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**Switzerland's Adoption of EU Sanctions
Utilitarian or Normative Motive?**

Master Thesis

International Management and Public Policy

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the underlying motives of why Switzerland adopts EU sanctions. The study attempts to examine the Swiss adoption of EU sanctions by conducting a congruence analysis. By applying the lenses of the logic of consequences and the logic of appropriateness, the study tests the explanatory value of utilitarian and normative motives to understand the underlying reasons for adopting EU sanctions in two specific cases: sanctions against Russia and Syria. Press releases published by the Swiss government are systematically coded, while interviews, foreign policy documents, and newspaper articles are analyzed through in-depth content analysis. The empirical data shows that normative motives, particularly shared beliefs such as ‘peace’ and ‘human rights’, play a dominant role. Utilitarian motives are also significant. Switzerland considered political costs and benefits, aiming to maintain positive EU relations and avoid becoming a hub for sanction evasion. This highlights the importance of utilitarian motives, viewed not as a traditional cost-benefit balance, but as weighing the political costs of compliance versus non-compliance. However, in summary, the prominence of normative motives (53%) in the data indicates that shared beliefs and identity are more likely to be the primary drivers of adopting EU sanctions and hence provide a more fitting explanation than the utilitarian motive.

Keywords: Switzerland, EU Sanctions, Congruence Analysis, Foreign Policy, Russia, Syria

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List of Abbreviations

CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
EEAS	European External Action Service
EU	European Union
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
SECO	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (Swiss department)
UN	United Nation

1. Introduction

The relationship between the European Union (EU) and Switzerland is marked by its complexity. Switzerland, despite its central location within Europe, remains a non-member state. Switzerland opted for bilateral agreements with the EU, allowing participation in aligned integration areas while retaining autonomy where policies differ (Wasserfallen, 2021). This distinctive arrangement has resulted in a nuanced interaction of interests, values, and norms between the two parties, also in areas such as foreign policy. This became even more evident in February 2022, when Switzerland, despite initially hesitating due to its neutrality, decided to adopt extensively the EU sanctions to condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine (SECO, 2022; Petrig, 2022). The Federal Council characterized this decision as a ‘one-time step’, denoting it as a unique occurrence (Schweizer Bundesrat, 2022). Yet, Switzerland has adopted EU sanctions before, marking the first time in 1998 during the Kosovo war (SECO, 2023). Nonetheless, Switzerland's adoption of EU sanctions is infrequent and occurs selectively, with the Federal Council retaining authority to decide on their implementation on a case-by-case basis (Szép & Van Elsuwege, 2020; Cardwell & Moret, 2023).

On the other hand, this selective approach of Switzerland also reflects the EU’s expanding sanction regime. Since the 1990s, the EU has significantly increased its restrictive measures and imposed more autonomous sanctions against third countries. Sanctions serve as a crucial instrument for enforcing compliance with EU norms and values while advancing its foreign policy objectives (Giumelli et al., 2021). In certain cases, the EU ‘invites’ third countries *to align* with the sanction regime to increase coherence and effectiveness (Cardwell & Moret, 2023; Cardwell, 2015). However, the reasons why third countries agree to align remain underexplored in scholarly discourse (Cardwell & Moret, 2023). Nonetheless, understanding the motives driving third-country alignment is crucial for comprehending the dynamics of EU foreign policy coordination and its impact. The case of Switzerland stands out because the country is not formally invited *to align* due to its neutrality, yet still *adopts* EU sanctions in approximately half of the cases (Cardwell & Moret, 2023). Henceforth, there is a lack of literature offering a comprehensive explanation for Switzerland's adoption of EU sanctions.

1.1 Research Aim and Question

Consequently, this study aims to address this gap by conducting a thorough examination of the reasons why Switzerland adopts EU sanctions. According to the literature, third countries may find motivation to conform to EU sanctions due to utilitarian reasons. In that case, sanctions may be adopted based on a cost-benefit analysis, leaving the country with an economic or political cost or benefit (Schade, 2023; Marciacq & Jaramillo, 2015). However, an alternative interpretation lies in normative values, whereby a third country deems it appropriate to align with the collective values, thus leading to their compliance with the sanction's regime (Marciacq & Jaramillo, 2015; Szép & Van Elsuwege, 2020). Therefore, to examine why Switzerland adopts EU sanctions, utilitarian and normative motives are consulted to find an explanation of the dependent variable. A congruence analysis is conducted to determine their respective explanatory power. This inquiry leads to the following research question:

Does a utilitarian motive or normative motive explain why Switzerland adopts EU sanctions?

1.2 Theoretical Relevance

The theoretical relevance of this study lies in its exploration of the motivations behind Switzerland's adoption of the EU sanctions regime, a topic that has not been extensively researched (Hellquist, 2016; Cardwell & Moret, 2023). By analyzing the phenomenon through a utilitarian and normative lens, the research seeks to elucidate the factors influencing Switzerland's decision-making in adopting EU sanctions. Despite the application of these theoretical frameworks in the context of enlargement (Piedrafita & Torreblanca, 2005), their utilization of the sanction regime has been limited to Balkan countries. Moreover, this study contributes to the overall understanding of how third states navigate their relationships with the EU, displaying the interplay between rational calculations and normative considerations in foreign policy decision-making. Additionally, by focusing on the specific case of Switzerland, the research offers insights into the dynamics of EU-Swiss relations and the complexities of external adoption with EU sanctions. Moreover, it sheds light on a broader EU policy adoption in Switzerland and its underlying reasons. Overall, the theoretical relevance of this research lies in its contribution to the ongoing scholarly discourse on the determinants of state behavior in the context of EU foreign policy.

1.3 Societal Relevance

The societal relevance of this study lies in its potential to provide insights into Switzerland's foreign policy decisions, particularly its adoption of EU sanctions which directly impacts its international orientation of the country (Buzan & Hansen, 2009). Addressing this gap in the literature will help policymakers, diplomats, the business community, and the Swiss public understand the reasons behind these decisions. Policymakers will gain insights for more strategic foreign policy. Diplomats will understand Switzerland's international positions better, aiding in negotiations. The business community will assess risks and plan strategically regarding sanctions. The Swiss public will be better informed about foreign policy decisions, fostering transparency and informed public discourse. Additionally, this study re-examines Switzerland's tradition of neutrality, offering the public a new perspective on this aspect of foreign policy, leading to more nuanced debates and a possible re-evaluation considering current global challenges.

1.4 Structural Outline

In addressing the research question, Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical framework, focusing on utilitarian and normative motives. After briefly discussing EU-Swiss relations, specific case propositions are outlined. Chapter 3 explains the research strategy and justifies methodological choices. Chapter 4 compares theories with empirical case study observations, while Chapter 5 discusses and compares analytical results. Finally, Chapter 6 offers a conclusion and recommendations for further research.

2. Theoretical Foundation

2.1 Literature Review

The literature review examines pertinent literature on the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and its sanction regime. It synthesizes research on factors influencing third countries' alignment with the EU's sanctions.

2.1.1 The EU Sanction Regime

In the EU the main policy area that manages sanctions is the CFSP (Cardwell, 2015). Created in the Maastricht Treaty, the CFSP aims to maintain peace and enhance cooperation. The Lisbon Treaty strengthened it with a Foreign Minister and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to support external actions and coordination (European Commission, 2024a). Hence, scholars describe the CFSP's main objective as increasing the EU's global effectiveness and coordinating the EU's internal and external policies by expressing a unified stance (Marciacq & Jaramillo, 2015). However, according to Hix and Høyland (2022), the intergovernmental structure of the CFSP, which allows member states to maintain sovereignty through unanimous decisions and veto power, potentially risks consistent policymaking. Nonetheless, according to Dijkstra and Vanhoonacker (2017: 2), the EU has still achieved to establish an '*international identity*'.

The CFSP has the power to implement three different types of sanctions against third countries (European Commission, 2024a). First, sanctions imposed by the UN which the EU translates into its law. Second, it can reinforce UN sanctions with even stricter measures. Third, the EU can adopt autonomous sanctions not based on UN Security Council resolutions (Cardwell & Moret, 2023). While UN sanctions focus on international peace and security, EU autonomous sanctions also promote democracy and human rights, reflecting treaty-based values (Cardwell, 2016). This study emphasizes autonomous sanctions, the primary category of restrictive measures within the EU. Cardwell and Moret (2023) argue that the extensive adoption of autonomous sanctions within EU foreign policy demonstrates enhanced autonomy, capacity, and coherence in efficiently coordinated decision-making processes. Cardwell (2015) describes that the EU autonomous sanctions aim to bring about a change in the behavior of those targeted while safeguarding the EU's values, interests, and security. In that regard, Giumelli et al. (2021)

categorize various triggering factors that can prompt the imposition of EU sanctions. Their analysis concludes that the foremost motivation is the promotion of democracy (44%), followed by (post: 27%)-crisis management (33%), and adherence to EU norms (15%), with pursuing EU interests ranking lower in priority (13%).

EU autonomous sanctions consist mainly of targeted measures such as asset freezes and travel bans (Giumelli et al., 2021). Yet, sanctions can also entail broader economic restrictions such as commodity embargoes or financial limitations (Meissner, 2023). However, De Vries et al. (2014) show that imprecise targeting in sanctions can have unintended negative consequences on human rights such as harming civilians. Hence, they conclude that the design of sanctions is crucial in determining their impact (De Vries et al., 2014; Meissner, 2023). Critics often highlight design shortcomings, especially in information sharing and coordination among EU member states. Consequently, the EU's ability to exert influence and the effectiveness of sanctions heavily rely on internal coherence (Meissner, 2023; De Vries et al., 2014; Giumelli et al., 2021). Moreover, effectiveness can be enhanced through coordination with external partners through the *alignment process* (Cardwell, 2015; De Vries et al., 2014; Szép & Van Elsuwege, 2020).

