner. This division has been very well studied throughout the years and has served as a strong legitimising factor for Putin's actions in the Crimea and the Donbas.

The only partly meaningful action that was taken was the establishment of the Minsk Agreements to foster dialogue and ceasefire or humanitarian corridor agreements between the two sides. The first Minsk Protocol was an agreement drafted by the Trilateral Contact Group containing Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE. Its conception was largely mediated by France and Germany, their leaders at the time, Francois Holland and Angela Merkel respectively. It consisted of 12 points⁵⁵, the most important of which are:

- Ensure an immediate and bilateral ceasefire
- Decentralise power in the Donbas (Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts)
- Ensure local elections
- Improve the humanitarian situation
- Withdraw illegal armed groups and paramilitary organisations
- Ensure the permanent monitoring of the border

The Minsk Protocol was widely unsuccessful at attaining these goals. Within a few months, the ceasefire had collapsed and stemming from it, the rest of the points were impossible to uphold. On the 12th of February, 2015, Minsk II was announced. Again, mediated by Holland and Merkel with very similar aims to solve the conflict. While the agreements were not formally abolished, the ceasefire was short-lived and neither side gave up the fight, blaming the other for shooting first. The agreement itself was also used by Russian officials to justify the "special military operation", arguing that Kyiv was not upholding its part⁵⁶.

Looking back at the EU member states' attempts to solve the conflict after 2014, it can be concluded, that while some, albeit lacklustre, effort was made, it was purely based on individual actions from France and Germany and not a unified effort from the EU itself. This shows that at the time, European integration at such a high level has not reached the heights required to meaningfully influence the Ukraine conflict.

⁵⁵ "Minsk Protocol" (Press release) (in Russian). (2014, September 5). Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

⁵⁶ Moscow to thwart any provocations by Kiev in Donbass, Russian military chief warns. (2021, December 9). TASS.

Social spillover / countervailing forces

In 2014, the level of socialisation within the EU and cohesion within the EU institutions was significantly less than in 2022 for a few reasons. First of all, as we look at the integration as a process through a long period of time, unless there is a significant retraction, at a point of time 8 years prior to another, there will be less integration by design. As it will be explained later, after 2014 there has been particularly deep integration along with the many crises the EU had to endure which makes this period of time unique. Secondly, when taking action in such a crisis, the stability and composition of the EU policymaking bodies matter. This is important in this case because when the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula took place and then the civil war broke out in the Donbas, the EU was only months away from Parliamentary elections. The manner in which candidates react to such a situation can fundamentally impact their election results as it was shown in early 2022 in the Hungarian parliamentary election where the opposition's confused reaction to the breakout of the war decreased their support substantially⁵⁷.

In the context of 2014, countervailing forces were particularly powerful as well. Two out of the four forces outlined in the spillover section apply: domestic constraints and diversities and diversity.

Domestic constraints played a crucial role as most of the member states had domestic pressures not to get involved and at the same time there was no societal demand to do otherwise. Countries such as Germany have relied heavily on trade connections with Russia, thus the government was reluctant to jeopardise economic stability and growth. France had deep-lying historical and diplomatic connections to Moscow, something it tried to utilise to solve the conflict, to no avail. And there were countries such as Hungary, which had fundamental disagreements with Ukraine over the territory of Transcarpathia which made them uninclined to aid Kyiv. On the other hand, there were member states who warned against Putin's intentions like Poland and the Baltic states but they were largely ignored.

Diversity was high from the perspective of political elites fundamentally disagreed over trying to keep the EU outside of the conflict. For example, during the invasion of Iraq, EU countries,

⁵⁷ Vas, A. (2022, December 25). Úgy tűnt, Orbán vesztésre áll, de aztán Putyin mentőövet dobott neki. Népszava.

particularly in an East-West divide, disagreed over whether and to what extent they should be involved⁵⁸. The atmosphere was similar in 2014, as many governments viewed the conflict as a local one, something the EU should not be involved in.

Cultivated spillover

From the perspective of the EU institutions, most importantly the commission being able to harvest relations between political elites or non-governmental actors, there is not much to assess in 2014. As it has been laid out before, in the context of the other types of spillovers, there was significantly less connection and cooperation than in 2022. Stemming from this, there were equally fewer opportunities for the institutions to grow their power either through the expansion of autonomy or the creation of new institutions. This is likely to be true for any two points in time for the EU. One can argue that since the community has been in a process of (more or less) continuous integration, a point 8 years later than another will have more cultivated spillover. However, it is particularly true for this period of time, between 2014 and 2022. The reason for it is that in these 8 years, the EU had to overcome a number of crises such as the migration crisis of 2015, the spike in terrorism during the height of the Syrian civil war, the Covid-19 pandemic and finally the Invasion of Ukraine. However, as these events took place after 2014, we will be examining them and their effects on EU integration in the case study of 2022, in a retrospective manner.

2022

When taking a glance at the immediate reaction and the aftermath of the Russian invasion of 2022, there are some stark contrasts compared to 2014. First of all, as it has been expanded on before, the two events are rather different with regard to the nature of the warfare and the intensity of the conflict. This arguably has an impact on its reception in the public as well. On the other hand, the two can be well compared from a number of aspects and show that the integration within the EU has a significant impact on how the block reacts to the crisis. For the first time in its history, the European Union has managed to position itself as a power to be reckoned with in the context of an armed conflict. Despite its lack of own armed forces or

⁵⁸ Simon, F. (2019, Sept 27). One or two (in)famous Chirac quotes on Europe. Euractiv.

inventory it can pledge its support to Ukraine and have a meaningful impact in a wide variety of ways.

