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The European Union - Iran Relations: Indirect Outcomes of the Nuclear Agreement Negotiations



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Abstract

The European Union is an important long-time actor of the diplomatic relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. For this reason, their relation is constantly observed and debated, which results in various approaches and conceptualizations of this relation. This study covers the indirect impacts of the Iranian Nuclear Deal, which was negotiated between Iran and several world powers and EU, which played the major role in the negotiation. The thesis evaluates the European Union's approach to the negotiations after the Nuclear Agreement through the perspective created framework of Sewell's Structuration Theory and Theory of Security Complexes.

In its second part, the thesis provides a brief overview of the major events that accompanied the negotiations as well as those that occurred during the subsequent period. Furthermore, this case study focuses on events and activities that can be considered indirect effects of the abovementioned diplomatic negotiations. The thesis sets out to analyse the less obvious impacts of the negotiated agreement, which may be overlooked in the debate on the Nuclear Deal. The thesis is a case study that uses the theory of descriptive analysis for practical research. The practical part of the thesis will analyse mainly European Union documents, international treaties, and scientific texts. Furthermore, the thesis draws on media articles from the New York Times, Politico, Washington Post, Iranian newspapers, and others.

Keywords

European Union, Iran, Iranian Nuclear Deal, Structural Theory, Security Complexes

Reference

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Abstrakt

Evropská unie je dlouhodobě významným aktérem v diplomatických vztazích s Íránskou islámskou republikou. Proto je tento vztah předmětem zkoumání a debat, v nichž se vyskytuje velké množství přístupů a konceptů. Tato práce se zabývá nepřímými dopady jaderné dohody, již s Íránem vyjednávala spolu s dalšími státy také Evropská unie, která zde sehrála klíčovou roli. Práce na zmíněnou problematiku nahlíží skrze teorii strukturace, a hodnotí přístup Evropské unie k vyjednávání v období po podepsání jaderné dohody. Dále se v práci nachází stručný přehled zásadních událostí provázející vyjednávání jakož i těch, ke kterým došlo v době po přijetí dohody. Ve druhé části se tato případová studie soustředí na události a aktivity, jež je možné pokládat za nepřímé dopady diplomatických vyjednávání. Práce si dává za úkol analyzovat méně zřejmé dopady vyjednané dohody, které mohou být v debatě o jaderné dohodě opomíjeny. Jedná se o případovou studii, která k praktickému výzkumu využívá teorie deskriptivní analýzy.

Ve druhé části práce je uveden stručný přehled hlavních událostí, které jednání provázely, i těch, které se odehrály v následujícím období. Dále se tato případová studie zaměřuje na události a aktivity, které lze považovat za nepřímé důsledky výše zmíněných diplomatických jednání. Práce si klade za cíl analyzovat méně zjevné dopady vyjednané dohody, které mohou být v debatě o jaderné dohodě přehlíženy. V praktické části práce jsou analyzovány především dokumenty Evropské unie, mezinárodní smlouvy a odborné texty. Dále práce čerpá mimo jiné z mediálních článků z New York Times, Politico, Washington Post, íránských periodik.

Klíčová slova

Evropská Unie, Írán, Íránská jaderná dohoda, Teorie strukturace, Teorie bezpečnostních komplexů

Declaration

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on April 30, 2024

Bc. Pavel Kubíček

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
I. METHODOLOGY	4
II. THEORETICAL PART	6
II.I. SECURITY COMPLEX THEORY	6
II.II. STRUCTURATION THEORY	9
II.II.III. <i>Sewell's understanding of the structure</i>	13
II.II.VI. <i>Sewell's understanding of agency</i>	14
II.II. CONCLUDING REMARKS ON THEORETICAL PART AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE RESEARCH	15
III. PRACTICAL PART - EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS (CASE STUDY)	16
III.I. EUROPEAN UNION AS AN ACTOR.....	16
III.I.I. <i>European Union as an actor in international relations</i>	16
III.I.II. <i>Foreign policy of the EU and Neighbourhood Policy</i>	17
III.I.III. <i>Key documents and summit shaping the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy</i>	18
III.II. THE SECURITY COMPLEX BETWEEN EU AND IRAN	19
III.II.I. <i>The European Union's approach towards Iran</i>	19
III.II.II. <i>EU – Iran motivation</i>	24
III.III. SECONDARY IMPACTS OF THE NUCLEAR DEAL - INDIRECT OUTCOMES	26
III.III.I. <i>Secondary impacts of the nuclear deal: Brief overview</i>	26
III.III.II. <i>Sphere – Economic assistance and trade</i>	27
III.III.III. <i>Sphere - Migration</i>	29
III.III.IV. <i>Sphere – Political Activities of the European Parliament</i>	31
III.III.V. <i>High-Level Political Dialogue with Iran</i>	32
III.IV. RENEWAL OF THE NUCLEAR AGREEMENT AND THE POSITION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION.....	33
IV. FINDINGS	35
IV.I. INDIRECT EFFECTS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN ON THE NUCLEAR DEAL	35
IV.II. EFFECT OF NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN	36
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	38
SHRNUŤÍ	41
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	42
BIBLIOGRAPHY	43
DIPLOMA THESIS PROJECT	52

Introduction

The Iran nuclear deal is one of the very visible achievements of Barack Obama's administration. However, it is not only an agreement between the United States and the Iranian Islamic Republic; almost all the world powers are also parties to the deal. This ambitious agreement had the clear objective of preventing Iran from producing nuclear weapons. The deal itself is the result of protracted diplomatic negotiations in which the European Union (EU) and its specific relationship with Iran played an important role as the Union acted as the intermediary between Iran and the other countries which took part in the negotiation. The EU played a very important role in the negotiations as an entity that was able to maintain a long-term diplomatic relationship with the Iranian regime and mediate the communication between the Middle Eastern country and the US (Adebahr 2017; Vague, 2023).

The negotiations themselves and the subsequent signing of the treaty allowed for the development of further relations between the various actors. They helped to normalise US-Iranian relations, although this particular effect of the rapprochement between Iran and the world powers was relatively short-lived. Not only did the treaty's signing result in enhanced control over Iran's nuclear production and research, but it also helped Iran's economy and subsequently improved the economic situation of its citizens. It was the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) that resulted in the lifting of sanctions against the Iranian regime and the launching of dialogues between the EU and Iran at the highest political level with the explicit aim of capitalising on the relationship that had been built over the course of the proceeding decades as well as attempting to cooperate further. This cooperation should have and does cover several different areas which are being developed by both sides in different ways. The main ones are economic cooperation, development of humanitarian cooperation, coordination of migration policy, further normalisation of political relations, joint programs covering anti-drug activities, education, and collaboration in the field of energy security (Alcaro, 2024; European Commission, 2016).

This thesis is based on two theoretical approaches, first one is theory of the security complexes pioneered by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde (1998). This theory facilitates the relation the thesis is describing. By acknowledging there is a relation and further more structure that has developed especially with the emphasis on the change in the security milieu concerning Iran it is possible to observe and analyse the structure ramification. This observation is analysed through the second theoretical concept used. It is based on the theoretical foundation of Anthony Giddens' Structural Theory, further developed by William

H. Sewell. The thesis mainly uses Sewell's take on the original theory presented by Giddens. W.H. Sewell came up with the Structuration Theory, which offers the possibility of a better empirical understanding of Giddens' theory. The constant cycle between an actor and the surrounding environment is central to this theory. This continuous cycle results in the reproduction, creation and destruction of structures created through agents' interaction in a particular environment. The signing of the treaty is seen as the creation of a new environment in which the European Union is an actor with the ability to establish new interactions and to push forward its foreign policy objectives within relations with Iran.

The theoretical part of the thesis begins with a theoretical concept of the security complexes. Firstly, the main idea of the security complex is introduced with the emphasis on the Buzan understanding of the approach. In the next part subdivisions of the security complexes are presented as various categorization could be used in the process of differentiating among security complexes. By employing security complex theory researcher is able to examine a different set of cases in comparison to classical approach pioneered by Kenneth Waltz.

The second part of the theoretical section of the thesis is represented by the chapter introducing the work of Anthony Giddens, who is considered to be the spiritual father of the theoretical approach used in the thesis. This passage is followed by a section focusing on one of Giddens's successors Sewell and Stone. Sewell adopted the theoretical framework, critically evaluated it, and further developed it. Sewell considers the lack of emphasis on the agency to be the main shortcoming of Giddens' approach. The last part of the theoretical section offers a more detailed description of the theoretical system developed by Robert Stone, who suggests using structuration theory with an emphasis on its empirical grounding. Stone assesses Giddens' concepts as vague and abstract, which is why he comes up with his own concepts, aiming to create a more readily applicable theoretical framework for a real-world setting. Therefore, the author of the Strong Structuration Theory comes up with The Quadripartite Nature of Structuration, which helps to divide the structuration cycle into four points that, despite their fluid and unstable form, can be captured and elaborated upon. Stones also comes up with a division of the internal structures, which he elaborates in great detail precisely to be able to use the theory for practical cases.

The theoretical and methodological approach applied in this thesis builds upon various academic publications. The primary publications framing the analysis are the following books: *The constitution of Society Outline of the Theory of Structuration* by Anthony Giddens (1984), and the research article entitled *A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency and Transformation* by

William H. Sewell (1992). Furthermore, the book *Structuration Theory* by Rob Stones (2017) was also very useful. The empirical part analyses mainly official documents of the EU institutions. To support the institutional records, the thesis uses information from the official websites of the EU institutions. The author also had the opportunity to consult classified documents during his internship at the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU in Brussels¹ regarding the EU-Iran relationship. For reasons of confidentiality, none of them is named and directly cited. In addition, think-tank papers and newspaper articles were used to provide additional context.

The practical part of the thesis aims to answer two main research questions:

RQ1: What are the indirect effects of the negotiations between the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Iran on the Nuclear Deal?

RQ2: How do these negotiations affect the actors mentioned?

Due to that, it builds on the theoretical considerations centred on understanding the structuration cycle through the four points. In the first passage, the external structure of EU-Iran relations is introduced. This part is perceived from a historical perspective. It presents the development of the EU-Iran relationship, explaining the unique nature of this relationship and introducing the broader realities of the negotiation on the Iran nuclear deal. The second part presents the EU perspective as well as the foreign policy settings of the Union. Specific EU actors who are active in each area are introduced.

The core part focuses on the active agency itself, following the pattern of theory and mainly the division of the structuration cycle. The EU's efforts to create new structures in different sectors are presented here. These sectors include, for example, economic relations, migration, development cooperation or drug-related issues. The aforementioned issues cover the secondary effects of the signing of the JCPOA as the negotiation leading to the signature of the treaty and the fact that the treaty was concluded enabled the cooperation in these areas. This cooperation, in turn, continues to allow the development of the relationship between the EU and Iran to influence the direction of Iranian policy and achieve the EU's objectives for the region.

A separate chapter summarizes the findings from the empirical analysis (case study) and addresses the research questions. In the Discussion and Conclusion sections, the author presents the final observations, discusses the results, and outlines the limitations of his approach.

¹ The internship occurred during the Presidency of the Czech Republic in the Council of the EU, which the author participated in as an intern from June to December 2022.

I. Methodology

The work was constructed as follows: Firstly, the author builds its own approach in a theory, combination of structuration and security complexes helped to create a tool to observe the targeted phenomenon. Once the theoretical part was stabilised author started to do the research regarding several spheres of interest that were examined by the actors. Some of them did not have sufficient information or were in their infancy, and thus, they did not experience more development before the U.S. withdrawal. Others were sufficiently robust and sufficient information was released on them. In the last stage the EU was defined and described as an actor of the international relation.

The diploma thesis seeks to answer two main research questions:

RQ1: What are the indirect effects of the negotiations between the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Iran on the Nuclear Deal?

RQ2: How do these negotiations affect the actors mentioned?

