

The role of women in intelligence and security services: organisational value, persistent barriers and implications for Poland

Original article

Received: 2026-07-13

Revised:

Accepted: 2026-07-17

Final review: 2026-07-16

Peer review:

Double blind

Keywords: women in intelligence, intelligence services, security services, gender integration, organisational diversity.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 License

Magdalena Kowalska^{1,D}

[ORCID !\[\]\(4f6bf54ae7e4144a72d78316053e412d_img.jpg\) 0009-0008-8324-4321](https://orcid.org/0009-0008-8324-4321)

A - Research concept and design, B - Collection and/or assembly of data, C - Data analysis and interpretation, D - Writing the article, E - Critical revision of the article, F - Final approval of the article

¹Faculty of Security, Logistics and Management, Military University of Technology, Poland

Abstract

Objectives: The article examines the role of women in contemporary intelligence and security services, with particular attention to the Polish institutional environment and the Internal Security Agency (Agencja Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego, ABW). It asks how women contribute across the intelligence cycle, which organisational and cultural conditions shape their careers, and how public representation affects recruitment, legitimacy and professional status.

Results: Women have long performed operational, analytical, linguistic, technical, liaison and leadership functions, although their contribution was frequently obscured by secrecy and occupational segregation. Contemporary services increasingly depend on analysis, cyber expertise, open-source intelligence, cultural knowledge and inter-agency coordination; these requirements widen the range of relevant professional profiles.

Conclusions: Women are not an auxiliary category of intelligence personnel but an integral part of the professional workforce. Their organisational value depends primarily on competence, access to assignments, security-cleared career development and inclusion in decision-making. The strongest policy case for gender inclusion is therefore institutional rather than essentialist: services that recruit from a wider talent pool and reduce avoidable career barriers are better positioned to understand diverse operating environments and challenge analytic blind spots

Introduction

Since the Cold War, deterrence has played a key role in exerting influence and preserving geopolitical stability. However, with the rise of competition among major powers and the emergence of regional powers, traditional deterrence strategies have become less effective. “Deterrence is a strategic theory employed in geopolitics, principally aimed at deterring an adversary from undertaking an undesirable action by threatening credible retaliation. Its foundations are deeply rooted in the rationalist school of thought, which asserts that nations are rational actors that base their decisions on cost-benefit analyses. The efficacy of deterrence depends on the credibility of the threat, the capacity to execute the threat, and the communication of the threat to the adversary. Within the geopolitical realm, deterrence plays a crucial role in upholding stability by dissuading states from partaking in aggressive behaviors that could lead to escalations into conflicts. As global relations progress with the emergence of new technologies and shifts in global power structures, the concept of deterrence is consistently under scrutiny. Its ability to adapt to modern threats, such as cyber warfare and economic sanctions, is essential for its continuous relevance in shaping global peace and security strategies. Nevertheless, the theory deviates from reality, particularly in contemporary geopolitical rivalries, where warfare appears to be a logical recourse in the absence of empathy, and effective leadership” (Ivanov, 2024).

Sectoral sanctions are increasingly viewed as an instrumental strategic deterrence, particularly in the hybrid warfare contexts where economic pressure complements cyber and informational operations. Their use reflects a shift in global power dynamics, where independence can be weaponized to achieve foreign policy goals (Ivanov, 2024). The evolution of sectoral sanctions also mirrors the rise of economic statecraft, in which tools such as export controls, investment bans, and financial restrictions are deployed to shape adversarial behavior. These sanctions are often accompanied by diplomatic efforts, intelligence sharing, and public massaging to reinforce their impact. In addition, sectoral sanctions are tailored to exploit vulnerabilities in adversarial economies. For example targeting energy exports in petro-states or financial institutions in economies reliant on foreign capital can yield disproportionate strategic effects (Taran et al., 2024). The purpose of this article is to examine the impact of sectoral sanctions on the national security of the Russian Federation, with particular emphasis on their role in achieving offensive strategic and economic objectives, as well as their crucial element of a national security doctrine focused on self-driven development, continuity of strategic planning, and the construction of a comprehensive state’s grand strategy. The article critically examines the role of sectoral sanctions as a tool of deterrence in contemporary international politics, focusing on their impact on the national security of the Russian Federation. It challenges the assumption that economic pressure can reliably force immediate policy change, arguing that such expectations often overlook the adaptability of targeted states. At the same time, the article emphasizes that sectoral sanctions are a highly effective instrument for undermining national security in the long term. By targeting key sectors such as energy, finance, and technology, they constrain economic development, limit access to critical resources, and hinder modernization processes.

In this article, a methodology based on the analysis of secondary sources was applied, including a review of available academic literature and official state documents. The selection of these methods and research techniques was justified by the possibility of comparing approaches to the concept of national security in the Russian Federation and Western countries. The analysis of literature and documents allowed for the formulation of the thesis that sectoral sanctions constitute a key element of deterrence strategy and, to a significant extent, a tool for carrying out offensive strategic and economic actions aimed at limiting the capabilities of the Russian Federation.