2.1.2 Third Country Alignment of EU Sanctions

Alignment is a formalized practice where the High Representative can publicly 'invite' European neighborhood countries, including EEA states, EFTA states, candidate and potential candidate states, and Eastern Partnership countries, to *align* with EU sanctions. This separate declaration is published in a press release (Marciacq & Jaramillo, 2015; Hellquist, 2016). However, *alignment* comes with a strong obligation as the third countries '*undertake to align their legal systems to enable the freezing of assets, limitation of trade or impose travel bans on officials*' (Cardwell, 2015: 307). If a non-EU state accepts, it grants the EU the right '*to speak on its behalf*' (Marciacq & Jaramillo, 2015: 203, 204). Hence, due to this institutionalized practice neutral countries (for example Switzerland) are not on the list of invitees. Existent studies describe alignment with the CFSP as a way of strengthening the EU's voice in regional and global affairs (Dimitrova & Dragneva, 2013; Mayer, 2014; Marciacq & Jaramillo, 2015). Some scholars see alignment as an instrument in foreign policy coordination (De Vries et al., 2014; Cardwell, 2015; Szép & Van Elsuwege, 2020), while Hellquist (2016) views it skeptically as the EU's instrumentalization of third countries to increase its international influence. To counteract this instrumentalization there

is an alternative approach to '*alignment*'. A third country can '*adopt*' EU sanctions. Adoption does not require a specific public declaration, nor does it entail any legal obligations. Instead, it is based on similarities of the sanction and concurrent timing. Therefore, adoption is *informally* determined by a non-EU state's willingness to follow EU sanctions and hence is not a formalized process like alignment (Cardwell & Moret, 2023).

2.1.3 Motives of Third Countries for Alignment

While there are studies analyzing *when* third countries *align* with EU sanctions (Szép & Van Elsuwege, 2020; Cardwell & Moret, 2023; Cardwell, 2015), the literature analyzing the underlying motives of *why* countries decide to do so is rather scarce (Hellquist, 2016). Moreover, research on *when* and *why* third countries *adopt* EU sanctions is minimal due to a methodological challenge. While the *alignment process* offers quantifiable measures, such as the number of countries aligning with EU declarations, the *adoption process* lacks clear quantifiable indicators (Cardwell & Moret, 2015). Thus, this study concentrates on articles that analyze the motives behind the alignment process, to subsequently apply these motives to the adoption process in Switzerland. Two in-depth case studies investigate the motives of alignment in Eastern- (Mayer, 2014) and Western Balkan countries (Marošková & Spurná, 2021). Moreover, two studies have explored the reasons behind third-country alignment with EU positions at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) (Marciacq & Jaramillo, 2015; Schade, 2023). Yet, the analysis still holds significance as the findings of the reasons for alignment in sanction decisions can be expected to be similar (Schade, 2023). Overall, three main motives for alignment can be extracted: structural, utilitarian, and normative explanations.

The first explanation highlights the structural aspect, emphasizing the importance of legal-institutional ties with the EU in shaping alignment, drawing from external governance theory (Lavenex, 2004; Lavenex, 2009; Lavenex & Schimmelfennig, 2009). The studies by Marciacq and Jaramillo (2015) and Schade (2023) within context suggest that as the legal institutional distance from the EU increases, the EU's ability to disseminate norms and induce alignment decreases. They find consistent alignment among EU candidate countries, those with special relationships like Iceland, and aspirants such as Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, supporting the idea that institutional proximity to the EU influences alignment. However, in their analysis, outliers such as Turkey and

Switzerland are evident, meaning that despite close relations, OSCE statements are not adopted (Marciacq & Jaramillo, 2015; Schade, 2023).

Other alternative explanations are derived from rational choice theory and constructivism (Marošková & Spurná, 2021; Mayer, 2014). First, the logic of consequence tries to maximize its benefits; hence a cost-benefit analysis is calculated (March & Olsen, 1998). Therefore, Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2019) argue that a state should adopt EU sanctions if the potential costs are counterbalanced with rewards. Marošková and Spurná (2021) claim that domestic costs might stem from sources like economic losses in trade or political costs. The EU should compensate for the adaption cost in the form of economic or political rewards such as financial liberalization or association agreements (Marošková & Spurná, 2021). However, their study in the Western Balkans concludes that empirical evidence for the logic of consequence is limited for both case studies Albania and Montenegro. Furthermore, the study by Mayer (2014) tested a rational choice theory in the form of a power-based argument. Conversely, states, especially weaker ones, tend to lean towards aligning with EU policies to mitigate perceived threats from external actors, thus strengthening their ties with the EU. In short, the more a country is dependent on the EU as a security actor, the more it is inclined to align with EU sanctions. However, the study does not find concluding evidence, while Georgia was in line with this logic, Azerbaijan is less consistent with this model.

The third explanation is the logic of appropriateness that suggests that the transformation of national interests from individualistic to collective terms emphasizes the commitment to EU norms, thereby inducing alignment due to normative resonance between EU rules and domestic understandings (Marciacq & Jaramillo, 2015; Marošková & Spurná, 2021). In the Albanian case study, Marošková and Spurná (2021) discover that normative values, including pro-European attitudes and identity, along with historical and cultural affiliations, were the primary factors influencing Albania's alignment with EU sanctions. This finding is supported by the OSCE study by Marciacq and Jaramillo (2015), which found significant support for alignment as a signal of normative propinquity. The study revealed that *'states that align most with the EU claim to share EU norms and values, making alignment the norm'* (Marciacq & Jaramillo, 2015: 212). However, Mayer's (2014) conclusions on this model are less conclusive. Out of the three countries that were analyzed, only Georgia aligns with EU liberal values hence is congruent with the normative explanation.

In summary, these studies illustrate varied motives influencing behaviors and emphasize each country's unique context. To understand a specific country's actions, a thorough analysis is essential to uncover the reasons behind their adoption of EU sanctions. Moving forward, the structural motive, as proposed by the legal-institutional proximity theory, is not explored in this study due to the unique case study of Switzerland, which acts as an outlier to this construct (Schade, 2023). Despite Switzerland's geographical and institutional proximity to the EU, it does not formally align itself with EU sanctions due to its stance of neutrality (Maricacq & Jaramillo, 2015). Therefore, it is disregarded in this discussion. Consequently, only normative, and utilitarian motives are explained in more detail.

2.2 Utilitarian vs. Normative Motives

This section relies on two primary theoretical frameworks often used to study state interactions: rational choice theory and constructivism. Within these frameworks, the concepts of logic of consequence and logic of appropriateness lead to utilitarian and normative motives. These frameworks act as analytical lenses for critically assessing Switzerland's EU relationship with sanction regimes. Thus far, these theories have been utilized to analyze the dynamics of the EU and its integration process (Piedrafita & Torreblanca, 2005) and in connection to conditionality in Balkan countries (Mayer, 2014; Marošková & Spurná, 2021). However, they have not been applied to the specific case of Switzerland or another EFTA country.

2.2.1 Logic of Consequences

Utilitarian motives can be linked to rational choice theory in international relations. This theory offers a framework for comprehending human behavior (Green, 2002). The theory follows the logic of consequence which proposes that individuals make choices to maximize their benefits. The outcomes of their actions are considered through a cost-benefit analysis constituting a utility. Utility refers to the satisfaction or usefulness that individuals gain from their choices (March & Olsen, 1998; Eriksen, 1999). Hence, it is assumed that actors behave strategically (Jupille et al., 2003). Jupille et al. (2003:12) describe it as a '*straightforward*' mechanism where '*individuals want things, and they act in such a way as best to obtain what they want*'. In the context of third countries aligning with EU sanctions, utilitarian motives drive decisions based on the perceived

material or non-material benefits or costs. Material benefits might include economic aid or trade advantages, while non-material benefits could involve political support or increased security. Conversely, the costs of compliance could entail economic losses from restricted trade or political backlash from opposing alliances. In short, third countries would weigh the potential advantages against the costs of compliance, aiming to maximize their utility (Marošková & Spurná, 2021).

2.2.2 Logic of Appropriateness

Normative motives are closely aligned with constructivist theory in international relations, which follows the logic of appropriateness. It highlights the importance of identity, norms, interests, and socialization processes in influencing state preferences and actions (Hurd et al., 2008; Jupille et al., 2003). Hence, according to the logic of appropriateness, actors base their decisions not only on what benefits them but also on what they conceive as ‘appropriate’ to do, adhering to established roles and norms to create a collective identity and foster solidarity (March & Olsen, 1998). In this perspective, actor rationality is understood as contextual rather than instrumental, emerging from the identity of the community they are part of (March & Olsen, 1998). Regarding sanctions, there could be an alignment between the values and norms of the sanctions and domestic norms within the country (Marciacq & Jaramillo, 2015; Marošková & Spurná, 2021). These domestic norms might revolve around principles such as democracy, peace, security, human rights, rule of law, environmental protection, transparency, or other fundamental aspects of governance and societal organization, particularly those based on EU treaties (Cardwell, 2016).