The posed research questions focus on the impact of JCPOA on the non-military relations between the European Union and Iran. The research aims to document and illuminate the development of relations made possible by the signing of the treaty and the subsequent partial lifting of sanctions imposed on Iran during the previous years. It thus seeks to answer what indirect impacts the negotiation of the JCPOA had and, if such indirect effects are identified, to take into account their impact on the actor itself. The thesis uses the indirect collocation impact as a designation for events and actions that are not the direct result of the specific project, in this case, the Iranian Nuclear Deal. Still, they are produced away from the complex impact pathway. The indirect impact is often also marked as a secondary or even third-level impact; they often occur later in time.

The observation period selected for this research lasts from 2016 to 2021. The reason for this choice is the relatively straightforward: time period from the signing of the agreement itself and its entry into force to the end of the government of the then pro-reform Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, who was a supporter of the agreement. An important turning point is a shift in US relations with Iran following Donald Trump's accession to the presidency. The reversal of policy towards Iran by the Donald Trump administration has been translated into ties between Iran and the EU in the form of efforts to maintain the agreement and, following the change of administration in the United States, to renew it. This is a relatively short block of time during which it is possible to observe the activity of the EU as an actor with specific objectives and means.

The research adopts a qualitative methodological approach, and the single case study method is used. Although single case studies have the disadvantage of a limited explanatory range, this case has the advantage of being beneficial in terms of description and clarification. A single case study usually supports or challenges theories within a single event (Kacowicz, 2004). This approach attempts to capture the event as accurately as possible to capture the details and the dynamics of the event itself (Mills et al., 2010). This thesis uses the descriptive approach, which might be challenging to detect as there are many variations of a definition. The approach used in this research is based on *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research (5th edition)*, published in 2017, where the main focus was on Chapter 14, "Case Study Methodology," written by Thomas A. Schwandt and Emily F. Gates. This chapter was very beneficial because of the variety of approaches to descriptive analysis it offered. The chapter is a source of ample information regarding weaknesses and strengths.

For the purpose of this research, the author has used following sources and materials. Firstly, the author used official press releases, international treaties, documents used for communication between the embassy and the headquarters. Then he used information from open sources, including academic literature and media sources such as the New York Times, Iranian news outlets in English language, Politico EU, and Euractiv.

The theoretical framework in which the research operates is constructivism, which is a theory based on the premise that humans actively construct or create their own knowledge, and that your experiences as an actor shape reality. It claims that rather than passively absorbing information, actors build knowledge. Constructivism is a social theory in international relations that contends that substantial parts of international relations are affected by ideational forces. Collectively held ideas are the most essential ideational elements; these collectively held beliefs form actors' interests and identities. This argument undermines the prevailing view in international relations that governments are rational players that make decisions based on objective evaluations of costs and benefits. Instead, constructivists contend that ideas and norms formed via social interaction impact states. This suggests that actors' interests and identities are constantly reevaluated through social contact rather than being fixed.

II. Theoretical part

The upcoming theoretical section of this work is set to introduce two pivotal theoretical concepts. These concepts are used as the foundation for the case study that will be presented in the subsequent practical section of this thesis.

The first concept to be introduced is the theory of security complexes, which provides a framework for defining the case that will be examined later. The theory of security complexes is fundamentally based on geographical proximity and the relationships of amity and enmity that can exist between two or more actors within a given security complex. This theory provides a lens through which we can understand the dynamics of security relationships within a specific geographical context. However, in the case of this thesis, the concept of geographical proximity is omitted. The European Union is understood as a great power, allowing it to intervene in areas outside its geographical proximity and thus create new security complexes (Buzan et al., 1998).

Following this, the section will delve into the explanation of Structuration theory, a concept originally conceived by Anthony Giddens. Giddens' concept will be explained in detail, providing a comprehensive understanding of its theoretical underpinnings. This theory will then be further developed and refined into a more practical and applicable state through the work of W. H. Sewell. Structuration theory offers a valuable tool for examining the development and evolution of the structure that an actor, in this case, the European Union (EU), creates through its agency. This theory allows us to understand how the EU, as an actor, shapes and is shaped by the structures it interacts with. In essence, these two theoretical concepts will provide the necessary theoretical grounding for the case study that will be explored in the practical section of this thesis.

II.1. Security Complex Theory

II.1.1. Defining Security Complex Theory

Security Complex Theory is a response to Kenneth Waltz's realist conception of international relations. It explores the relationships between actors in defined regions and thus has the ability to examine in greater detail the individual dynamics of security problems. Security complexes are based on action and reaction and thus can be observed as continuous and related events/ acts/ declarations. The theory considers security interactions as acts that are based on geographic proximity, historical experience and the distribution of power in a given environment. The founders of this theory are Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver. The first mention of security complexes can be traced in Barry Buzan's 1983 book *People, States & Fear*. The

theory was further elaborated in the 2003 book *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*. The theory allows for the analysis and explanation of security relationships between actors inside and outside the region (Buzan et al., 1998).

Thus, the authors of this theory foreground the relational (inter)dependence between actors because they argue that without knowing the environment in which an actor is located, it is impossible to understand its interests and behaviour. These relationships are numerous, and it is therefore necessary to define the security complex under study, which consists of at least two actors, and to define it precisely (Buzan et al., 1998). The main element that needs to be taken into account when examining security relationships between two or more actors is mutual friendship and enmity. Thus, it is good to look at whether the relationship between actors is built on mutual support and trust or, on the contrary, on suspicion and fear (Buzan, 1991; Buzan, 2015). This division can thus be depicted as a continuum with two extreme/extreme points, and the relationship itself can be located somewhere on this line. However, the shape of the relationship is not only based on the distribution of power, but also on other elements such as historical relationship, ideological proximity, ethnic proximity, cultural relationship, and others. These elements create a more plastic picture that is able to tell much more about the relationship between the actors than just the balance of power (Buzan & Wæver, 2003).

Buzan defines a security complex as "a group of actors who share security concerns, and their concerns build upon or coalesce into these concerns to the extent that they cannot be seen as anything other than interacting. It is possible to say that these actors would not have these security concerns without each other" (Buzan et al., 1998, p.12). This relationship can be positive and manifested in a multitude of shared interests, as well as negative and thus fearful. These relationships can be perceived through the intensity of their exchange. These are processes that arise from the anarchic nature of international relations and geographical distances. Moreover, it is not entirely necessary for individual actors to actively act in a particular relationship; the fact that another actor perceives them as part of its security complex is sufficient (Amable 2022). This is coupled with the ability to see the surrounding threats but not realize whether the actor happens to be alone. Thus, the main factor that determines the security complex is the threat/common interest that both actors perceive mutually, and often it is a threat (Burgess 2021).

Security complexes can be further subdivided into lower and higher-level security complexes depending on how far the complex extends beyond the immediate neighbours of each actor. At the lower level, the dynamics are those of close actors, while at the higher level, on the other hand, the involvement of great power, i.e. actors with greater reach, can be

observed. Buzan (2015) highlights two conditions why it may not be easy to find a security complex - the first is when the interaction is not completely transparent due to the weak manifestation of a particular actor. The second case when an external actor commits an intervention is the so-called "overlay". The interventions result in a realignment of forces in the region and thus disrupt previous dynamics. Another obstacle in assessing the security complex is its borders. Buzan identified three cases where finding the boundary between complexes is difficult. The first is the moment when two security complexes begin to merge/merge following a major security change that affects them. The third case is when the so-called lower and higher security complex coexist and therefore the exchanges are less visible and can be ignored. This can be corrected when the division by levels from domestic to global appears in the analysis. Finally, the fourth security complex is a condition where individual security issues are intertwined even between different security complexes and therefore may appear to form another security complex (Buzan et al., 1998).

At the moment we identify a security complex it is possible to look at its different levels, these are from the domestic level to the regional level, inter-regional level to the global level. Last but not least, Buzan notes that it is important to determine which factors will be taken into account. Buzan does not deny the importance of economic factors but argues that their interdependence between states is not as geographically based as military or political factors. He further elaborates on this issue in a follow-up theory, Security Analysis, where he includes economic, environmental, and social factors in addition to political and military factors (Buzan et al., 1998).

II.I.II. Security complex as structure

Security complexes are action-reaction phenomena, analogous to arms races and trade rivalries, rather than being an element of the structure of the global system as defined by Waltz. Security complexes can be considered interconnected subsystems, or small-scale anarchies, with their own structures and interaction patterns. However, such a setup also means that these structures are in a constant state of flux based on their nature, where action is followed by reaction. The idea of using the essential structure of a security complex as a standard is to measure significant changes within the complex. The essential structure comprises two key components: patterns of amity and enmity among states and the distribution of power among principal states. Major shifts in either of these components would necessitate a redefinition of the security complex (Burgess, 2021).

Making a distinction between what is meaningful and what is not is the fundamental theoretical issue when talking about change. Even though change is constant, certain things effectively never change. The allocation of power among the major nations and patterns of amity and enmity among states make up the fundamental framework of a security complex. Both internal and external factors might cause shifts in power within a security complex. Such changes in power may be the consequence of resource distribution, disparities in the rates of growth of the actors, or the acquisition of new military technology, such as nuclear-armed missiles. Internal transformation might occur through shifts in the distribution of power or alterations in the pattern of enmity. There are four general structural options to evaluate the effects of change on a security complex: maintaining the status quo, internal transformation (changes inside the existing boundary), external transformation (shifts in the border through expansion or contraction), and overlay (direct imposition of external presence) (Buzan, Wæver, 2003).

Security complexes offer a valuable framework for analysing and assessing policy analysis. They offer insights for addressing regional conflicts and great power participation and serve to clarify the links between various security challenges. A traditional view of security from a single state, self-help perspective is being challenged by the diffusion of power in the modern system, which has raised the relevance of players at the bottom of the power hierarchy. Security complexes provide a counterpoint to ethnocentrism in national security analysis because they involve seeing states in a relational framework greater than themselves. Security complexes incorporate traditional power priorities while also emphasizing the significance of patterns of relations and sources of insecurity at all levels, including the macro level of great power impact on the system, the middle level of local state relations, and the micro level of domestic affairs. The reciprocal interaction between both levels is emphasized, with exterior influences intensifying local issues and local issues influencing external entanglements. Security complexes are an effective instrument for structuring patterns of international relations, and they raise important questions about the durability of these complexes, their internal dynamics, and their interactions with other complexes (Buzan & Wæver, 2003).

II.II. Structuration Theory

II.II.I. Defining Structuration Theory

Structuration theory interconnects structure and agency by advocating that they continuously influence each other - structures shape actions, but actions also reproduce structures. Structure refers to rules and resources that make social action possible and understandable. Agency refers

to the capacity for individuals to act independently. Key concepts are the duality of structure, agency, and the unintentional outcomes of action over time. The main parts of the structuration theory were presented by Anthony Giddens in his book “The Constitution of Society Outline of the Theory of Society”.

Structuration theory bridges structure and agency by seeing social practices constituted by repeated actions or events reproducing structures while allowing change through reflexivity. Anthony Giddens argues that human actors possess knowledgeability and naturally monitor their actions, giving rise to the rationalization and motivation of intentional acts (Giddens, 1984). This means actors have reasons for their actions, allowing others to assess them by considering perceived intentionality. Action has an unconscious as well as conscious dimension - actors draw on tacit knowledge in situated interactions. The continuous flow of action is described as *durée* - indivisible, embodied processes responsive to environmental cues. Through the recursive reproduction of practices with variation, agency, and structure presuppose each other (Joas & Knöbl, 2020). Structuration thus offers an alternative to structuralism and functionalism by granting primacy to neither individual experience nor societal totalities but to social practices. In doing so, Giddens bridges dualisms of action and structure, subjectivity, and objectivity.