Functional spillover

In 2021, the EU imported 83% of its natural gas⁵⁹. In June of the same year, 47,8% of the EU's gas imports were coming from Russia⁶⁰. However, by the end of 2022, it declined to 12,9%⁶¹ and the gap in the market was filled by a number of diverse sources such as the Middle East and the US, seeing countries like Germany and Croatia building new and extending existing LNG terminals⁶². As it has been mentioned previously, the fallout that was expected by many and heavily played on rhetorically by the Kremlin was not to happen. From this point of view, the level of functional spillover is not a helpful factor in explaining the EU's response to Russian aggression as while the level of spillover was high both in 2014 and 2022, the outcomes were drastically different.

However, there is another perspective to understanding functional spillover in the energy sector. Stemming from a few of now familiar events; the Russia-Ukraine gas disputes of the later 2000s and the annexation of Crimea, some Eastern European states recognised the dangers of heavy reliance on Russia for energy as it became clear that the Kremlin is willing to use its gas leverages as political tools. Countries such as Poland and the Baltic states decided to develop infrastructure that would allow them to reduce reliance on Russia. The first significant development came in the form of a grand cooperation project between Poland and Lithuania in 2007 as the Parliament of Lithuania confirmed a new National Energy Strategy⁶³. The strategy acknowledged the dangers of heavy reliance on Russia and as Budrys explained exhaustively, aimed to restructure Lithuania's energy policy. The main issue was that while Poland was a transit country for Russia to the rest of Europe, the West in particular, Estonia was only a "dead-end" and no other country sourced their imports through it. This meant that Poland was in a significantly more secure position as Russia would be less likely to restrict trade with it as it meant losses in the rest of the European market. However, this was not the

⁵⁹ Infographic - Where does the EU's gas come from?. European Council.

⁶⁰ *ibid*

⁶¹ *ibid*

⁶² Third floating LNG terminal arrives in northern Germany. (2023, January 20). Deutsche Welle.

⁶³ Budrys, K. (2007). Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review, The Impact of cooperation with Poland on Lithuania's energy Security. Strategic Research Centre. pp.224.

case in Lithuania where Russia could do as it pleased without fearing to anger other countries. In order to alleviate this problem, Poland and Lithuania agreed to connect their energy systems. It started with the Polish company, PKN Orlen purchasing Mazeikiu Nafta, a formerly Lithuanian refining and energy company, in the hopes of developing relations between the two countries as their representatives meet more frequently and work together in the context of the purchase. This indeed resulted in a higher willingness to cooperate and “the President of the Republic of Lithuania in his State of the Nation supported efficient cooperation with neighbouring countries”⁶⁴. One of the most important projects that have been completed between the two countries is the LitPol Link which came into commission in 2015. It connects electricity transmission between Poland and Lithuania but also grants access to the other Baltic countries. The purpose of it is to strengthen energy independence in the region from Russia, increase energy security and facilitate energy trade with the rest of the EU⁶⁵. With such projects, Poland and Lithuania successfully reduced their dependency on Russian energy exports. This allowed them to respond in a quick and effective manner to the 2022 invasion of Ukraine where they have been among the most vocal about supporting Kyiv as long as it takes and have become ‘norm entrepreneurs’⁶⁶ within the EU and NATO. It is a great example of how functional spillover (and in the specific example of intergovernmental relations improving after the purchase of the refinery; political spillover) EU foreign policy towards Russia.

Political spillover

As in the previous case, we will be starting with non-governmental political spillover.

Non-governmental spillover

2022 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine saw a strikingly different EU public than 8 years prior. According to Eurobarometer 98.1 conducted in the autumn of 2022, the support for Ukraine and the positive view of the EU was glaring.

⁶⁴ *ibid*

⁶⁵ LitPol Link, the power link between Lithuania and Poland. (2015). EPSOG.

⁶⁶ defined in Gingleux, V. (2016). Explaining the diversity of small states’ foreign policies through role theory. *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal*. 1:1.

