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HAS THE LIBERAL INTERNATIONALIST CONCEPTION OF THE EU'S FOREIGN POLICY MADE IT INCAPABLE OF ACTING IN INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS?

Abstract. *Notions of the power associated with the European Union's foreign policy and its role in international relations are mostly liberal in origin. This explains the EU's special role in the Cold War era and that it has since emerged more as a moral, ethical and normative power. The EU's lack of military capability has probably been the main cause that prevents it from acting as a great or superpower. The distinction between materialistic and immaterial elements of power has been a crucial point of contention between realists and liberal thinkers. In international relations, we are also witnessing the trend of the EU increasingly using the geopolitical approach (such as in the Ukrainian crisis) besides the normative one. In the article, different concepts of EU foreign policy regarding power in the light of realism and liberalism are compared where, alongside the descriptive method, a SWOT analysis is performed.*
Keywords: *realism, liberalism, power, European Union, Ukraine, foreign policy, international relations*

Introduction

Realism and liberalism are two central traditions in Western socio-political thought that differ with respect to the issue of power. While realists view power as a core issue in international relations, liberals largely neglect power politics and possible power imbalances, basing their international relations agenda mainly on the principles, norms and defence of democratic values along with the role of international institutions. The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) has primarily been influenced by liberal internationalism (and even constructivism) more than realism, which Mearsheimer (2014) believes would lead to some innovative solutions and understandings of the EU's new role in the international community.

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Realism has dominated power debates since the Second World War. Realists imagine power chiefly in terms of military capabilities, with the classification of states based on the notion of how many of these military resources a given state possesses. Some alternative conceptions of power (e.g., constructivism or postmodernism) have "dematerialized" realist conceptions of power in international relations (Berenskoetter, 2007). There is a distinction between possessing power resources and using them. Baldwin (2016: 69) refers to this as the "as the difference between intentions and capabilities". Davis Cross and Karolewski (2016) treat power as a relational phenomenon that is not necessarily always based on resources or material connotations in the realist sense. The realist explanation of power is primarily built on hierarchy and material resources within the international system. "While it is true that material resources matter, they must be put into a relational context internationally to understand the outcomes they might produce" (Davis Cross and Karolewski, 2016: 9).

One of the conventional classifications of power refers to the "faces of power". Dahl (1961) examined political power using a pluralistic approach and showed that many interests can appear simultaneously in open competition. Bachrach and Baratz (1975) criticised Dahl's pluralism in the "second face", noting that hidden conflicts and non-decisions are also potential power in the hands of decision-makers. Lukes (1974/2005) further developed earlier concepts based on psychological aspects (the "third face"), pointing to subordinates' passive behaviour toward dominant actors. Finally, Digeser (1992), using a Foucauldian perspective, wrote about productive power in terms of dispersion through micro-relationships.

Joseph Nye (2004) described soft power as the ability to persuade other political opponents via persuasion, attraction or even *quid pro quo*. As Lukes (2007) pointed out, soft power is a tool for potentially controlling the preferences of others. Nye (2009) later introduced another concept of power – smart power, which means the simultaneous use of soft and hard power (section below).

Baldwin (2013) shows that it is necessary to connect power with politics; power does not exist without political relations. He defined the following essential elements of power: scope (behaviour of subordinate actors), domain (spread of power of the dominant actor), weight (reliability of power of the "master"), cost of political action (resources available for action), and means of action (symbolic, military, diplomatic and economic aspects).

An important part of the taxonomy of power is the distinction between relational and structural power. The key feature of structural power is that it is unintentional (Baldwin, 2013). In line with Bartnett and Duvall (2005), structural power describes positional aspects of different states; for

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example, world systems theory explains the position held by developing countries vis-à-vis the developed "centre". The concept of relational power suggests that values, norms and ideas play an important role in the power relations among political actors (Baldwin, 2013).

Another important dimension of power is the distinction between 'power to' and 'power over'. "Power to"

> *encompasses whatever capacity a society or any other collectivity may have to realize common values or purposes. To say that an individual or some other agent is powerful, however, usually means that it can bring about one kind of result: It can prevail over others—it can get them to do something they do not want to do, defeat them in a conflict, or perhaps even shape their understanding and desires.* (Starr, 2007: 18)

'Power over' has the goal of legitimating the use of power and establishing rules – the role is to limit power in action (Starr, 2007).

