Pia Helene Haavik

The Trump Effect on EU Strategic Autonomy and Normative Power Dynamics

Qualitative Single Case Study

Bachelor's thesis in European Studies with Political Science
Supervisor: Tobias Schumacher
May 2024

Bachelor's thesis

NTNU
Norwegian University of
Science and Technology

Pia Helene Haavik

The Trump Effect on EU Strategic Autonomy and Normative Power Dynamics

Qualitative Single Case Study

Bachelor's thesis in European Studies with Political Science
Supervisor: Tobias Schumacher
May 2024

Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Faculty of Humanities
Department of Historical and Classical Studies

NTNU
Norwegian University of
Science and Technology

Abstract

With the context of a world with a changing geopolitical environment, this thesis examines how the presidency of Donald Trump affected the European Union´s quest for strategic autonomy and how this quest can be combined with the discourse in consolidation of normative power Europe. The findings indicate that Trump´s presidency significantly accelerated the EU´s strategic autonomy efforts, compelling the Union to bolster its defense capabilities while maintaining and combining strategic autonomy with its normative influence. Trump´s critical view on NATO, his isolationist and unilateral policies, and the unpredictability of an American president, are the most prominent strategic drivers within the Trump presidency that can explain the acceleration of strategic autonomy integration.

The thesis begins with an overview of the EU´s historical development in defense and security, then delves into the conceptual literature on strategic autonomy and normative power Europe. The empirical analysis uses process tracing to examine the impact of Trump's foreign policy actions on the EU´s strategic autonomy initiatives from 2016 to 2021. The discussion explores how the EU balanced its pursuit of strategic autonomy with its identity as a normative power and evaluates the hypotheses´ derived from the research questions. The discussion finds the first hypothesis, that the Trump presidency has accelerated the EU's quest for strategic autonomy and put in place a new momentum, to be correct. The second hypothesis is rejected, which originally stated that the Trump presidency has had a negative impact on the EU's simultaneous ambition to be a normative power. The thesis contributes to the understanding of the EU´s adaptability and resilience in safeguarding its interests amidst changing transatlantic relations, as well as the dynamic interplay between American political changes and European policy actions.

Sammendrag

Med en endrende geopolitisk verden som kontekst, undersøker denne oppgaven hvordan Donald Trumps presidentskap påvirket Den europeiske unions utvikling av strategisk autonomi og hvordan denne utviklingen kan kombineres med EU sin normativ makt. Funnene indikerer at Trump sitt presidentskap betydelig akselererte EUs innsats for strategisk autonomi, og førte Unionen til å styrke sine forsvarskapasiteter samtidig som den opprettholdt og kombinerte strategisk autonomi med sin normative innflytelse. Trumps kritiske syn på NATO, hans isolasjonistiske og unilaterale politikk, og uforutsigbarheten til en amerikansk president, er de mest fremtredende strategiske driverne innenfor Trumps presidentskap som kan forklare akselerasjonen av integrasjonen av strategisk autonomi.

Teksten begynner med en oversikt over EUs historiske utvikling innen forsvar og sikkerhet, for deretter å dykke ned i den konseptuelle litteraturen om strategisk autonomi og EUs normative makt. Den empiriske analysen bruker prosessporing for å undersøke virkningen av Trumps utenrikspolitiske handlinger på EUs initiativer for strategisk autonomi fra 2016 til 2021. Diskusjonen utforsker hvordan EU balanserte sin streben etter strategisk autonomi med sin identitet som en normativ makt og evaluerer hypotesene som er tatt ut ifra forskningsspørsmålene. Diskusjonen finner den første hypotesen å være korrekt, at Trumps presidentskap har fremskyndet EUs søken etter strategisk autonomi og fått på plass et nytt momentum. Den andre hypotesen blir avvist, som orginalt sa at Trump-presidentskapet har hatt en negativ innvirkning på EUs samtidige ambisjon om å være en normativ makt. Avhandlingen bidrar til forståelsen av EUs tilpasningsevne og motstandskraft i å beskytte sine interesser i endrede transatlantiske relasjoner, samt det dynamiske samspillet mellom amerikanske politiske endringer og europeiske politiske handlinger.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

US	United States
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
EU	European Union
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CSDP	Common Security and Defense Policy
EEAS	European External Action Service
EUGS	European Union Global Strategy
PESCO	Permanent Structured Cooperation
CARD	Coordinated Annual Review on Defense
EDF	European Defense Fund
ESA	European Strategic Autonomy
SA	Strategic autonomy
PT	Process Tracing
UK	United Kingdom
MPCC	Military Planning and Conduct Capability
EPF	European Peace Facility

1 Introduction

The period of 2017-2021 marked a significant shift in the United States´ (US) foreign policy, characterized by Donald Trump´s prominent "America First" stance that has had far-reaching implications for international alliances, particularly those involving the European Union (Fiott & Bund, 2018). The Trump presidency was characterized by a stark departure from traditional US foreign policy, embracing a unilateral and protectionist approach that often sidelined multilateral institutions and alliances. From questioning the relevance of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), criticism of European defense spending levels within NATO, withdrawals from international agreements, to imposing tariffs on European goods, the administration's actions signaled a shift towards nationalism (Fiott & Bund, 2018). Amidst this backdrop, the presidency of Donald Trump in the US marked a period of significant upheaval and compelled the European Union (EU) to reassess its position on the global stage (Fiott & Bund, 2018). The coming new election in 2024, a re-run of the 2016 election between Donald Trump and Joe Biden, makes this thesis relevant to the political agenda as it seeks to assess the impact and influence of Trump´s last presidential era on the EU.

With this context in mind, will this thesis research the development of European security. At the heart of this investigation lies the central research question: "*How has the presidency of Donald Trump affected the quest for EU strategic autonomy?".* This question opens a multifaced analysis into the realm of security and defense policy within the EU, focusing on the concept of strategic autonomy – a term that encapsulates the EU´s ambition to assert its decision-making capabilities and operational interdependence in the realm of security and defense. A second inquiry considers the potential evolution of the EU from a normative power – a force that exerts influence through values and standards – to a hard power, demonstrating an increased capacity for independent action and defense. The paper´s second research question sounds like this; *"How can the quest for strategic autonomy be combined with the discourse in the consolidation of normative power Europe?".* The exploration of a potential evolution from a normative to a hard power adds another layer to the research, probing into the feasibility and implications of a strategic transformation for the EU. The findings of the research indicate that Donald Trump's presidency significantly accelerated the European Union's strategic autonomy efforts, compelling the EU to bolster its defense capabilities while maintaining and combining strategic autonomy with its normative influence.