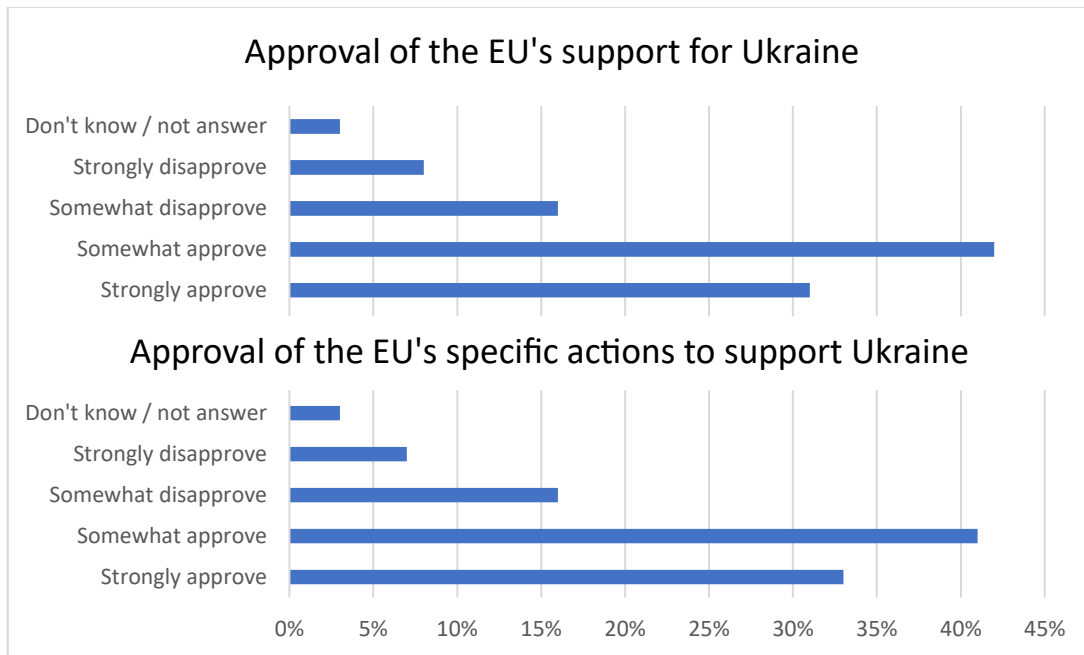


Figure 2

Own calculations based on Parlameter Autumn 2022 data (98.1)

Starting with the general attitude, as it is depicted in Figure 1, 74% of respondents agreed with the EU's support for Ukraine with 33% strongly and 41% somewhat approving. This share is given some nuance with the chart of approval for the specific support including political and financial sanctions and military and humanitarian aid. Here the overall positive attitude reaches 73% with 31% strongly approving and 42% somewhat approving. And finally, there is also a majority of respondents who are satisfied with the EU's response to the war with 58% of them being fairly (49%) or very satisfied (9%).

Looking at the public opinion about the EU and its institutions, there is also a trend of significant improvement over the 8-year period.

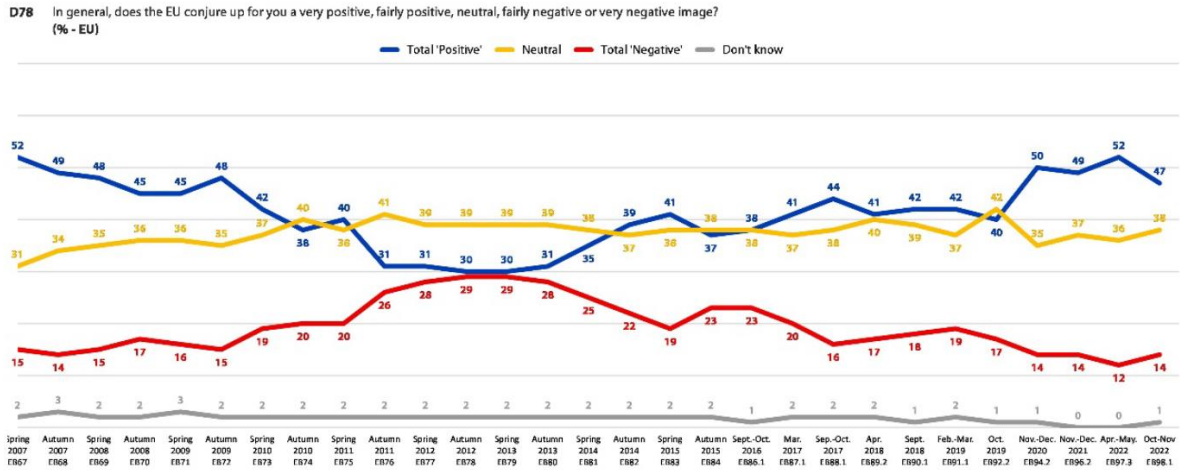


Figure 3

source: Parlameter Autumn 2022 data (98.1)

Figure 2 distinctly shows that since 2014, the positive image of the EU has been on a steady rise and has reached a record height in early 2022 with 52% of the public holding a positive view, before slightly declining to 47%. At the same time, the share of negative views has halved to 14 by the end of 2022. The support, moreover, extends to the specific institutions of the EU as well. According to the poll, 55% would like to see the European Parliament (EP) play a more important role. And finally, but equally importantly, when being asked what they saw as the main benefit of their countries' EU membership, the answer that reached the highest share (36%) was the EU's role in maintaining peace and security. Closely followed by the opinion that EU membership improves cooperation between their country and other member states (35%). This result is somewhat surprising as one would assume the greatest benefits people see from the EU would be economic development or perhaps the free movement of people, as it is commonly designated as the biggest appeal of membership. This change signifies a shift in priorities for the EU public. More people, seemingly now a relative majority, see the block as a source of security and potentially a significant actor in international politics.

Governmental political

In 2022, there can be a stark change in the elite's behaviour examined. This is true for both their interactions towards each other and the wider attitude towards EU foreign policymaking. As it has been expanded on in the previous section, in 2014, governments of the member states were deeply divided over the nature of what the EU's reaction should be. Due to a wide variety of reasons such as economic interests and historical or political connections, a large

swath of the European elite was unwilling to treat the Annexation of Crimea and the ensuing civil war in the Donbas seriously.