The structure of this article is as follows. First, we investigate how realism and liberalism as international relations theories shape the notion the power the EU holds in foreign affairs and neighbourhood policy by considering differences and commonalities of the two theoretical approaches together with combined approaches like liberal realism. Second, we present a vast set of various power approaches to the EU's foreign policy in which the liberal paradigm generally dominates alongside the 'realist' alternatives. Selected power conceptions are then applied, also determining the positive aspects and shortcomings of these approaches, in an attempt to explain the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Finally, we seek to identify which conception may be able to provide solutions to the conflict.

Research Questions and Method

The fact is that liberalism has largely neglected power relations since the end of the Cold War. The same has happened in the field of political theory, which has generally reflected the political practices in this period of time. The course of the Ukraine crisis reveals that the lack of a realist approach to the EU's foreign and security policy has led to misunderstandings about Russia's position in this conflict. On the theoretical level, despite considerable effort having been made to explain the international role of the EU, emphasising its civil, normative and ethical stance in the international community, hardly any academic analysis has shown the potential of a realist explanation of a problem the EU faces.

We assume that the theories of international relations generally complement each other and are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Realism and

liberalism as important IR theories can give some new insights into complex issues of the international community (Proedrou, 2010). The aim of this article is to offer a theoretical and evolutionary explanation able to detect potential solutions to certain international conflicts, in particular a reconstruction of concepts referring to the EU's power in foreign policy. Another question that is examined is whether possible theoretical mergers and comparisons could hold value for political practice in the case of Ukraine. Here, a comparative approach is used to investigate different models of power in between the realist and liberal theories of international relations. Finally, apart from distinguishing the various power conceptions, a synthesis of them is attempted.

For a specific part of our enquiry – the Ukrainian conflict – we perform a SWOT analysis as an original idea borrowed from Opoka (2016) but refined in the present investigation by widening the original core of strengths and weaknesses of liberalism and realism with specific power explanations, which is our original contribution to the field of research. As Opoka (2016) noted, SWOT analysis is typically an economics method within the academic field of IR searching, besides strengths and weaknesses, also for opportunities and threats regarding certain concepts and events in the international community. Application of this method in the case of Ukraine is not new (Bratko et al., 2021; Holas, 2018; Dumitrescu and Constantin, 2022).

Between realism and liberalism – development of a sui generis power concept

With their focus on power, realist approaches have been relied on less by European scholars, albeit some have included realism as a definitional theoretical core. Cladi and Locatelli's (2012) analysis of European security policy stressed that realism can still provide a satisfactory analytical platform for explaining EU security issues. In the context of realism, the authors mainly examined structural and soft balancing strategies in European security cooperation, concluding that "the European Union represents a hard case for realism. Accordingly, liberal and constructivist accounts of the European integration process are currently more popular than realism, as they seem more able to grasp the exceptional features of the EU" (Cladi and Locatelli, 2012: 3). Realist analysis by Hyde-Price (2008) revealed that structural realist theory can also explain the nature of European security policy and the importance of bipolarity for international security. Hyde-Price (2006) additionally described how states in the international system are aware of their survival and the balance of power, rather than just defending the 'normative agenda'. Similarly to Hyde-Price, García Cantalapiedra (2019) assessed the European Union's Global Strategy from a realist perspective, which includes

the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) the challenge of strengthening European military capabilities.

Mearsheimer's critique of post-Cold War liberal interventionism is aimed at the lack of realist thinking in Europe. The mentioned author (2014) showed that liberal scholars have neglected the special role of superpowers in international relations by emphasising their fundamental role in securing the balance of power.

Kenealy and Kostagiannis (2013) pointed to Carr's classical realism as being able to provide new insights into the evolution of EU integration processes. In particular, his perspective on the widespread use of political power is likely to be seen as an accurate portrayal of an to be an accurate portrayal of EU history and political development. As the authors show, a specific relationship between power and morality offers some innovative viewpoints for further theoretical debates on European integration. They stated: "It aids the attempt to grapple with a key fault line that animates the contemporary EU, namely, that between the power of nation-states and the moral commitment to a supranational order" (Kenealy and Kostagiannis, 2013: 3).