Other key concept which is a central to the Structuration theory is an agent. The agent engages in three fundamental actions during any activity, namely reflexive monitoring of its training, rationalization of the activity, and motivation to carry out the task. All the activities shape and are shaped by the surroundings. The monitoring and rationalization are mostly routine activities. However, the motivation differs as it is not preplanned, and each event might have unique set of motivation. These tasks are altogether agency. To exercise power, the actor needs a circumstance to use it, which means ability to act and react. Power itself has a transformative capacity to influence actions. Power also renders the duality of subjectivity and objectivity. The intentional consequences are based on the actor and his idea of the outcome of his intended behaviour (Giddens, 1986).

The crucial concept of the theory is the structure itself. A structure consists of rules and resources, which are essential for facilitating social action. Those actions are the fundamental units that further interoperate in the process of structuration. Furthermore, social systems are created through the recurring reproduction of social relations. Together, these formulate structural principles that can lead to the creation of institutions. The structure can be unfolded on the reoccurring application of the rules and mobilization of resources. Actors with knowledge of the rules and the ability to mobilize resources are willingly using their capabilities

to reach their desired goals. However, the rules can be modified, and the most embedded rules shape social institutions. Often, the strongest rules become invisible as they are perceived as something natural (Archer, 1982; Sewell, 1992).

The last determining concept of the structuration theory is the duality of structure, which is a concept that overcomes the division of agency and structure. The structure is the surroundings of actors but also something that is consciously created by actors. This implies that agency and structure are deeply interconnected to each other. Action becomes feasible due to enabling and constraining structural characteristics, while structures only exist when implemented. Action becomes practicable due to enabling and constraining structural characteristics, while structures only exist when put into practice. The interconnectedness between structure and agent can also be seen in the inseparability of knowledge used by the agent in everyday life and thus determines their decision-making. The duality of the structure influences the constant evolution and transformation of social activities (Giddens 1984; Imbroscio, 1999).

II.II.II. Sewell's approach

Sewell's approach to Giddens' conception of structuration theory is critical, but he also considers Giddens' contribution very important and comes up with his conception that corrects the perceived shortcomings in Giddens' approach. Perhaps the biggest shortcoming is the lack of description of the actual formation of structures in the Giddens procedure, which Sewell tries to remedy. Further Sewell identifies the following problematic points. The theory does not sufficiently consider the importance of agency as it is a complex observable phenomenon (Sewell 2005). The notion of structure generally conjures up an image with constancy, which is not entirely satisfactory in the case of the theory's conception of structuration. The idea of structure is often contrasted with culture, thus showing the difference between material and abstract environments. Sewell's theory overcomes these points and develop its own concept of structuration theory.

The basic principle of duality of structure is the mutual dependence between human agency and structure. The structuration theory is based on the fact that neither of these two factors is predominant. On the contrary, they consider each other as enabling conditions for structuration. Human agency is based on the acquired knowledge of actors, which is acquired in the environment, that is, in structures. Structures, in turn, are created based on the activity of the actors who insert their knowledge into the process. Structures can thus be seen as boundaries that both enable and constrain agency (Sewell 2005).

The definition of structure lacks definitive terms, and although the terms like social systems, rules and resources may sound simple and straightforward, they do not provide precise boundaries. A social system is a set that includes communities from the smallest social groups up to formations such as the state or a supranational community. Giddens understands these units as something repeatedly structured through social patterns. However, Sewell's problem with this understanding of structure is that such a definition of structuration is based on principles that help create social patterns. Giddens further describes structures as virtual formations that materialize through memories and their use in solving future situations. Structures are rules and resources. The trait of structure, as a rule, might be seen in understanding the agent's role. Giddens's vision of an actor is based upon its knowledgeable, which refers to the possession of knowledge of rules which are valid in a specific time and space. Sewell misses the clarification of what the actor actually knows - the set of its expertise, which creates the desired knowledgeable. Different known rules may differ for different actors, they are not accentuated by Giddens's understanding. Sewell does not agree with the status of rules as virtual, but he views them as rather actual due to their essence, which consists of general understanding and codification. Furthermore, Sewell labels Giddens's rules instead as schemes as he perceives schemes as a generalizable term, which fits their continually changing and transformative nature (Sewell 2005).

Sewell views the understanding of resources as even less theoretically coherent. Both the authors agree that resources are a crucial statement of power relation and that they must be included and consider the asymmetry of power. Anything that can be perceived as a source of power in terms of social interactions can be considered as resources. Sewell deems it necessary to reformulate Giddens' resource approach as Giddens's wording does not provide enough clarity. Sewell divides resources into human and nonhuman categories. As non-human resources we can include, for example, objects, created by nature and man, which give their holder power. As human resources can be described, for example, the qualities that the agent has, whether built, genetically or learned, and thus, for example, charm, knowledge, the ability to handle other resources and so on. Those two categories are mediums of power. To be an agent means the ability to possess a resource, no matter what kind the resource it is. Understanding human beings as agents inherently involves recognizing their empowerment through the availability of various resources. (Sewell, 2005).

Structure, as understood by Sewell, consists of schemes and resources. Schemes are considered to be virtual due to their generalizability and transposability, and this is the way in which Sewell's approach avoids the trap of the term rule, because the scheme is much more

flexible in nature. Schemes also make part of every social practice, and they can be transformed into various scenes in time and space. Resources cannot be considered virtual as they also consist of nonhuman resources, which are material properties. The second type of resource are the human ones. Although human bodies are considered material, human resources have a mental component. Sewell determines resources as actual. Sewell claims that this categorisation of structures differs from Giddens' approach. Whilst Giddens considers structures to be virtual, explains the distribution of resources as an effect shaped by the structures, Sewell argues that some resources are of material nature, so they are not reducible to schemes. Through this, the duality of structure is constituted of virtual schemes and actual resources. Those two building stones are interdependent as one is inferring the other element and vice versa. Without their mutual existence, they are nothing. The scheme explains the meaning of the resources, and the resources are, in turn, the basis for the creation of the schemata. And structures are formed, supposing that this interdependence establishing schemas and resources is perpetuated over time.

II.II.III. Sewell's understanding of the structure

Additionally to a critique of Giddens' conception of structuration theory, Sewell came up with his own conception. For a more accurate description of Sewell's understanding of structuration theory, it is necessary to look at the elements that he considers central to his theory. Sewell argues that structure is not fixed but instead variable - that is, dynamic. To capture this dynamism, it is therefore important to look at elements such as: agency, the duality of structure and its constant transformation. Sewell points to the material basis of the transformation of structure and therefore rejects its merely virtual form (Sewell, 1992).

Thus, the main axioms of Sewell's theory are: duality, which allows and limits transformations; actors, who have the ability to make changes in the structure; the property of transfiguration, which allows the constant transformation of the structure through the agency of the actor; the variety of structures, which refers to the multitude of multiple structures that coexist simultaneously; and last but not least, semiotics, which gives actors the possibility to interpret the different structures precisely through the perspective of a specific actor. Thus, for Sewell, it is important that structures are continuously transformed by the actions of actors, and individual structures can be discerned into patterns of behaviour and a set of formal and informal rules. schemas. It is also important to consider the fact that schemas, in order to have their structural capacity, must be reproduced and maintained. This is only possible if they are given sufficient resources to continue to be reproduced. Due to that, those that do not receive

this subsidy or lose it are then forgotten and do not participate in the creation of structures (Sewell, 1992).

Sewell's understanding of the structures is based also on their multiplicity. Society is made up of many structures, and these different structures operate at varying levels of society, work with different resources, and operate in very different ways. Nevertheless, it is possible to observe their replication and derivation from unrelated areas. This multiplicity is, therefore, based on the ability to apply different structures in different situations using duplicated, often unrelated resources. An important property that schemata have is their transposability. This allows schemas to be used in different situations that may not coexist. The use of schemas for analogous situations, therefore, leads to a constant evolution and transformation of the schemas used. The ability to solve a problem through analogical transfers of schemes cannot be predetermined by social scientists; it must be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the involved parties, indicating that there are no set boundaries to potential transpositions. This therefore means that it is not possible to judge schemes by where they were originally taken from, as there is no clear limit to where they could and could not be used. (Sewell, 2005).

II.II.VI. Sewell's understanding of agency

Sewell's understanding of agency is based on individual actors using structures to gain power over other actors. Thus, structures are used as a tool for gaining power. The agent, therefore, seeks to apply his knowledge of the individual schemas that weigh the structures of the environment in which he coexists and uses the resources available to him to do so.

Agency itself, then, means that knowledge of schemata enables their further use in new contexts. This is followed by the ability to organize resources and use them because, as mentioned above, schemas are only applicable if there are sufficient resources. Sewell stresses that every actor has the capacity for agency, that it is natural, like using language to persuade or inspire. However, this also means a great deal of variability, caused by the simple fact that each actor has its own approach to agency, making it difficult to look for any uniform approaches. This variability is supported by the simple fact that each actor has his own different goals relative to his environment. Therefore, it also uses the surrounding structures differently. In essence, structures grant varying levels of empowerment to agents, which also means that they reflect the desires, intentions, and knowledge of these agents in diverse ways. These structures, along with the human agencies they enable, are inherently marked by disparities in power.

Last but not least, Sewell sees agency as a collective activity. The very transposition of schemas and use of resources is based on interaction with others. The agency is precisely the activity that challenges the coordinated approach of actors against other actors; it is the activity that promotes the emergence of joint projects, encourages common surveillance, creates pressure on specific actors, or inhibits the activities of other actors (Sewell 2005, Sewell 1992).

II.II. Concluding remarks on theoretical part and its significance for the research

The theoretical chapter of the thesis lays a robust foundation for the practical case study involving the EU and Iran. Security Complex Theory offers a nuanced framework to analyse the intricate security dynamics, transcending traditional power politics by incorporating a broader range of factors like historical, cultural, and ideological ties. The framework allows for an in-depth exploration of the intricate security relationship between the EU and Iran, especially considering the EU's influential status as a great power with ability to influence security issues beyond its geographic region.

Structuration Theory, especially through Sewell's adaptation, provides a sophisticated lens to understand how the EU, as a dynamic actor, interacts with and shapes the structural environment in its security dealings with Iran. This theory underlines the importance of agency and the interplay of structures in the realm of international relations, facilitating a deeper insight into the EU's strategies and responses within the security complex.

Together, these theories frame a comprehensive approach to studying the EU-Iran security complex. They allow for an exploration the development in the relationship between two actors based on the signing a revolutionary JCPOA agreement, which enabled a new era of their cooperation. The theoretical insights serve as a crucial backdrop for the forthcoming practical analysis, which will delve into the specific impacts of the Nuclear Deal and the secondary effects it has on the EU-Iran security dynamics.

III. Practical Part - Empirical Analysis (Case Study)

III.I. European Union as an actor

The European Union, together with China, Russia and the USA, is a signatory to the JPOA and subsequently to the JCPOA. This in itself could be enough to prove that the EU is an actor in international relations. In the following chapter the most important provisions of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy will be listed. Furthermore, what it means to be an actor will be defined. Despite the fact that this thesis considers the EU as a unified actor, the next part of this chapter will introduce the different Directorate-Generals (DGs) of the European Commission involved in building relations with Iran, the Head of Missions format will also be introduced as another active element of EU activity towards Iran, finally, it should not be forgotten that the activity of the European Parliament.

III.I.I. European Union as an actor in international relations

For considering the European Union as an actor, it should meet certain conditions, there are many researchers who are dedicated to establishing these conditions and fulfilling them. Europe by its very nature is a *sui generis* entity and therefore the approach to it is more complex than to other entities such as states, multinational companies, or international organisations. Jaques Delors described the EU as an "unidentified political object" (Delors, 1985).