The thesis begins with an overview and a contextual clarification of the EU´s historical development in defense and security. It then situates the study within a broader scholarly context by examining the conceptual literature, drawing upon strategic autonomy and the concept of EU normative powers. This sets the stage for the derivation of research questions and hypotheses. Chapter 3 outlines the methodological approach of the study, detailing the research methods, data sources, variables included, and methodological limitations. The empirical analysis is presented in chapter 4 with a process tracing, with chapter 5 discussing the findings in relation to the established research questions. Finally, the conclusion offers a summary of the thesis and highlights its key findings, encapsulating the essence of the study´s contributions to understanding the effects the presidency of Trump had on the EU´s quest for strategic autonomy.

Despite peace and security being central to European integration from the start, attempts at European security and defense integration over the years have encountered resistance from national authorities with a lack of operationalization (Fiott, 2018; Haar et al., 2021; Rieker et al., 2023; Tocci, 2021). The start of security integration can be traced back to the origins of the European Communities. The drive for European self-assertion during the period of structural bipolarity during the Cold War, led to initiatives like the proposed European Defense Community, aiming for self-reliance but eventually leading to a reliance on NATO after the proposal's rejection in 1954 (Lippert et al., 2019). This reliance underscored NATO's primacy over European defense matters for decades. Despite this, the European Community/European Union developed its foreign policy and security capabilities under NATO's umbrella (Lippert et al., 2019). This evolution included key areas such as common trade policy, European Political Cooperation (EPC), Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) (Lippert et al., 2019). The EU´s CFSP was formally established with the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, and further enhanced by the introduction of a CSDP during the Cologne summit in 1999 (Claes & Førland, 2020; Græger, 2019). The Lisbon Treaty later declared,

> The Union's competence in matters of common foreign and security policy shall cover all areas of foreign policy and all questions relating to the Union's security, including the progressive framing of a common defense policy that might lead to a common defense. (Lisbon Treaty, 2007, Art. 10c).

The CSDP is an integral part of the EU´s crisis management mechanisms organized under the European External Action Service (EEAS), responsible for strengthening international security, peacekeeping operations, and conflict prevention work (European External Action Service, 2021). Although there is no unified European army today, European defense and security cooperation have nonetheless seen significant strengthening and institutionalization over the past decades (Claes & Førland, 2020; Græger, 2019; Helwig, 2020; Helwig & Sinkkonen, 2022; Knutsen, 2022). Ambitions for the EU´s enhanced role as a security actor were expressed through the EU´s Global Strategy of 2016, which includes a goal of strategic autonomy, with initiatives in later years such as the establishment of a rapid response force, closer NATO cooperation, Permanent Structured Cooperation, the European Defense Fund, and the Coordinated annual review on defense, underpinning this goal (Aggestam & Hyde-Price, 2019; Biscop, 2018; Græger, 2019; Svendsen, 2019; Svendsen & Rieker, 2019). Juncos and Pomorska (2021) indicate how EU member states appear to be seeking closer ties to become more resilient in the face of external crises, suggesting that increased uncertainty may contribute to the strengthening of CFSP.

The evolution of transatlantic relations represents a multifaced narrative that has undergone significant transformations over the last century. Initially characterized by sporadic engagements, the relationship between the US and EU, has evolved into a complex partnership that includes political, economic, military, and cultural dimensions (Aggestam & Hyde-Price, 2019). Trump´s presidency prompted a reevaluation of European strategic autonomy, with discussions around the EU´s capacity to act independently in matters of defense and security getting attention. The concept of European autonomy emerged as a strategic objective, aimed at reducing dependency on the US for security and responding to the challenges posed by a more transactional approach to transatlantic relations (Aggestam & Hyde-Price, 2019; Fiott, 2018).

2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework centers on two concepts: European Strategic Autonomy (ESA) and Normative Power Europe (NPE). Together, these concepts will help the thesis dissect the EU's role on the global stage, setting the stage for an empirical analysis.

2.1 European Strategic Autonomy

The concept of ESA has no common definition in the scholarly literature, and it is richly layered, reflecting its multifaced implications for the European Union´s policy and strategic posture. ESA is primarily viewed through a defense lens, emphasizing the EU´s ability to independently manage security and defense matters, signaling a move towards "European sovereignty" (Fiott, 2018). Helwig (2020) broadens this perspective by distinguishing between a conventional perspective focused on military capabilities and a global perspective that incorporates trade, digitalization, and responses to global challenges such as health and climate. There are also different dimensions of strategic autonomy, which can be categorized into institutional/operational autonomy, material/industrial autonomy, and political autonomy, each addressing different aspects of the EU´s capacity for self-directed action (Drent, 2018; Helwig, 2020). These elements of institutional capacity, technological and industrial capabilities, and political cohesion are necessary to act autonomously and are different elements that frequently appear in the debate and literature (Drent, 2018; Fiott, 2018; Helwig, 2020; Tocci, 2021). Meanwhile, Zandee et al. (2020) advocate for a multidimensional understanding of ESA, stressing the balance between autonomy and the need to keep alliances, suggesting that autonomy complements rather than replaces these relationships.

The thesis paper will primarily focus on the conventional perspective of strategic autonomy (SA), centering on security and defense. This concentration is justified by the following reasons. Firstly, the genesis of ESA was predominantly in response to the evolving security landscape, making it a foundational pillar of the ESA discourse. Additionally, there is a significant academic precedent for this emphasis, with a substantial portion of scholarly literature on ESA addressing these traditional domains. While acknowledging the expanded scope of SA to include areas such as digital autonomy and energy security, the enduring importance and complexity of security and defense offer a compelling rationale for this narrowed focus.

To clarify, the paper´s definition of ESA is limited to defense and security perspectives and will not differentiate between dimensions. Henceforth, this is the definition of European strategic autonomy this paper will be based on:

> European strategic autonomy in security and defense is the ability of Europe to make its own decisions and to have the necessary means, capacity, and capabilities available to act upon these decisions, in such a manner that it can properly function on its own when needed. (Zandee et al., 2020, p. 8)

2.2 Normative Power Europe

There is a discourse in the academic literature about what kind of power the EU has in global politics. The EU is a complex political entity shaped by and interacting with various national, supranational, and transnational actors and structures (Lynggaard et al., 2015). The most prominent types of power discussed in the literature are either civilian power, ethical power, soft power or more newly discussed is EU as a hard power, and maybe the most known is EU as a normative power.

In 2002, Ian Manners coined the term Normative Power Europe (NPE) and explained it very simply by saying that "the EU acts the way it acts because it is the way it is". Manners developed the concept to describe how the EU uniquely influences global norms and values not through military force (hard power) or economic might (soft power), but through its commitment to democracy, human rights, rule of law, good governance, social solidarity, sustainable peace, social freedom and inclusive equality (Manners, 2002, 2008). According to Manners (2002), these normative principles enable the EU to influence the international system by defining "normalcy" by setting standards and promoting values that reflect its foundational identity. The Treaty of Lisbon (2007, Art. 2) underscores the EU's commitment to these norms, serving as a normative benchmark by stating their values and interests being; democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights, and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law.