In addition to the realist focus on security issues, commercial realism is understood as a realist strategy to give the EU greater economic power. Commercial realism combines security and economic issues within a single structure. In practice, the EU has used market power to influence Russia's security interests (Meissner, 2018). Wrexler (2006) applies the Welsh neorealist conception to the EU, with anarchy at the core of neorealism, which does not refer to chaos or violence, but mostly to the fact that there is no world government. According to the systemic logic of action, states are the central actors within this structure and tend to survive in the brutal international environment.

The structural approach to realism places the understanding of the EU in the global context, i.e., geopolitics, which is one of the classical axioms of realism, and assumes that a certain incoherence exists between the internal political structures and the external international environment with respect to the EU. The structural realist view thus points to quite a complex relationship with the EU that is sometimes not easy to explain (Rynning, 2005). For Jørgensen (2016: 92), the realist approach to EU affairs is in decline: "The realist tradition seems to have come to an end, at least in Europe; power politics has been largely absent in relations among the larger states /.../".

In general, the EU's concepts of CFSP/CSDP policy can be seen as largely liberal in orientation. However, the EU has also come up with alternative concepts of power in its policies that consider the EU as a completely different form of power. Andreatta and Zambernardi (2017) noted that modern European liberalism has operated with a productive character (instead of

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the destructive realist component). Rather than using military power exclusively, liberals know how to solve international problems using "internal forces" – domestic actors. In liberalists' imagination, international organisations play an important role in securing the economic interests of EU member states. Liberals argue that member states only intervene and negotiate on the supranational level when compelled to do so by internal forces.

Haukkala (2008) criticised the liberal hegemonic orientation of EU foreign policy in which, he noted, the EU had replaced previously important enlargement processes with control of a narrow political environment, like in the case of Ukraine. Specifically, his critique referred to the concept of the EU as a normative power in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy – calling it "normative hegemony". Haukkala (2016: 76) later confirmed his earlier argument, stating that "the original argument is revisited by both expanding and qualifying it. It is expanded in the sense that it is argued that the EU's claim of hegemony is not only normative but is also underpinned by strong material, ideational and doctrinal foundations /.../.".

While conceptualising the notion of liberal realism, Skordas (2018) acknowledged the relevance of the balance of power as a strategy to ensure peace and stability in the international community. Skordas wrote (2018: 13): "In the present context, the term 'liberal realism' has a different meaning. In the natural language it signifies that the foreign and security policy is oriented towards liberal-democratic and universal values, but that it is also embedded in an overall policy framework advancing the Union's interests". Further, referring to the liberal-realist 'alliance' creates a real challenge for the established European values-system; namely, how to incorporate them within the EU's interests. For Sleat (2013: 72), "The realist vision of politics challenges liberalism by conceptualizing politics as an activity that takes place in conditions of ubiquitous, perennial, and ineradicable political disagreement and conflicts /.../".

Conceptualisations of the Power Held by the European Union

The concept of Normative Power Europe (NPE) (Manners, 2002; Whitman, 2011) offers insight into recent political conceptualisations of European policies in relation to ideas or normative forces. Europe is seen as a civilising power, a mediator and in some sense a responsible power (Whitman, 2011). For example, norms and standards in various policy fields are replacing more traditional – "coercive" – forms of policy in military or economic terms. Whitmann (2011) stated that the NPE paradigm is close to what some scholars define as civil power focused on the use of non-military resources. NPE rejects the traditional argument that only nation states are central actors in the international community and expresses the potential of

the 'non-material' aspects of power (Whitmann, 2011: 4). As a realist thinker, Hyde-Price (2006) was critical of the "normative" and "civilian" conceptions of EU power in the international community. He argued that the realist approach moves away from the reductionist position of the normative approach and pays more attention to the systemic parameters of foreign and security policy.

Developed by Joseph Nye, the well-known concept of soft power was applied in the context of US foreign policy and later also in the context of Europe's global role (Forsberg, 2013). Duarte and Ferreira-Pereira (2021) explain that soft power is a matter of perception – of the roles that states play in an international environment. Both self-perception and external perception make up the image of soft power. The values, norms and principles of EU integration are emphasised in its external relations such as peace, democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. The intergovernmental nature of the EU entails that the Commission formally shares responsibility for implementing the CFSP with the member states. This is one reason the EU's foreign and security policy is much weaker than in many other policy areas considered to be particularly important (Michalski, 2006: 130).