On the other hand, in 2022, the reaction was strikingly different. First of all, a crucial milestone in fostering unity among members was from the leading EU governments such as those of Germany and France, to acknowledge the mistake of not heeding the warnings of Eastern Europeans. In 2014, a source of the divide was that some Eastern European governments, particularly post-soviet ones were ignored by the more senior members. While Poland and the Baltic states have, partly stemming from historical memories but also from a more nuanced knowledge of Russia and its politics, warned the rest of the EU that Russia is an expansionist state. At the Lublin Triangle Summit in 2022, Polish PM, Mateusz Morawiecki stated that *“for years the West has lived in the hope that Putin and Russia will change, normalise”, “we warned and unfortunately today we have no satisfaction when we see the late sobering up of the West...Europe today is discovering that a business marriage of convenience with Russia was an enormous mistake”*⁶⁷. The disappointment formulated by Morawiecki was widely felt by the other regional states and it certainly did not help to foster cooperation between the EU members as the Eastern European governments felt that they were ignored. This, however, was not the case in 2022 and first Olaf Scholz made amends during his speech at Charles University where he said *“The centre of Europe is moving eastwards”*⁶⁸, acknowledging the growing gravitas of Poland and other regional states. Later in the speech, he announced to have proposed a gradual transition to majority voting in common foreign policy and a move away from a need for unanimity which *“only works for as long as the pressure to act is low”*⁶⁹. These statements signal a substantial change in leading politicians’ attitudes towards common EU policymaking, particularly as it extends to policy fields that have been considered strictly intergovernmental where the member states retain a significant level of autonomy. He was followed by Emmanuel Macron. At GLOBSEC in May of 2023, the French President gave a speech where he explicitly acknowledged the mistake of ignoring Eastern Europe. Quoting Jacques Chirac, he said *“some told you then that you were missing*

⁶⁷ Tilles, D. (2022, March 14). West now realises “enormous mistake” of not listening to our Russia warnings, says Polish PM. NfP.

⁶⁸ Speech by Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz at the Charles University in Prague on Monday, 29 August 2022. (2022, August 29). German Federal Government.

⁶⁹ *ibid*

opportunities to keep quiet”⁷⁰, referring to the then-French President’s remarks about Poland’s support to the invasion of Iraq. “But I believe we sometimes missed opportunities to listen”⁷¹. Later, he goes on to emphasize the need for “Strategic autonomy” which in his words, was only a “French whim” a few years prior. It has to be pointed out that Macron has long been a proponent of military and defence autonomy from the US and has called for a deeper cooperation among EU members in this regard. However, the current circumstances have exacerbated this stance. In his concluding remarks, he called the moment a “conceptual and strategic awakening” for Europe which is telling of how different the attitudes are compared to the events in 2014. That being said, it has to be acknowledged that these are mere statements made during speeches and not signed acts and policies. Such attitudes are not immune to the change in circumstances and the progress of the war in Ukraine. At the same time, the difference between the two cases is clear and the current unity among elites makes the immunity to changing circumstances significantly stronger and the policy outcome more predictable.

Social spillover and countervailing forces

In 2022, there is somewhat more social spillover to examine than 8 years prior. As it has been mentioned in the case of 2014, the sheer elapse of time, without serious setbacks, has created more socialisation effects in the EU institutions, particularly, as it will be laid out below, the many crises in the past decade have given way for proliferated and enhanced institutions through cultivated spillover. There have been a number of studies conducted on the extent of social spillover within the EU institutions and the findings are non-conclusive at best. While the existence of such a dynamic is all but confirmed, its real impact is debatable. Meyer-Sahling et al. put it in their concluding remarks, “while the analysis has confirmed a positive effect of EU contact on professional socialization of public officials in CEECs, we must recognize that the effect is fairly small”⁷². Four years later Michalski and Danielson arrived to a very similar assessment when looking at how dissent at higher levels affects socialisation below. As a positive takeaway they argue that “the degree of socialization within the PSC has remained strong despite the EU’s

⁷⁰ Closing speech by the President of the French Republic. (2023, May 31). Élysée

⁷¹ *ibid*

⁷² Meyer-Sahling, J.-H., Lowe, W., & van Stolk, C. (2016). Silent professionalization: EU integration and the professional socialization of public officials in Central and Eastern Europe. pp.178.

existential crisis”⁷³, however, the main issue they find with socialisation at international institutions is a conceptual one. Namely, that socialisation doesn’t exist on all levels, in all circumstances. Their findings correspond to those of Meyer-Sahling et al in the sense that they conclude that socialisation happens most effectively on the lower levels where merits are more important than stature. Finally, institutional design is also an important factor to take into account as not all systems enhance socialisation to the same extent.

Compared to 2014, countervailing forces have eased significantly. In the previous case, domestic constraints and diversity among member states were the two main obstacles in this regard. By 2022, however, most of these obstacles have disappeared. Starting with domestic constraints, as it is pointed out many times through this research, the heavy dependence of many member states on Russian energy export was not as big of a barrier as most thought. The EU has managed to cut itself off from the Russian energy trade through 2022 and by the beginning of the winter, diversification has successfully happened. Another important component of domestic constraints, which was lacking in 2014, is the societal pressure towards the governments to change the policy course. Quite the opposite has happened and in 8 years, societal disinterest and neutrality have turned into active support for Ukraine as the perception has changed. This pressure was strong enough to force governments to put the common interests and standpoints of the EU above the short-term economic security of the country. This societal pressure is a crucial difference between the two cases and is explained in detail through the paper.