Understanding the Concept of National Security in Western Countries

The priority of security over other areas is quite special, because it is a value, which achievement is an elementary duty. A concept of security is interdisciplinary and utilitarian (Kitler, 2011, p. 23). The issue of security, as a reflection and social practice, has been present in the social consciousness since the dawn of mankind. However, scientific considerations on security appeared with the birth of scientific disciplines, dealing primarily with separable subjects of the research (Wroblewski, 2015, p. 18). Scientists conducting research in military studies in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries encountered more and more anomalies, heralding the depletion of the current paradigm of military studies and the transition into a state of crisis in their practice. The aforementioned anomalies consisted mainly of the expansion of the domain of military studies, initially to include unarmed activities and then also non-military activities related to a broad understanding of national security of various entities (nation, state, individual, organization, and social groups). These anomalies have led to a crisis in the practice of military science, to which the answer should have been a new paradigm that allows scientists to resolve research puzzles in the stable phase of practicing normal science (Glen, 2011, pp. 9-10).

The first suggestions to separate security studies as an autonomous field of research appeared at the end of the twentieth century. The area of security studies, either national or international, in twentieth century was the domain of international relation studies, nowadays a sub-discipline of political science. In 1952, the US State Department introduced the term "national strategy" as a concept of an international policy intended to ensure the national security of a superpower. The main subjects of this strategy were the national goals and ways of achieving them under conditions of an increasing arms race. Later on, the term "national strategy" was changed into "national security strategy", however the dominant dimension of state power was still the military. In the early 1980s, researcher Barry Buzan published a paper in which he showed that security applies not only to the states but also to all human communities and it has five dimensions: a military, a political, an economic, a social, and an environmental. These theses were accepted and thus, in the theoretical terms, the military dimension of security ceased to be the dominant one. On the other hand, in the 1990s, the National Defense University in Warsaw started scientific research not only in the strict field of military sciences but also in the field of national and international security (Wroblewski, 2015, pp. 20-21). As a result of the above the security studies were established in Poland in 2011 (Zieba, 2021, p. 7). Relatively young security studies required not only urgent identification, definition, typology, but also the development of research methodology. This is proved by the incredible increase in the number of studies and authorities

in this discipline. The separation of "security" studies was accompanied by the parallel development of two similar disciplines - security studies and defense studies. At the beginning of several years of heated debate on the emerging new studies related to security, the separation of the field of security and defense studies was considered (Daniluk, 2013, pp. 15-17).

At that time, scientists faced the dilemma of determining the identity of these studies in formal (administrative) and methodological terms. Both studies took over from military studies, but defense studies are not as controversial, as security studies due to a wide range of approach (Kitler, 2015, p. 159). According to professor A. Glen and professor W. Kitler, the research on the defense studies includes defense issues of a state in the field of the defense system, martial arts theory, including strategies, operating art, and tactics. The subject of this discipline is defensive preparations for the state and the development of the system of defense, including the armed forces as well as the organization and conduct of defensive activities, military operations, command, and troops training (Kitler, 2015, p. 165). While defense studies have a transdisciplinary character due to its phenomena and processes of ensuring the existence and development of an individual in social groups free from disturbances (conflicts, threats), in which the leading and necessary factor is the use of military force in international and internal relations (with simultaneous using other means of defense policy), the security studies are more complex than that, because they deal with all phenomena and processes in ensuring the security of an individual, nation (state), and international environment (mainly political, economic, social, cultural, universal, and public security) (Kitler, 2015, p. 175). In this matter security studies are a derivative of a complex and multidimensional typology of national security goals (Cebula, 2015, pp. 187-188).

The basic criteria for systematizing security issues are subjective dimension. It refers to a human being as a subject who, using his subjectivity, satisfies the need for security, shaping his external and internal environment. Security is a subjective need; it concerns people and various social groups, and organizations (Chojnowski, 2015, p. 191).

When looking for methods and techniques to look at the security issues, the following features characterizing the security environment should be particularly taken into account:

- increasing complexity;
- dynamics of changes;
- multidisciplinary of threat sources;
- increasing uncertainty of the environment;
- network of phenomena;
- the growing scope of phenomena analysis (Daniluk, 2013, pp. 15-17).

Every human being is guided by his own interests, among which security is paramount, which is caused by the innate, existential need to survive.

The security analysis from the subject perspective is defined as the subjective dimension of security, which most generally answers the question: whose security is it about? It concerns the analysis of security from the perspective of a specific subject and its existential values.

The main problem related to the security dimension is the huge number of its subjects. The first segregation ordering security is the division into the security of the individual and the community. Security affects every human being, regardless of his race, sex, nationality, age, professed values and organizational affiliation. The second stage of security systematization is grouping various human communities into individual categories of collective security subjects. In this matter, the basic categorization of human communities is the identification of their common integrative features.

The third stage of the systematization of security subjects is the arrangement of individual security categories based on their mutual relations. These structures create the nation and the state as the basic and the dominant form of society organization, as well as other communities located above the state (e.g. civilization) and functioning within states (e.g. local communities or self-government communities).

The layered arrangement of the categories of communities that make up the global society is the basis of the fourth stage of systematization of the subjective dimension of security. At this stage, taken into consideration is the functioning of subjects and interactions between them at the same level (e.g. between sovereign states) and between subjects located on different levels - superior and subordinate (e.g. individuals and groups).

Due to the fact that communities inhabit a specific territory there are several types of security: global, regional, national, community and local.

The complexity of the modern environment of the functioning of human being and various human communities makes it easier to get to know and understand the phenomena occurring in the sphere of a security as a whole by sectors. Taking this into account, the entirety of contemporary security issues covers six sectors: political, military, economic, ecological, cultural and identity, and universal (Chojnowski, 2015, pp. 191-196).