The concept of NPE shifts the focus from traditional power politics to the role of ideational influence, emphasizing the EU´s distinct approach to exerting global influence through normative means. Manners (2002) suggests that the normative power of the EU is like an automatism, prone to promote certain norms in the world, and because of the limits stipulated by the treaties and because the EU does not have a military component, all the power EU holds is to transpose their norms externally. The EU's strategies for promoting norms include symbolic actions like public declarations in support of human rights and good governance, as well as embedding normative conditions within international treaties (Manners, 2002). Through diplomatic efforts and treaty negotiations, the EU embeds its core values in its interactions with third countries, making adherence to its standards a condition for cooperation (Forsberg, 2011).

2.3 Reconciling Strategic Autonomy with Normative Powers

The EU has long been a figurehead of normative power, exerting its influence across the world not through military might but through the promotion of core values. This distinctive approach, captured in the concept of NPE, underlines the EU´s commitment to shaping global norms and standards in alignment with its foundational principles. However, the evolving geopolitical landscape and as this thesis will explore, the challenges posed by the Trump presidency, have brought the concept of ESA to the forefront raising questions about its compatibility with the EU´s normative identity. The ambition to achieve strategic autonomy, particularly in defense and security, marks a significant shift towards ensuring the EU´s capacity to act independently on the international stage. This shift, driven by the desire for a more assertive European defense posture, appears at first glance to diverge from the traditional normative stance.

The challenge for the EU lies in integrating its strategic autonomy ambitions with its normative power framework. Does the integration view autonomy and normative influence as mutually exclusive, or as complementary forces that can enhance the EU´s global position? Palm (2021) suggests that normative power is an essential instrument in the EU´s foreign policy "toolbox" and should play a central role in the debate about SA. Hyde-Price (2006) offers a realist critique by questioning the effectiveness of normative power in a geopolitical context often dominated by hard power dynamics. He argues that the liberal-idealist portrayal of the EU as a normative power is overly simplistic and neglects the influence of systemic power dynamics on EU policies (Hyde-Price, 2006). He points out that the development of the CFSP and ESDP are shaped by these systematic factors and that the EU has used a combination of hard and soft power to shape external environments. To sum up, Hyde Price's (2006) critique is that the EU cannot act as a purely normative power without the support of substantial hard power capabilities.

The EU is relatively new to the game of power politics and does not necessarily fit within existing classifications of the great powers. Traditionally, power politics have been associated with realist schools of thinking where they focus among others on that SA is often treated interchangeably with European sovereignty, which refers to the EU´s ability to act independently from other global powers like the US (Palm, 2021). However, Palm (2021) argues that pursuing too much independence could risk isolating the EU and fracturing its commitment to multilateralism. Furthermore, the EU´s internal challenges, such as the lack of a unified army and a consensus-driven approach to decision-making, dilute its ability to act as a cohesive geopolitical and defense entity (Dessewffy, 2024).

In this context, two critical questions emerge:

> **Research question$_1$:** How has the presidency of Donald Trump affected the quest for EU strategic autonomy?

> **Research question$_2$:** How can the quest for strategic autonomy be combined with the discourse in consolidation of normative power Europe?

Correspondingly, the thesis hypotheses suggest that:

> **Hypothesis$_1$:** The Trump presidency has accelerated the EU´s quest for strategic autonomy and put in place a new momentum.

> **Hypothesis$_2$:** The Trump presidency, by further enhancing the EU's strategic autonomy quest, has had a negative impact on the EU's simultaneous ambition to be a normative power.

3 Methodological Approach

The methodology employed in this thesis is a qualitative research method, and the research design the method falls under is a single interpretive case study with process tracing. The rationale behind choosing this research method is both from an academic and practical viewpoint. The case study primarily serves an explanatory function, focusing on generating as much knowledge as possible to support a central argument, using text-based primary and secondary sources which avoids the need for transcription or recording (Moses & Knutsen, 2019, pp. 121-124; Tjora, 2017, p. 85). The research´s reliance on public records also ensures ethical integrity by avoiding the need for informed consent and therefore this approach is deemed ethically appropriate and suitable for highlighting the thesis´s main argument.

3.1 Single Interpretive Case-Study

A single interpretive case study is the chosen method, which in investigations is conducted based on a situation, place, or unit with a natural limitation that is independent of the research project (Tjora, 2017, p. 256). The study in the thesis is social science with an exploratory design and inductive hypothesis development and testing design (Tjora, 2017, p. 257). It is a fitting method for the thesis, by guiding an empirical and conceptual analysis and discussion.

A single interpretive case study is an approach used in research to move beyond descriptive analysis and aim for explanatory insights by applying known theories or concepts to new contexts, demonstrating how the theory/concept can be adopted to explain the phenomenon under study (Bennett & Elman, 2007). Events may be open to multiple interpretations, so one may use counterfactuals to explore alternative explanations to unravel the cause-and-effect link between the independent variable and the dependent variable (Bennett & Elman, 2007). Bennett and Checkel (2014, p. 8) define a case as "an instance of the class of events", and in this thesis, the case being studied is European Strategic autonomy integration. This paper researches if there is a causal inference between the Trump presidency, which is the independent variable that is presumed to have an impact on the dependent variable, which is the quest for ESA.

3.2 Process Tracing

Process tracing (PT) is the chosen approach and is considered effective for case studies. The method enables the tracing of causal mechanisms underlying the complex patterns in the social world (Moses & Knutsen, 2019, p. 143). The use of this approach in a case study offers a deep dive into the mechanisms, for example, politics, that led to an event, the event being the ESA quest. Simply put, it's about proving why we have done what we have done, and then commenting on the patterns of the result (Moses & Knutsen, 2019, p. 143). Collier (2011, p. 823) defines process tracing as "the systematic examination of diagnostic evidence selected and analyzed in light of research questions and hypotheses posed by the investigator". Process tracing is an essential form of within-case analysis which is evidence from within the temporal, spatial, or topical domain defined as a case (Bennett & Checkel, 2014, p. 8). By focusing on the unfolding of events over time, which

in this thesis is in the time frame of 2016-2021, process tracing becomes a tool for understanding causal inferences, or at least some correlation.

According to Moses and Knutsen (2019, p. 141), the procedure can be divided into three steps: theorizing, empirical analysis, and comparison. The first step involves developing background knowledge about the case being studied (Moses & Knutsen, 2019, p. 141). In the thesis, a contextual background of the EU´s security and defense development was provided in the introduction. The second step involves empirical analysis, through an observation of the relationship between event and phenomenon (Moses & Knutsen, 2019, pp. 141-143). The thesis will conduct an analysis that delves into a process that unfolded from 2016 to 2021. The empirical data are introduced chronologically, providing a structured analysis, and presenting patterns for the discussion of the results. Usually, the third step would be initiated, where comparative elements are added. That means comparing across similar cases to enable a generalization of the findings in the analysis (Moses & Knutsen, 2019, pp. 141-143). Given the limited scope of the thesis, the third step of process tracing will not be conducted. This means that the thesis, will not seek to link the results to a comparative design, but rather to gain insight into the given case.