2.3 Intermezzo: Setting the Scene

2.3.1 EU-Swiss Relations in a Nutshell

The EU and Switzerland foster a complex relationship in several domains such as trade, politics, and science. Despite being situated at the center of Europe; Switzerland is not a member of the EU. Switzerland has opted for a different integrational path dating back to 1972 when the free trade agreement granted Switzerland access to the EC market. In 1992, the Swiss electorate, via a referendum, rejected the prospect of the European Economic Area membership, a pivotal decision indicative of Switzerland's choice to abstain from closer integration with the forthcoming EU

(Schwok & Lavenex, 2015). Subsequently, Switzerland's principal aim was (and still is) to maximize economic integration while minimizing political integration, as the latter poses potential sovereignty loss (Veuthey, 2023; Wasserfallen, 2021). Therefore, to strengthen the Swiss export-driven economy, the Swiss Federal Council adopted bilateral agreements (Lavenex & Schwok, 2015). In 1999, the Bilateral 1 agreement was concluded, which was followed by Bilateral 2 in 2004 granting Switzerland access to the EU single market (Cottier, 2012). This 'peculiar' path towards European integration has been qualified by a Swiss scholar as 'Sonderfall' (Wasserfallen, 2021).

2.3.2 Swiss Foreign Policy

At the Congress of Vienna in 1815, Switzerland declared its commitment to '*perpetual neutrality*' a principle that has continued to shape its decisions in foreign and security policy ever since (Claude, 2016). In the 1970s, Switzerland proactively developed its foreign policy, spurred by the end of the Cold War. In 1993, the Foreign Policy Report narrowed Swiss neutrality to its military core (Wenger & Nünlist, 2016). Thereupon, Switzerland started to autonomously participate in non-military sanctions imposed by the UN (Szép & Van Elsuwege, 2020; SECO, 2023). Moreover, in 1998, Switzerland expanded the scope of its economic sanctions beyond the UN framework, marking the first instance of adopting autonomous EU sanctions in the context of the Kosovo War (SECO, 2023; Petrig, 2022).

Nevertheless, the country always underlined the '*voluntary and autonomous*' nature of implementing international sanctions (Szép & Van Elsuwege, 2020: 12). In 2002, the Swiss Federal Council introduced the Federal Act on Implementing International Sanctions, granting it the power to decide on implementing non-military sanctions on a case-by-case basis (Szép & Van Elsuwege, 2020; Cardwell & Moret, 2023). Therefore, Switzerland is not included in the list of invitees for aligning with sanctions, leading scholars to categorize Switzerland as a case of *adoption* (Cardwell & Moret, 2023; Szép & Van Elsuwege, 2020). Switzerland's neutral stance results in limited motivation to align with EU foreign policy, although historical data shows it has adopted roughly '*half of the EU's autonomous sanctions*'. However, the reasons behind the motives for adopting these sanctions remain unclear (Cardwell & Moret, 2023: 13).

2.4 Propositions

In the following section propositions according to the case of Switzerland are derived from the theory stated above.

2.4.1 Utilitarian Proposition

If utilitarian motives best explain Switzerland's adoption of EU sanctions, there would need to be a significant emphasis on maximizing its utility, focusing on costs and benefits in the data. The literature distinguishes between economic and political benefits and costs (Marošková & Spurná, 2021; Mayer, 2014). When adopting EU sanctions, economic costs might stem from reductions in trade with the target country or with the EU (Mayer, 2014). Switzerland being reliant on smooth trade with EU member states (EDA, 2023), adopting EU sanctions may be perceived as a strategy to safeguard or increase economic exchange. This approach aligns with Switzerland's foreign policy objectives, emphasizing enhanced economic integration, as articulated in the literature (Wasserfallen, 2021). Finally, Switzerland would assess if the economic benefits outweigh the cost of adoption. Moreover, political costs/benefits might stem from cooperation among states, especially if the targeted state is a strategic partner in security affairs. In this context, the rational choice perspective of the power-based explanation suggests that greater dependence on the EU as a security actor leads to alignment with EU sanctions (Mayer, 2014). While Switzerland relies on its militia army for defense, its limited military resources increasingly depend on larger security partners such as the EU (DeVore & Stähli, 2011). Hence, *if* adopting EU sanctions enhances security, it aligns with maximizing collective utility. In essence, if Switzerland's behavior would align with the utilitarian theory, the benefits of adopting EU sanctions would surpass both the economic and political adaptation costs. Consequently, one would observe references to cost/benefit analysis in the economic as well as political domains. Therefore, the following propositions are derived:

P 1.0: The adoption of EU sanctions is driven by Switzerland's utilitarian motives.

P 1.1: Economic benefits drive Switzerland to adopt EU sanctions.

P 1.2: Political benefits from cooperation drive Switzerland to adopt EU sanctions.

2.4.2 Normative Proposition

If normative motives best explain Switzerland's adoption of EU sanctions, there would need to be significant emphasis on shared beliefs and identity in the data. As proposed in the literature, this logic would suggest that Switzerland's decision-making process is shaped by the logic of appropriateness, rooted in its identification and accordance with EU norms. Switzerland's adoption of EU sanctions would be attributed to its normative alignment with the values and principles *underlying* the sanctions regime (Marošková & Spurná, 2021; Marciacq & Jaramillo, 2015). Switzerland's Federal Constitution emphasizes freedom, democracy, independence, peace, solidarity, global openness, and diversity (Schweizer Bundesversammlung, 1999). The EU upholds human dignity, democracy, freedom, equality, the rule of law, and human rights, as stated in Article 2 of the Lisbon Treaty and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (Foret & Calligaro, 2018). This illustrates that Switzerland and the EU have almost identical values, hence adopting an EU sanction may be driven by the underlying normative reason of the sanction. Additionally, the data should show that Switzerland publicly criticizes the targeted country (Marošková & Spurná, 2021). Second, it may also be seen as appropriate to adopt the sanctions given a shared identity. The Swiss population identifies with the European identity and hence is willing to contribute to the collective identity of Europe (Schroedter et al., 2015; Datler et al., 2021). To conclude, if the sanctions are in accordance with Switzerland's values, norms, and identity, one would observe high values of identification with the EU and not the targeted country and Switzerland would refer to a shared identity. Therefore, the following propositions are derived:

P 2.0: The adoption of EU sanctions is driven by Switzerland's normative motives.

P 2.1: The underlying norms and values: democracy, freedom, peace, and human rights which are shared by both Switzerland and the EU, drive Switzerland to adopt the EU sanctions.

P 2.2: The identity shared between Switzerland and the EU drives Switzerland to adopt EU sanctions.

Overall, by analyzing utilitarian and normative motives, a more in-depth understanding of the factors influencing Switzerland's adoption of EU sanctions can be developed. The propositions are formulated to test the conditions under which either utilitarian or normative motives, or a mixture of both, are most likely to drive adoption.

3. Methods and Data

This chapter explains the research design which outlines the data sources, followed by justifications of methodological choices, and concludes with a discussion on validity and reliability.

3.1 Research Strategy

This small-N case study aims to explain the reasons for Switzerland adopting EU sanctions and test the theoretical explanatory power of the logic of consequences and logic of appropriateness. Blatter and Haverland (2012) developed congruence analysis, which involves utilizing case studies to assess and compare different theories. According to Blatter and Haverland (2012), two key principles underpin congruence analysis. First, it involves comparing empirical data with at least two theories. Second, the selection of theories should provide the most relevant information for analyzing outcomes. Therefore, to conduct an analysis, propositions based on selected theories are examined alongside empirical observations to determine their explanatory power (Blatter & Haverland, 2012). In the context of this study, two rival theories are chosen: a utilitarian and a normative perspective which constitutes a '*competing theories approach*' (Blatter & Haverland, 2012: 145). The choice of these theories stems from the literature where the chosen motives have been presented and empirically tested across a few case studies (Marošková & Spurná, 2021; Mayer, 2024). Specific propositions are derived from the chosen theories for comparison with empirical data. The analysis then evaluates the alignment of these theories with the data. The most compelling conclusion is if the data supports one theory, demonstrating its explanatory power while contradicting the other (Blatter & Haverland, 2012).

3.2 Case Study

This study specifically focuses on Switzerland and its adoption of EU sanctions (dependent variable). Unlike a typical congruence analysis, the selection of theories came after choosing the case study (Blatter & Haverland, 2012). This approach was motivated by the scarcity of existing research, particularly in understanding Switzerland's adoption of EU sanctions (Cardwell & Moret, 2023). Switzerland is a deviant case: First, it is not invited to align with EU sanctions, however,

Cardwell and Moret (2023: 13) claim that Switzerland still adopted approximately *'half of the EU autonomous sanctions'*. Second, Switzerland maintains a close yet distinctive relationship with the EU through bilateral agreements (Wasserfallen, 2021). The interplay of cooperation and autonomy in the Swiss-EU relationship deepens the understanding of its decision-making processes, addresses a gap in the literature, and offers a fresh perspective on third-country compliance with EU policies. Two instances of Swiss adoption of EU sanctions are selected for detailed analysis.

First, the sanctions against Russia in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine are analyzed. This case is chosen because of its significant geopolitical consequences reflected in economic and political implications. The adoption of the sanctions against Russia has sparked substantial internal debate regarding Swiss neutrality (Foulkes, 2014). However, Switzerland has already started to adopt some EU sanctions in 2014 after Russia illegally annexed Crimea. Initially, in March 2014, the Federal Council chose not to adopt all EU sanctions but took measures to prevent their circumvention. Later, on 27 August 2014, they decided to fully adopt the EU sanctions. In February 2022, the EU imposed the first package of sanctions against Russia in response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine (European Council, 2024a). Switzerland officially implemented all EU sanctions against Russia within a relatively brief period (SECO, 2023).

Second, the sanctions against Syria are analyzed. The EU imposed autonomous sanctions against Syria due to the violent repression of the civilian population by the Syrian armed and security forces (European Council, 2024b). This regime is one of the oldest and longest EU sanction regimes that Switzerland has adopted (SECO, 2023). Yet, it has not evoked as much internal debate. First adopted in 2011 and most recently updated in 2024, this case is selected for its long-term significance. Moreover, the Syrian conflict is a significant international crisis with profound humanitarian consequences, making it a compelling subject for analysis. Switzerland adopted all the sanctions within a similar timeframe (SECO, 2023).