There are numerous theories on actorness, therefore this section gives space to some of the more prominent theorists who have considered the EU as an actor. According to Sjöstedt (1977), an actor in international relations is an autonomous unit in which minimal signs of internal cohesion can be observed. He identified three conditions for defining an actor: the expression of a common goal, having mechanisms of control and decision-making, and the capacity to perform these acts. Another widely used approach is actorhood according to Bretherton and Vogler (2006). Their approach has the basis in constructivism. It involves three interconnected concepts: opportunity, presence, and capability. Opportunity refers to an environment that can be restrictive or permissive. Presence takes into account the actor's ability to influence events simply by existing. Finally, capability is the setting up of an apparatus to set one's own policies. The last theory selected is formulated by Thomas (2012), who based the foundation of actorhood on coherence. Moreover, he sees cohesion as a measurable variable that is judged by the ability to adopt common policies and then implement them. Thus, it is the ability of member states and institutions to unite across preferences and create common policies that the EU can then apply to other states or international organisations or the private sector be considered an actor in the field of international relations. It should be added that the Lisbon

Treaty has contributed significantly to this, bringing institutional changes, and linking the foreign policy and security policy framework. The Lisbon Treaty has helped to consolidate the instruments and mechanisms that contribute to the development of a clear and unified foreign policy (Kuchařová 2014).

III.I.II. Foreign policy of the EU and Neighbourhood Policy

In order to be able to communicate and interact with the outer world, the European Union creates and exercises its foreign policy. The need for having European Union's own foreign policy stems from the idea of a unified, therefore a stronger and louder, stance towards various issues of global importance among the European countries. Walter Hallstein in Bindi even claims that "One reason for creating the European Community was to enable Europe to play its full part in world affairs" and that "it is vital for the Community to be able to speak with one voice" (Bindi 2016). This shows that having foreign policy is tied to the beginnings of deeper European integration after the Second World War. However, it must be underlined that there was no coherent foreign policy before the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. With the establishment of the European Union as such, the Treaty on European Union established the Common Foreign and Security Policy with the aim of preserving peace, strengthening international security, promoting international cooperation, developing, and consolidating democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Real institutional change within the Union came with the introduction of Lisbon Treaty, which provided the Union with legal personality and institutional structure for its external service. Moreover, the Treaty introduced High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and European External Action Service. Furthermore, it strengthened the Common Security and Defence Policy within the existing Common Foreign and Security Policy. This development only demonstrates that there is an increasing interest of the EU and its Member states to build a robust and unified foreign policy to react to international development and develop relations with the third countries (Bindi 2016).

Relations between the European Union and third countries, indeed, make part of its foreign policy. The European Union's foreign policy is based on the founding principles of the EU such as democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights. These principles serve as a basis for the multilateral as well as bilateral relations with countries outside the EU. The relations with the neighbouring countries are amongst the key foreign relations objectives and are of high political and economic importance for the European Union.

III.I.III. Key documents and summit shaping the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy

The Maastricht Treaty

All these new security threats have forced the European Community (EC) to think more about the issue of security and about the strong US influence in this area, mainly through NATO and the UN. The Maastricht Treaty not only transforms the EC into the EU, but also forms the three main pillars of EU policy: the European Community; Justice and Home Affairs; and the Common Foreign and Security Policy. The Maastricht Treaty therefore not only creates the EU itself and gives it the main areas to deal with, but also binds the member states to much closer cooperation than was previously necessary. The Maastricht Treaty enters into force on 7 February 1992 (Nugent, 2006).

Petersberg tasks

The Petersberg tasks were introduced at the Western European Union summit in 1992. The area of the CFSP was already defined by the second pillar of the Maastricht Treaty, but there was no clear vision of further developments or what instruments and areas should be included in the CFSP. Although several other summits have followed which have addressed this area (one of the most important of these, for example, was the St Malo summit in 1998 between the UK and France), the Petersberg tasks are still one of the most important aspects of the CFSP today, especially in the field of foreign operations and peacekeeping missions. For this reason, they were later included in the EU Treaty (Aybet, 2004). The Petersberg Tasks form a policy framework that enumerates and specifies a variety of different military activities that EU member states can use, if they agree on a mandate for them. More specifically, it forms a framework on "joint disarmament operations, humanitarian and rescue tasks, military advice and assistance tasks, conflict prevention and peace-keeping tasks, tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peace-making and post-conflict stabilisation. All these tasks may contribute to the fight against terrorism, including by supporting third countries in combating terrorism in their territories." (Official Journal of the European Union, 2008).

CSDP provisions

Given that France and the UK were the most important players in the EU field of defence, Member States took this as a signal to further deepen European integration in this area. Following the St Malo Declaration, further steps were taken at the 1999 European Council summits, now officially institutionalized by the EU. In June, the institutional framework for CSDP was proposed in Cologne. This was further developed at the Helsinki Summit in

December (Howorth, 2007), where the Helsinki Headline Goal was also set out, guaranteeing voluntary cooperation in EU-led operations and the creation of smaller military groupings to serve as reactionary forces in the event of military conflict. This concept later gave rise to the EU Battlegroups. The deadline for fulfilling these requirements was set for 2003 (Quille, 2006). CSDP became an official part of EU policy with the Treaty of Nice in 2001 (Howorth, 2001).

St. Malo Summit

The French seaside town of St. Malo was the scene of one of the most important moments that gave birth to the CSDP on 4 December 1998. This bilateral summit was attended by only two key states to the EU's security and defence policy, Great Britain represented by British Prime Minister Tony Blair and France represented by French President Jacques Chirac. They drafted the Joint Declaration on European Defence, key parts of which enabled the creation of the CSDP (Howorth 2007: 33-35).

1. *The European Union needs to be in a position to play its full role on the international stage. This means making a reality of the Treaty of Amsterdam, which will provide the essential basis for action by the Union. It will be important to achieve full and rapid implementation of the Amsterdam provisions on CFSP.*
2. *To this end, the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises. (Joint Declaration on European Defence 1998).*

It may seem that the Declaration does not call for anything new, since similar attempts were made immediately after the end of the Second World War, for example with the Brussels Treaty or the Fouchet Plan. However, the previous attempts were unsuccessful, so why was it only in St. Malo that this was done, if the resulting declaration brought nothing new? This breakthrough, according to many experts, is precisely because the two major European security actors, France and the UK, were willing to come together and write this declaration (Howorth, 2007). According to Howorth, St Malo is proof of the 50-year-long British veto on any discussion of the involvement of the defence section in the EU/EC institution. This in itself marks the criticality of the whole situation, when a country like the UK has retreated from its original doctrine and acknowledges the importance of security and defence policy on EU soil (Howorth 2001).

III.II. The security complex between EU and Iran

III.II.I. The European Union's approach towards Iran

This chapter is intended to provide an overview of the relationship between the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Iran. This relationship has its own specificities and is important in

the context of Iran's geopolitics. First of all, the relationship between the European Union and Iran after the 1979 coup will be described, when the pro-Western Shah was removed from power and the Islamic Republic was established. This part will focus on the significant milestones in the diplomatic ties between EU and Iran. Among the highlights of the historical development, are considered the Critical Dialogue, the Comprehensive Dialogue. The negotiations leading to the Paris Agreement, the downturn and sanctions pressure between 2006 and 2010, the subsequent period of convergence and the formation of the JCPOA, and finally the relations after the US abandoned the agreement. The relation between the EU and Iran was based on economic ties during Shah's era, which changed dramatically after the coup in 1979 when the Shah's regime fell, and the Iranian Islamic Republic was established. The coup severed ties with the US, which had gone from being Iran's main ally to its main enemy. This significant change in geopolitical direction allowed the European Union to stand out and come with own approach. The European Union moderated its ties with Iran because of the coup but never severed them, representing a significant difference from the diplomatic approach of the United States. This approach has put the EU in a unique position of an actor that can ensure communication between Iran and the US (Haghirian & Zangiabadi, 2021).

The coup severed ties with the US, which had gone from being Iran's main ally to its main enemy. This significant change in geopolitical direction gave the European Union an opportunity to stand out. The European Union moderated its ties with Iran because of the coup but never severed them, which is a significant difference from the diplomatic approach of the United States, which severed its ties. This has put the EU in a unique position as an actor that can ensure communication between Iran and the US. This period, referred to as cold peace lasted between 1979 and 1989. Relations between the US and Iran improved following the death of Iran's Supreme Leader Khomeini and the election of President Hashemi Rafsanjani (Bergenäs, 2010).

Furthermore, the start of Operation Desert Shield made room for the beginning of new negotiations with Iran. The Edinburgh European Council, therefore, initiated a new approach toward Iran (European Council, 1992). This break in the process to EU-Iran relations is usually perceived as the initial point of the so-called Critical Dialogue. This approach aimed to normalize political and economic relations and to try to channel the behaviour of the Islamic Republic, namely on the issues of human rights, weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. From the EU's point of view, this change of approach was intended to limit Iran's activities, such as the support for Hamas or the active development of nuclear weapons. However, the EU's efforts have been to no avail.

Moreover, the initiative was strongly marked by the cooperation between Iran and the Russian Federation on constructing the Bushehr nuclear reactor. Pressure from the United States to reinforce the isolation of Iran that would entail a restriction of diplomatic relations was delayed. However, the critical dialogue was eventually suspended mainly because of the court-confirmed involvement of the Iranian regime in the "Mykonos" murder case (Bergenäs 2010, Cowell, 1997; Przybyszewski, 2021).

The cooled relations did not last long. In 1997, the victory of Mohammad Khatami, the candidate of the reformist wing of the Iranian political spectrum, provided an opportunity to reopen negotiations. Negotiations were launched in 1998 under the summary title "Comprehensive Dialogue", which built upon the previous "Critical Dialogue" in terms of content. Still, they were additionally expanded to include other topics such as the drug issue, refugees, and possible cooperation in the field of energy resources (Ali, 2021). In the context of the world events, these negotiations were influenced by the situation in neighbouring Afghanistan and by the open approach of Iranian diplomacy expressed in its desire to improve relations with the European states and Saudi Arabia. The EU has succeeded mainly in pursuing common commercial objectives. Furthermore, there was interest in further rapprochement, but the problem was the slow progress on non-economic issues. Though the re-election of President Khatami raised positive expectations, it was subsequently overwhelmed by the events of 11 September 2001 (Przybyszewski, 2021). Efforts to sign the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) were weighed down by the aftermath of these events with increased safeguards in politics and terrorism (Pihl, 2002). In addition, Iran's attempts to build secret nuclear facilities were revealed in 2002, which presented a violation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This resulted in an end to the dialogue and, more importantly, in setting a new direction in EU-Iran relations, which began to deal primarily with the nuclear issue (Albright & Hinderstein, 2010; Bergenäs 2010).

The next chapter of the relations between Iran and the European Union builds on the previous dialogues. The signing of the Additional Protocol to the NPT, which allows for inspections beyond the NPT basis, can be considered a partial success. This success was followed by reaching an agreement on the so-called Paris Agreement, which temporarily committed Iran to abandon its enrichment activities in exchange for cooperation with the EU (Alcaro, 2018).

Another significant event of 2004 was the new negotiating format represented by France, Germany and the UK, supported by the EU (E3/EU), strengthened by the addition of the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy. However, any promising

progress was halted by the cooperation between Russia and Iran and their agreement on nuclear fuel supply. The departure from collaboration with the EU was confirmed by the election of President Ahmadinejad, who sided with Russia. Iran resumed its uranium enrichment activities and has been investigated by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which referred its case to the UN Security Council. This development gave the European Union no choice but to join the US in sanctioning Iran (Alcaro, 2018; Posch, 2010; Sauer, 2007). Despite the distancing and the sanctions imposed on Iran for uranium enrichment, further negotiations between the EU and Iran continued. Western states, in conjunction with Russia and China (the so-called P5+1 or E3/EU +3 format), pushed for legally binding resolutions in the Security Council (United Nations Security Council 2006a, b, 2007, 2008a, b, 2010)² and further increased pressure on Iran. It is important to note that none of the countries involved in the abovementioned format wanted another state in nuclear-weapon States category, in the context of North Korea's first successful nuclear test (Przybyszewski, 2021; Sanger, 2006). This deadlock situation lasted until the breakthrough in 2013, which came with the change in the post of Iran's president who is a specific driver of events in the Iranian nuclear case (Jett, 2018).