3.3 Analytical Units/Data Selection

To conduct the process tracing mostly primary sources will be used to collect data, and the data will be backed up by secondary sources. The data used to account for Donald Trump´s presidency are obtained from "The American Presidency Project" website, which was developed by UC Santa Barbara to provide easy access to information of high scientific quality. Their sources include collections of presidential papers, including letters and papers from the Presidents of the United States and the presidents' public papers. The website regularly updates materials sourced from the White House, the Government Printing Office, and the National Archives, including texts of presidential documents such as speeches and remarks. During data collection, the search was limited to the terms EU, NATO, and Europe, and the document category was limited to "spoken addresses and remarks", "statements" and "Timelines". The Council on Foreign Relations (cfr.org) also offers a timeline of Trump´s key foreign policy moments, and data will also be collected from this source. The data collected for the development of European security and defense, the European Council and the Council of the EU offer a timeline of EU cooperation on security and defense from the website Consilium.europa.eu, which will be used. Official documents from EU institutions, speeches, and policy declarations, will also be used as well as secondary sources that provide context and commentary on these events.

3.4 Limitations

Engaging in single case studies and PT in the context of the Trump presidency´s impact on EU strategic autonomy introduces several methodological challenges. First and foremost, as mentioned the methodological goal is to find causal mechanisms, however with the method being a single case study one cannot establish a causal link between cause and effect but rather a correlational link (Collier, 2011, p. 828). The Trump presidency is seen as a high-profile political period and the polarized nature of this period also heightens the risk of confirmation bias, where the researchers may unknowingly select evidence that supports preconceived notions about the impact of Trump´s presidency (Bennett & Checkel, 2014, p.18). Factorial implications may be present in

research like this thesis. Equifinality is relevant given there may be numerous factors influencing EU autonomy beyond American politics, and counterfactual reasoning, while useful might be challenging to apply without appearing speculative (Bennett & Checkel, 2014, p. 4; Collier, 2011, p. 825). With a disclosure of all the limitations that may arise in the thesis´ analysis, the paper will resume the analysis with them in mind and will be open and transparent about the findings and conclusions given.

4 Empirical Analysis

To analyze how the Presidency of Donald Trump may have affected the EU´s quest for strategic autonomy, the empirical analysis will present possible strategic drivers as well as Trump´s major political decisions and international engagements and address the EU´s significant events, focusing on major policy changes and international engagements that may have been influenced by Trump´s foreign policy actions.

4.1 Key Security and Defense Dynamics in the 2010s

To set the scene for the empirical analysis to investigate what affected the EU´s quest for autonomy, it is important to know the broader context and other possible strategic drivers of security and defense in Europe in the 2010 decade.

One of the possibly most consequential events was the 2014 annexation of Crimea and part of Donbas by Russia, which sent shockwaves through the international community (Görgen, 2021). This act not only violated international law and Ukraine´s sovereignty but also disrupted the security balance in Europe, encouraging the EU to rethink its defense and deterrence strategy and impose sanctions on Russia. The EU´s response illustrated a more assertive and coordinated approach to external threats than ever seen before (Görgen, 2021).

A year later, the refugee crisis of 2015 highlighted the EU´s vulnerability to large-scale migration and border security issues (Görgen, 2021). The influx of refugees from conflict zones in the Middle East and Africa strained national resources, raising questions about the EU´s capacity to manage movements like this while maintaining humanitarian principles (Görgen, 2021). The refugee crisis prompted a re-evaluation of border control mechanisms and underscored the need for a unified EU response to both security and humanitarian challenges in the future (Görgen, 2021).

In 2016, the same year Donald Trump was elected the 45th president of the US, Brexit happened. The United Kingdom´s (UK) decision to leave the EU following the 2016 referendum, added another layer of complexity to the European security landscape (Biscop, 2016). The departure of one of the EU´s largest military powers (also a nuclear power), necessitated a recalibration of defense strategies and cooperation agreements. Brexit challenges the cohesion of the EU´s CSDP, prompting discussions on maintaining strong partnerships with the UK while advancing the EU´s strategic development (Biscop, 2016).

4.2 Foreign Policy Decisions of Donald Trump and ESA Developments 2016-2021

4.2.1 2016

In 2016, before Trump´s presidency, a new EU Global Strategy (EUGS) in the area of security and defense was introduced with the title 'Shared vision, common action: a stronger Europe' (European External Action Service, 2016). The 2016 EUGS takes up the term "strategic autonomy" and develops European policy responses, stating that:

> We live in times of existential crisis, within and beyond the European Union. Our Union is under threat. Our European project, which has brought unprecedented peace, prosperity, and democracy, is being questioned…the EU needs to be strengthened as a security community: European security and defense efforts should enable the EU to act autonomously while also contributing to and undertaking actions in cooperation with NATO. (European External Action Service, 2016).

At the NATO summit in July 2016, NATO and the EU signed the first joint declaration to strengthen cooperation in response to rising security challenges (European Council, 2016). The declaration aimed to foster collaboration on various security issues, including military mobility, counterterrorism, and information sharing (European Council, 2016). The declaration, signed by the President of the European Council, the president of the European Commission, and the Secretary-General of NATO, was an important milestone by indicating a shared commitment to addressing common security threats (European Council, 2016).

4.2.2 2017

Donald Trump began his presidency on January 20, 2017, by addressing in his Inauguration speech, his strong emphasis on an "America First" approach and outlining his foreign policy with a focus on rebalancing global alliances and reducing U.S. trade deficits (The White House, 2017a). Three days later, he withdrew the U.S. from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), asserting a preference for bilateral trade deals (The American Presidency Project, 2017a). On his first foreign trip in May 2017, Trump traveled to several countries including Saudi Arabia, Israel, and European nations. In his speech in Saudi Arabia, he called for unity against terrorism, and in Brussels, he pressed NATO members to increase their defense spending and "contribute their fair share", but notably refrained from affirming NATO´s Article 5 mutual defense commitment (The White House, 2017b). The importance of this speech lies in his failure to endure the article during his first 4 months in office, and the meeting in Brussels would be an opportunity to do so. His stance sparked a significant discourse on a possible independent European security. Thomas Wright (2017) said that "Trump's failure to personally endorse Article 5 may come to be one of the greatest diplomatic blunders made by an American president since World War II.". Trump did in a later visit to Warsaw in July however, explicitly support NATO´s mutual defense clause for the first time (The White House, 2017c).

On June 1, 2017, Trump announced the second U.S. withdrawal from international agreements, this time being the Paris Climate Agreement, citing disadvantages to the American economy (The White House, 2017d). This decision was part of a broader pattern of revisiting international agreements, evident again in October when Trump chose not to recertify Iran´s compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal (JCPOA) and left the final decision on reimposing sanctions to Congress (The American Presidency Project, 2017b).