The term "security" is widely used nowadays in various forms (Kitler, 2013, p. 22). The scope of the concept of security covers a very wide range of factors, which causes difficulties in defining and a variety of research concepts, which have a large impact on the formulation of the definition of security. Different theoretical approaches in social science also determine how security threats and challenges are understood and which subjects are taken into consideration.

Security can be defined as the certainty of the existence and survival, possession, functioning and development of the subject. This conjunction is the result of the nonoccurrence or elimination of threats. At the same time, it arises as a result of the operation of a given subject and it can be changed over time.

Security is a process as well as a constancy matter (Helnarska, 2015, pp. 216-218). It is the supreme value for human beings and it consists of two basic components, which are the guarantees of the entity's survival and the guarantees of its development (Kozub, 2015, p. 13).

There can be security of: an individual, a family, a social group, culture, society, economy, raw materials, energy, public, ecology, a country, a nation, a globe (Kitler, 2013, p. 22).

The basis of the security typology is that subjective criterion based on which national security and international security can be recognized. National security refers to a singular country and its society and its inhabitants' nations ((Helnarska, 2015, pp. 216-218).

The national security:

- is an overriding value among other goals of the state, concerning goals including the values/needs/interests;
- it determines the level of freedom in achieving these goals;
- as a process, it includes various operations in the field of international and internal relations;
- it is ensuring the security of the state as a political institution (sovereignty, integrity, inviolability of borders);
- it is to protect society, its welfare and its environment against threats;
- it concerns resisting the challenges and threats to national values, goals and interests;
- it concerns the provision of favorable conditions for the implementation of national goals - national development (Kitler, 2013, p. 28).

National security, apart from the concern for the protection and defense of the state against threats of internal and external nature, which is characteristic for the security of the state, also includes the interest in prosperous existence, development and protection of values close to members of a various communities. It is essential to preserve such values as quality of life, social solidarity, human rights, culture, customs, and national identity (Duraj, 2021, p. 13).

The definition included in the "Glossary of terms in the field of national security" suggests that national security should be associated with the protection of the nation and territory against physical aggression, as well as with the protection of vital economic and political interests, the loss of which would threaten the vitality and fundamental values of the state.

Security is analyzed in the context of threats and challenges. These threats can be internal and external. The separation of the aspects of internal and external security contributes to the security of a given subject. Internal security means the stability of a subject/system, and external security means no threats from the other subjects (Helnarska, 2015, pp. 219-221).

National security is achieved through the creation of an effective system of state management and coordination of the activities of political forces, social groups, as well as effective activities of entities designed to form the security of the state (Nowakowski&Szafran, 2009, pp. 70-73).

The defined set of features of the modern and future security environment generates specific requirements that few currently used methods can meet. An interesting approach to the study of the security environment is proposed by the strategic analysis, which at the same time

meets all the above-mentioned qualifying requirements (Daniluk, 2013, pp. 15-17).

Understanding the Concept of National Security in the Russian Federation

The concept of national security in Russia differs slightly from the dimensions presented above due to its multinational character. Looking at national security from a historical point of view, the concept of "state security" was introduced into legal circulation by a Resolution of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR of July 10, 1934. In the USSR, the term "state security" reflected the official point of view of the military-political leadership of the country regarding priority the interests of the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat over the interests of the general public and the interests of the individual. State security in the USSR was defined as all measures related to the protection of the existing state and social system, territorial inviolability and independence of the state against the subversive activities of intelligence services and other special services of hostile states, as well as against opponents of the existing system within the country. Strengthening the definition of state security in the Constitution of the USSR of 1936, and then in the Constitution of the USSR of 1977, ensured the constitutional paradigm of the priority of state security interests, i.e. solving all problems related to ensuring the safety of the individual and the security of society, taking into account in the first instance the interests of countries. The recognition of a man and his rights and freedoms as the highest value in the Constitution of the Russian Federation of 1993 made it necessary to develop a new paradigm of ensuring security. In the 1990s, Russia gradually began to use the term "national security", which was most often used in scientific studies, political debates and in the mass media. However, Russian scholars such as O.V. Garina, D.V. Iroshnikov, and S.V. Blatin have opposed and continue to oppose the use of this conceptual category (Duraj, 2021, pp. 15-16), pointing out that the word "national" should not be used due to the fact that Russia is a multinational country (Garina, 2010, pp. 85-86). In modern Russia, considerable attention is paid to the issues of ensuring the security of various spheres of public relations. The array of already established, as well as developing social relations requires the state to take timely measures to identify and prevent threats that could harm the existence and sustainable development of man, society and state. In this regard, security has become one of the significant and studied scientific and legal categories. However, the issues definitions, as well as the content of such a significant scientific category as „security” in the Russian legal doctrine are still open. The scientific literature continues to discuss the content of the concept of “security,” as well as its types and related concepts, such as “national security,” “state security,” and “public security”(Duraj, 2021, pp. 15-24) .The result of disagreements in the above issues in the doctrine was the lack of a unified system of “conceptual coordinates” in the security legislation. In turn, the need to respond to existing and emerging threats and hazards led to advancing scientific developments, the formation of legislation on security (Damm, 2019, p. 49). State security is an integral part of the broader concept of "national security", which means the security of its multinational people as the bearer of sovereignty and the only source of power in the Russian Federation. There are different approaches to understanding national security in Russia. Some approaches define national security as state development trends and living conditions of a society, its structures, institutions, and institutions, which ensure the preservation of their qualitative certainty,