Cultivated spillover

As mentioned before, in this section, we will be examining cultivated spillover not only in the context of the events of 2022 but the whole 8-year period in retrospect as it will give a more nuanced understanding of the process of integration than a comparison between 2014 and 2022. This is mainly because, in this regard, many of the most important spillovers happened between the two, over a longer period of time. As mentioned previously, since 2014, the EU has had to tackle some of the worst crises since its establishment. These events have strained relations between member states and also between them and the institutions. However, as

⁷³ Michalski, A., & Danielson, A. (2020). Overcoming Dissent: Socialization in the EU's Political and Security Committee in a Context of Crises. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* pp.341.

outlined by Jones et al⁷⁴, the block managed to come out of each crisis more integrated than before. In this section, we will be looking at the institutions and agreements created to address a specific issue and ones that strengthen the powers of the EU establishment by extending its autonomy or creating new ones in realms that would have been considered strictly national competencies before. To this end, we will analyse the Migration crisis of 2015 and onwards resulting in the creation of the Dublin Agreement, Frontex becoming a household name, the results of the Covid-19 pandemic and the growing importance of the EU through the Next Generation EU fund and finally, but perhaps most importantly, the creation of the Collaborative Procurement of Ammunition scheme. These events may not be relevant to the specific case of Ukraine at a glance, however, they are important in understanding the process of integration the EU has undergone in the past 9 years. The integration that was furthered by cultivating these crises in return impacts the level of effectiveness of the measures the EU is able to take against Russia. The more competencies the institutions have and the more diverse fields they cover, the less the Union relies on agreement by the individual member states and this is able to act more quickly and in a more united manner.

While these milestones are by no means exhaustive when it comes to examining cultivated spillover and the process of integration, these events give a helpful overview of the rather turbulent past 8 years.

The migration crisis of 2015 and onwards

Starting in 2015, the EU has experienced the biggest migration inflow so far, caused by a number of conflicts mostly but not excluding in the Middle East and Northern Africa. The Syrian Civil War and the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (most commonly referred to as ISIS), the war in Darfur, the war in Libya and the proliferation of Boko Haram or the war in Afghanistan all contributed to the huge wave of refugees reaching the border of the EU. This mass arrival has strained the EU, its institutions and its members for a variety of reasons. First of all, from a logistical point of view, many of the countries that are located on the outskirts, having a border with non-EU states such as Greece, Italy, Croatia and others, found it increasingly difficult to process the people arriving. Without going too much in-depth

⁷⁴ Jones, E., Kelemen, R. D., & Meunier, S. (2016). *Failing Forward? The Euro Crisis and the Incomplete Nature of European Integration*. *Comparative Political Studies*.

into this aspect of the migration crisis, which is beyond the scope of this research, documentation, threat level assessment and housing all posed serious obstacles.

This strain, however, also affected the EU itself as the Dublin III Regulation, which is the legal and logistical base for the resettlement and distribution of asylum seekers and the relief of overburdened member states was not effective. The result was a chaotic row between governments, between member states and EU institutions and what is often named as an “East-West divide”⁷⁵ where Eastern European members would be increasingly vocal about their displeasure over taking in migrants. While the displeasure was not limited to the latecomers into the European Project as Italy and Germany alike experienced such pressures from the wider public, countries such as Poland and Hungary were the most commonly quoted in this regard. The political reflection of the discontent was soon to follow with many countries experiencing EU-sceptic parties’ rise in the popularity polls. Marine LePen in France, Matteo Salvini in Italy, the AfD in Germany or incumbent parties gaining more strength such as Fidesz in Hungary or PiS in Poland. The most dramatic event that showed the effects of the crisis was the Brexit Referendum’s success. While migration is only one component in the complicated saga of Brexit, it played a huge part in the leave campaign’s rhetoric. The Eurobarometer mentioned before also shows this trend as the positive image of the EU has declined from 41% to 37% through 2015 before gradually getting back to 41% over the next 2 years. This trend was paralleled by the rise in negative attitudes while neutral opinions stayed put⁷⁶. Pew Research Centre also concluded that the anxiety about immigration, loss of jobs and terrorism was widespread⁷⁷.

What is expanded on above paints a clear picture of how the migration crisis exposed a number of serious and deep-lying issues within the EU. However, by the end, the block has managed to become more integrated than before the start of the asylum inflow for two main perspectives. The first is the creation of the notion: “Fortress Europe” and the second, corresponding milestone is the creation and subsequent development of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (mostly referred to as Frontex).

⁷⁵ Traynor, I. (2016, January 20). Pressure to resolve migration crisis could tear EU apart. *The Guardian*.

⁷⁶ EP Autumn 2022 Survey: Parlemeter. (2022). Eurobarometer.

⁷⁷ Wike, R., & Stokes, B., & Simmons, K. (2016). Europeans Fear Wave of Refugees Will Mean More Terrorism, Fewer Jobs. PewResearchCentre

Fortress Europe

Fortress Europe was the common nickname used to describe the proliferation of border protection measures enacted by a number of EU member states to curb migration inflows. The first of these measures would be taken by Hungarian PM Viktor Orbán in 2015 when he decided to build a fence along the Serbian border. At the time, this decision was widely criticised among the other EU members as a disregard for human rights and EU principles. However, eventually, other members would start taking similar measures, particularly ones located on the Mediterranean coast. Eventually, more and more effort was being dedicated to stopping or at least slowing migrant inflows. This is where the EU institutions managed to take up the mantle and turn the crisis into a part of the integration process. As individual member states were not able to achieve such results on their own, the Commission decided that the most effective way to protect the borders was to convince transit states such as Turkey, Tunisia or Morocco to restrict the migration movements. While even the most influential member states would not wield such powers, the EU as a whole succeeded in making deals such as the landmark EU-Turkey Statement & Action Plan⁷⁸. This agreement resulted in Turkey closely monitoring its borders with Greece and substantially stemming migration flows in return for funding and diplomatic favours from the EU. Following the success of the Turkey deal, cooperation has been extended to other regions such as North Africa⁷⁹, the latest talks coming in 2023, in Tunisia with Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen, Italian PM Giorgia Meloni and Dutch PM Mark Rutte attending⁸⁰.