Throughout 2017, the EU sought to bolster its defense capabilities, influenced by Trump´s criticism. The Council of the European Union pursued initiatives to strengthen defense, focusing on military mobility, joint training programs, and deeper EU-NATO cooperation (Council of the European Union, 2017b). The push for enhanced EU defense integration was influenced by broader discussions on the future of Europe, where the European Commission launched a White Paper in March 2017, proposing five different scenarios for varying levels of cooperation among EU member states (European Commission, 2017b). The White Paper´s vision highlighted the EU´s desire to be more effective in its defense strategy, and the Commission´s third scenario, "those who want to do more", opened the door for greater cooperation on defense matters. With an emphasis on strong common research and military base, joint procurement, integrated capabilities, and enhanced military readiness for joint missions abroad (European Commission, 2017b).

In May 2017, the former German Chancellor Angela Merkel spoke at the Trudering fest as an answer to Trump´s speech to the European Leaders on NATO, highlighting the shifting dynamics in international relations, suggesting that the EU no longer completely relies on others for its security and that the EU must now be prepared to "take its fate into its own hands" (Paravicini, 2017). The Commission supported this statement and put forward the idea of a European Defense Fund (EDF) in June, where a fund of 5.5 billion euros could be spent per year "to boost Europe´s defense capabilities" (European Commission, 2017a). In September, French President Emmanuel Macron delivered a speech outlining his vision for European integration, calling for a common European intervention force and underscoring the need for more robust European defense cooperation. Macron proposed that Europe should establish a common intervention force, a common defense budget, and a common doctrine for action by the beginning of the 2020s (Macron, 2017).

The development of security and defense in 2017 culminated in the establishment of permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in November (Council of the European Union, 2017a). PESCO provided an inclusive framework for EU member states to work more closely together on security and defense matters. The European Council´s notification to formally launch PESCO emphasized the need to enhance EU defense capabilities and to strengthen NATO´s European pillar (Council of the European Union, 2017a). PESCO marked a new level of defense integration within the EU, with 25 member states committing to deepen defense cooperation, develop joint projects, and increase operational readiness (Biscop, 2018). The launch of PESCO can be seen as a direct response to Trump´s criticisms and signaled the EU´s pursuit of greater strategic autonomy and reducing dependency on US military support while complementing NATO´s role in European Security (Council of the European Union, 2017a).

4.2.3 2018

Trump´s second year in office saw a continuation of the "America First" agenda, with the implementation of tariffs on foreign-made steel and aluminum in March 2018, reasoned on national security concerns (The American Presidency Project, 2018b). Trump´s tough stance on trade was further underscored by the release of strategic documents that labeled China and Russia as major strategic competitors (The White House, 2018). In May 2018, the President withdrew the U.S. from the JCPOA, reinstating sanctions on Iran which had been previously lifted under the agreement, marking further steps in the reversal of previous U.S. foreign policy commitments (The American Presidency Project, 2018a). Also in May, the U.S. embassy was officially moved to Jerusalem, reinforcing Trump´s previous recognition of the city as Israel´s capital despite widespread criticism and concerns over its impact on peace negotiations (The American Presidency Project, 2018c). Another withdrawal happened in June, this time from the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), which Trump criticized for its alleged bias and the membership of countries with poor human rights records (National Public Radio, 2018).

A significant event in 2018 on security development was the adoption of the Coordinated Annual Review on Defense (CARD), which aimed at enhancing defense cooperation among EU members (European Defence Agency, n.d.). CARD provided a mechanism for EU nations to align their defense investments and planning strategies, encouraging member states to pool resources and avoid duplication (European Defence Agency, n.d.). With PESCO and CARD, the coordination improved the efficiency of defense spending but also strengthened the EU´s capacity to respond to emerging security challenges, if necessary (Council of the European Union, 2018)

In addition to increased internal EU cooperation, 2018 also saw an increase in external engagements with international partners and a more active discourse in the media about strategic developments. Ahead of the EU Summit in June 2018, Donald Tusk warned EU leaders that;

> despite our tireless efforts to keep the unity of the West, transatlantic relations are under immense pressure due to the policies of President Trump. It is my belief that, while hoping for the best, we must be ready to prepare our Union for worst-case scenarios (Herszenhorn, 2018).

At the annual EU-NATO summit in July, both organizations reaffirmed their commitment to closer collaboration which reinforced the message that the EU was committed to fostering international security through partnerships, while also pursuing a more integrated defense framework within its borders (European Council, 2018). German Chancellor Angela Merkel held a speech in November, where she brought up Macron´s earlier proposal of a European intervention force and similarly spoke of the need to create a "real European army" someday (De la Baume, 2018). The EU Council´s decision to upgrade the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) to 60 permanent staff to run Battlegroup-size military CSDP missions by the end of 2020 was an important step in the direction of Macron and Merkel´s wishes (European External Action Services, 2022).

4.2.4 2019

In June 2019, Donald Trump ordered a strike on Iranian targets following the downing of an American drone but later called off the operation (The New York Times, 2019). This incident heightened tensions with Iran and highlighted the ongoing strain in U.S.-Iran Relations, worsened by increased sanctions and threats to maritime security in the region (Council on Foreign Relations, 2019). Trump´s continuation of unilateral agreements, such as withdrawing from the Paris Agreement and the Iran Nuclear Deal, underscores his continued disregard for multilateralism and can be seen as a strategic driver to further pursue strategic autonomy by pushing the EU to seek greater independence in defense matters.

2019 was the second year of PESCO and the year saw an increase in joint projects and increased cooperation among EU member states. Over 47 collaborative projects were in development, ranging from cyber defense to military mobility, which made PESCO the cornerstone of the EU´s defense strategy (Council of the European Union, 2019). Throughout 2019, the European Parliament and the European Council continued to advocate for a stronger EU defense framework. The European Parliament´s 2019 resolution on defense and security called for increased defense spending by EU member states and greater integration of European defense policies (European Parliament, 2019). This resolution underlined the EU´s broader objective of achieving strategic autonomy, especially in reducing its independence from external actors (European Parliament, 2019).

4.2.5 2020

Amidst the global COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Trump announced U.S. actions against China and criticized the World Health Organization (WHO) for the handling of the virus outbreak and claiming undue influence by China. The disputes led to the formal notification of the U.S. withdrawal from the WHO in July (The American Presidency Project, 2020). The year also saw the U.S. withdrawal from the Treaty on Open Skies in November, based on Russian noncompliance, further eroding international arms control efforts (Council on Foreign Relations, 2020). These withdrawals highlight the isolationist approach of the Trump presidency.

The EU opened for third-state participation in PESCO projects in 2020, allowing non-EU countries to collaborate on defense initiatives within the EU framework (Council of the European Union, 2020). The EU´s new emphasis on third-state participation underscored its commitment to a more inclusive and collaborative defense strategy, enabling a wider range of countries to contribute to European security (Council of the European Union, 2020). Another development in 2020 on the quest for strategic autonomy, was France´s renewed focus on its unique role within the EU defense landscape, especially after the British exit of the EU. With France being the only EU member with a permanent seat on the UN Security Council and the only one with nuclear weapons, Macron came up with a strategic proposal in February 2020 (Macron, 2020). Macron's proposal aimed to foster a broader European strategic culture and suggested that French nuclear power could be associated with a wider European context (Macron, 2020).