It is possible to identify several reasons for the gradual rapprochement between the P5+1 and Iran, which resulted in new negotiations. The main factors include the impact of sanctions, which have hit the Iranian economy hard. The country has experienced cash problems, economic growth has plummeted, and inflation has started to rise. All this has had an impact on the standard of ordinary Iranians living. Iran believed that it would be able to survive the sanctions, and it linked its efforts to the production of the necessary components for a nuclear weapon. This had an impact on the P5+1, who was forced to acknowledge this fact. However, this increased the potential for military escalation. Since 2010, the number of meetings between Iran and the E3/EU+3 has gradually increased. These meetings were still accompanied by additional pressure in the form of strengthening sanctions through Resolution 1929 (Alcaro, 2018; UN Security Council, 2011).

The EU demanded the suspension of enrichment in exchange for offers in civilian nuclear research. Despite the lack of success of the negotiations, the talks have indeed resulted in improved relations, as evidenced by concessions on the part of Iran, which has converted

²United Nations Security Council. (2006a, July 31). S/Res/1696.^{[1][2]}
United Nations Security Council. (2006b, December 23). S/Res/1737.^{[1][2]}
United Nations Security Council. (2007, March 24). S/Res/1747.^{[1][2]}
United Nations Security Council. (2008a, March 3). S/Res/1803.^{[1][2]}
United Nations Security Council. (2008b, September 27). S/Res/1835.^{[1][2]}
United Nations Security Council. (2010, June 9). Resolution S/Res/1929.

some of its enriched fuel stockpiles into less exploitable fuel plates (Thielmann, 2012). The main advances were to be achieved with the help of the secret talks in Muscat between the US and Iranian representatives. These negotiations were facilitated by the Sultan of Oman and Iranian Foreign Minister Salehi (Rozen, 2015). The momentum of the negotiations was increased by the election above of the new Iranian president Hassan Rouhani who took office in June 2013. In addition to being the candidate of the reformist wing, Rouhani already had experience from the previous E3/EU-Iran talks from 2003 to 2005. His campaign mainly emphasised ending the international isolation and improving the country's economic situation (Ehrenfreund, 2013).

With the new leadership headed by Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, negotiations got off to a high pace. President Rouhani met with French President Hollande, and there was a great deal of excitement over the news of a direct phone call with President Obama (France 24, 2013; Mason & Charbonneau, 2013). The result of these renewed talks was the signing of The Joint Plan of Action (JPOA), which presented a significant follow-up to the signing of the Paris Agreement in 2004. The JPOA was only a preliminary agreement, but it had clear implications. Its main points are the destruction of the stockpile to 20% of enriched uranium, the capping of the maximum possible enrichment to five percent, and restrictions on the expansion of centrifuge construction.

Moreover, the agreement allowed daily access to Iran's nuclear facilities for International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections (CNN staff, 2013; Davenport 2022). The success of the JPOA was followed by further negotiations aimed at reaching the final agreement. This was a daunting task as the negotiations were complicated by the sheer complexity of the technical debate over curtailing Iran's nuclear industry towards militarization while retaining civilian operations. The divisions within the main actors in the negotiations further complicated the process of searching for consensus. The US state apparatus was divided on the deal, with the Republican-dominated House of Representatives resisting its conclusion. Similarly, Israel expressed its displeasure at the final agreement. Likewise, there was some tension within Iran over the agreement with the US. The negotiations themselves were accompanied by a relaxation of the sanctions that had been imposed on Iran. The IAEA inspection mechanisms, the length of expected checks of the agreement and the issue of fuel enrichment became the main issues in the talks. In return for compliance with the terms of the agreement, the P5+1/E3+3 states were supposed to end the United Nations (UN) sanctions program as well as their own nuclear-related sanctions.

The success of the negotiations brought about the end to the UN sanctions with Resolution 2231 and supported the emerging treaty (Alcaro, 2018; UN Security Council, 2015). For the EU, the signature of the treaty was a good starting point for negotiations with the 45th US President Donald J. Trump, who has made no secret of his opposition to the agreement during his whole presidency campaign. The EU states tried to satisfy Trump's criticisms of the JCPOA through diplomacy, which concerned the Iranian production of ballistic missiles and short- and medium-range missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads. Despite these efforts, President Trump ultimately decided to unilaterally terminate the treaty on 8 May 2018 (Landler, 2018; Morello & Vitkovskaya, 2021). Concurrently with this move, he switched to a policy of maximum economic pressure, which aimed to weaken Iran by way of economic sanctions and efforts to isolate Iran's economy as much as possible (Al-Monitor, 2018).

This move had a major impact on the EU, which had to come up with its own approach, one that was limited. On the one hand, by the need to create a sufficient economic environment for Iran to force it to continue complying with the JCPOA, while keeping this environment within the limits of what is permissible for the US. This posed problems as European companies were constrained by secondary US sanctions. In addition, the US has put further pressure on Iran and thus on the EU. The only instrument that survived the next waves of sanctions was Instrument in Support of Trade Exchange (INSTEX), a mechanism is described later in the text (Alcaro & Tocci, 2021). US pressure continued to grow during 2019, and when the US targeted oil waivers with sanctions, Iran announced an increase in the limit set in the deal. The policy of maximum pressure had repercussions also on its creators as we have seen a multiplication of cases of attacks on tankers, seizures of ships, or the increased intensity of the proxy conflict in Iraq. This conflict that took place in different spaces reached its peak with the killing of General Qassem Suleimani in January in Baghdad (Mazzetti et al., 2020). This assassination was the last straw for Iran which subsequently withdrew from the JCPOA. Unfortunately, this marked the failure of the EU's long-standing efforts to keep Iran in the deal until President Trump changes his position or his successor arrives. This strategy focused on limiting the damage that could have been done to the deal (Alcaro & Tocci, 2021).

III.II.II. EU – Iran motivation

Recalculation of the EU's approach after aligning with US and strengthening the sanction pressure in a previous period till Obama presidency period. The Iran was viewed as one of the more stabilizing actors in the region, especially in the context of the ISIL expansion, the shared enemy of both actors. It is safe to say that JPOA and later JCPOA were partial nods in a more

complex vision for the securitized region, where Iran was meant to play significant role. The region of Levant and Maghreb was seen as a threat to EU's long-term strategies as the danger of migration and instability was growing. EU had already in place its European Neighbourhood Policy (Santini 2014). The support of the JCPOA gives EU a leverage over the USA way of containment of Iran. By supporting the treaty, the EU has retained the ability to continue to directly negotiate with Tehran and thus to be able to partially influence its behaviour. This hybrid mode of engagement leaves the EU free to balance its interests with those of other actors. This approach is led not by a means of confrontation but rather through the prospect of economic development (Niknami 2021).

The EU came up with a different approach, which contrasted sharply with the containment approach that the US came up with during the Bush and then Trump administrations. This neoliberal approach, which offered the possibility of cooperation and mutual development in exchange for gaining a stable and non-confrontational relationship, is discussed in more detail in the next chapter, which focuses on specific areas. It should be kept in mind that this has also brought some concessions from the EU, especially in the area of human rights, which is declared by the EU as one of its highest values. Even though the sanctions imposed by the EU specifically for human rights violations have remained in place and continue to affect Iran, it is clear that the EU has had to compromise its publicly stated objectives for compliance (Alcaro, Siddi, 2021; Dolzikova & Borck, 2021). It is precisely the ability to balance the approaches of containment and engagement that gives the EU a unique position in which it has not been forced to give up its security interests, although this flexibility has come at a price. The Iranian representatives' statements confirm that they continue to value and value the opportunity to further develop relations at various levels (Motamedi 2022). The next question is whether maintaining the JCPOA will be of value to the EU and at what cost to keep the agreement at least partially operational. The Biden administration's approach has given the EU hope that its efforts have logic and will be evaluated in the short term (Sanger, Jakes, & Fassihi, 2021). Unfortunately, that appearance has been shattered by a violent change in the balance of international relations - the war in Ukraine. This has thrown further obstacles into the negotiations for a full revival of the JCPOA, as the Russian Federation is aware of the potential of the agreement and with potential intention to stop it (Liechtenstein, Toosi; 2022).

III.III. Secondary impacts of the nuclear deal - Indirect outcomes

III.III.I. Secondary impacts of the nuclear deal: Brief overview

This chapter looks at the secondary effects of the signing of the JCPOA and the subsequent easing of sanctions, which opened up a wealth of opportunities in various areas of cooperation between the EU and Iran. Among the most important areas are economic assistance and trade incentives, migration management and assistance with managing migration pressures, counter-narcotics efforts, energy trade, environment, culture and tourism, and later assistance with COVID-19. To its detriment, this topic is overshadowed both in the media and academically by the primary impact of the JCPOA and the current negotiations to revive the treaty. Nevertheless, the author considers the EU's efforts to expand relations with Iran to be significant. It is also evidence of Europe's own path, which is very different from the course of action chosen by the US. In the case of its engagement with Iran, the EU is showing that it is reflecting on its capabilities and possibilities. The approach based on expanding economic and other cooperation is a visible demonstration of the EU's strengths.

A key document that clarifies the intended scope of cooperation is the Joint Statement of by High Representative / Vice President (HR/VP) Federica Mogherini and Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif dated 16 April 2016. During this event, representatives of the European Commission patronizing most of the agenda (Internal Market, Climate and Energy, Humanitarian Aid, Research, Science and Innovation, Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries; Education, Culture, Youth and Sport) met with their Iranian counterparts (European Commission, 2016).

This meeting was intended to declare openness to pursue common objectives and to highlight the improvement of EU-Iran relations. It included the presentation of the main objectives. The primary objective was to keep the JCPOA operational. Furthermore, general objectives in various sectors ranging from economic development to human rights were presented. Finally, emphasis was placed on efforts to stabilize and peacefully settle conflicts in the region. Mutual opening of representative offices was also discussed. The Joint Statement declared cooperation in following areas: political consultations; economic cooperation; trade and investment cooperation; agriculture; transport; energy and climate change; civil nuclear cooperation; environment; civil protection; science, research and innovation; culture; drugs; migration; regional issues; humanitarian cooperation.

The following section concentrates on the description of the agendas where progress and cooperative efforts can be traced in the fulfilment of the stated objectives.

III.III.II. Sphere – Economic assistance and trade

The economic diplomacy is nothing new, among many Marshall Plan or European Steel and Coal Community or current Belt and Road Initiative are well known projects, that are perfect examples of mixture between diplomacy and economic, trade and private companies interests. The potential of developing relations through these paths are even more obvious, if the numbers are analysed. EU as the world largest economy with production concerning one quarter of world GDP must use this potential to pursue its own goals. The future global growth is expected to take place outside EU, so the European Commission decided to strengthen SMEs abroad. After the Lisbon treaty entered into force, new possibilities emerged - namely the European External Action Service (EEAS) was established together with Commissioners' Group on External Action (CGEA) chaired by HR/VP. These institutional changes have strengthened and expanded the EU's options. These are instruments that allow the EU to fully develop its economic diplomacy (Bouyala 2017).

Iran experienced a steep rise in its GDP in 2016 in the context of the lifting of sanctions, while in 2015 the GDP was in negative figures, in 2016 it reached 12.5%, unfortunately due to the geopolitical situation it gradually declined and in 2018, it again went into negative figures. The data from the World Bank shows that GDP halved between 2016 and 2020 (Ghasseminejad, 2021; Ng, 2021).