The rise of Frontex

As the EU-wide understanding that there was a need for uniform and effective border control grew, so grew the pressure to create an institution that can organise such an effort. The result was the creation of Frontex in October of 2016. Frontex's tasks are rather wide, most importantly including general border control, fighting cross-border crime, cooperation with third countries and return and reintegration of migrants⁸¹. In 2019, the decision was made to expand the organisation with the creation of a 6500-strong standing staff by 2021 growing to

⁷⁸ Corrao, I. (2019). EU-TURKEY STATEMENT & ACTION PLAN. European Parliament.

⁷⁹ EU working together with African partners on migration: Launch of Team Europe initiatives. European Commission.

⁸⁰ Preussen, W. (2023, June 11). EU considers more than €1B of aid to Tunisia in effort to reduce migration. Politico.

⁸¹ Who we are. Frontex.

10000 by 2027⁸². Frontex provides the EP with regular reports on risk analyses, vulnerability assessments and other accounts. As a result of the migration crisis, the EU succeeded in furthering integration as the institutions have cultivated spillover and strengthened themselves and created new institutions that would grow over time taking over individual member state's competencies.

Covid-19 pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic was the latest crisis that drove deep rifts between member states and has tested the unity of the EU to a great extent. One of the most significant decisions that showcased how much unity was put at risk was the suspension of the Schengen Zone. As the virus was spreading, many countries unilaterally closed their borders to specific nations and eventually, often completely⁸³. At the same time, the EU institutions were not quick enough to react adequately, hence the large divergence in policies among member states. Such border closures and reintroductions of control resulted in two major obstacles to the maintenance of EU integrity. First of all, the immediate effect was the disharmony among member states and the resulting confusion over trade, commuting across borders and the jeopardy of integrated industries. While these issues would soon be fixed, the manner in which the member states decided unilaterally and then the resulting complications are eased by the EU institutions did not portray a united Europe. Secondly and in connection with the previous point, such a fast suspension of the free movement of people, one of the core principles and achievements of the EU, showed that in a grievous situation such as the pandemic, member states still opt to act on their own instead of consulting with their peers to create a common solution.

While the Covid-19 pandemic has arguably strained the fibres of the EU and raised question marks about the stability of its current state, in the end, the institutions succeeded in coming out of the crisis with yet another tool of integration. The NextGenerationEU fund.

In the Commission's description, the "NextGenerationEU is the EU's €800 billion temporary recovery instrument to support the economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and build a greener, more digital and more resilient future"⁸⁴. €338 billion of it is given to the

⁸² Strengthening the EU's external borders. European Council.

⁸³ 21/26 Schengen Countries Have Already Closed Borders While EC Still Mulls Schengen Suspension Idea. (2022, March 17). Schengenvisa.

⁸⁴ NextGenerationEU. European Commission.

member states in the form of a grant and the other half serves as a fund for loans that the members may choose to take. As it is explained in the document, the granting of such a loan is conditional on the Recovery and Resilience Plan which is submitted by the national governments. Applying for the loan is crucial for a number of member states. Through the conditionality and the appealing scale of the loans, the Commission was able to extend its influence over member states as it achieves a twofold goal.

First of all, it can push the green and modern transition agenda as the NextGenerationEU is built around five principles: make it green, make it digital, make it healthy, make it strong and make it equal⁸⁵. A crucial component of these principles is the sustainability achieved through modernisation and green transition in the energy industry.

Secondly, the funding, or to be more precise, the withholding thereof, serves as a great leverage and a tool of punishment and reigning in against member states such as Hungary. This is clearly shown by when the Hungarian government's recovery plan was rejected a number of times due to concerns over the state of the rule of law and judicial independence in the country⁸⁶. Even though these are not criteria for the granting of the loan, the disregard for fundamental principles of the EU prompted such a response. These two ways in which the Commission manages to influence member states to pursue common goals is another example of how it succeeded in turning a severe crisis such as the Covid-19 pandemic into an extension of its powers through cultivating a larger need for common solutions and a willingness of wider cooperation.

Collaborative Procurement of Ammunition Scheme

When Russia invaded Ukraine in February of 2022, the EU has turned a historic corner to aid the country through a number of programmes. The most popularly mentioned and arguably most influential actions taken by the block as a whole were money freezes, asset seizures, many waves of sanctions and economic and humanitarian aid. Being a defender in a war, Ukraine has the most need for Western equipment and technology, which it had received from a multitude of countries, some even outside of NATO. This was the case within the EU as well, as many member states decided to send whatever they could spare the aid Ukraine in its war

⁸⁵ NextGenerationEU. European Union.

⁸⁶ Ellena, S. (2022, November 30). Commission recommends EU funds for Hungary remain frozen. Euractiv.

effort. However, these packages have not gone through the EU as a common channel and have resembled much more as bilateral agreements, albeit negotiated within the platform of the EU institutions as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy has visited Brussels to address the Parliament. After the realisation that the war will not end in the foreseeable future for either side, consumables such as ammunition became one of the most important parts of the aid. However, the West had to realise that most countries do not have enough ammunition to send as they also have to arm their forces and in general the war has caught them massively underprepared in this regard. To ease the pressure and channel the member states' capacities, the European Defence Agency (EDA) has set up the Collaborative Procurement of Ammunition project which "opens the way for EU Member States and Norway to proceed along two paths: a two-year, fast-track procedure for 155mm artillery rounds and a seven-year project to acquire multiple ammunition types"⁸⁷. The project has received widespread support as 25 countries have expressed interest in signing up. It also serves as a foundation-stone for future more elaborate and deeper collaboration between the member states in the realm of defence. It has to be addressed, however, that the scheme is by no means a supranational institution with enforcement powers, it is an intergovernmental forum for cooperation between governments. At the same time, it is a sign of integration and development as now an EU-level cooperation agreement has been created in a field that is strictly the competence of the national governments, thus in the future, there is great potential for deeper integration.