A similar form of power is smart power acting as a 'bridge' between the soft and hard forms. Since soft power forms part of the EU's external appearance, it lacks hard power resources in certain respects. In terms of its use of language, mostly determined as a strategy within a circle of soft power, political messages can also be seen as coercion (Davis Cross, 2011). Davis Cross (2011) argued that soft power ensures much broader uses than its hard counterpart. A perfect example of the use of soft power is the EU. Generally, the soft power concept is used to defend norms, rules, and humanitarian principles. The principles of hard power are primarily applied in the EU's enlargement, for example towards the Western Balkan countries. To date, the EU has often failed to use hard power (Davis Cross, 2011). As Jansson (2018) noted, smart power also has its origins in the realist tradition where the question is how power and politics relate to human nature. It fulfils the tenets of realism by incorporating the criteria of policy change that are missing in the realist approach.

Borzel and Risse (2009) used the term transformative power to highlight the EU's transformative potential in enlargement processes. The latter refers to the model of accession negotiations whereby candidate countries must meet several conditions to become full members of the EU. Elements of the EU's potential transformative power include the principles of good governance, the ability of a state to initiate and implement new reforms, political change in the face of new democratic challenges, and asymmetric relations between Brussels and the target countries where European institutions hold sufficient potential power to reform national policies. Similarly, Grabbe

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(2006) examined the accession of the candidate countries and how the conditions applied by the EU prevailed in the relations between the candidates and the European institutions and member states. This led Grabbe (2006) to describe these unilateral relations as "asymmetric dependencies".

Toje (2011: 51) showed that the EU prefers "small-scale, low-intensity pre-and post-crisis management operations – all of which are relatively low on the international agenda". Accordingly, the EU is "economically strong, militarily weak, and politically fragmented. EU members have failed to pool anything resembling the autonomous intervention force originally envisioned" (Toje, 2011: 53).

In the mid-1970s, Francois Duchene declared that the European Community should find a role as a civilian power. This meant a strong economic role and less emphasis on the military side. In global terms, states should therefore cooperate more in the areas of trade and the economy. As Özer (2012) described, states that act as civil powers tend to use non-military power and politicise various political issues less. The EU actively played a fundamental role in the enlargement process, promoting the Neighbourhood Policy and concluding strong trade agreements with third countries. Özer (2012) also likened the EU's civil power to its normative goals: "The 'civilian ends' (or normative objectives) of a civilian power /.../ are peace and international co-operation, solidarity, strengthening of the rule of law in international relations, democracy, human rights, environmental protection, and the diffusion of equality /.../ justice and tolerance" (Özer, 2012: 73).

Moravscik (2010) stated that at the end of the unipolar era the USA was not the sole superpower on the global scale because Europe was also playing a key role in the international balance of power, using its soft and hard power simultaneously. To refer to the liberal interventionist logic, the EU was strongly influencing the enlargement processes, advocating good neighbour policies, trade, and foreign aid, and acted as a champion of international multilateral institutions and European norms and values. Moravscik (2010) argued that the EU has functioned as a true superpower alongside the United States. Nowadays, the EU's exercise of power in the field of military and security policy is clearly different from the greater potential it holds in economic relations. This argument is contrary to the school of realism in international relations (e.g., Mearsheimer, Walt, Waltz), which defended military power after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Moravscik, 2010). Similar to Moravscik's term, McCormik (2007) introduced "The European Superpower", while Gaenzle, Grimm and Makhan (2012) referred to the EU as a "power in the making".

Yet, Mearsheimer argued exactly the opposite. In his realist view, the EU cannot act as a true superpower in international relations, in part due to its

liberalist focus on norm enforcement and negation of the role of true great powers and the global distribution of power. Mearsheimer sees the latter as evident in the Ukraine crisis (Mearsheimer, 2014).

Meunier and Vachudova (2018) explain that the rise of illiberal regimes within the EU has affected its potential to act as a major superpower. The authors follow the Dahlian position that a given country will act and behave like a superpower if it can apply soft power on the global level. They insist on the definition that the EU is a "potential superpower", especially in the context of the transfer of powers between member states and EU institutions in some policy areas (like military policy), which is often subject to slow political processes. Moreover, so-called liberal intergovernmentalism is always "shaped by the domestic political preferences that bring governments to the EU negotiating table" (Meunier and Vachudova, 2018: 2).