These two cases are particularly interesting in answering the research question because the sanctions regimes have a long history, yet they are of current salience as they were both recently updated. Their significance in international relations provides abundant data compared to other potential cases. However, they are distinct in target, scope, and international context (see Table 1 in [Appendix](#)). Moreover, the sanctions have not sparked the same domestic interest within the Swiss population. These differences offer an interesting comparison suggesting the possibility of

differing perspectives on underlying motives, hence enhancing the reliability and validity of the study.

3.3 Operationalization of the Propositions

Based on the theoretical framework, key themes have emerged to guide the examination of the propositions through the chosen case studies. Table 2 and 3 summarize the motives and propose corresponding indicators that will be operationalized as codes in a subsequent step.

Table 2: Operationalization of Utilitarian Motive

Theory	Variable	Proposition	Motive	Indicators (Codes)
Utilitarian Theory	Cost / Benefit	P 1.1	Economic cost/benefit	<i>Rising or sinking:</i> Price Embargo (import/ export ban) Financial flow/marketplace FTA / Trade agreement Investment
		P 1.2	Political cost/benefit	<i>Security related:</i> Regional stability Military Dependency on the EU / NATO <i>Diplomacy related:</i> Political dialogue Closeness to the EU Evasion of sanction (platform to bypass sanction)

Note. Created by author.

Table 3: Operationalization of Normative Motive

Theory	Variable	Proposition	Motive	Indicators (Codes)	
Normative Theory	Norms / values	P 2.1	Shared beliefs	Democracy	Respect for the rule of law/ Free and fair elections / Transparency/ Accountability
				Freedom	Fundamental freedoms: Violation of freedom of: speech, assembly or association/media/ press
				Peace	Conflict prevention / Promote peace / Violation of international law
				Human rights	Civil and political rights / Inhumane treatment/ Reference to international standards
		P 2.2	Identity	Long-lasting partnership / shared European identity	

Note. Created by author.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection in this study is driven by the operationalization of the theories. The study adopts a qualitative content analysis including primary and secondary data that has been gathered predominately from the official Swiss setting. To identify the motives, different sources including press releases, newspaper articles, interviews, and policy are examined. To ensure validity and reliability, all data came from publicly accessible sources. The primary focus lies on the Swiss Federal Council's decisions and rationale as they deliberate on sanction packages on a case-by-case basis (SECO, 2002). Consequently, the primary focus is put on analyzing the press releases issued by admin.ch, which reflect the decisions and motivations of the Swiss Federal Council. Subsequently, the press releases are systematically coded and analyzed. The sanctions against Russia include 42 press releases, while the sanctions against Syria contain 12 press releases, hence a total of 54 press releases are coded and analyzed. The primary sources are referenced for the Russian case R_1 to R_54 and for the Syrian case S_1 to S_16. The timeframe is given and justified by the sanction regime starting in 2011 until 2024. The preliminary codes are formulated based on the theoretical framework, hence derived from the indicators stated above. Moreover, this study applies an open coding technique. This technique allows for new categories (unexpected codes) to emerge from the data, reducing confirmation bias (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). To ensure systematic coding, the software Atlas.ti is utilized. Sentences and paragraphs are chosen as coding units for more in-depth analysis than individual words. The final codebooks are added to the Appendix.

Additionally, for triangulation, primary sources such as foreign policy strategy documents and interviews are collected. Foreign policy strategy documents are retrieved from admin.ch, while interviews are sourced from admin.ch's interview archive, focusing on those addressing sanction regimes within the specified timeframe. These interviews, conducted by journalists with Swiss Federal Council members, were then published in newspapers. However, a certain limitation arises with these sources. Press releases and interviews reveal what is 'communicated', yet they might not necessarily provide information about the underlying motive behind the decision. Therefore, to provide a critical perspective, newspaper articles (secondary sources) are collected. To accomplish this, an extensive search is conducted across major Swiss newspapers representing both left- (Le Temps) and right-wing (NZZ) perspectives, to locate articles discussing sanctions related to Russia or Syria. Furthermore, to investigate the relations with the EU, newspaper articles from Euractiv,

Politico, and Reuters are systematically collected and analyzed. These secondary sources aim to offer additional context regarding the Russian and Syrian sanctions and embed potential findings. There exists a notable disparity in the availability of data between the two cases. The imbalance between the two cases is attributed to the limited media coverage surrounding the Syrian case.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

This research ensures validity by triangulation, incorporating multiple sources to cross-check findings and enhance credibility. Additionally, thick descriptions of the findings increase validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Unlike other forms of explanatory research, the goal of a congruence approach is not to prove causal relationships using measurement tools. Instead, it aims to evaluate the relative strength of theoretical approaches by identifying congruence between empirical evidence and abstract claims (Blatter & Haverland, 2012). Before conducting the empirical research, this thesis formulates testable and precise propositions derived from each theory. The specificity of the propositions regarding what should be observed in empirical data enhances the internal validity of this thesis. Moreover, the formulation of two propositions per theory aids in enhancing internal validity. Another element for comparison is the theories themselves. For this thesis, conflicting propositions are chosen, as this yields the most valuable results and thus enhances internal validity. (Blatter & Haverland, 2012). On the other hand, external validity concerns the extent to which findings can be generalized (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The findings are not generalizable because this is small-N research, focusing on two nested cases only. However, in congruence analysis, conclusions can still be extracted to contribute to the theoretical discourse (Blatter & Haverland, 2012). Reliability in social science research concerns the transparency and repeatability of a study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In the context of this congruence analysis, reliability is bolstered as the propositions are precisely derived from the abstract theories and justified during empirical analysis (Blatter & Haverland, 2012). Thus, when seeking to replicate this study it would be able to formulate similar propositions from the selected theory and draw comparable conclusions from empirical observations. Moreover, to ensure reliability, an intra-researcher check is conducted to verify if consistent results are obtained (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Overall, the thesis utilizes open-source data and will reflect on the potential limitations and biases of both the sources and the analysis.

4. Empirical Findings

The empirical analysis commences with examining both propositions reported in each case. The findings from the press releases, presented as percentages in Tables 4 and 5, are triangulated with the aforementioned documents to bolster the analysis. The analysis of the Syrian sanction is shorter compared to the Russian sanction due to limited data and less media coverage in Switzerland.

4.1 Sanctions against Russia

Table 4: Findings of the Press Releases regarding the Russian sanction

Motive	Economic Cost	Economic Benefit	Political Cost	Political Benefit	Shared Beliefs	Identity
Russian Sanction	25%	0%	21%	2%	43%	5%

Note. Created by author. The press releases (N=42) on Switzerland's adoption of Russian sanctions detected 148 codes, sorted by motive percentages in the table above. 4% of the codes are uncategorized. Reading example: 25% of all the codes (N=148) referenced to economic costs (37/148).

4.1.1 Utilitarian Motives

Table 4 indicates that the Russian sanctions are linked to significant economic costs (25%), with a quarter of the codes highlighting rising prices or reduced financial flow. The interview (R_43)¹ with Guy Parmelin, a Swiss Federal Council member, supports these findings. Parmelin emphasized in February 2022 that enforcing EU sanctions against Russia imposes significant costs on the Swiss economy, notably due to the crucial role of the Swiss financial sector in their enforcement. The Swiss Bankers Association calculated that Switzerland's adoption of EU sanctions against Russia incurred a total cost of CHF 150 milliards for the Swiss financial sector (Swiss Info, 2023). Moreover, the sanctions against Russia are very complex as the US, UK, and EU sanction regimes are not entirely congruent on how to sanction Russian assets. Therefore, Swiss banks are challenged by *'major difficulties with implementation and unnecessary compliance risks'* (Swiss Info, 2023). Failure to properly implement sanctions raises the likelihood of a reputational cost on the Swiss banking industry (Delmas, 2023). The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) recognized the complexities of implementing sanctions against Russia and Switzerland's

¹ References of analyzed documents are made available in the appendix.

limited experience in this area. Therefore, they decided to increase their staff to ensure effective enforcement of the sanctions which poses an additional cost (Vincenz, 2023).

However, apart from the financial sector, the main economic cost mentioned in the press releases is the oil embargo. At first, imposing a Russian oil embargo seems to carry minimal consequences for Switzerland, considering that only 1.2% of its oil was sourced from Russia in 2021. Yet, Germany, which supplies nearly 40% of Switzerland's oil, heavily relies on Russian oil, as Russia emerged as Germany's primary oil supplier in 2021 (WITS, 2023). This dependency on Russian oil created a supply chain vulnerability for both Germany and Switzerland, which was disrupted when the EU adopted the oil embargo. Ensuring a reliable energy supply poses significant challenges for both the EU and Switzerland, particularly during periods of conflict or crisis. Moreover, Switzerland is one of the *'largest trading hubs for oil and petroleum'* (EDA, 2023a). Although the commodities never reach Swiss soil, they are traded by Swiss-based companies (EDA, 2023a). Therefore, when the oil embargo was imposed, the Swiss commodity industry *'was in complete panic'* (Duparc et al., 2023). Thus, the oil embargo seems to constitute an even higher cost than framed in the press releases.