As reported in January 2018 on its website, the French public investment bank (Bpifrance) rushed a large number of investors to Iran after the sanctions were eased, to offer products to the 80 million-strong market. This has led to a 30% increase in trade between the EU and Iran in 2016-2017. This very bank has come out in support of financing IR- FR economic projects, airbus has agreed to a deal with Iran worth 10 billion euros, and Mercedes Benz car company has agreed to set up a production line with Iran Khodro (Hepher, 2016; Financial Tribune 2018). Italy has become the biggest investor in EU countries, signing an agreement with the Iranian government on a 5 billion euro deal to support joint projects in infrastructure, chemical and petrochemical industries (Reuters, 2018). This period of economic incentives and development has been disappointingly shaky because of the statements made by US President Trump. On 6 August, the first wave of sanctions was imposed, focusing on Iran's access to the dollar at the international level, trade in precious metals and strategic raw materials such as aluminium and steel, or industrial software and automotive production (The White House, 2018). In response to these sanctions, financial groups such as France's Bpifrance have suspended their activity in the country. British Airways/ Air France/ KLM airlines have started to cancel direct flights to Tehran (DW, 2018).

EU reacted quickly to provide evidence of interest in the continuation of cooperation with the 18-million-euro support package (Rios, 2018). This support package was divided into three areas, 8 million euros were allocated to SMEs of the Iranian private sector, the other 8 million euros was assigned to the environmental agenda, and the last 2 million was provided to fight harm caused by drugs (VoA, 2018).

In September, during the UN General Assembly, a panel of ministers, without the participation of the US, presented their plan to create a new financial instrument, the Special Purpose Vehicle, which was intended to ensure continued trade with Iran despite the imposition of US sanctions; subsequently, this instrument came to be referred to as INSTEX. The EU is still the second largest importer into Iran, supplying between €300 million and €400 million a month in exports. Most of this trade is conducted through small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (EEAS, 2018; EURACTIV/ Reuters, 2018). It was INSTEX that Iranian and EU officials hoped to be able to continue trading independently of US sanctions. INSTEX, or Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges, is an instrument that was inspired by the exchange of goods without the use of money during the Cold War. This alternative platform to the traditional financial system to legally trade with Iran through a netting system for import and export payments in coordination with Iran's Special Trade and Finance Institute (STFI). The crucial part of the mechanism provides for a virtual ledger that matches all balances related to import and export transactions so that payments are exchanged only between European companies that import and export to Iran and no direct payments to or from Iran are involved (Killick et al., 2020).

Finally, this framework for exchange was established in January 2019, its first and so far last use came during the outbreak of the COVID 19 pandemic crisis at the end of March 2020, this was for the supply of German pharmaceuticals that COVID-affected Iran desperately needed. The original trio of France, Germany and the United Kingdom was supplemented at the end of the year by six other states, Finland, Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway (non-EU member), and Sweden, which justified their involvement on the grounds of the need to keep the JCPOA alive and reduce the possibility of nuclear proliferation. It should be added that INSTEX has not offered any more since its first use and Iran has continuously expressed its dissatisfaction with this instrument (Tehran Times, 2021). Its European representatives have also expressed a certain amount of disappointment with its functioning (von Hein, 2020).

However, it is not only the EU that should be blamed for the failure to develop economic cooperation. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an intergovernmental organisation that brings together international standards for a legal framework for states to combat money

laundering and terrorist financing. In a joint statement, Iran committed to fulfilling the obligations that would allow the FATF to reclassify Iran's system. In the interim, its sanctioning was suspended in the context of offering a transition period to complete the necessary laws and legal safeguards. This reprieve has been granted to Iran several times in the good faith belief (the first expiration of the exemption was in January 2018) that progress would be made in the areas of anti-money laundering (AML) and counter-terrorist financing (CFT). By repeatedly failing to ratify in the documents of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the FATF Convention on the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, Iran has been blacklisted again and will be subject to restrictions. The delegation of financial restriction obligations to individual states can be seen as a somewhat accommodating move - also leaving the freedom to trade with Iran to individual states at their own peril (FATF, 2018; O'Toole, 2020).

III.III.III. Sphere - Migration

Illegal migration and its implications are also a long-standing common theme for Iran and the EU. Iran is plagued by migration from neighbouring Afghanistan, which is very difficult to control and puts a strain on the Iranian system. Some of these illegal migrants continue further west to later set foot on European soil via Turkey or Greece. According to data from the International Organization for Migration, at the height of the migration crisis, up to 205,000 migrants from Afghanistan entered Europe in 2015 through sea crossings and landings in Greece (IOM, 2016). Despite the ebbing of the migration wave, migration to the EU from Afghanistan is still very much present and, for example, in October 2018, 1,537 migrants were recorded as travelling by sea to the shores of Greece from Afghanistan, making them the largest nationality group (IOM, 2018). Compared to Iran, these are low numbers, with half a million people migrating from Afghanistan to Iran in 2021 alone. According to available data from 2021, there are just under 4 million refugees from Afghanistan residing in Iran, with around 780,000 properly registered.

Such a number creates a permanent strain on the social system, employment and also allows for illegal activities such as human trafficking, especially when considering the severity of US sanctions and the covid wave. moreover, the numbers are long term, for 2018 the estimated refugee population was around 3 million with a 1:2 ratio of registered to illegal refugees. The Iranian government conducted a count of all illegal Afghan citizens living in Iran in 2022, including those who had just come after the events in Afghanistan in 2021. According to Iran's Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA), the Headcount was

completed on June 30, 2022, and approximately 2.6 million Afghans were registered through the exercise and received "laissez-passers," which gave them a form of temporary protection against refoulement during its validity period (EUAA, 2023; Golpira 2018; UNHCR (a), 2023, UNHCR (b), 2023).

Despite migration being an important issue for the EU and Iran, there are not many outputs on it although the Joint Statement from April 2016 directly mentions the launch of comprehensive bilateral dialogue on the migration issue. However, this does not mean that it has not been discussed (EEAS, 2016). Furthermore, the document available on the Council site specify the time period and mechanism of the dialogue:

"The European Commission, in cooperation with the European External Action Service, therefore proposed to the Iranian authorities a non-legally binding instrument on launching a dialogue on migration and refugee issues. Since the first draft provided to the Iranian authorities in June 2017, discussions on the instrument took place between representatives of the Commission and of the Islamic Republic of Iran with a view to drawing up a non-binding instrument setting out political commitments with regard to migration and its management in all its different dimensions." (Council of the European Union, 2019).

Migration is part of policy dialogues that have a broader agenda. Migration itself is also addressed by EU states with Iran on a bilateral level. One of the most interesting publicly available references is an interview with EC Commissioner Avramopoulos, recorded during his visit to Tehran on 25 June 2018. Here, the Commissioner comments on the topic of migration and outlines the contours of the negotiations that took place between EU and Iranian representatives on the subject. He mentions the financial assistance that the EU has provided to Iran to cope with the migrant influx, amounting to 10 million in 2017. Between December 2017 and June 2018, the Commissioner said, a further €39 million was to be provided to a special programme to support refugees returning locally from neighbouring countries. In the interview, he also outlines possible cooperation in combating drug trafficking, a similarly important topic for Iran.

The Council endorsed the memorandum of understanding in February 2019 specifically focused on migration and refugees. This should have brought relations closer and establish closer cooperation. This platform should address issues like visas, Iranians living in the EU without a visa, and readmission agreements to facilitate returns of migrants to their home countries. The technical level meetings were meant to take place half a dozen times a year. However, there are no documents about any meetings, and it seems that this memorandum was never functionally implemented (Council of the European Union, 2019; Golpira 2018).

The hard work to manage the influx of migrants is also evident from the position of the EU representative in Afghanistan. Roland Kubia reported via his Twitter account that EU assistance to manage the migrant influx had reached 40 million euros for 2019, with the aim of helping Afghans in Pakistan and Iran (Kobia, 2019). A further \$21 million in aid for essential health, education and drinking water needs were due in February of the following year. (European Commission, 2020). In an interview given to the online media tahlilbazaar.com, the EU representative in Afghanistan points to the increasing financial assistance, which he documents with the 260 million euros in financial aid that the EU was to provide to cope with Afghan refugees in the region. Despite the poor coverage through the EU's official website, according to the Twitter accounts of Roland Kobio and Helga Schmid (who represented the EEAS), negotiations regarding migration between the EU and Iran are frequent and have some development (Ghamkhar, 2019).

Since 2011, Iran has received almost 120 million euros, 113 million of which have gone toward humanitarian relief initiatives. Most of these assistance disbursements were made to international organizations operating in Iran (such as UNHCR, UNICEF, RED CROSS, and Norwegian Council for Refugees). The total amount of humanitarian support to Iran is €92.3 million from 2016 till 2022. Majority of the funds were directed into the improving reception and accommodation facilities for migrants, education of migrant children, and other humanitarian aid (Lenarčič, 2022).

III.III.IV. Sphere – Political Activities of the European Parliament

Representatives of the European Parliament (EP) have also made efforts to establish contacts with Iran and thus help shape a harmonious dialogue. In 2015, the 5th inter-parliamentary meeting between representatives and their Iranian counterparts took place, the first of these meetings dating back to 2006. The topics covered were the human rights situation, stability in the Middle East region, energy, and the environment.

The following 6th meeting took place on Iranian soil in the cities of Tehran and Isfahan. The EP was represented by the delegation's chairman for relations with Iran, Member of the Parliament (MEP) Janusz Lewandowski, and other MEPs. Among the representatives on the Iranian side, we can name, among others, Foreign Minister Javad Zarif, Minister of the Interior Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli, and Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani. The agenda for this meeting was wide-ranging and included NGOs, the state of religious minorities in Iran, Afghan refugees in Iran, the controversial missile programme, drugs and the environment. During a one-day stay in Isfahan, the EP representatives also visited a centre for Afghan refugees. According to the

available report, the platform is a very suitable means to develop frank and important dialogues. It is precisely such inter-parliamentary group meetings that should contribute to further development.

The seventh and last inter-parliamentary group meeting so far took place in Brussels in September 2018. As with the previous meeting, it was a rich discussion on various topics, including security in the Middle East, the status of the JCPOA, the situation regarding Afghan refugees, and the state of human rights in Iran (European Parliament, 2018).

III.III.V. High-Level Political Dialogue with Iran

The third round of High-Level Political Dialogue³ with Iran was held on the 19th of November 2017, like the agenda of the inter-parliamentary groups; these meetings have a wide range of topics on the agenda. These include trade, energy, environment, migration, humanitarian issues, drug policy, education, culture, research, and transport, as well as regional issues (Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Lebanon and Afghanistan). The meeting was chaired by representatives of the agendas mentioned above. This was followed by the participation of Secretary of European External Action Service (EEAS) General Schmid at the 2nd conference on International Nuclear Cooperation, which focuses on the development of Iran's civilian nuclear programme following Annex III of the JCPOA. This conference was also well represented by high-level officials on both sides, with the Secretary General of the European External Action Service, Dominique Rostori, Director General of DG ENER, Stefano Manservigi, Director General of DG DEVCO, as well as Patrick Child, Deputy Director General of DG RTD and a representative of DG JRC attending from the EU. Other participants were representatives of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency and others. Among the agenda items was a report on the visit of Iranian scientists to the EU Joint Research Center, a debate on nuclear waste management and liability for any damage caused by its handling (IRNA, 2017).

The following 4th round of meetings took place one year later, similar to the previous meeting. This time the highest-ranking representative was EEAS Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid, and her counterpart was Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. Last year, the High-Level Meeting was followed by the third conference on International Nuclear Cooperation. Among the main topics discussed were frequent high-level exchanges on policy issues related to civil nuclear cooperation, a joint seminar on civil nuclear liability and insurance, and projects supporting the Iranian Nuclear Regulatory Authority's efforts to align

³ No information on previous meetings could be found, although the second meeting was mentioned in the press minutes of the third High Level Political Dialogue.

with international legislative and regulatory standards (DG ENER, 2018). The 5th High-Level Political Dialogue took place in December 2020 and had the fight against COVID 19 on the agenda compared to previous years. Equally important was the inclusion of a negotiation item on establishing an EU-Iran migration dialogue, which did not produce any tangible result (EEAS, 2020).