Gehring, Urbanski and Oberthuer (2017) reject the notion that the EU cannot act as a great power given its lack of military resources and potential to use hard power. The authors believe the EU's market policies demonstrate its ability to act as a great power/market power. Economic power has dominated the military counterpart: "Furthermore, cross-policy effects that are central to our argument have rarely been systematically examined, although there is evidence both in the theory and in comprehensive studies of EU foreign relations /.../. Accordingly, the great power politics occurs as a cross-policy effect" (Gehring, Urbanski and Oberthür, 2017: 2). This led the authors to refer to the EU as "inadvertent great politics". The 'corporate actorness' involved can ensure that the EU can act without the consent of the member states due to some autonomous rights it has in policymaking We agree that the EU functions with market power based on a single market of more than 550 million people, including various free-trade agreements (Gehring, Urbanski and Oberthuer, 2017). In a sense, the economic sanctions imposed by the EU against Russia are a result of market power strategies. Davis Cross and Karolewski (2016) stressed that in the EU considerable attention has been paid to studying policy development within integration processes, leading to a deficit in explaining the potential influence of externally driven factors. When discussing market power, we can equate it with Zimmerman's (2007) realistic power and the possibilities of the EU's trade with other major powers like China and Russia. Zimmerman (2007) stated that realism explains the EU's role in these negotiations through geopolitical factors and materialistic interests. The author (2007) noted that in international economic relations by using the concept "Realist Power Europe" states try to survive and often tend to maximise their power. States are in a process of constant interdependence in their economic relations. On top of the structural component, realism also builds on the behaviour of actors – economic policy must be consistent with the national interest. Zimmerman

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(2007: 816) wrote: "Thus, while realism certainly has not been used widely to explain international trade policy, it is far from completely silent in this field and actually allows some distinct predictions about the goals of state actors".

Aggestam's (2008) concept of Ethical Power Europe (EPE) describes a reversal "in the EU's role and aspirations from what it 'is' to what it 'does': from simply representing a 'power of attraction and a positive role model to proactively working to change the world in the direction of its vision of the global common good'" (Aggestam, 2008: 1). The author agreed that the EPE concept encompasses civil and military power as well as social and material elements of power. Normative and civil power concepts pay stronger attention to the supranational level of the EU, while the EPE concept focuses on the member states. As Hyde-Price (2008) noted in his critique, some realists would also criticise normative, civil, transformative and similar concepts of power for their "ethical" nature. Still, as realists like to point out, the primary interest of states in an anarchic international environment is their desire to survive and secure their territory.

Pachecho Pardo (2012) moved beyond the conventional classification between realist and liberalist political thought by offering the concept of power called "Normal Power Europe". He explained that the EU's power has been described as normative, ethical and civil power from a very positive point of view. He agreed that all of these concepts only partially explained EU foreign policy. Realistically, the EU, like any other actor in international relations, seeks to maximise its power. Military and non-military power are accordingly used simultaneously depending on a given situation in an international environment.

Finally, Wagner (2017) coined the term "Liberal Power Europe", which in principle shapes ideas (norms and values) and material power (interests). Ideas and interests change nature through different issues and domains. Wagner (2017: 1402) described how:

> *The concept of liberal power thus brings about an understanding of causal pathways such as lobbying by interest groups or responsiveness to public opinion. Which of the two will dominate in any particular case also depends on a third key liberal variable – the institutions that serve as transmission belts and that make governments more or less receptive to lobbying and accountable to the electorate.*

Are the EU's policies inadequate for managing relations with the Russian Federation?

We saw above how the EU has developed a *sui generis* concept of foreign, security and defence policies by taking account of its own historical context, institutional set up and underlying specific European values. Here, it has developed its own set of power concepts that can be theoretically pinned to realism or liberalism or in between them. As such, the EU has been successful with its European neighbourhood policies or global policies in general, with the notable exception of certain cases. This includes its relationship with the Russian Federation, especially as regards Ukraine.