An additional aspect regarding the energy supply is the EU's omission of a gas embargo on Russia. In the first quarter of 2022, Russia was the EU's biggest gas supplier via pipeline with a 38.8% share (European Council, 2024c). Therefore, the EU may have avoided a gas embargo due to its heavy reliance on gas, which would lead to significant costs and risk to energy supply reliability. This can be seen as a utilitarian decision. Nonetheless, since 2022, EU states voluntarily reduced reliance on Russian gas to 8%, aiming to enhance energy independence and diversify sources to mitigate unreliable supply risks (Armstrong & Richter, 2023). Simultaneously, Russia deliberately decreased gas and oil supply to Europe, aiming to pressure and counter European sanctions (BBC, 2022). According to Cooper (2023), Putin is described as an 'energy bully', using gas supply to intimidate the West. While in 2021, Switzerland imported 41% of its gas from Russia, it followed the EU member states' trend and reduced its Russian gas imports to 10% in 2024 (BFE, 2024). This drives up gas prices and compromises EU and Swiss energy security, incurring both economic and political costs.

Although the economic costs of adopting the sanctions are shown to be significant for Switzerland, no benefit (0%) is apparent in the press releases or interviews. On the contrary, one interview (R_45) even points out: *'Switzerland does not seek to benefit from the war'*. However, this is not unexpected and highlights a limitation of this study. Press releases and interviews with

the Federal Councils summarize what is ‘communicated’ to the public but not necessarily the ‘true reasons’ behind the decisions. However, the picture is more nuanced when considering the SRF investigation (Swiss Info, 2023), Public Eye's NGO findings (Duparc et al., 2023), and non-Swiss sources (Wrede, 2022; Reuters, 2024). Reporters have discovered that certain Swiss firms exploit loopholes to evade the sanction regime mainly in the commodity sector. These blind spots in the sanction’s regime allow firms to potentially profit while undermining the sanctions' intended impact (Swiss Info, 2023). According to Wrede (2022), the commodity trade in Switzerland is still under-recorded as well as underregulated which leads to these loopholes in the first place. Hence, the Swiss parliament adopted a proposal that calls for stricter enforcement and monitoring of sanctions against Russia particularly concerning the Swiss commodity sector (Nationalrat, 2023). Driven by this proposal, the Federal Council's commissioned SECO to establish stricter regulations, aimed at preventing economic benefits from the sanction regime (Classen & Bachmann, 2023).

However, contradictions persist regarding Swiss commodity trade amid the Ukraine conflict. Tagesanzeiger's investigation reveals firms like Glencore reaping record profits from coal due to the oil embargo. Thus, Swiss tax authorities likely profit from the crisis (Renz & Flubacher, 2022), indicating Switzerland benefits from sanctions due to its strong global commodity trade position. However, the Federal Council's ongoing efforts to regulate this impact indicate these benefits might be unintentional side effects rather than deliberate (Swiss Info, 2023). Although there appear to be some benefits, they do not align with the expected outcomes outlined in P1.1. There is no evidence indicating that Switzerland adopted the sanctions with the intention to safeguard its economic relations with the EU. Moreover, since the implementation of the sanctions, there has been no observable increase in economic integration between Switzerland and the EU. According to the report, ‘Schweiz-EU in Zahlen’ the foreign trade volume (import+export) from 2021 to 2022 remained stable after accounting for inflation (EDA, 2023b). Statistics from 2023 are not available yet and remain to be seen. Yet, it could be argued that trade between the EU and Switzerland could have been affected when not adopting the sanctions.

On the other hand, implementing the sanctions led to political costs (21%) such as deteriorating relations with Russia. The EU member states as well as Switzerland are on the Russian list of ‘unfriendly actors’ as noted by the Embassy of Switzerland in Russia. The Federal Council underlined this further in an interview: *‘We had to expect that Russia would call international Geneva and Switzerland's neutrality into question and that diplomatic relations*

would cool down' (R_46). However, Switzerland is more politically and economically dependent on the EU than Russia (EDA, 2023b). The significance of Switzerland's prioritization of its relationship with the EU is underscored by the consistent mention (21%) of *'preventing Switzerland from being used to evade any of these sanctions'* (R_1). This indicates that Switzerland values its ties with the EU more than potentially undermining EU sanctions in favor of its relationship with Russia. Moreover, the interview with the Foreign Minister further emphasizes the importance of fostering closer cooperation with the EU (R_48). Hence, choosing not to implement the sanctions could have resulted in considerably higher political costs, especially in terms of responses from the EU.

This was evidenced in 2014 when Switzerland initially resisted full adoption of EU sanctions against Russia. This was criticized by the EU for self-interest favoring Swiss banks and undermining the EU sanctions (Foulkes, 2014). In 2014, the EU's economic sanctions escalated pressure on Switzerland (SRF, 2014), likely prompting the Federal Council's eventual compliance. A similar scenario occurred in 2022 when the Federal Council delayed the decision to adopt the EU sanctions by four days. Once more external and internal pressure sparked (Shields & Koltowitz, 2022). In 2022, all Swiss parties except the far right (SVP), pressured the government to adopt the EU sanctions (SRF, 2022). Moreover, the EU made clear in the press briefing on 25.02.2022, that Switzerland is *'part of Europe'* and *'so we expect our partners, our neighbors, our ally, to follow suit in standing up for defending the principles on which our communities and our countries are based.'* (Kijewski, 2022). This direct request of the EU to adopt the sanctions increased the pressure on Switzerland and hence resulted in the full adoption only four days later. In summary, the increased pressure exerted on Switzerland by the EU suggests that failing to adopt the sanctions could have led to diplomatic tensions or political repercussions. Therefore, it seems that the political costs are lower when Switzerland adopts the sanctions, considering its close relationship with the EU.

Moreover, the data suggests political benefits emerged since the adoption of the sanctions (2%). Switzerland was able to offer its *'Gute Dienste'* (good services) on several occasions. For example, since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Switzerland hosted conferences such as the reconstruction conference in Lugano in 2022 (FDFA, 2022). Moreover, there will be another peace conference in June 2024 which aims to achieve peace in Ukraine (Federal Council, 2024). This can be understood as bolstering its diplomatic relations and international standing. Political benefits are also highlighted in the interviews (R_44, R_45, R_46) emphasizing the significance of a *'rule-*

based order' in safeguarding Swiss security and welfare (R_45). It is highlighted that *'only a stable and secure situation allows us to remain independent'* (R_45). Given Switzerland's position as a small, neutral country situated in the heart of Europe, with a relatively small militia army, its security relies heavily on alliances with entities such as the EU and NATO. Therefore, by adopting sanctions aimed at promoting stability and security in Europe, Switzerland politically benefits by enhancing its political leverage and strengthening its cooperation with key security allies. This ensures a more secure environment for Switzerland, reducing the risk of regional instability and enhancing its ability to maintain its independence amidst geopolitical uncertainties (R_45). Therefore, political benefits (2%) seem to partially drive the adoption of the EU sanctions hence confirming parts of P1.2.

In conclusion, given the absence of evidence supporting economic benefits and only very limited evidence of political benefits to counterbalance the substantial costs associated with restrictions in the Swiss financial sector and energy supply insecurities, the utilitarian theory may not provide a comprehensive explanation. Therefore, P1.0 does not seem to be congruent with the empirical findings in the case of the Russian sanction. However, the alternative scenario of not adopting the sanctions, as evidenced in 2014 and by the four-day delay in 2022, highlights the pressure exerted by the EU on Switzerland. Therefore, not adopting the sanctions may entail substantial political costs due to the dependency on the EU.

4.1.2 Normative Motives

Despite the Swiss neutrality, the country positioned itself pro-Ukraine and against the Russian actions which confirms parts of P2.0 (R_45). The European Parliament adopted a text in October 2023 regarding the 'EU-Switzerland relations' stating:

- A) *'The EU and Switzerland are politically and culturally close like-minded allies with shared values such as democracy, the rule of law, human rights.'*
- B) *'The EU and Switzerland have a long-standing relationship founded on shared values and goals of peace, the commitment to upholding multilateralism and the rules-based international order.'*

These shared beliefs mentioned by the European Parliament are also evident in the findings of the Swiss press releases regarding the Russian sanction (43%). References to the upholding of 'human rights', 'violation of international law', and mainly 'peace' are evident in the data. 'Peace' (19%)

is the most frequently mentioned 'shared belief'. Therefore, press releases highlighted on several occasions the need for a peaceful Europe. In the interviews, it is underlined that the commitment to peace reflects a deep-rooted belief in the importance of preserving human rights and preventing harm. Peace is not merely the absence of conflict but also the presence of justice, equality, and mutual respect among nations (R_46, R_50). By advocating for a peaceful resolution to the crisis in Ukraine, Switzerland demonstrates its commitment to fostering a world where dialogue and diplomacy prevail over aggression and coercion. This normative approach finds its basis in the foreign policy strategy documents, notably strategies for 2020-2023 and 2024-2027, which prioritize 'peace and security' in Europe and the EU (R_55, R_56). Moreover, the interview (R_50) emphasizes that for Switzerland *'neutrality means standing up for peace and security'*. Shared beliefs as well as norms and values are a reappearing theme in 5 out of 7 interviews: *'We are a community of values. (...). We need to form a community with our neighbors that is as strong as possible'* (R_48). Therefore, Switzerland wants to advocate and defend its values: freedom, democracy, human rights, and international law (R_46). These statements underline the importance of Switzerland sharing the same beliefs and values as the EU. Therefore, P2.1 is confirmed by empirical evidence.

Moreover, the motive 'identity' (5%) is evident in the press releases, referring to 'a closer partnership', 'being part of Europe' and even more concretely to 'identity of the EU'. However, the press releases do not highlight this normative motive extensively. It is more highlighted in the interviews (R_44), (R_45), and (R_46). The Foreign Minister highlighted that Switzerland adopted the sanctions due to its shared identity with the EU. *'Switzerland is part of the European society'*, underscoring the importance of a close partnership with the EU. Therefore, P2.2 is confirmed by parts of the data. Moreover, the normative proposition (P2.0) is strengthened by a statement in the interview with the Foreign Minister when he mentions that adopting the sanctions was *'the appropriate response to the Russian aggression'* (R_44).