Other initiatives include several agendas for which it was possible to find at least partial information on EU activities. Among the selected ones is a mention of a business forum, an Europe-Iran conference in Zurich, or the establishment of contact between universities between the EU and Iran (Havergal, 2016; Keinon 2016).

III.IV. Renewal of the Nuclear Agreement and the position of the European Union

Trump's unilateral withdrawal from the agreement was officially explained by the lack of respect for human rights, and other shortcomings were that the resources Iran was acquiring through the deal were being used in the Middle East by its proxy groups. Similarly, resources were used to strengthen relations with Russia and China (Lander, 2018). The abandonment of the agreement was a big blow to the rest of the signatories. The efforts of the European partners to keep the agreement alive were evident in their efforts to communicate and offer meeting opportunities. President Macron has been the most vocal advocate for a return to the agreement. However, these insistences have not yielded results (Doe, 2020; France 24, 2019). It is also worth mentioning the comments of High Representative Borrell, who explained the importance of the agreement and insisted on its maintenance. In the text, he mentions not only the emphasis on diplomatic resolve and the importance of non-proliferation, but also highlights the JCPOA as an agreement that allows for the settlement of economic and trade relations and ends Iran's isolation on a global scale (Borrell, 2020).

Another breach of mutual trust was the assassination of leading Iranian physicist Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh as well as two sabotages of Iranian nuclear facilities, most likely by the Israelis. Even so, the Biden administration was prepared to negotiate a reentry into the agreement (Smith, 2020). In early 2021, European negotiators succeeded in resuming mediated talks between the US and Iranian sides. First the ministerial meeting between the EU and the US in February expressed that this is a meaningful and important agreement that is key to maintaining non-proliferation (Borrell, 2021). Subsequently, in April, the first negotiations took place in Vienna. The US representatives have clarified that the negotiations will be complex, but they see a way forward. The Iranian side has refused to meet directly with US negotiators

until Trump's sanctions are lifted, giving further space to the European team (Herszenhorn & Barigazzi, 2021; Miller, 2023). Indications that there is a will to negotiate can be seen for examples, the IMF agreed to provide loans to Iran for Covid-19 relief (Tang, Pan 2022). After the resumption of the talks, six meetings were held, then suspended due to the presidential elections in Iran. This election may be considered as critical point as they led to internal political change in Iran regarding the position of the president. In the summer of 2021, the moderate Rouhani was replaced by a representative of the conservative wing, Ibrahim Raisi (Yee, 2021). The talks did not resume until 29 November, and in the meantime, Iran has begun enriching uranium and has not allowed monitors from the IAEA (Apelblat, 2021).

IV. Findings

This chapter of the thesis summarizes the aforementioned results of the empirical analysis that adopted a complex case study approach. The special emphasis is given to answering two main research questions introduced in the Methodology, whilst addressing crucial issues connected to the information and processes that influenced the current state.

IV.I. Indirect effects of the negotiations between the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Iran on the Nuclear Deal

The first research question stands:

RQ1: What are the indirect effects of the negotiations between the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Iran on the Nuclear Deal?

The analysis permitted one to reach a conclusion that there are several spheres of the indirect effects of the JCPOA negotiation between the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Iran. First and foremost, the analysis proves that the JCPOA is not just a one-dimensional treaty designed to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. The negotiations and the final agreement made it possible to end Iran's isolation. Consequently, this offered the EU an area that lies in its immediate neighbourhood and is of strategic importance to it to project its own policies and address its needs.

Ending the isolation and removing several sanctions has allowed a previously unseen relationship to develop, as *Figure 1* shows. Beyond the primary goal of stopping nuclear proliferation. The EU has established cooperation in several sectors and has sought to use its influence to bring Iran closer. Cooperation in economic matters can be documented by the interest of European manufacturers in establishing or outsourcing production lines to Iranian territory. It is also evidenced by the interest of airlines in increasing the number of services they provide. In addition, the EU offered economic assistance through INSTEX during COVID-19, although it remained more of a vision in this case. Similarly, the EU had a vision for migration, which it was able to start implementing. It is possible to trace efforts to stem the flow of migrants reaching Europe's borders from Afghanistan via Iran.

The EU has also sought to establish relations on a political level, not only along national lines but also through EU institutions such as the European Parliament and the European Commission. Last but not least, there were other initiatives, that have been discussed but have unfortunately not produced tangible results.

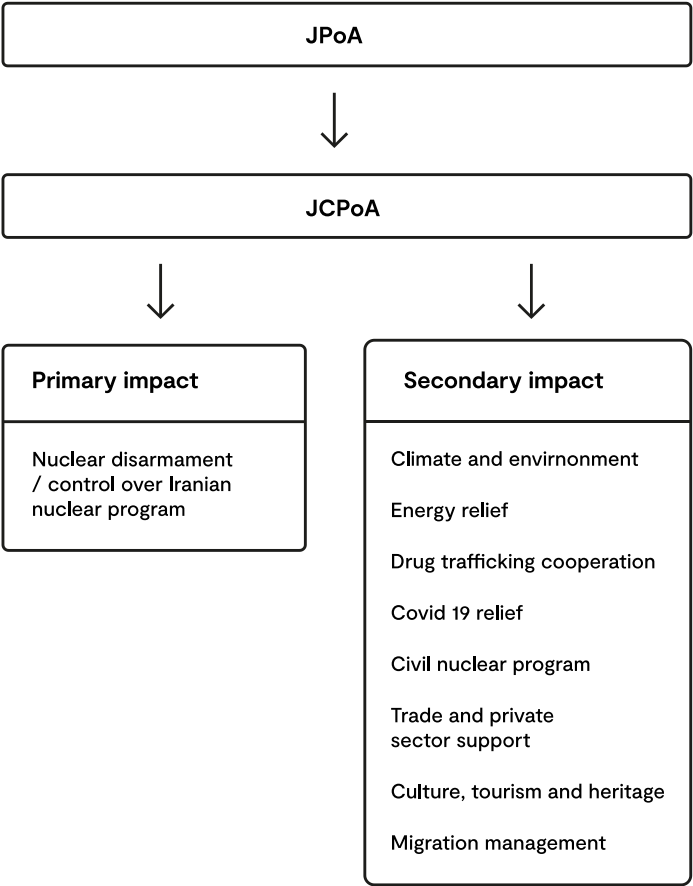


Figure 1: Primary and secondary impacts of JCPOA, created by author

IV.II. Effect of negotiations between the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Iran

The second research question was formulated as follows:

RQ2: How do these negotiations affect the actors mentioned?

The negotiations had impact on the European Union as well as on Iran. The author mainly focused on the EU; however, the impact was intertwined as the structuration happened in an action reaction manner. One consequence of Iran leaving its long-standing isolation has been the European Union's activity. As seen through the theory of the security complex, the EU has decided to establish and stabilise a close relationship with this important player. Through the different spheres explored between the actors and the progress made in some of them, it is

possible to say that new structures have been created at the level of economic or political cooperation on which were meant to build further. For example, working groups at the level of the European Parliament have been a very useful means of further developing relations.

Further, the resulting effect of negotiation and a long-term open approach was quite evident after the US left the JCPOA, when European negotiators first became stabilizers of the turbulent developments. Their efforts to keep the treaty on track despite Trump's aggressive policies were evident. And then, after the change in the US administration and, therefore, in the approach to Iran, the European negotiators became the diplomatic bridge between Iran and the US. This trust placed in the EU only underlines its long-standing desire to become a global diplomatic force.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this research show how important it is to look at international treaties in detail and to pay attention to their possible effects, which may need to be more generally considered. As already discussed, the nuclear deal with Iran was one of the significant foreign policy achievements of the Barrack Obama administration, but that is not the only way to view the deal. Equally important is its importance for the European Union and how EU and its officials have been able to deal with it.

As already discussed, the nuclear deal with Iran was one of the significant foreign policy achievements of the Barrack Obama administration, but that is not the only way to view the deal. It is, therefore, very important to look at the agreement after it has been approved and what the consequences of their primary outcomes have been. Preventing nuclear proliferation is its primary objective, and closely linked to this is the easing of the harsh sanctions that have been imposed on Iran for its nuclear policy. However, secondary impacts or effects (both terms are used in the thesis; the author understood them equally, and they have the same meaning in his conception) have an essential value for the EU as an international actor on the global stage, an ambition that the EU has had for a long time and is looking for ways to confirm this position in the long term.

Therefore, the signing of the treaty has led to a restart of relations between the various actors vis-à-vis Iran. Iran normalized its position on the international scene, and individual actors then sought new ways to include this actor in their own understanding of the international scene. This thesis focuses on the EU's approach, which, through the normalization of relations with Iran, has attempted to address some of its pressing problems, such as migration from the Far East, mainly from Afghanistan (European Commission, 2016). Similarly, the EU has decided to invest in developing trade and mutual economic exchange. It is the theoretical part of this master thesis that notes that the EU perceives Iran, through its relative proximity and geopolitical position, as an important actor.

The view through the security complex is a good starting point for understanding change (Motamedi 2022). The signing of the treaty changed the long-term narrative, and with a state that was perceived as an enemy, it was possible to negotiate and try to change the narrative, i.e., to get from mutual enmity to mutual friendship, or at least to move closer to friendship on that continuum (Amable 2022). Such situation then offers an opportunity to increase the

intensity of their exchange, which need not be only of an economic and material nature, which, according to the author, can be observed in the case of the EU and its actions after the US withdrawal from the treaty. This moment must also be seen as an external factor because it disturbed a certain balance, and the EU had to reposition itself and start balancing President Trump's aggressive policy. It is, of course, appropriate to ask how long the EU-Iran set-up would have continued without this external factor.

The second part of the theoretical interface chosen by the author for the analysis of this case study is structuration theory. That is to say, tracing the emergence of relationships and their patterns, which had the opportunity to emerge thanks to the signing of the nuclear agreement and, in a certain perspective, the restart of the EU approach towards Iran. In this case, the document that was presented by both actors in April 2016 is very important; it clearly shows the ramification of possible topics of cooperation that could have been discussed just because of the signing of the JCPOA (European Commission, 2016). Most of this agenda has been taken up by the European Commission and covers a wide range of areas, from sport and education to transport or energy to agriculture. Only those areas where there has been a noticeable shift are discussed in the following. This is in the areas of trade, migration and humanitarian aid and at various political levels, demonstrating the practical implications of the EU-Iran relations. Unfortunately, there was not enough time to better observe the emergence of new relationships and their establishment, as external intervention also disrupted this area. One of the elements of the structure that has been created is that Iran required a mediator to negotiate the US rejoining the agreement, and that mediator was the EU. Thus, it can be inferred that within the structures that have emerged in the political relations, a new scheme has emerged that Iran is actively utilizing.

The thesis clearly points out that the signing of the JCPOA has not only impacted Iran's nuclear armament but also Iran-EU relations in many areas, some of which would be interesting to follow if possible. However, the work also has several limitations. A significant limitation is the lack of information, which has several causes. One reason is the confidentiality of the materials under study. Although the author has had the opportunity to look at some classified documents, it is quite certain that much of the negotiations remained classified. Therefore, some important inputs had to be omitted from this analysis. The second problem concerning EU sources is the difficulty of accessing them. This is a general problem of the EU documentation, which does not provide a large part of the document, or, in case of a political change, many documents become inaccessible. Alternatively, for a large number of events, it provides only

brief press releases. Another limitation of this thesis is its focus on a narrow segment of the whole problem. The author has mainly examined the EU, but it is certain that the actions of other actors have had an impact on the overall results, with very limited mention of the influence of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China.