The EU is playing the role of a great power despite lacking in military resources (Gehring, Urbanski and Oberthuer, 2017). The EU's power potential chiefly lies in its ability to act as a true corporate actor and to thereby exercise strong market power. The EU has granted privileges to Ukraine associated more with the economic cooperation group than the mobilisation of governance resources related to CFSP policy areas. In the area of energy policies, a high level of interdependence between Russia and the EU has historically been evident. Casier (2017: 10) noted that "The relationship between Russia and the EU is in the field of energy policy highly asymmetrical providing more power to the Russian side". The EU has also been exercising its 'normative power' towards Russia. In its foreign and security policies, the EU has promoted the rule of democracy, social justice, and similar principles in many states, including Russia (Veebel, 2018). "The outbreak of the violent conflict between Russia and Ukraine at the end of 2013 clearly demonstrates that the EU has failed in its pursuit in Russia despite extensive mutual relations and comprehensive financial support provided by the EU" (Veebel, 2018: 698). In contrast to the normative power approach, Nitoiu (2015) argued that the EU has been forced to adopt a geostrategic approach rather than a normative power approach during the Ukraine crisis. "Over the years, the EU has received its fair share of criticism for not being willing and able to have a grand strategy or to even start thinking strategically in its foreign policy" (Nitoiu, 2015). Normative policies also failed in the case of the Crimean Tatars. "It is argued that even if political issues such as democracy and the rule of law are the main EU norms, the relations have been developed on the basis of economic and security priorities of the EU" (Çepel, 2018: 57).

Karolewski and Davis Cross (2016) highlighted the specific relationship of distrust between the EU and Russia. Despite this distrust, "the EU was able to react to the Russia–Ukraine crisis, and develop a complex mixture of instruments, such as sanctions towards Russia, institutional and financial aid

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to Ukraine as well as substitute gas delivery to Ukraine from the EU through reverse gas flows" (Karolewski and Davis Cross, 2016: 138).

The EU's transformative power was visible in Ukraine in the past. It was seen as a country whose stability and success with reforms would have a strong impact on the security of the EU (Sononenko, 2010: 5). The EU's anti-corruption policies have played a major role in Ukraine. In line with its normative power, "the clash of the EU norms with the prevalent norms, institutions, and informal practices of Ukrainian top officials has led to reform-imitation and resulted in institutional layering and partial institutional innovation" (Králiková, 2022: 245).

The liberal interventionist position regarding the EU's foreign policy views any greater "actorness" as limited due to internal incoherence among member states on how to respond collectively in the EU's external affairs. Moravscik and Emmons (2021: 189) emphasise that the power of the EU is quite "sporadic". Nevertheless, they show the EU's massive impact on the Ukrainian crisis "by providing support in almost major category" (Moravscik and Emmons 2021: 190). Moravscik and Emmons (2021) argued that Ukrainian political development has been successful because it has escaped Russian control and is closer to the West.

Mearsheimer maintains in his 2014 article that the 'West' has made fundamental mistakes with Russia:

> *Elites in the United States and Europe have been blindsided by events only because they subscribe to a flawed view of international politics. They tend to believe that the logic of realism holds little relevance in the twenty-first century and that Europe can be kept whole and free on the basis of such liberal principles as the rule of law, economic interdependence, and democracy.*

For Mearsheimer, the Ukraine crisis clearly shows that realpolitik principles are still fundamentally important. In his view, one of the crucial omnipotent strategies of the "West" was and remains the tension to "Westernise" Ukraine (extensive liberal-democratic convergence). In other words, in Ukraine the EU is using market tools and normative encouragements to act in response to a violator of international law.

