

Francesco Giumelli, *The Success of Sanctions: Lessons Learned from the EU Experience* (Surrey/Burlington: Ashgate, 2013), ISBN 978-1-4094-4531-9, 266 pp. EUR 79.75

Despite ten years of EU restrictive measures in the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), decades of EU sanctioning in trade policy, and more than twenty years of withdrawals or suspensions of ACP-EU Partnership Agreements and Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) arrangements, research on the European Union's sanctions policy is still in its infancy. Within the small but constantly growing EU sanctions discourse, two research traditions have crystallized that feature two different definitions of restrictive measures. The two traditions can be differentiated along two dimensions: (1) focus, i.e. *determinants v. effectiveness of EU sanctions*; (2) scope, i.e. *narrow* (CFSP focused) *v. comprehensive* point of view, with the latter including the full scope of restrictive measures available in EU external policy from the Common Commercial to the Development and Cooperation Policy. While most scholars apply a narrow definition of EU sanctioning and examine the effectiveness of EU restrictive measures, only a handful of researchers explore the determinants of EU sanctioning or apply a comprehensive definition of sanctions.

With *The Success of Sanctions: Lessons Learned from the EU Experience*, Francesco Giumelli seeks to contribute to the CFSP-concentrated research category.

Identifying a lack of common approach to the analysis of the effectiveness of sanctions, Giumelli aims to provide a common analytical framework for scholarly discussion of the success of restrictive measures. Right from the beginning he clarifies his intentions not to answer the question of the success of sanctions itself, but to ‘elaborate a four-step procedure to evaluate sanctions’ and to develop ‘a new way of thinking about sanctions that will provide building blocks for further analysis which will shape and influence the understanding of why sanctions are imposed’ (p. 2).

Specifically, Giumelli’s framework of analysis consists of four analytical steps: (1) Place sanctions within the larger foreign policy strategy context; (2) Define the logic of sanctions: coercive, constraining or signalling; (3) Elaborate on the impacts, effects and effectiveness of sanctions; and (4) Take into consideration the comparative utility of sanctions (pp. 7–10).

To demonstrate his approach and to discuss EU sanctioning experiences, the author structures his book into four parts. The introductory chapter presents the author’s concept, a short literary survey, the book’s structure and a teaser of the final nine lessons learned. The analytical part of the volume opens with a more descriptive section on the decision-making process, the underlying principles, legal documents and actors involved in EU sanctioning; and continues with an overview of EU restrictive measures since 1992. Giumelli restricts his empirical evaluation to ‘autonomous EU targeted sanctions’, which indicates a narrow focus on ‘independent’ EU sanctions, based on ‘political decisions at the discretion of the Council’ (p. 22). Following the general discussion of European sanctions policy, he conducts an in-depth case analysis of six sanctions cases of the European Union: the US (*1996), Belarus (*1998), Zimbabwe (*2002), Transnistria (*2003), Uzbekistan (2005–2009) and China (*1989). The final part summarizes the case studies’ findings and presents nine lessons learned about the effectiveness of sanctions. To test the applicability of his nine lessons, Giumelli briefly reviews EU sanctioning in the events of the Arab Spring. The study concludes with a discussion of how the EU sanctions process could be improved.

To first provide a general overview of EU sanctions policy and then zoom into specific cases for in-depth analyses suggests promising insights. Yet, it remains unclear on what the selection of the 45 ‘autonomous’ EU sanctions episodes in overall 24 sanctioned countries is based. Giumelli expresses his intention to focus on ‘EU autonomous measures’ imposed since 1992 (p. 12). In his words, the analysis includes ‘independent’ EU sanctions, based on ‘political decisions at the discretion of the Council’ (p. 22). However, the data basis comprises cases of “*gold-plating*” sanctions as well, which refer to the Union’s common practice to implement mandatory UN Security Council sanctions and to expand them with additional EU restrictive measures (Taylor 2010). Following the author’s logic of

focusing on ‘autonomous’ EU measures, only *stand-alone* sanctions and no *implementing* cases ought to be included in his dataset. Yet, both the Iranian and the Libyan sanctions regimes form part of his range of data. Moreover, reading the intention of a full-scale analysis of CFSP sanctions since 1992 into his dataset does not explain Giumelli’s list of cases either. The EU’s listing of ‘Restrictive measures (sanctions) in force’ (European Commission 2015) indicates a number of thirty-seven active targets (countries and terrorist groups) – and not twenty-four. Besides, a multitude of underlying sanctions episodes and already determined cases would further burst the number of forty-five episodes.

In his case study section, the author analyses two most-likely cases for each logic of sanctioning: the US and Belarus for a coercing logic; Zimbabwe and Transnistria for a constraining one, and Uzbekistan and China for a signalling sanctions logic. Most-likely cases are very frequently used for exemplifying in-depth case analyses. Still, the question remains if one is not only looking for confirmation for one’s own expectations and hypothesis. The positive aspect of Giumelli’s case selection – e.g., the US sanctions regime – is that it underlines the fact that not only the commonly known examples of poor countries with weak democratic systems exist – although they do represent the majority indeed. EU restrictive measures are imposed on a variety of actors, countries and non-state actors as terrorist groups alike. EU sanctions appear in different forms, which Giumelli would describe with their underlying logic of being coercive, constraining or signalling. At this point, I would go even further and highlight the different kinds of sanctions imposed (CFSP, ACP, GSP and trade sanctions) and the forms of restrictive measures they apply (arms embargoes, asset freezes, economic sanctions, withdrawal of partnership and cooperation agreements, etc.). This approach would depart from Giumelli’s narrow definition of EU sanctions as it would open the focus on the wide array of EU sanctioning measures. However, the Union’s sanctions policy is not a uniform mass of measures, which can be analysed by rule of thumb. It is a complex and diverse foreign policy area that can only be captured by a comprehensive understanding and way of analysis.

The idea of summing up the most important facts of every sanctions case in the ‘lessons learned’ provides a summary of the insights gained and gives an understanding of Giumelli’s notion of the most valuable findings of his study. To test his ‘nine lessons learned about the effectiveness of sanctions’ (p. 178), Giumelli adds further four case studies to the concluding chapter. Within five pages he briefly treats the sanctions regimes in the countries of the so-called Arab Spring: Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria. The ambitious endeavour of a thorough examination of four more sanctions cases is not seizable within so little space. Instead of rushing through the events, dropping the titles of the lessons learned

and surrendering to the pressure of making his book up to date, the author should rather have reflected on his study's insights once more.

Overall, Giumelli adds an illustrative volume to the research tradition concentrating on the success of sanctions. For readers less familiar to the topic, he presents a handy summary of the European sanctions process and of examples of EU restrictive measures. Readers more familiar to the subject will stumble across a number of crudities, however. Apart from some analytical contradictions, his dataset and case selection raise questions. Scholars inclined to a more narrow, CFSP-concentrated research angle may find a valuable research approach in Giumelli's four-step procedure. While others, prone to a comprehensive definition of EU sanctions or interested in analysing the determinants of EU sanctions policy, are not likely to find a guiding principle in this study.

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