A limitation emerges when examining the normative motive. Despite identifying normative approaches in press releases and retrieved interviews, the analyzed newspaper articles do not acknowledge this motive. This limitation might arise because newspaper articles focus on political realities rather than abstract normative motives. While press releases and interviews emphasize idealistic and moral justifications, the media often overlooks these in favor of more concrete content (Maat & de Jong, 2013). Furthermore, the influence exerted by the EU is not factored into this motive. As indicated in the utilitarian motive, there was pressure from the EU to compel

Switzerland to adopt the sanctions, especially considering Switzerland's European ties and shared values as mentioned in the EU press briefing in February 2022 (Kijewski, 2022).

4.1.3 Summary

Switzerland's adoption of EU sanctions against Russia reflects a balance between utilitarian and normative factors. The utilitarian view highlights the 'economic' (25%) and 'political costs' (21%) of the sanctions, including challenges from the energy crisis and the pressure that Switzerland does not offer a platform to evade the EU sanctions. Despite high costs, Switzerland still adopts the sanctions. Therefore, the absence of 'economic benefits' towards the EU weakens P1.0. Switzerland's commitment to international norms suggests a normative motive. Although 'identity' seems to have little impact (5%), the interviews with Federal Council Cassis emphasize the significance of a shared identity and a strong partnership with the EU. Moreover, the consistent emphasis on 'shared beliefs' (43%), highlights the normative motive and hence strengthens P2.0. Therefore, the analysis suggests that normative considerations may be more explanatory (P2.0). However, the utilitarian motive (P1.0) remains significant, as it becomes apparent from data analysis that a cost-benefit analysis likely influenced the decision to implement the sanctions. It becomes even clearer when considering the scenario of not adopting the sanctions and the resulting internal and external pressure. Choosing not to adopt would most likely incur a greater political cost compared to adopting them, as the political connections with the EU are stronger than those with Russia. Hence, Switzerland's sanction adoption likely results from both utilitarian and normative factors.

4.2 Sanctions against Syria

Table 5: Findings of the Press Releases regarding the Syrian sanction

Motive	Economic Cost	Economic Benefit	Political Cost	Political Benefit	Shared Beliefs	Identity
Syrian Sanction	10%	0%	6%	0%	54%	15%

Note. Created by author. The press releases (N=12) on Switzerland's adoption of Syrian sanctions detected 52 codes, sorted by motive percentages in the table above. 15% of the codes are uncategorized.

4.2.1 Utilitarian Motives

‘Economic costs’ (10%) are mentioned only in the early press releases of 2011-2012 where the Swiss government underlines that sanctioning the oil has potential costs for Switzerland (S_1, S_2). Since 2015, press releases have stated that Switzerland faces minimal economic repercussions, as Syria is not a significant trading partner for the country (BAZG, 2024). Furthermore, there has been ‘*no change in politics*’, resulting in no alteration in relations with Syria or any other significant partner (S_1). This suggests that the political costs (6%) are minimal, with the only notable consequence being a potential strain on the Swiss embassy in Syria. However, given the limited diplomatic ties between Switzerland and Syria, this impact can be largely disregarded (S_8). Hence, as the economic and political costs are low or almost non-existent, there are no big hurdles in adopting the EU sanctions.

However, from the findings, there are no benefits of adopting the sanctions (0%) which weakens the utilitarian proposition P1.0. Although there is no direct benefit, *not* adopting the sanction might be expected to be more costly. This is implied in the foreign policy document of 2012 (15: 1360): ‘*If Switzerland stands aside, there is a risk that the trade and financial restrictions adopted by the EU will be undermined via Switzerland*’. Therefore, it is interpreted that choosing *not* to adopt the sanctions would most likely carry the risk of Switzerland becoming a platform for evading the sanctions and hence compromising the effectiveness of the EU sanction. This risk arises due to Switzerland's central location within Europe and its strong economic connections with the EU. For instance, not adopting the oil embargo would enable Switzerland to maintain its trade in Syrian oil, benefiting its commodity hub and facilitating continued trade for its partners via Switzerland (Frankfurter Rundschau, 2023). Consequently, this action would undercut the EU sanctions and hence most likely spark international criticism. This could lead to potential political

or economic repercussions. Hence, given Switzerland's strong political and economic bonds with the EU and limited diplomatic relations with Syria, abstaining from adopting the sanctions would result in a greater potential political expense compared to implementing them.

4.2.3 Normative Motives

In the press releases regarding the Syrian sanction, 'shared beliefs' (54%) refers to human rights violations, such as the repression of civil society. However, this is unsurprising, as human rights violations were the trigger for both the EU and, subsequently, Switzerland to adopt the sanctions (see Chapter 3.2). Moreover, the emphasis on the pursuit of peace and the prevention of violence, highlights Switzerland's dedication to promoting a non-violent world, aligning with the EU's commitment which confirms P2.1. Identity and partnership with the EU are emphasized in the press releases (15%).

The adoption of the sanction faced criticism from the Swiss parliament through an interpellation in 2021 (S_15). In essence, the Swiss parliament criticized how the sanctions, initially intended to address repression against civilians, have instead contributed to worsening the humanitarian situation in Syria. As a result, the civilian population is now bearing the greatest burden of this crisis (Mohamad, 2023). This presents contradictions: while the sanctions were initially imposed to address the repression of civil society and human rights violations, the interpellation emphasizes that the sanctions exacerbate the situation for civil society, thus worsening the humanitarian crisis in Syria.

As a result, the Federal Council was compelled to modify the sanctions already in 2019 to mitigate their severe impact on the humanitarian situation in Syria. Moreover, the Federal Council announced further applying 'punctual loosening' in 2021 (S_15). Therefore, Switzerland gradually began easing the sanctions from 2019 onwards (see S_1-S_12), incrementally reducing their stringency. Conversely, the EU consistently extended the sanction regime each year, expanding its scope further (European Council, 2024b). From a normative perspective, it highlights Switzerland's prioritization of humanitarian principles in its foreign policy decisions. Deciding to modify and gradually ease sanctions shows an ethical commitment to minimizing harm to civilian populations. In contrast, there is a misalignment between Switzerland and the EU on whether they share the same values and beliefs. However, after the earthquake in Syria and Turkey in 2023, the Swiss Federal Council decided to modify the sanctions again due to the humanitarian crisis to

facilitate humanitarian actors to help rebuild infrastructure damaged by the war or the earthquake. This was done ‘*in accordance with the EU*’ (S_12), as Switzerland adopted the ‘humanitarian exception’ put in place by the EU in March 2023. This underscores the nation's commitment to addressing humanitarian needs while cooperating with the EU. To conclude, these findings confirm both P2.1 and P2.2.

4.2.3 Summary

Utilitarian motives indicate that the economic (10%) and political costs (6%) are minimal or non-existent, making implementation relatively straightforward. However, Switzerland sees no clear benefits from adopting these sanctions, which weakens the explanatory power of the utilitarian motive (P1.0). Yet, not adopting the sanctions risks Switzerland becoming a platform for other countries to evade them, compromising the effectiveness of EU sanctions and potentially leading to political or economic consequences from the EU. On the other hand, normative motives emphasize Switzerland's dedication to shared beliefs such as human rights, peace, and non-violence, confirming P2.1. Switzerland's identity and partnership with the EU are highlighted, albeit facing criticism from the Swiss parliament for the perceived ineffectiveness of sanctions in Syria. Switzerland's response to Syrian sanctions indicates a strong commitment to humanitarian principles, supporting P2.0. While there may be differences with the EU on certain approaches, Switzerland's adoption of the humanitarian exception after the 2023 earthquake underscores its willingness to cooperate within a framework prioritizing humanitarian need.

5. Discussion

In this discussion, comparing the case studies (see Table 6) relates the findings to the propositions. Additionally, the findings are connected to theory, implications, and the development of existing research.

5.1 Case Comparison and Proposition Conclusions

Table 6: Summary of Findings of the Press Releases

Theory Proposition	Utilitarian Motive				Normative Motive	
	P 1.1		P 1.2		P 2.1	P 2.2
Motive	Economic Cost	Economic Benefit	Political Cost	Political Benefit	Shared Beliefs	Identity
Russian Sanction	25%	-	21%	2%	43%	5%
Syrian Sanction	10%	-	6%	-	54%	15%
Total	21%	-	17%	1.5%	45.5%	7.5%
Overall	Economic + Political cost 38% Economic + Political benefit 1.5%				Shared belief + Identity 53%	

Note. Created by author. The press releases (N=54) on Switzerland's adoption of Syrian and Russian sanctions detected 200 codes, sorted by motive percentages in the table above.

5.1.2 Utilitarian Motives

In the case of Switzerland's adoption of EU sanctions against Russia and Syria, Table 6 shows that both economic (21% / 0%) and political (17% / 1.5%) considerations play important roles.

PI.1. Economic Costs / Benefits

Economic costs associated with adopting EU sanctions against Russia (25%) include impacts on the financial sectors and energy supply. In contrast, the economic costs mentioned in the press releases of the Syrian sanction regime appear slightly lower (10%), all found within two press releases (S_1, S_2). Therefore, the economic costs seem to be more important in the context of the Russian case, meaning that the hurdle to adopting the sanction would be higher. This outcome is unsurprising, as Russia is the more important trading partner to Switzerland, while Syria's trade

exchange with Switzerland is minimal (BAZG, 2024). Moreover, the closer geographical proximity of Russia, alongside its shared continent with Europe, might further explain this difference.