On the eve of the 2020 US presidential election, a discussion between the German Defense Minister, Kramp-Karrenbauer, and French President Macron on Europe´s reliance

on the US for security. Kramp-Karrenbeuder underscored that Europe couldn´t replace America´s role as a security provider, but also acknowledged that Europe should shoulder more security responsibilities (Von der Burchard, 2020). Macron argued that the US would only respect Europe as an ally if Europe took its defense role seriously and exhibited sovereignty (Von der Burchard, 2020). Macron's viewpoint advocates for a more assertive European posture that goes beyond mere contributions to actual strategic autonomy (Von der Burchard, 2020).

4.2.6 2021

Donald Trump concluded his term as the 45th U.S. President in 2021. The year began with Trump facing widespread inspection and controversy surrounding the outcomes of the 2020 presidential election, where he contested vigorously election irregularities. His insistence culminated in a turbulent event on January 6th, with the storming of the U.S. Capitol as Congress was certifying the election results, leading to deaths, injuries, and significant political fallout (BBC, 2021). Following these events, Trump faced his second impeachment, charged with "incitement of insurrection", but the Senate acquitted him soon after, allowing him to run for office again (Wagner et al., 2021). Not only did it damage Trump's reputation among EU leaders, but also served as a reminder of the importance of democratic resilience, both within the United States and globally. It strengthened the EU's quest to pursue strategic autonomy, as reliance on an unpredictable and internally conflicted U.S. seemed increasingly risky.

A key milestone of security development in 2019, was the introduction of the European Peace Facility (EPF), a dedicated off-budget fund aimed at supporting EU military training missions and peace operations on a global scale (European Council & Council of the European Union, n.d.). The EPF was designed to enhance the EU´s capacity to assist partner countries in building their defense capabilities and to foster resilience against emerging threats, which represented a step towards expanding the EU´s role in global peace and security operations (European Council & Council of the European Union, n.d.). This is a notable sign of the EU combining its normative power with an evolving strategic power because the EPF demonstrates how the EU is not just preaching values but is also developing the means to actively uphold and defend these values on the global stage, thereby reflecting the merging of normative influence with strategic action.

The Council launched the fourth wave of new PESCO projects in 2021, bringing the total to 60, spanning from cyber defense, maritime security, and military planning (Council of the European Union, 2021). The Strategic Compass played a central role in the 2021 security and defense development (Foreign Affairs Council, 2021). The Compass outlined a clear plan of action for the EUs strategic objectives, focusing on enhancing strategic autonomy and the ability to work with international partners. It emphasized the EU´s capacity to act independently in its security interests while fostering collaboration with global allies. The Strategic Compass highlighted the importance of coordination and aligning defense and security policies across member states, but also underscored the EU´s commitment to safeguarding its values and interests as well as it shows that compliance between SA and NP is possible. (Foreign Affairs Council, 2021).

PRESIDENCY OF DONALD TRUMP

2016

- Nov.: Wins election

2017

- Jan.: Inaguration: America First
- Jan.: Trans-Pacific Partnership Withdrawal
- May: NATO address
- June: Paris Agreement Withdrawal
- Aug.: War of Words with North Korea
- Nov.: Asia Tour
- Dec.: Recognizing Jerusalem as capitol of Jeruslaem

2018

- April: Announcing Tariffs
- April: US-China Trade Wars
- May: Iran Nuclear Agreement Withdrawal
- May: US Embassy moves to Jerusalem
- June: UN Human Rights Council Withdrawal
- Dec.: Withdrawal of troops in Syria and Afghanistan

2019

- Jan.: Border Wall Battle, Shutdown and first veto
- June: Walk back Iran Strike
- June: Visiting North Korea
- Sep.: Impeachment Inquiry

2020

- Feb.: Acquittal
- US-Taliban Agreement
- Nov.: Loses election
- Nov.: defense department Shake-up
- Nov.: Open Skies Withdrawal

2021

- Jan.: Insurrection at the Capitol
- WHO withdrawal

EUROPEAN STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

2016

- June: NATO and EU sign a joint declaration to enhance cooperation at the NATO summit.
- Dec.: European Council discussions on strengthening Europe's defense capabilities and endorsing the European Defense Action Plan and the EU-NATO Joint Declaration.

2017

- March: European Commission releases a White Paper proposing scenarios for cooperation.
- May: Merkel emphasizes EU's need for strategic autonomy.
- June: Proposal of Eurpean Defense Fund
- Sep.: Macron calls for a common European intervention force.
- Nov.: Establishment of PESCO

2018

- Adoption of the CARD to align defense investments.
- June: EU Summit discussion on transatlantic relations and readiness for worst-case scenarios.
- July: EU-NATO summit reaffirms commitment to closer collaboration.
- November: Merkel speaks about the need for a "real European army".

2019

- Full implementation of CARD
- EU supports over 47 joint defense projects under PESCO.
- European Parliament´s rsolution on Secuirty and Defense

2020

- PESCO opens to third-state participation.
- Feb.: France's strategic proposal on its nuclear deterrence role in EU defense.
- Nov: Discussion on Europe's security reliance on the US between European leaders

2021

- Introduction of the EPF to support global peace operations.
- Launch of new PESCO projects, totaling 60 projects
- Publication of the Strategic Compass to guide EU's defense actions

Figure 1:Timeline of Trump´s foreign policy actions and the EU´s SA initiatives.

5 Discussion

Guided by two questions, this thesis examines: 1) How has the presidency of Donald Trump affected the quest for EU strategic autonomy? 2) How can the quest for strategic autonomy be combined with the discourse in consolidation of normative power Europe?

5.1 The Impact of Donald Trump´s Foreign Policy on EU Strategic Autonomy

The findings from the empirical analysis show Donald Trump´s most prominent foreign policy actions that have affected the EU´s quest for strategic autonomy. Trump´s speech on NATO about Europe freeriding and that NATO is a big financial burden for the US, his isolationist and unilateralism policies, and most importantly Donald Trump´s unpredictability can all explain a further acceleration of SA integration.

Shortly after Trump spoke about NATO in 2017, Merkel articulated a sentiment that Europe "must take our fate into our own hands.". A statement reflecting a growing consensus within the EU that reliance on the US for security guarantees was becoming increasingly untenable. Building on Merkel´s sentiments Macron further emphasized the need for a stronger and more integrated European defense strategy. The introduction of EDF reflects an acknowledgment that the EU needed to take more responsibility for its defense, partly provoked by Trump´s criticism of European defense spending. 2017 ended with the launch of PESCO, which can be seen as a culmination of the discussions and proposals of Merkel and Macron, brought forward because of Trump´s critical NATO stance. When examining SA as defined by Zandee et al. (2020) which entails "…to have the necessary means, capacity and capabilities", both EDF and PESCO mark initial steps towards operationalizing SA.