and others as sufficient in terms of the level and nature of the protection of national resources and values, as well as state, public and personal interests from internal and external threats, as well as the state of protection of the vital interests of the individual, society, and the state in all spheres of their life from internal and external dangers and threats, characterized by such condition of a state which ensures its integrity and internal stability, sovereign and progressive development, the possibility of acting as an independent and full-fledged subject of international legal relations. According to S. Stepashin, the security of the country is a prerequisite for the healthy development of individuals and society, which he interprets as “the security of the qualitative state of social relations that ensure the progressive development of man and society in specific historical and natural conditions from dangers, the source of which are internal and external contradictions” (Stepashin, 1999, pp. 6-17). In the view of N. D. Kazakov, security is understood as “a dynamically stable state in relation to adverse consequences and activities to protect against internal and external threats, to ensure such internal and external conditions for the existence of the state that guarantee the possibility of stable all-round progress of society and its citizens”(Kazakov, 1994, pp. 62-63).

National security is recognized as a set of factors that ensure the vital activity of the state in the system of international relations, its ability to reflect emerging external threats and act in accordance with its national interests (Olak, 2016, pp. 107-117). In international law, the term "nation" is used as a synonym for "state". At the same time, in Russian, the word "nation" can be understood historically established stable community of people, formed in the process of forming a community of their territories, economic ties, literary language, cultural features, and spiritual image. These concepts complete each other.

The subject of national security is broader. The state and its institutions, the political and economic system, society as a whole, nations and peoples inhabiting the territory of the Russian Federation, individual citizens, their customs, traditions, way of life, language, culture, religion operate all together (Goncharov, 2009, pp. 118-119).

At the level of federal legislation, the bases of legal regulation of security issues are regulated by the Federal Law of 28.12.2010 No. 390-FZ "On Security". Special federal laws regulate different security issues (Damm, 2009, p. 49).

Security science includes a number of functions:

- descriptive function – concerns the description of the object and subject of research;
- explanatory function – explains the causes and effects of the situation by answering the questions;
- diagnostic function – evaluates the security environment and its process by providing answers to the questions;
- prognostic function – based on conclusions from the explanatory and diagnostic functions may postulate about the direction of changes and a forecast of future security evolution;

- methodological function – concerns the research approach (Czuprynski et al., 2017, pp. 13-15).

Methodology is therefore the study of the cognitive activities of scientific research and the cognitive products of these activities. It is interested in research methods and their products in the form of facts, i.e. obtained data, or data presented as qualitative or quantitative variables of their markers. The research, however, must be delivered to the foundations of the pragmatic creation of reality, in order to ensure access to the security of the global world system, in the political-military, social, ecological sense, etc. Achieving this goal without comprehensive and rational use of scientific achievements is unrealistic (Sienkiewicz, 2010, p. 27).

However, when we refer to a global political system, it should be noted that, according to Henry Kissinger, there has never been a truly global world order. It is rather recognized as an expression of practical adaptation to reality and not some sort of exceptional moral intuition, based on the agreement of independent states that they do not refrain from interfering in their internal affairs and, thanks to the balance of power, they inhibit each other's ambitions (Kissinger, 2015, p. 10).

The Role of Sanctions in National Security Policy

As noted by the U.S. President Woodrow Wilson in 1919, “a nation that is boycotted is a nation that is in sight of surrender. Apply this economic, peaceful, silent, deadly remedy and there will be no need for force. It is a terrible remedy. It does not cost a life outside the nation boycotted, but it brings pressure upon the nation which, in my judgment, no modern nation could resist” (Wilson, 1919). The devastating loss of life during the “War to end all Wars” pushed global leaders to seek peaceful alternatives to conflict. President Woodrow Wilson, filled with hope and perhaps idealism, proposed the creation of a “League of Nations”, an international body that would reject war and rely on economic sanctions to enforce global cooperation. Before World War I, such sanctions were typically used as a step toward war. However, neither the League nor the use of sanctions succeeded in achieving lasting global peace. Despite Wilson’s efforts, the U.S. Senate refused to ratify the treaty to join the League, and without American support, the organization failed. While sanctions never lived up to Wilson’s vision, they have since become a key tool in national security strategy (Drake, 2001, p. 2).

Sanctions are an important foreign policy tool in national security strategies, used to achieve strategic goals such as protecting political and economic freedom. Sanctions serve as instruments to advance foreign policy, national security, and strategic objectives. They are intended to safeguard national interests, contribute to international peace and stability, and uphold global norms and standards. This includes defending the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states and supporting the promotion of human rights. Sanctions do not operate in isolation but are used to complement and strengthen other policy instruments. Their effectiveness is maximized when integrated into comprehensive strategies that tackle underlying issues. Sanctions yield the best results when viewed as part of a broader lifecycle, which includes not only their implementation but also their potential removal. Before imposing

sanctions, alternative measures, such as diplomatic engagement or law enforcement actions are carefully considered. Ultimately, sanctions represent just one component within a broader, multifaceted policy framework.