Within the press releases, there is no indication that Switzerland benefited from adopting EU sanctions. However, when analyzing the newspaper articles, investigations were pointing to certain benefits in the commodity trade regarding the Russian sanction. Yet, these benefits occurred as a side effect due to lax regulations and cannot be identified as the driver of the decision to adopt the sanctions in the first place. In the data corpus, no empirical evidence has been found to indicate that Switzerland adopted the sanctions due to the benefit of safeguarding or increasing its trade with the EU. Although the literature indicates that countries typically adopt sanctions when benefits outweigh costs (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2019), Switzerland's case contradicts this expectation. Despite high costs and lacking direct rewards, Switzerland still implemented EU sanctions in both cases. Therefore, P.1.1, that economic benefit drives the adoption of the sanction is not congruent with the empirical data, indicating that indirect benefits were insufficient to drive Switzerland's decision.

P1.2. Political Costs/ Benefits

The data of both cases underlined several times that Switzerland does not want to provide a platform to evade the EU sanctions. The Federal Council stresses that a motive to adopt the EU sanctions is to '*prevent Switzerland from being used to evade any of these sanctions*' (R_1, S_1). By emphasizing the motive to avoid Switzerland from being utilized to evade EU sanctions, the Swiss Federal Council indicates a strategic decision to maintain a positive relationship with the EU. It suggests that Switzerland prioritizes its diplomatic ties with the EU over potentially conflicting interests. This approach might provoke short-term political costs but could hold long-term political benefits by enhancing Switzerland's credibility and strengthening its partnership with the EU. These findings explain the decision that *not adopting* sanctions could potentially incur significantly higher political costs for Switzerland. By abstaining from adopting EU sanction regimes, Switzerland risks a backlash from EU member states committed to enforcing these measures. This was evidenced by the pressure the EU exerted on Switzerland. In contrast to the sanctions against Syria, where external pressure was not prominently reflected in the data, the sanctions against Russia saw intentional calls from the EU, directing attention towards Switzerland, as noted in the press brief (Kijewski, 2022). This approach allows the EU to exert its influence. The EU has an interest in invoking countries to align with its sanction regime, as this can enhance

its regional and global standing (De Vries et al., 2014; Cardwell, 2015; Szép & Van Elsuwege, 2020). Furthermore, coordinating with external partners can improve the effectiveness of the sanctions (Cardwell, 2015; De Vries et al., 2014). Moreover, when a neutral country like Switzerland voluntarily adopts EU sanctions without a formal invitation, it might send an even more powerful signal. This act underscores the EU's international identity and broadcasts a message worldwide regarding the EU's authority in Europe. For the EU, Switzerland's adoption of its sanctions in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine represents a significant success in its standing as an international actor. Therefore, this example illustrates that Switzerland has moved closer to the EU in coordinating foreign policy.

However, Switzerland also considers potential political benefits. The argument proposed by Mayer (2014), which suggests that 'weaker' states tend to align with EU policies to mitigate perceived external threats, is substantiated by the findings of this analysis. This aspect is particularly emphasized in the context of Russia, largely due to its geographical proximity and the security risks it poses to Europe. These security concerns prompted Switzerland to consider that adopting EU sanctions could enhance stability, security, and cooperation. This underscores Switzerland's dependence on larger security allies such as the EU.

To conclude, P.1.2, that political benefit drives the adoption of the sanction is only partially congruent with the empirical data. While there are certain benefits, the political costs and foremost the political costs that would be incurred in case of non-compliance would most certainly outweigh the mentioned political benefits.

5.1.3 Normative Motives

In the case of Switzerland's adoption of EU sanctions against Russia and Syria, Table 6 shows that particularly shared beliefs (45.5%) seem to play an important role.

P.2.1. Shared Beliefs

Both cases discuss normative motives underlying Switzerland's adoption of sanctions. The focus is mainly put on 'shared beliefs' (45.5%). In the case of the Russian sanction, the primary focus lies on 'peace', whereas, in the sanction against Syria, the focus is predominantly on 'human rights'. This finding resonates with the EU's reasoning for adopting the sanction in each case (European Council, 2024b; European Council 2024d). Hence, P.2.1, which posits that shared

beliefs drive sanction adoption, aligns with empirical data, given its prominence across all documents. This finding aligns with the findings of the OSCE study by Marciacq and Jaramillo (2015). However, the EU's public and potential subtle pressure likely played a significant role. Given Switzerland's dependence on the EU for stability, its decision may have been shaped by the EU's normative power. According to Manners (2002), this dynamic highlights the EU's ability to shape the behavior of neighboring states through normative means, reinforcing its status as a normative power in international relations.

P.2.1 Identity

'Identity' is less prominent, especially in the Russian case (5%), which is somewhat surprising. Literature suggests that identity, historical, and cultural affiliations are key factors influencing alignment in some instances (Marošková & Spurná, 2021). Despite Switzerland's cultural closeness to the EU, this aspect has not been explicitly framed as such in press releases or newspaper articles. Furthermore, it was anticipated that during times of war in Europe, countries like Switzerland would seek to strengthen bonds, emphasizing shared identity to demonstrate unity as a community (Saunders, 2023). However, this is not evident in the press releases. Nevertheless, the Foreign Minister emphasizes the importance of a close partnership with the EU in addressing Russian aggression. In conclusion, while mentioned less frequently in both cases, the assertion in P.2.2 that 'identity' motivates Switzerland to adopt sanctions is only partially supported.

Table 7: Findings overview

Case	Russian Sanction				Syrian Sanction			
	Utilitarian		Normative		Utilitarian		Normative	
Theory								
Proposition	P1.1	P1.2	P2.1	P2.2	P1.1	P1.2	P2.1	P2.2
Empirical Congruence	Low	Moderate	High	Moderate	Low	Moderate	High	Moderate

Note. Created by author. According to the findings of Table 6 and the document analysis.

Table 7 summarizes the overall findings and interestingly shows the same results for both cases. The table highlights that the most empirical congruence in both cases is found with the normative motive, more concretely 'shared beliefs' such as human rights and peace. This is an interesting finding as both cases have a different context, trigger, and scope, empirical congruence is found in the same motive. According to Table 6, while considering both cases, the normative motive makes

up 53% of the codes, while 'cost' constitutes 38% and benefits only 1.5%. Therefore, there is moderate to high empirical congruence for the normative motive (P2.0) in both cases, while the utilitarian motive (P1.0) only exhibits low to moderate empirical congruence. However, in congruence analysis, the most compelling conclusion would be if the empirical data aligns with one theory, thereby showcasing its explanatory power and contradicting the other theory (Blatter & Haverland, 2012). Hence, this analysis does not prove that normative theory is conclusively explanatory as the utilitarian theory is not fully contradicted. Yet, the analysis indicates that the normative theory is the most fitting theory in the cases of Switzerland adopting the EU sanctions against Russia and Syria.

However, Switzerland's decision to adopt EU sanctions against Russia and Syria reflects most likely an interplay of utilitarian and normative motives. When examining secondary sources such as newspaper articles that comment on the decisions made by the Federal Council, a slightly different picture emerges. The newspaper articles hinted that a cost-benefit analysis was considered by the Federal Council, even though it was not explicitly described as such. However, despite the presence of a cost-benefit analysis, the outcome does not align with the theoretical framework, which suggests that adoption costs need to be outweighed by rewards or benefits (Schimmelfenning & Sedelmeier, 2019). Conversely, the normative motive was predominantly found in interviews and press releases but was not evident in newspaper articles. While press releases, under the Federal Council's control, emphasize normative motives, to present a positive public image, newspaper articles, crafted by independent journalists, tend to prioritize a critical analysis of the decisions (Maat & de Jong, 2013). Hence, the contrasting portrayal not only emphasizes the interplay between motives but also the complex relationship between strategic communication and impartial journalism.

To conclude, Switzerland's decision-making process reflected a pragmatic mixture of utilitarian and normative motives. While a cost-benefit analysis is present, it does not primarily focus on economic and political benefits versus costs. Instead, it emphasizes the political costs of compliance and non-compliance, particularly Switzerland's concern about not becoming a hub for evading EU sanctions. This was weighed against EU pressure and the existing status quo. The EU's influence underscores the importance of Switzerland's close ties to the Union, highlighting the significant political costs of not adopting the sanctions. Ignoring the war and human rights violations would have maintained the status quo, but this is where the normative played a crucial role in adopting the sanctions. This pragmatic approach aims to prevent Switzerland from

becoming a platform for evading sanctions, addressing both the utilitarian motive of avoiding political repercussions and the normative motive of addressing perceived injustice.

6. Conclusion

This study examined Switzerland's adoption of EU sanctions against Russia and Syria, analyzing the underlying motives through the comparison of utilitarian and normative motives. The findings detect economic, political, and normative factors driving Switzerland's decisions. The empirical data reveals a dominant role for normative motives, particularly shared beliefs related to peace and human rights. Utilitarian motives were also present. Switzerland considered political costs and benefits, aiming to maintain positive EU relations and avoid becoming a hub for sanction evasion. This highlights the importance of the utilitarian motive, viewed not as a traditional cost-benefit balance, but as weighing the political costs of compliance versus non-compliance. Nonetheless, the analysis concludes that while utilitarian motives play a role, they are not the primary drivers of Switzerland's sanction adoption. Instead, the normative motives provide a more fitting explanation.