Table 1: REVIEW OF THE UKRAINIAN CRISIS THROUGH THE LENSES OF REALISM AND LIBERALISM

Parameters / Approaches	Liberalism BEHAVIOURAL POWER	Realism POSITIONAL POWER
Perception of reasons for the crisis	Expansion of the liberal democratic model is perceived by Russia as a threat	Expansion of NATO and the EU to Russia's borders; the USA as the dominant power
The EU's approach	Advocacy of liberal norms; strong economic sanctions against Russia; the need to trade with Russia (Russia as a strong economic partner?); a norm enforcer; structural differences among member states limit the EU's potential in foreign policy; financial assistance	The EU is a rival (together with western states) to Russia; not enough power as a selective force (specifically in military terms); no major influence in foreign policy (realist explanation)
Some fundamental concepts of the EU's power potentially describing the Ukrainian crisis	Normative Power: consistency in the promotion of the EU's values Civilian Power: trade policy to support enforcement Ethical Power: power of attraction and persuasion (also a constructivist element) Transformative Power: a small transformative impact (?) Second/Quiet Superpower: "rational preferences about interdependence" (Moravscik and Emmons, 2021: 151) Market/Regulatory Power: the importance of energy issues	Smart Power (partly valid in liberal standpoints – a component of soft power): the role of values and interests Small Power: impossibility of employing a geopolitical approach Realist Power Europe: understanding of Russia's power potential Normal Power (partly using liberalism): interchangeably using military and non-military power Geopolitical Power (superpower): inconsistent geopolitical power (Rohac, 2022)
Solutions	Financial assistance to Ukraine, Ukraine's possible neutrality; cooperation with Russia	Recognition of a (super)power to establish/propose its sphere of influence; Ukraine as a buffer zone; no major role for middle powers
Strengths	Strategic rational behaviour; solution not military, albeit sending weapons to Ukraine	Reduction of tensions among superpowers; control of the weaker state; simplicity of solutions and the potential balance of power; pragmatism
Weaknesses	Misunderstanding of the Ukrainian crisis; problems of the EU's bureaucratisation; insufficient attention to irrational factors	Underestimation of irrational parameters; the Ukrainian perspective missing in analysis; no attention to the ideology, culture, or history of Ukraine
Opportunities	Ongoing communication of the parties involved	A liberal understanding of Russia's strategy and behaviour
Threats	Unstable nature of the conflict; threat to Ukraine's inclusion in the liberal-democratic model	Status quo or instability in conflict; an imbalance of power among superpowers

Source: adapted from Opoka, 2016; Mingst, McKibben, adjusted to the situation of Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine.

Conclusion

The fact the concept of smart power can be ambiguous and sometimes too misunderstood to be useful is where Europe's real strength lies. Faced with the 2013 crisis in Ukraine, the EU Commission took both a soft and a hard approach. Although the EU is mostly a soft-power actor, it has since

engaged in very targeted smart power. The European External Action Service (EEAS) often employs smart power strategies (Davis Cross, 2011). Pacheco Pardo (2012) suggests that, alongside ethical, normative and civilian parameters, in some sense contemporary EU foreign policy includes "normal power" capacities. Following its operational logic, the EU's primary goal in foreign policy is to maximise its own security while also influencing the behaviour of other actors, with the European Security Strategy (ESS) being an example. In this way, the EU's aim is

> *to create a consensus on political institutions that are justified not by their ability to promote or avoid particular moral goods or evils, but by their ability reconcile though not perennially eradicate, conflict, and in doing so provide means for the peaceful coexistence of people with different and conflicting moral, political and religious views.* (Sleat, 2011: 483)

The European Union's Global Strategy (EUGS) was also established in this context: "/…/ the EUGS does not understand values and interests as opposite. The Union is a liberal realist power aiming to 'universalize' its values because its own interests are better served in a liberal world order" (Skordas, 2018: 14).

Table 2: HYPOTHETICAL APPLICATION OF SWOT ANALYSIS TO THE CONCEPT OF LIBERAL REALISM
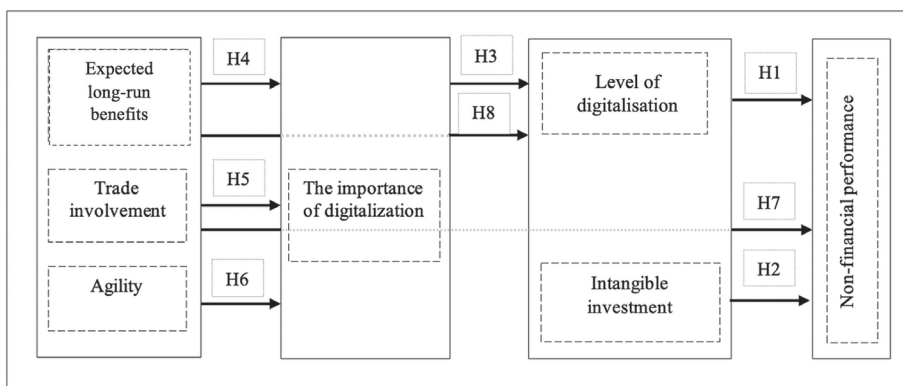
Source: author's own analysis partially originated from Sleat, 2013.

In this article, we presented the positive sides and shortcomings of EU foreign, defence and security policies that are rooted in different theoretical understandings, historical contexts, institutional specificities, and roles of partners and opponents. This set of factors has been responsible for a major impact on certain international events, including the 2013 Ukrainian crisis

and Russia's position in it. The hybrid approach of smart power highlights the EU's normative and ethical stance in its foreign relations and its desire to secure itself and maximise its own security.

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