During the entire presidency period, Trump held a strong isolationist policy, where America concurrently came first, and with multiple withdrawals from international agreements and posing tariffs, he proved his point of view on international cooperation and disregard of multilateralism. As seen in the analysis, this isolationism and unilateralism forced the EU to reassess its reliance on the EU for security, leading to serious considerations about the need to enhance its strategic capabilities. The EU became more proactive in defining its role within NATO and signed the second joint declaration in 2018. They also expanded with external engagements with several other international partners and opened for more international external participation in PESCO projects in 2020.

The key takeaway the EU has of Donald Trump´s presidency was that it was filled with unpredictability. The effect is evident as there was a boost of ESA coverage in the media and especially German Chancellor Merkel and French President Macron spoke on their view on a need for an increase of SA integration in several speeches and in media directly. There was also a boost of discussion of ESA within all the EU institutions, during the years 2016-2021, and the development of new EU defense and security capabilities

during the years included the EDF, PESCO, CARD, MPCC, and lastly the publication of the Strategic Compass in 2021.

However, the SA integration started before the Trump presidency. 2016 was an important year of recalibration of ESA, with an EU-NATO joint declaration and an EU Global Strategy. The analysis mentions the annexation of Crimea, the refugee crisis, and Brexit as possible strategic drivers for ESA. The annexation of Crimea, was a shock for Europe and the EU, promoting the EU to rethink European defense as Russia now attacked a European country. Brexit may also be a relevant explanation for the ESA quest, being that the UK was the biggest military power in the EU leaving France as the only nuclear power as well, making the EU question the military capabilities of Europe before Trump became president.

5.2 Balancing Normative Power with Strategic Autonomy

In the analysis, there are discovered ways to make the EU´s traditional normative powers compatible with the SA development. When considering Zandee et al. (2020) and their multidimensional approach to SA, this kind of SA allows for the EU to wield its influence across various domains, thus embodying the principles of normative power. EU have traditionally promoted their norms through symbolic actions, as mentioned earlier, and maybe symbolic security can be a way of promoting their norms. The EU still doesn´t have a military component and therefore there is an emphasis on non-military aspects of security such as crisis management and diplomatic initiative. This is a way of aligning security with the identity of normative powers.

Initiatives such as the EPF and PESCO also illustrate how strategic developments are inherently tied to normative principles. The EPF aims to support partners in conflict zones, promoting sustainable peace and stability, values that are deeply rooted in the EU´s normative identity and can be connected to the Lisbon Treaty art. 2 with the value of "sustainable peace". Similarly, PESCO while enhancing the EU´s defense capabilities, also stresses the importance of collaborative engagements that respect the member state´s sovereignty and equality. Interestingly, the presidency of Donald Trump, inadvertently acted as a driver for the EU to bolster its strategic autonomy in a way that was compatible with its normative powers. Trump´s foreign policy actions pushed the EU to not only rethink its security and defense but also to reaffirm its commitment to multilateralism and international cooperation, with a renewed emphasis on normative influence. Just like Palm (2021) argued that both normative powers and strategic powers are a part of the EU´s foreign policy toolbox and Zandee et al. (2020) stress that SA compliments rather than replaces these international relationships.

However, the development of EDF, MPCC, and PESCO could be interpreted as moves that prioritize strategic interests over normative values that have been influenced by systematic powers, such as the actions taken under the Trump presidency. As Hyde-Price argued, the EU´s inherent normative power may be at odds with the realist demands of strategic autonomy, particularly in terms of defense and military capabilities, and the EU will always strive to have some hard power to effectively assert itself and safeguard its interests on the international stage.

5.3 Evaluation of Hypotheses

When analyzing the impact of Donald Trump´s presidency on the ESA and NP responses, the thesis has been guided by two central hypotheses.

> **H₁:** The Trump presidency has accelerated the EU´s quest for strategic autonomy and put in place a new momentum.

The evidence found in the empirical analysis and discussion strongly supports this hypothesis. Trump´s critical stance on NATO, isolationism, and disregard of multilateralism, spurred the EU towards seeking greater self-reliance. This was manifested by the rapid development and implementation of key strategic initiatives such as the PESCO and the EDF. These measures were catalyzed by the perceived need to bolster European defense capabilities independently of the US, reflecting a decisive shift towards SA. Additionally, the increase in discourse around ESA in policymaking and media from European leaders and EU institutions, further indicates that his presidency did indeed inject new momentum into EU defense strategies. The important thing to keep in mind is that Trump is not the only reason for ESA integration and that other geopolitical drivers in the 2010s also accelerated the EU´s quest for ESA, making it a case of multicollinearity showing correlation, rather than causal inference. The hypothesis is there for correct being that it accelerated and put in place a new momentum, not being the reason for the ESA quest.

> **H₂:** The Trump presidency, by further enhancing the EU strategic autonomy quest, has had a negative impact on the EU's simultaneous ambition to be a normative power.

Contrary to the first hypothesis, the second is not relevant to the empirical evidence. The evidence suggests that the EU has not only maintained but also integrated its normative power within its quest for strategic autonomy. Initiatives like PESCO and the EPF, while strategic primarily, have consistently emphasized the EU´s core normative values such as promoting peace, stability, and adherence to international law. These efforts underline the SA initiatives can coexist with the EU´s role as a normative power. Furthermore, the EU´s proactive reaffirmation of multilateralism and international cooperation in response to the Trump presidency showcases a robust commitment to its normative principles. Therefore, the thesis refutes or rejects Hypothesis 2, concluding that the Trump presidency, rather than diminishing the EU´s normative power, has underscored the compatibility and synergy between the EU´s strategic autonomy and its normative role on the global stage. This confirms Hyde-Price´s theory that the EU´s normative power is complemented by, and sometimes contingent upon, strategic autonomy and realist considerations. It also fits with Zandee et al.´s multidimensional definition of strategic autonomy, because of the compliance between SA and multilateralism.

6 Conclusion

This thesis has explored the influence of Donald Trump during his presidency 2017-2021, on the European Union´s quest for strategic autonomy. The thesis has been driven by two research questions; "How has the presidency of Donald Trump affected the quest for EU strategic autonomy?" and "How can the quest for strategic autonomy be combined with the discourse in consolidation of normative power Europe?". Through a single interpretive case study with process tracing, a detailed analysis of the evolving security landscape, policy shifts, and strategic responses within the EU concluded that Trump´s "America First" policy served as a pivotal catalyst for the EU to pursue greater strategic autonomy. This research thesis has confirmed Aggestam and Hyde-Price´s (2019) argument, that the unilateral and often unpredictable foreign policy decisions made by the Trump administration compelled the EU to reassess its security and defense strategies, thereby accelerating the quest for a European strategic autonomy.