Assessment of expectations

Expectations were not particularly high for functional spillover, however, there have been some unforeseen effects. While the expectations were that the EU's heavy energy dependence on Russia and all the functional spillovers stemming from it will impact its ability to respond adequately, it has not been the case. When the decision was made to finally end the reliance on the gas pipelines from the east, meaningful actions to fund alternative sources and reduce consumption were quickly taken. As the polls show, this move was widely supported by the citizens as well causing the decisionmakers to push through faster with policies. There have been, however, positive and unexpected effects in the energy market due to functional spillover. As it has been described above, Poland and the Baltic states have been

⁸⁷ EDA brings together 25 countries for Common Procurement of Ammunition. (2023, March 20). European Defence Agency.

alarmed by Russia's actions in 2014 and even before, which pushed them to integrate their energy markets. These cooperation projects, first started at the governmental level, have trickled down to more technical matters and have resulted in an interconnected energy grid in the region that made their economies and their energy security significantly more resistant and can serve as a template for other countries or larger-scale EU-wide policies. Thus, we can conclude that functional spillover had limited effects and most of the negatives were quickly overcome, while some spillovers have caused positive implications as well, but their advantages are arguably barely significant for the EU's ability to respond to the invasion of Ukraine.

Non-governmental political spillover turned out to be one of the most important of all. Despite the literature often ignoring the impact of integrating civil society, it seems to possess a growing ability to pressure governments and EU legislation to find a middle ground and pursue common goals. As support for the EU as a whole and the positive attitude towards its institutions and common goals steadily rises and consolidates, policymakers find public opinion harder and harder to negate in favour of national interests. It has been demonstrated that when there was widespread support for aiding Ukraine in its war effort and the public expressed this through protests, fundraising, NGOs and other forms of lobbying, meaningful policy was quick to follow. This is likely to be even stronger in the future as more and more such pressure groups proliferate, particularly in the Brussels Bubble. This is one of the main implications of this research, to add to the existing literature and point out that there has been a significant gap in examining the impact of integration on foreign policy, particularly when it comes to such a key issue as a war on the continent.

Moving on to governmental political spillover, it can be concluded that the expectations were correct in assuming that it has a significant effect on foreign policy. This should not come as a surprise for two main reasons. First of all, the importance of high-level officials' cooperation in creating meaningful foreign policy is a well-researched topic, as it was expanded on in the governmental political and social spillover sections. Secondly, it is well-known that the EU foreign policy remains a deeply intergovernmental affair where the national governments retain a substantial amount of autonomy over their decisions. Furthermore, statements and common actions more often than not are voluntary or require unanimity. Stemming from this, it is not difficult to imagine why spillover on the governmental level is highly impactful.

When it comes to the social spillover and the countervailing forces, the bar was already quite low. It was to be expected that social spillover has a low to medium effect, but after deep examination, we can conclude that it is low at best. As it has been explained by both Meyer-Sahling et al and Michalski and Danielson, socialisation cannot be generalised to all levels of the institutions. It is a process that happens effectively in a specific and limited number of cases. Countervailing forces have equally low value at predicting whether the EU will respond adequately to a crisis such as the war in Ukraine. While there are indeed some forces that can be used to explain the action or the lack thereof such as domestic constraints or diversity among member states, they are not impactful enough to be used as possible indicators. It must be addressed, that while these two types of spillovers have turned out to be very limitedly significant, they shouldn't be dismissed entirely in any evaluation as they add to the context of understanding why specific decisions are made on a lower level of analysis, such as why an individual member state would vote against a decision, which is useful information even if it doesn't change the outcome.

Finally, arriving at cultivated spillover, it was predicted that this type of spillover would have a positive medium effect. This has come true after the analysis. Perhaps the period of time between 2014 and 2022 has been unique for assessing cultivated spillover, as there have been a number of crises plaguing the EU where the institutions could and did proliferate and enhance their powers. Frontex has become a household name in EU-wide border protection, the NextGenerationEU became a crucial source of funding for many member states and most importantly from the perspective of the Ukraine conflict, the Collaborative Procurement of Ammunition Scheme has been established as a milestone in European military cooperation. This signals that throughout the various crises, the EU institutions have enhanced their power and garnered more and more competencies and autonomies. This is significant for the process of integration and by extension, effective foreign policymaking.

Conclusion and Discussion

To sum up, we found that there indeed are spillovers that impact the EU's policy towards Ukraine and that the level of integration should not be omitted from consideration either. Political spillover has been found to be the most important in this regard. The essential finding is that non-governmental political spillover has been identified to be more important than it

was expected before. This suggests that the impact of civil society, pressure and representative groups and in general, public opinion is more important for EU foreign policy in the case of the Ukraine crisis than it has been assumed before. As it will be expanded on in this chapter, there are a number of conclusions and discussions that stem from these findings both in academic terms and for the policymaking as well.