Nations employ sanctions and embargoes as strategic tools to protect their national security interests from external threats. By limiting access to key resources, technologies, or markets, they can diminish the capabilities of adversaries. This method offers a calibrated alternative to military intervention in response to hostile actions. For instance, arms embargoes in regions of conflict help to prevent further violence and curb the proliferation of weapons. Likewise, financial sanctions imposed on terrorist groups hinder their ability to fund operations and sustain networks, thereby enhancing global security. Sanctions can also be specifically designed to address modern threats such as cyberattacks or foreign interference in democratic processes. By evolving in response to new challenges, they enable governments to effectively deter actions that compromise national safety. In this way, sanctions remain adaptable and valuable instruments for safeguarding national interests (UK, Policy paper, 2025).

The 2017 U.S. National Security Strategy highlighted the central importance of economic strength, declaring that “economic security is national security”. In line with this principle, the U.S. government has committed to advancing the financial well-being and long-term prosperity of its citizens. To achieve this, it is prepared to implement proactive measures, including the use of economic sanctions when necessary. Amid complex global rivalries and economic interdependence, the strategy emphasizes the strategic value of economic sanctions as essential instruments in both, geo-economic and geopolitical arenas. Sanctions are positioned as powerful diplomatic tools, enabling the United States to confront emerging threats and project influence on the international stage (Sarau, 2024, pp. 274-298).

“The concept of economic security as national security is rooted in the fundamental connection between a nation’s economic well-being and its ability to safeguard its citizens, interests, and values in today’s interconnected world. By leveraging economic tools and measures, countries can protect their national interests and promote own foreign policy objectives while deterring adversaries and preserving peace and stability.

Economic sanctions are diplomatic tools that alter behavior, counteract aggression, and protect national interests and security. They aim to disrupt illicit activities and prevent hostile actors from accessing critical resources. Furthermore, economic sanctions play a pivotal role in countering emerging threats to national security, such as cyberattacks, intellectual property theft, and illicit finance networks. By restricting access to financial resources and technology, sanctions disrupt the capabilities of hostile actors, bolstering defences against evolving security risks” (Sarau, 2024, pp. 274-298). Within the framework of the 2017 U.S. National Security Strategy, economic sanctions are recognized as instruments that not only serve political objectives but also strengthen the economic security of the imposing state. This strategic use of sanctions reflects an adaptive response to evolving security threats, emphasizing the need for flexible approaches that combine economic measures with traditional security tools. For many years, the United States has relied on sanctions as a central element of its foreign policy strategy, particularly against its most serious adversaries and threats to national security. Sanctions are often employed to express disapproval and condemnation

of certain actions, such as nuclear proliferation, terrorism, drug trafficking, human rights violations, and efforts to destabilize governments. Policymakers frequently view sanctions as a means to discourage harmful behavior in the future. By cutting off targets from access to the U.S. financial system, which lies at the heart of sanctions enforcement, these measures are designed to inflict significant economic pressure and create strategic leverage to advance U.S. political and diplomatic objectives. Since the final years of the Cold War, the United States has increasingly turned to coercive economic tools to influence the foreign policy choices of other nations. In the post-Cold War era, these measures have significantly evolved and been applied to a wider range of global threats. The 1990s marked a turning point in both the use and perception of sanctions. One of the most prominent examples was the United Nations sanctions on Iraq, which became a case study in both the potential and pitfalls of such measures. Despite restrictions, Iraq was able to sell oil through widespread evasion tactics, fueling a large black market and deep-rooted corruption. At the same time, the humanitarian impact on the Iraqi population was severe, leading many to view sanctions as excessively harsh and punitive

Today, U.S. policymakers increasingly regard sanctions as the preferred option when diplomacy falls short and military intervention is not feasible. Sanctions are valued for their role in sending strong messages, building international coalitions, and generating economic pressure. Both in Washington and globally, their effectiveness and strategic utility are widely recognized. Nonetheless, there remains an ongoing discussion about which types of sanctions are truly effective, how they influence political outcomes, how to mitigate their broader impact, and what principles should guide their use. Despite these debates, sanctions have become a core component of U.S. foreign policy. Moving forward, effective leadership in this area will require greater innovation, thorough analysis, and strategic thinking to maximize impact while minimizing unintended consequences (Rosenberg, 2019).

Economic sanctions have become a commonly used concept in international politics. In today's world, where military interventions no longer ensure the outcomes they once did. State leaders increasingly turn to economic sanctions as a means of asserting influence over rival states. The growing reliance on these measures also reflects the changing nature of global power dynamics. In a highly interconnected and globalized world, where no single superpower dominates the economic landscape, trade and commerce have taken on a new level of strategic importance (Anzari, 2019).

The sanctions can be either comprehensive or selective, using the blocking of assets and trade restrictions to accomplish foreign policy and national security goals (OFAC, 2025).

Strategic Impact and Limitations

The strategic impact of sanctions and international pressure on Russia can be understood through four key dimensions: first, by progressively degrading its military capabilities through

restricted access to critical technologies and resources; second, by constraining its economic power via disruptions in trade, investment, and financial systems; third, by influencing and shaping the country's decision-making processes through external pressures and internal economic recalibrations; and fourth, by enhancing the diplomatic leverage of sanctioning states, allowing them to negotiate from a position of strength while isolating Russia on the global stage (Rosefielde, 2024, pp. 1-11).