However, the analysis of foreign policy decisions is limited, particularly when relying solely on official communications like press releases, as these documents are carefully compiled to convey specific narratives. While conducting interviews with key decision-makers might have addressed this issue to a certain extent, securing interviews with Federal Council members is challenging due to their high rank. Even if attained, they may not fully share the true motives behind decisions. Hence, using an ethnographic approach in future research, such as sitting in plenary meetings involving high-ranking officials or parliament members discussing sanctions, could provide an alternative. Moreover, conducting surveys with state employees like diplomats could help to gain a broader perspective on motives. Additionally, the study's focus on sanctions against Russia and Syria may not capture all influential factors like economic dependencies, regional dynamics, or historical alliances. Therefore, future research should examine different scenarios in which Switzerland either adopted or abstained from adopting EU sanctions over time to provide a more thorough understanding of Switzerland's decision-making motives. Moreover, future research should delve into additional dimensions such as the influence of domestic politics and public opinion.

From this study, the EU can learn that its normative influence through shared beliefs is strong and that strategic communication about the normative reasons for sanctions may enhance compliance among partner countries. Switzerland has learned about the EU's use of pressure, emphasizing the importance of showing solidarity with the EU on crucial decisions that affect all of Europe. This experience might help Switzerland in its future negotiations regarding EU-Swiss

relations. Moreover, it is recommended that in the future the EU should share sanction policies with Switzerland in advance, enabling Switzerland to assess options and communicate decisions. This could reduce confusion and compliance risks as pointed out in the data (Swiss Info, 2023). Additionally, aligning sanction regimes between the EU, US, and UK would facilitate information sharing and coordination, making it easier for third countries like Switzerland to adopt sanctions correctly and enhance their overall effectiveness (De Vries et al., 2014).

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8. Appendix

Table 1: Overview cases

Country	Russia	Syria
Geographical proximity	European country Approximately 2000km	Middle Eastern country Approximately 2800km
Trade relations: Exports + Imports in 2022 (BAZG, 2024)	Trade partner 24 out of 202	Trade partner 137 out of 202
Diplomatic relations (EDA, 2024)	Before 2022: close diplomatic ties including peace promotion and cultural exchange.	Focus on Peace, Security, and Human Rights.

Note. Adapted from (BAZG, 2024) and (EDA, 2024).

Target	Sanction against Russia	Sanction against Syria
Initiation	2014	2011
Latest update	2024	2024
Trigger	Russian illegal annexation of Crimea Russian war of aggression against Ukraine	Violent repression of civilian population by Syrian armed and security forces
Scope	Targeted measures Economic measures Diplomatic measures Visa measures	Targeted measures Economic measures

Note. Adapted from European Council (2024b / 2024d) and SECO (2023).

Codebook Sanction against Russia (adapted from atlas.ti)

Sanctions against Russia					
Press releases / date	References to economic cost / benefit	References to political cost/ benefit	References to norms and values	References to identity	Unexpected? (added afterwards)
Pre-Codes	Economic cost No economic cost Economic benefit <i>Rising or sinking:</i> Price Embargo (import/ export ban) Financial flow/marketplace FTA / Trade agreement Investment	Political cost No political cost Political benefit <i>Security related:</i> Regional stability Military Dependency on the EU / NATO <i>Diplomatic Themes:</i> Political dialogue Closeness to the EU	Democracy / Pluralism Respect for the rule of law/ Free and fair elections / Transparency/ Accountability Fundamental freedoms: Violation of freedom of: speech, assembly or association/media/ press Conflict prevention / Promote peace (no violence) Civil and political rights Inhumane treatment Reference to international standards	Long-lasting partnership Shared European identity Harmony with EU values	-
Findings summary:	Economic costs (37x) - Oil prices - Financial flow - Gold embargo - Weapon embargo - Costly for the Swiss industry - FTA on hold - Investment prevention - Ban on imports of steel	Political benefit (3x) - Bring 'Gute Dienste' in times of war - Defense of Swiss security	Democracy (1x) Human rights (9x) In. line with international norm (2x) Peace (no violence) (27x) Violation of international law (24x)	Harmony with EU values (7x)	Prevention of bypass mechanism (31x) Other big players (influence from OSCE and US) (3x) Increase the effectiveness of overall sanction (4x)
1 / 26/3/14	Economic cost (FTA on hold)		International norm Violation of international law 3x Human rights		Prevention of bypass mechanism 2x Other big player (OSCE, US)
2 / 2/4/14	Economic cost: Schweizer Finanzplatz darf nicht profitieren Economic benefit (Geschäftsbeziehungen dürfen weiter bestehen)				Prevention of bypass mechanism 2x
3 / 2/5/14	Economic cost				Prevention of bypass mechanism 2x
4 / 13/8/14	Economic cost (Waffenlieferung eingeschränkt)		Peace 2x Violation of international law 2x		Prevention of bypass mechanism 3x
5 / 27/8/2014	Economic costs 4x				Prevention of bypass

					mechanism 2x
6/ 12/11/14	Economic costs 2x				Prevention of bypass mechanism 4x
7/ 6/3/15	Economic cost				Prevention of bypass mechanism 3x
8 / 1/7/15					Prevention of bypass mechanism 2x
9/ 23/2/22			Violation of international law 5x Integrity Peace2x Human rights		Prevention of bypass mechanism 4x
10 / 25/2/22					Prevention of bypass mechanism 2x
11 /28/2/22	Economic cost	Political cost: keep the independence and neutrality of Switzerland = defend through sanctions Political benefit: gute dienste halten	Violation of international law Democracy	Harmony with EU	Increase effectiveness
12/ 4/3/2022	Economic cost 2x				
13/ 16/3/22			Violation of international law		
14/ 18/3/22					
15/ 25/3/22	Economic cost				
16/ 1/4/22					
17/ 13/4/22	Economic cost		Peace Violation of international law Human rights		
18/ 27/4/22	Economic cost		Peace		
19/10/6/22	Economic cost		Peace		
20/ 29/6/22	Economic cost 2x		Peace 2x		
21/ 3/8/22	Economic cost		Peace 2x		
22/ 11 / 10/6/22	Economic cost 2x		Peace		
23/ 12 / 31/8/22			Peace		
24/ 12/10/22	Economic cost		Violation of international law		
25/ 2/11/22			Peace 2x Human rights 4x		Other big player
26/23/11/22	Economic cost	Political cost (security: Rüstungsembargo)	Peace Violation of international law		
27/ 25/11/22	Economic cost		Peace		Increase effectiveness
28/16/12/22	Economic cost		Peace		
29/ 21/12/22			Peace Violation of international law 2x		

30/ 25/1/23	Economic cost		Peace Violation of international law		
31/ 15/2/23	Economic cost 2x		Violation of international law 2x		
32/29/3/23			Violation of international law Human rights		
33/20/4/23			Peace Human rights		Increase effectiveness
34/10/5/23					
35/23/6/23				Harmony with EU 4x	
36/28/6/23			Peace		Prevention of bypass mechanism
37/16/8/23			Peace		Prevention of bypass mechanism 4x
38/ 13/12/23			Violation of international law	Harmony with EU	
39/22/12/23	Economic cost		Peace 2x Violation of international law	Harmony with EU	
40/ 31/1/24	Economic cost 2x		Violation of international law peace		Increase effectiveness
41/ 1/3/24			Peace		

Codebook Sanctions against Syria (adapted from atlas.ti)

Sanctions against Syria					
Press releases	References to economic cost / benefit	References to political cost/ benefit	References to norms and values	References identity	Unexpected? (codes added afterwards)
Pre-Codes	Economic cost No economic cost Economic benefit <i>Rising or sinking:</i> Price Embargo (import/ export ban) Financial flow/marketplace FTA / Trade agreement Investment	Political cost No political cost Political benefit <i>Security related:</i> Regional stability Military Dependency on the EU / NATO <i>Diplomatic Themes:</i> Political dialogue Closeness to the EU	democracy / Pluralism Respect for the rule of law/ Free and fair elections / Transparency/ Accountability Fundamental freedoms / human rights: Violation of freedom of: speech, assembly or association/media/ press Conflict prevention / Promote peace (no violence) Civil and political rights Inhumane treatment Reference to international standards Violation of international law	Long-lasting partnership Shared European identity Harmony with EU values	-
Findings summary:	Economic costs (5x) - Oil embargo - Diamantes embargo No economic costs (6x) - Economic repercussions non-existent	No political cost (1x) - No change in politics Political cost (1x) - Relations to embassy deteriorated	Human rights (15x) In line with international norm (1x) Peace (4x) Repression (7x)	In harmony with EU values (8x)	Extern motiv - Earthquake in Syria Prevention of bypass mechanism (3x)

			Violation of international law (1x)		
1: 18/5/11		No political change	Repression 2x		
2: 23/9/11	Economic cost (oil transport, financial means) 3x No economic cost (die Schweiz hat seit Jahren kein Erdöl von Syrien mehr eingeführt) → nicht auf Versorgungslage auswirken 2x		Repression		
3: 30/9/11	Economic costs (oil investment) No economic cost (wirtschaftliche Auswirkungen dürfen gering bleiben) 2x		Repression	Harmony with EU	Prevent bypass mechanism
4: 8/6/2012	Economic cost (keine neuen Geschäftsbeziehungen)		Peace Human rights repression Repression 4x		Prevent bypass mechanism
5: 20/12/12	No economic cost (betroffene Geschäfte dürfte gering sein) 2x		Peace		
6: 17/12/14			Human rights 2x International norm	Harmony with EU 2x	
7: 11/2/15				Harmony with EU 2x	Prevent bypass mechanism
8: 10/3/17		Political cost (diplomacy in Syria non existante)	Human rights 2x	Harmony with EU 2x	
9: 1/6/18			Human rights	Harmony with EU	
10: 16/10/19			Violation of international law Peace Human rights 7x	Harmony with EU	
11: 03/3/23			Human rights	Harmony with EU	
12: 10/3/23					Exten motive: Earthquake in Syria changed regime