Most of the aforementioned limitations could be also solved (or be a subject of) further academic research.

Shrnutí

Evropská unie je dlouhodobě významným aktérem v diplomatických vztazích s Íránskou islámskou republikou. Proto je tento vztah předmětem zkoumání a debat, v nichž se vyskytuje velké množství přístupů a konceptů. Tato práce se zabývá nepřímými dopady jaderné dohody, jíž s Íránem vyjednávala spolu s dalšími státy také Evropská unie, která zde sehrála klíčovou roli. Práce na zmíněnou problematiku nahlíží skrze teorii strukturace, a hodnotí přístup Evropské unie k vyjednávání v období po podepsání jaderné dohody. Dále se v práci nachází stručný přehled zásadních událostí provázející vyjednávání jakož i těch, ke kterým došlo v době po přijetí dohody. Případová studie sesoustředí na události a aktivity, jež je možné pokládat za nepřímé dopady diplomatických vyjednávání. Práce si dává za úkol analyzovat méně zřejmé dopady vyjednané dohody, které mohou být v debatě o jaderné dohodě opomíjeny. Jedná se o případovou studii, která k praktickému výzkumu využívá teorie deskriptivní analýzy.

Tato diplomová práce se tedy snaží osvětlit jadernou smlouvu s Íránem (JCPOA) a ukázat ji nejenom jako smlouvu o zamezení šíření jaderných zbraní, ale také jako možný nástroj stabilizace určitého prostředí, narovnání diplomatických a politických vztahů, navázání ekonomické spolupráce. Ke zkoumání této dynamiky, která vznikla mezi jmenovanými aktéry byla využita teorie strukturace a teorie bezpečnostních komplexů. Teorie bezpečnostních komplexů pomohla osvětlit samotný vznik této dynamiky a osvětluje, proč EU projevila takový zájem o kooperaci. Teorie strukturace pomáhá vysvětlit, jak se od primárního bodu – tedy jaderného odzbrojení aktéři dostaly až k široké kooperaci na různých úrovních a různých oblastech. Následně pak pomáhá s pochopením chování EU po jednostranném vypovězení smlouvy ze strany USA nebo pokusy o změnu.

Je samozřejmé, že práce má jistá úskalí, která se pojí s podobnými tématy. Velké množství informací je utajeno, a tudíž autor pracovat s pouze omezeným množstvím dostupných informací. Práce se zaměřila na konkrétní vztah dvou aktérů, a upozadila ostatní aktéry a jejich činnosti vůči sledované dvojici.

List of Abbreviations

AML - Anti-money laundering
BAFIA - Iran's Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs
CFT - Counter-terrorist financing
DG - Directorate-General
DG ENER - Directorate-General Energy
DG DEVCO - Development and Cooperation
DG RTD - Research and Innovation
DG JRC – Joint Research Center
EC – European Community
EEAS - European External Action Service
EP - European Parliament
EU – European Union
E3/EU - France, Germany and the UK, supported by the EU
E3/EU+3 - China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Germany
FATF - The Financial Action Task Force
HR/VP - High Representative / Vice President
IAEA - International Atomic Energy Agency
IMF – International Monetary Fund
INSTEX - Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges
JPOA – Joint Plan of action
JCPOA - Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
MEP – Member of the Parliament
NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO - non-governmental organization
P5+1 - China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Germany
STFI -Special Trade and Finance Institute
UK – the United Kingdom
UN – the United Nations
UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
US – The United States of America

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Diploma Thesis Project

Univerzita Karlova
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Diploma thesis project

The European Union - Iran Relations: Indirect Outcomes of the Nuclear Agreement
Negotiations



Name: Bc. Pavel Kubíček
Academic advisor: Jaroslav Weinfurter, M.A., M.Sc., Ph.D.
Study programme: Security Studies
Year of project submission: 2021

Introduction to the topic

The thesis will focus on the dynamic of the relation between the European Union as one of the actors in the Nuclear Deal negotiations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. The focus of the study lies in the observation of the indirect impact of the negotiations. The deal was an important achievement of Obama's administration, although the European Union is a long-time intermediary of any negotiations between western countries and Iran. This position was further strengthened after the unilateral exit of the USA. The deal was concentrated on the limitation of Iranian military nuclear activities, although the thesis is interested in the indirect effects of the deal. Those may be observable through the economic prism, the diplomatic prism, or the activities of the actors. The goal of the thesis is to examine the less obvious achievements of the deal and explain them in the context of the dynamics between the two actors, highlighting the importance of such achievements. The Iranian Nuclear Deal is often considered a ground-breaking achievement. The P5+1 countries were able to negotiate the control over the Iranian nuclear program in exchange for the termination of sanctions targeted on violation of the uranium enrichment activities. The deal open the possibility of strengthening relations with Iran for European Union as the country is viewed as an important actor in the region. However, after the US presidential elections the Trump administration decided to unilaterally withdraw from the deal. This step did not terminate the Nuclear Deal but it created pressure on the remaining signed countries. The EU has decided to keep the agreement operational and negotiate with Iran to comply with the agreed terms. This behavior of the European Union further confirmed its long-term position as a constructive partner for Iran.

good source of various types of case studies, the thesis is using the qualitative research approach.

In the theoretical part, the thesis is using the concept of descriptive case study, which is often approached from various approaches, and it is difficult to define. The book author decided to use is "*The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research (5th edition)*" with the main interest in chapter 14 "*Case Study Methodology*" written by Thomas A. Schwandt and Emily F. Gates published in 2017. The benefit of the book is based on the approach of authors, they decided to explain the phenomena through compilation of diverse perspectives and attitudes to the descriptive analysis. The book transfers the summary, strengths of the approach, and its weak parts.

The second part of the thesis, which is analytical is based on the primary sources, the Full Text of the Iran Nuclear Deal, The Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges. These documents are the crucial part of the relation between the European Union and the Islamic republic of Iran. These documents were created through the intense diplomatic relations, the negotiation of the Nuclear Deal provided a starting point to further strengthening of diplomacy and space for intensification of diplomacy talks. Secondary sources consist of academic articles, which are focused on the Iranian Nuclear Deal and the development of relations between actors after signing the deal. The thesis is also using newspaper articles as another source of information. The author is using *The New York Times*, *the Washington Post*, *The Politico*. The relations between Iran and European Union are closely observed and newspaper are providing another set of resources to evaluate the dynamics of relationship. The next source of information is the book written by Alcaro Riccardo "*Europe and Iran's Nuclear Crisis: Lead Groups and EU Foreign Policy-Making*" which provides information about the history of negotiations of the Nuclear Deal, the book also provides elucidation of the internal dynamics in the European Union and its ally – The United States of America.

Research question

The Iran Nuclear Deal is generally judged to have fallen short of its original vision due to its rapid collapse. While the withdrawal of the United States from the deal is often seen as its undoing, this paper aims to show that the negotiation and signing of the deal allowed for further rapprochement and thus opportunities for influencing developments in the region and the country itself.

What are the indirect effects of the negotiations between the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Iran on the Nuclear Deal?

How do these negotiations affect the actors mentioned?

In the thesis, the author will answer the question above. The importance of this issue lies in the substance of the nuclear deal, which lasted in full representation only 3 years until the US left. During those three years and even after the US withdrawal, the European Union engaged in relations with Iran at various levels in pursuit of its foreign policy objectives. The thesis is focused on the time period since the signing of Joint Plan of Action in December 2013 until the Iranian presidential election in 2021.

The thesis is using the collocation indirect impact as a designation for events and actions, which are not the direct result of the specific project, in this case of the Iranian Nuclear Deal, but they are produced away from the complex impact pathway. The indirect impact is often also marked as a secondary or even third level impact, they often occur later in time.

Literature review

The methodology of the diploma thesis is based on the book Robert K. Yin "*Case Study Research and Application: Design and Methods*". This book provides knowledge about case studies and possible application the social science research. The book serves as a

Conceptual and theoretical framework, research hypotheses

The descriptive case study is an approach to certain phenomena, but it can be used to emphasize only a single case like a historical event or life, a unique event of an individual being. This is an approach that focuses on describing a phenomenon as accurately as possible. This description should further assist both academics and officials and policymakers in the sector. The descriptive approach is centered around the description of detailed event information, presenting the dynamic of the event, and developing further the concepts.¹ Neoliberalism is a theory focused on cooperation in the anarchic world. There is a certain advantage for the states active in the cooperation mechanisms. Neoliberalism shifted from the measurement of power by arms to the economies. Neoliberalism is directed by the rationalist assumption about cost and benefit calculations. Trade is an empowering element for neoliberalism because linking individual actors increases their interdependence and reduces the possibility of conflict. Trade links base on previous contacts further entangles newly emerging relationships, resulting in a reduction of restrictions and an overall rapprochement of actors.² Furthermore, the Iranian Nuclear Deal can be viewed as a negotiation about the international regime, as the deal sets up norms and principles for the states and organizations on the issue of Iran's nuclear program. Another tool of neoliberalism is soft power, which is used by states to achieve their goals through the non-violent attraction of the state to the cause.

Empirical data and analytical technique

Primary sources for the analytical part of the diploma thesis are documents written by the European Union institutions, the JPOA, and the JCPOA deals. These documents show the extent to which the breadth of the agreement was intended, clearly articulating the

¹ (Ruthane Tobin 2010)

² (Keohane and Nye 1977)

primary interests of the parties involved in the agreements, and thus the author will be able to separate the direct and indirect effects of the signing of the Iran Nuclear Deal. The lifting of sanctions and the opportunity to establish trade and strengthen diplomatic relations has created the right climate for initiatives by Iran or the European Union to pursue their objectives through a newly appointed partner. These efforts will be analyzed based on a review of academic studies interested in the various types of relations that have emerged between the EU and Iran since the signing of the agreement. These sources will be supplemented by newspaper articles from *"The New York Times"*, *"The Washington Post"* and *"Politico"* that complement well the dynamics of the relations that have been formed and are developing.

From the methodological perspective, this thesis is a case study, a method focused on a certain event, which is explored using theoretical knowledge. The approach is based on gathering the information and subsequently interpreting them. The case study can observe and explore anything – events, an action, or a person. There are various levels of case studies – macro or micro level. The case study may be focused on one actor or multiple actors. The case studies are based on different types of data collection and evaluation, among many, there are linguistic interpretations like discourse analysis, semiotic or narrative approach.³ However, the use of the case study approach has some shortcomings, and the following five problematic points are generally mentioned: the research is not thorough and meticulous enough, using the non-research case study – as it can be used as a teaching method or case record in administration, there is also a problem with the generalization of case studies, the effort associated with the number of resources that must be traversed and their resulting indigestibility, and lastly its questionable advantage in comparison with other research methods⁴.

This thesis is using the case study due to its nature, the signing of the Iranian Nuclear Deal is the historical event that has many impacts, the thesis is aiming to describe the indirect ones and provides information about the development of the relation between

³ (Iiris Aaltio and Pia Heilmann 2010)

⁴ (Yin 2018)

the Islamic Republic of Iran. The time span of the work is from the beginning of the negotiation in 2013, when the initial JPOA was signed until the Iranian presidential elections in 2021, which marked the end of the era of progressive President Rouhani and his eight-year reform-minded government during which the negotiations were held.

Planned thesis outline

The diploma thesis is divided into four chapters. The first part is devoted to the introduction and theoretical framework. In the first chapter the presentation of the chosen topic – the historical development of the theme, which should introduce the case to the reader, research question and hypothesis which is later tested in the analytical part of the work, and finally the literature review. The second chapter is dedicated to the theoretical framework and its more detailed description. The second part of the thesis provides the analysis of the data and conclusion, where the research question will be answered, and the hypothesis may be accepted or refused.

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