Sanctions can incentivize innovation and self-reliance in targeted countries. For example, Russia has accelerated development of domestic microelectronics and aerospace technologies in response to western restrictions. Western-imposed technology restrictions have led to an unanticipated outcome: a surge in domestic innovation within Russia's tech industries, which could enhance rather than diminish its long-term global competitiveness. This development questions the traditional view of international sanctions, showing that isolation can sometimes drive local technological advancement instead of causing economic deterioration in key sectors.

The exit of international technology providers has led to the creation of extensive domestic substitutes across various industries. As *The Times* reported, many foreign brands that left Russia have been replaced by local equivalents, such as the fast food chain *Vkusna i Tochka* ("Tasty. Full stop") taking the place of McDonald's, and *Mir Kubikov* (World of Cubes) replacing Lego. This trend of substitution also extends into advanced technology fields, where homegrown solutions are emerging with the potential to eventually rival Western products in global markets. Consequently, sanctions on Russia have had an unintended side effect: by isolating the country, they have triggered a kind of forced technological development that might not have occurred in a more open and competitive environment." These legal uncertainties reinforce Russian incentives to develop indigenous alternatives rather than maintaining dependence on European technology systems that may face future restrictions or legal complications. The combination of immediate access restrictions and potential long-term legal vulnerabilities creates comprehensive incentives for technological independence" (Triggm, 2025).

Russia's economic performance under sanctions suggests it has effectively adapted in sectors reliant on technology. The Russian economy has demonstrated "remarkable resilience," with growth reaching around 3.6% in 2023 and an expected increase of 2.6% in 2024 (CBR RU, 2024). According to the International Monetary Found forecasted that Russia's economy would grow up to 2.6 percent in 2024, a 1.6 percentage point increase from the IMF's original projection in October 2023 (Fleming *et al.*, 2024).

Since 2022, the restructuring of Russia's economy has made its trade and investment flows increasingly reliant on a limited number of strategic partners. Even prior to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Western sanctions had already pushed Russia to strengthen economic ties with China. By 2023, trade between the two countries surpassed \$240 billion, with China making up 38% of Russia's imports and 31% of its exports. Beijing now holds a near-monopoly on several key goods exported to Russia, giving it leverage to charge higher prices than in other markets. That same year, Chinese exports of cars and tractors to Russia surged by almost 600%,

and Chinese brands captured over 60% of the Russian car market, up from just 9% in February 2022.

In December 2023, 35.8% of Russia's exports were settled in yuan, while 37% of its imports were paid for using the Chinese currency. For comparison, ruble transactions accounted for 35.7% of export payments and 31.5% of import payments during the same period. As a result, Russia's net foreign currency exports reached \$5.4 billion that month, the highest figure since January 2023. By the end of the year, Russian businesses and individuals held \$68.7 billion in yuan, surpassing their holdings in U.S. dollars, which stood at \$64.7 billion. In addition, yuan-denominated credit extended to Russian companies reached \$46.1 billion in 2023, nearly four times the previous year's amount—largely due to the conversion of existing debts from dollars and euros into yuan (Prokopenko, 2024).

Conclusions

Sectoral sanctions represent a convergence of economic policy and national security strategy. Their success depends on adaptability, coordination, and a clear understanding of adversarial vulnerabilities. As global threats evolve, sanctions must be integrated with other tools of statecraft, including diplomacy, intelligence, and cyber operations. This holistic approach enhances resilience and strategic impact. Ultimately, the legitimacy and effectiveness of the sectoral sanctions hinge on transparency, proportionality, and alignment with international norms. These principles ensure that sanctions serve as constructive instruments of global governance (Jermano, 2018).

As it can be seen, the sanctions imposed on Russia have limited effects. Despite significant losses, Russia is shifting its economy into war mode and is able to expand its military potential (strengthening it primarily in the Western strategic direction), including nuclear capabilities. These actions, along with simultaneous support from China (and the strengthening of strategic cooperation between these two countries), Iran, and North Korea, allow it to continuously replace losses incurred on the battlefield. Furthermore, Western countries are trying to weaken the Russian state by imposing sanctions (Dyner, 2021), however the Russian Federation has demonstrated its economic resilience to the world and proven its ability to withstand the pressure of external sanctions. Work continues to reduce import dependence in key economic sectors, and food and energy security have improved. A number of countries are exerting open political and economic pressure on Russia and its partners.

The transition to sustainable development is hampered by mounting socio-economic problems, disparities in countries' development, and the ineffectiveness of previously used instruments to stimulate economic activity. Uncertainty about the prospects for the global economy is growing due to the weakening of the system of regulations governing international economic relations, the politicization of economic cooperation, a lack of mutual trust between states, the unilateral application of restrictive measures (sanctions), and the rise of protectionism. From the Russian perspective, countries losing undisputed leadership attempt to dictate their principles to other members of the international community, employ unfair competition measures, unilaterally impose restrictive measures (sanctions), and openly interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign states. Such actions undermine universally recognized principles and norms of international law, weaken and destroy existing institutions and regimes

of international law, exacerbate the political and military situation, reduce predictability, and erode trust in relations between states. In the event of hostile actions by foreign states that pose a threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Russian Federation, including actions involving the use of restrictive measures (sanctions) of a political or economic nature or modern information and communication technologies, the Russian Federation recognizes the lawfulness of taking symmetrical and asymmetrical measures necessary to prevent such hostile actions and prevent their recurrence (Pravo RU, 07/02/2021/N400).