Through this research, there are a number of conclusions that are to be drawn and on different levels as well. Starting at the more general and theoretical degree, it can be said that neofunctionalism is very often neglected when analysing the foreign policy of the European Union. However, this is a mistake as it brings along the disregard for the impact of integration and particularly the understanding of the process of integration. While it is true that foreign policymaking remains an intergovernmental process within the EU, the influence of integration among political elites, institutions and crucially civil society has grown significantly in the past 9 years. The research has also shown that the debate between historical institutionalism and neofunctionalism is alive and well despite the apparent domination of the former when it comes to the analysis of EU integration. Not only is the debate not settled, but in the case of understanding and explaining the Ukraine conflict and the responses to it, but neofunctionalism also is arguably an equally fitting theoretical framework as looking at integration as a process has been demonstrably just as valuable as explaining the outcome through the examination of a few, albeit impactful events.

On a lower and more specific level of analysis, this paper has also pointed to a significant shortcoming in contemporary neofunctionalist concepts. Namely, that it does not grant enough attention to non-governmental political spillover and the impact of public opinion and civil society. While Arne Niemann has updated the concept to a more modern understanding expanding Haas' categorisation of unions with NGOs and pressure groups, it is not taken advantage of in practice. Opinion polls and perceptions are more often than not neglected and EU foreign policymaking is examined purely on the level of governmental elites, institutional bargaining and perceived structural constraints such as the EU's dependency on Russian energy, something that clearly was not as serious of an obstacle as thought of before.

This takeaway does not only apply to academic analysis, however. It is also a useful finding for everyday policy analysis and indeed policymaking. The EU is a unit that is constantly integrating one way or another and while studying specific events in-depth has its advantages,

it does not give us a clear view. It can only be achieved by looking at integration over a longer period of time and as a process. A process that has seen the UK leaving the block, that has seen significant economic changes throughout the continent and as mentioned in previous sections, the shift of balance towards the East, where countries such as Poland and the Baltics have a substantially heavier impact on policy towards Russia than it has been understood before. Finally, but crucially, the process of integration has also seen the rise of a 'European society', something that is widely unappreciated. This society, one that is much more integrated and perceives the EU as not only an economic block but a polity, a set of principles and often as a second nationality, is capable of elevating issues from the societal level to the political one through European elections, NGOs, lobby groups and protests. A crucial element, one that signifies that this 'European society' is much more than the collective of national societies, is its ability to pressure other policymakers within the EU not only their national one. As their principles and priorities mirror more and more what the common ones are, set by the EU's funding documents and the process of integration, these ideas translate into policies as well both on the national and the EU level.

On the other side of the fence, this research has some shortcomings and weaknesses. First of all, as it has been addressed before, the cases of 2014 and 2022 are not entirely comparable from the perspective of the level of hostilities and the armed conflict. The civil war in 2014 and the years since have seen significantly less bloodshed compared to 2022 when the Russian regular forces have begun to conduct a full-fledged assault on a sovereign country. This difference is likely to have an impact on the EU's perception on what is to be done and what is at stake. In 2014 few feared that the conflict would spill over into NATO territory and some, like Mearsheimer, have explicitly stated that the West is to blame for the unprecedented tensions. Compared to this, the invasion of 2022 has alarmed the EU and its allies to a significantly greater extent which makes the comparison of the two not entirely precise. However, the nature of the conflicts is only dissimilar to a limited extent as the context of the breakout of the hostilities, the actors involved and the predictions resemble each other significantly. Furthermore, the comparison of the two is very fitting from the point of view of EU integration for a number of reasons. First of all, there is nearly a decade elapsed between the two which allows us to look at the process of integration. Secondly, the structural obstacles to the EU's reaction such as its heavy energy dependence on Russia or the attitude of main

member state governments are still the same 8 years on. This combined with the above-mentioned similarities within the conflict such as the reasoning of Russia and the actors involved suggest that these are indeed not the factors that determine the EU's response but there are underlying, more subtle mechanisms at play.

The second shortcoming of the research stems from the theoretical framework that it is built around, neofunctionalism. As virtually all theories in political science, particularly among those that are designed to explain complicated dynamics such as integration, especially in the context of such an intricate case as the Ukraine conflict, neofunctionalism can not explain all the factors that may influence the outcome. It is centred around understanding the process of integration. However, as the EU's response is not determined by a single factor it can not be concluded based on neofunctionalism that integration is the single most influential element of the equation that will always and under all circumstances provide us with an adequate analysis or prediction. In this research, it is shown that integration is one of the elements, a very influential one as well and that it has been systematically overlooked by analysts. But by no means does it claim that there are no other influencing factors such as the nature of the war, the priorities of the member states' governments or indeed the progress of the war on the ground. It is also realistic to claim that the Ukrainian army's success in stopping the Russian advance has impacted the EU's willingness to pledge support as it saw that it can actually win, unlike in 2014.

Due to these shortcomings, this paper can potentially serve as a steppingstone for other research that aim to dwell into EU integration theory in the context of foreign policy. It achieves it first and foremost through bringing the concept of neofunctionalism to the light again as it has been neglected in this field of research. Secondly, it points to both the undeniable advantages of the framework, but also its weaknesses. Through this approach, future research can potentially develop the framework and patch the holes through combining it with other frameworks. This could help the theory to reach wider audiences and usages by enabling it to explain events and dynamics in a wider and more encompassing way than it currently can. However, this is beyond the scope of this research and is for future researchers to perfect.

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