The issue of sanctions and counter-sanctions does not currently appear to be crucial for Russia's economic situation. The restrictions introduced after the annexation of Crimea may exacerbate the structural problems of the Russian economy, which became apparent in connection with the decline in commodity prices. From this perspective, the Russian authorities may face greater difficulties due to the squandering of the 'fat years' than because of the Western world's response to the situation in Ukraine. However, the weakening of cooperation may have significance in the longer term, delaying the prospects for much-needed modernization. Sanctions, in their punitive or deterrent nature aimed at discouraging an adversary from taking specific actions, are a particular instrument in international politics. Their effectiveness depends on many measurable factors, the realism of the stated goals, as well as the proportionality, adequacy, and cost-effectiveness of the measures applied (political, military, economic, technological, financial, etc.). The current global situation (e.g., low oil and gas prices) can significantly increase the impact of such measures. This also applies to the intangible sphere, broadly speaking, the resilience of the sanctioned entity, especially the morale of the society affected. Moreover, the historical effectiveness of sanctions points to the ambiguous outcomes of their application and results. These elements, particularly the immaterial dimension, make it difficult to directly assess the effectiveness of this instrument (Madej, 2015, pp. 1-26).

The use of sanctions stems from a country's foreign policy and national security strategy, aiming to weaken the position of another state on the international stage. Sanctions, as a tool aimed at limiting a state's developmental capabilities, can only be truly effective when they are comprehensive in scope, targeting not just individual sectors or entities, but applying sustained pressure across economic, technological, financial, and political domains, in coordination with international partners and supported by consistent enforcement mechanisms. Despite all efforts, including the use of sectoral sanctions aimed at weakening the Russian Federation, their effects remain limited. For sanctions to be truly effective and achieve their intended goals, they must be firm and uncompromising. The core issue lies in the fact that the world is not confined to the Western cultural sphere, and global actors such as Russia and China often approach international relations through historical, political, and cultural perspectives that differ from those of Western Europe or the United States.

Nonetheless, sectoral sanctions can serve as an effective instrument of deterrence in international politics, but they must be implemented comprehensively and in a coordinated manner to achieve their intended outcomes and meaningfully affect the national security apparatus of the targeted state.

From the standpoint of pursuing offensive strategic and economic goals, sectoral sanctions serve as a vital instrument, forming a central component of a national security doctrine focused on self-driven development, the continuity of strategic planning, and the formulation of a comprehensive state's grand strategy.

Bibliography

- Cebula, K. (2015). Przedmiot, zakres i miejsce nauk o bezpieczeństwie wśród innych dyscyplin naukowych. W: W. Kitler & T. Kośmider (red.), Metodologiczne i dydaktyczne aspekty bezpieczeństwa narodowego. Warszawa: Defini SA.
- Chojnowski, L. (2015). Podmiotowo-przedmiotowe ramy analizy bezpieczeństwa a jego naukowa multidyscyplinarność. W: W. Kitler & T. Kośmider (red.), Metodologiczne i dydaktyczne aspekty bezpieczeństwa narodowego. Warszawa: Defini SA.
- Czupryński, A., Wiśniewski, B., & Zboina, J. (2017). Nauki o bezpieczeństwie. Wybrane problemy badań. Józefów: CNBOP-PIB.
- Damm, I. A. (2019). Approaches to the definition of security in the legislation of Russian Federation. *Juridical Science and Practice*, 15(1).
- Daniluk, P. (2013). Metodologia badań zagrożeń wynikających z kryzysu społeczno-ekonomicznego. Analiza strategiczna w obszarze bezpieczeństwa. *Rocznik Bezpieczeństwa Międzynarodowego*, 2012/2013.
- Duraj, N. (2021). Bezpieczeństwo państwa a bezpieczeństwo narodowe Federacji Rosyjskiej. Przykład Republiki Czeczeńskiej. Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.
- Glen, A. (2011). Wyłanianie się nauk o bezpieczeństwie. Podstawy poznawcze badań bezpieczeństwa narodowego. *Zeszyty Naukowe AON*, 2(83).
- Goncharov, I. V. (2009). On the correlation of the concepts "National security", "State security", "Constitutional security". *Actual Problems of Russian Law*, 1.
- Helnarska, K. J. (2015). Jak budować tożsamość nauk o bezpieczeństwie. W: W. Kitler & T. Kośmider (red.), Metodologiczne i dydaktyczne aspekty bezpieczeństwa narodowego. Warszawa: Defini SA.
- Jermano, J. (2018). Economic and financial sanctions in U.S. national security strategy. *PRISM*, 7(4).
- Kissinger, H. (2015). *World Order*. Harlow: Penguin Books.
- Kitler, W. (2015). Transdyscyplinarność badań w naukach o bezpieczeństwie i naukach o obronności. W: W. Kitler & T. Kośmider (red.), Metodologiczne i dydaktyczne aspekty bezpieczeństwa narodowego. Warszawa: Defini SA.
- Kitler, W. (2011). Bezpieczeństwo Narodowe RP. Podstawowe kategorie. Uwarunkowania. System. Warszawa: AON.
- Kozub, M. (2015). Myśleć strategicznie o bezpieczeństwie przyszłości. Warszawa: AON.

- Nowakowski, Z., & Szafran, H. (2009). *Bezpieczeństwo XXI wieku. Strategie bezpieczeństwa narodowego Polski i wybranych państw*. Rzeszów: RS Druk.
- Sarau, E. D. (2024). Economic sanctions and trade dynamics: Analyzing U.S. unilateral and EU autonomous economic sanctions (1950–2019). *Russian Journal of Economics*, 10(3).
- Sienkiewicz, P. (2010). *Metody badań nad bezpieczeństwem i obronnością*. Warszawa: AON.
- Słownik terminów z zakresu bezpieczeństwa narodowego. (2008). Warszawa: AON.
- Wróblewski, R. (2015). Od nauk wojskowych do nauk o bezpieczeństwie. W: W. Kitler & T. Kośmider (red.), *Metodologiczne i dydaktyczne aspekty bezpieczeństwa narodowego*. Warszawa: Defini SA.
- Zięba, R. (2012). O tożsamości nauk o bezpieczeństwie. *Zeszyty Naukowe AON*, 1(86).
- Madej, A. (2015). Sankcje a kontrsankcje. Przyczyny obecnego kryzysu ekonomicznego Rosji. *Biuro Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego (BBN)*.
- Гарина, О. В. (2010). К вопросу о соотношении понятий «безопасность» и «национальная безопасность» Российского государства. *Вестник Московского университета МВД России*, 1.
- Ирошников, Д. В. (2013). Государственная безопасность как правовая категория. *Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Серия: Юридические науки*, 3.
- Блатин, С. В. (2014). Государственная безопасность Российской Федерации: становление и современное содержание понятия. *Ученые записки Орловского государственного университета*, 4(60).
- Stepashin, S. (1994). *Security of man and society (political and legal issues): Monograph*. St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg Institute of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation.
- Kazakov, N. (1994). Safety and synergetics (the experience of philosophical reflection). *Safety. Information Collection*, 4.
- Olak, A. (2016). Modern understanding of national security. Introduction to the issue. *Security Dimensions*, 18.
- Internet sources:**
- Taran, S., Lausberg, P., & Villegas, P. (2024). Making sanctions an indispensable tool in the EU's developing economic statecraft. EPC. <https://www.epc.eu/publication/Making-sanctions-an-indispensable-tool-in-the-EUs-economic-statecraft-606d8c/> (accessed: 23.08.2025).
- Ivanov, Z. (2024). Rethinking deterrence: Adapting traditional strategies for modern geopolitical challenges. DEP. <https://foreignpolicy.org.tr/rethinking-deterrence-adapting-traditional-strategies-for-modern-geopolitical-challenges/> (accessed: 23.08.2025).

- Dyner, A. M. (2021). Strategia bezpieczeństwa narodowego Rosji. PISM. <https://www.pism.pl/publikacje/strategia-bezpieczenstwa-narodowego-rosji> (accessed: 1.09.2025).
- UK Government. (2025). Cross-government review of sanctions implementation and enforcement. Policy paper, May 2025. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sanctions-implementation-and-enforcement-cross-government-review-may-2025/cross-government-review-of-sanctions-implementation-and-enforcement> (accessed: 17.09.2025).
- Wilson, W. (1919). Address at the Coliseum, State Fair Grounds, Indianapolis, Indiana. The American Presidency Project. <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-the-coliseum-the-state-fair-grounds-indianapolis-indiana> (accessed: 17.09.2025).
- Anzari, A. (2019). Economic sanctions in a globalized world. Young Diplomats. <https://www.young-diplomats.com/economic-sanctions-in-a-globalized-world/> (accessed: 17.09.2025).
- Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). (n.d.). Sanctions programs and country information. <https://ofac.treasury.gov/sanctions-programs-and-country-information> (accessed: 18.09.2025).
- Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). (n.d.). Basic information on OFAC and sanctions. <https://ofac.treasury.gov/faqs/topic/1501> (accessed: 19.09.2025).
- Cleary Gottlieb. (2025). OFAC expands sanctions against Russian energy sector. <https://www.clearygottlieb.com/news-and-insights/publication-listing/ofac-expands-sanctions-against-russian-energy-sector> (accessed: 20.09.2025).
- Trigg, D. (2025). The impact of sanctions on Russia's innovation sector: How restrictions accelerate domestic technology development. Law News. <https://www.lawnews.co.uk/blog/the-impact-of-sanctions-on-russias-innovation-sector-how-restrictions-accelerate-domestic-technology-development/> (accessed: 22.09.2025).
- Fleming, S., Jones, C., & Seddon, M. (2024). IMF raises Russia growth outlook as war boosts economy. Financial Times. <https://www.ft.com/content/21a5be9c-afaa-495f-b7af-cf937093144d> (accessed: 22.09.2025).
- Prokopenko, A. (2024). Is the Kremlin overconfident about Russia's economic stability? Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/03/is-the-kremlin-overconfident-about-russias-economic-stability> (accessed: 22.09.2025)

Official documents:

1. The 2017 National Security Strategy of the United States of America.

2. Конституция (Основной Закон) Союза Советских Социалистических Республик. Принята На Внеочередной Седьмой Сессии. Верховного Совета СССР Девятого Созыва. 7 Октября 1977 г.
3. Конституция Российской Федерации. *12 декабря 1993* г.
4. Постановление Центрального Исполнительного Комитета. Об образовании общесоюзного Народного комиссариата внутренних дел. 10 июля 1934 г.
5. Указ Президента РФ от 07.02.2021 N 400 "О национальной стратегии неpassивности Российской Федерации".
6. Федеральный закон от 28.12.2010 № 390-ФЗ „О безопасности”.