Moreover, the empirical findings of this thesis have demonstrated that while Trump´s presidency posed challenges to transatlantic and multilateral relationships, it inadvertently strengthened the EU´s internal cohesion regarding defense and security policy and made the EU a more capable and reliable partner within NATO. The analysis also showed that the EU´s security and defense integration have not interfered with their normative goals and power. This outcome underscores the capacity of the EU to adapt and evolve in response to external pressures without sacrificing its foundational values. By maintaining its normative power – the EU continues to exert influence on the global stage on moral authority and ethical leadership. Concurrently, the development of SA allows the EU to assert more control over its security and defense and ensure it can independently address threats while advocating for the Union´s values.

An interesting thought for further research is the different perceptions of Europe versus the EU. Trump's 2017 critique of NATO was directed broadly at Europe, not specifically at the EU, underscoring the broader geographical and political implications. This spurred a reassessment of reliance on the US for security, involving both EU and non-EU European NATO members. France and Germany, major advocates of the European Strategic Autonomy (ESA), exemplify how national policies can drive EU-wide initiatives while also addressing broader European concerns, often blurring the lines between EU and European interests. Initiatives like PESCO, although EU-driven, illustrate this overlap by allowing third-state participation, reflecting a broader European security perspective. This interplay suggests that while the EU aims to increase its strategic capabilities, complete strategic autonomy may require broader European cooperation beyond EU borders, acknowledging that the EU's defense initiatives must align with wider European security interests to be fully effective, and that the EU may not be able to combine SA and their normative powers.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of the study, and there are more than disclosed in chapter 3.4. The analysis presented leans heavily on "speculation" and correlation, rather than establishing clear causal relationships. While the findings suggest correlations between Trump´s presidency and the acceleration of the EU´s strategic autonomy efforts, it´s important to recognize that causality cannot be definitively inferred from this thesis. Furthermore, while Trump´s "America First" policies

undoubtedly had a significant impact on transatlantic relations and the EU´s pursuit of strategic autonomy, it´s essential to note that he was not the first nor the only American president to advocate for protectionist measures. However, Trump´s assertive approach set a distinct tone that echoed across the global stage. The contextual background provided by the events in the 2010s serves as just some of many possible factors influencing the EU´s strategic autonomy decisions. It is important to acknowledge that there may be other unaccounted-for factors that could have influenced the EU´s integration, and further research needs to explore these complexities fully and delve deeper into the nuances of transatlantic relations and their impact on European security and defense policies.

In conclusion, the significance of this thesis paper is that it shows the evolution of the EU on the global stage, where it has effectively integrated its normative principles with its strategic autonomy efforts, rather than compromising them. It underscores the EU´s adaptability and resilience in safeguarding its interests amidst changing transatlantic relations.

7 References

Below is the thesis bibliography presented, with a distinction between primary sources and secondary sources. Both sections are individually sorted in alphabetical order.

7.1 Primary Sources

BBC. (2021, 07.01). Capitol riots: What happened on January 6, 2021. *BBC News*. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-55575260

Council of the European Union. (2017a). Council Conclusions Establishing Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and Determining the List of Participating Member States. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32017D2315&from=DE

Council of the European Union. (2017b, 5.12). *Defense cooperation: Council adopts conclusions on EU-NATO cooperation, endorsing common set of new proposals for further joint work* https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/12/05/defence-cooperation-council-adopts-conclusions-on-eu-nato-cooperation-endorsing-common-set-of-new-proposals-for-further-joint-work/

Council of the European Union. (2018, 19.11). *Security and Defence: Council welcomes the substantive progress made during the last two years* https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/11/19/security-and-defence-council-welcomes-the-substantive-progress-made-during-the-last-two-years/

Council of the European Union. (2019, 12.11). *Defense cooperation: Council launches 13 new PESCO projects* https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/11/12/defence-cooperation-council-launches-13-new-pesco-projects/

Council of the European Union. (2020, 05.11). *EU defense cooperation: Council sets conditions for third-state participation in PESCO projects* https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/11/05/eu-defence-cooperation-council-sets-conditions-for-third-state-participation-in-pesco-projects/

Council of the European Union. (2021, 16.11). *EU defense cooperation: Council launches the 4th wave of new PESCO projects* https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/11/16/eu-defence-cooperation-council-launches-the-4th-wave-of-new-pesco-projects/

Council on Foreign Relations. (2019). Strait of Hormuz: U.S.-Iran Maritime Flash Point https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/strait-hormuz-us-iran-maritime-flash-point

Council on Foreign Relations. (2020). Open Skies: Another Dying Arms Control Agreement. https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/open-skies-another-dying-arms-control-agreement

De la Baume, M., & Herszenhorn, D. M. (2018, 17.11). *Merkel joins Macron in calling for EU army to complement NATO*. Retrieved 29.04 from https://www.politico.eu/article/angela-merkel-emmanuel-macron-eu-army-to-complement-nato/

European Commission. (2017a, 7.06). *A European Defence Fund: €5.5 billion per year to boost Europe's defense capabilities* https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_17_1508

European Commission. (2017b). Reflection Paper on the Future of European Defence. https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/172d0a7c-161c-450b-b7f6-2d36acd7861f_en?filename=reflection-paper-defence_en.pdf

European Council. (2016). *Joint declaration on EU-NATO cooperation* https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/21481/nato-eu-declaration-8-july-en-final.pdf

European Council. (2018, 11.07). *Joint declaration on EU-NATO cooperation* https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/36096/nato_eu_final_eng.pdf

European Council, & Council of the European Union. (n.d.). *European Peace Facility*. Retrieved 29.04 from https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/european-peace-facility/

European Defence Agency. (n.d.). *Coordinated Annual Review on Defence* Retrieved 29.04 from https://eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/EU-defence-initiatives/coordinated-annual-review-on-defence-(card)

European External Action Service. (2016). *Shared vision, common action – A stronger Europe – A global strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy*. Publications Office. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf

European External Action Service. (2021). The Common Security and Defence Policy. *EU Security, Defence and Crisis Response*. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/common-security-and-defence-policy_en

European External Action Services. (2022). The Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC). https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/military-planning-and-conduct-capability-mpcc_en

European Parliament. (2019). REPORT on the implementation of the common security and defense policy – annual report. *2019/2135(INI)*. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2019-0052_EN.html#_section1

Fiott, D., & Bund, J. (2018). EUISS yearbook of European security: YES 2018. *2018*. https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/YES_2018.pdf

Foreign Affairs Council. (2021, 16.11). *Foreign Affairs Council (Defence)* https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2021/11/16/?utm_source=dsms-auto&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Foreign+Affairs+Council+(Defence)

Herszenhorn, D. M. (2018, 27.06). *Tusk warns EU of 'worst-case scenarios' due to Trump*. Retrieved 29.04 from https://www.politico.eu/article/tusk-warns-eu-of-worst-case-scenarios-due-to-trump/

Lisbon Treaty (2007). *Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, signed at Lisbon, 13 December 2007* (12007L/TXT). EUR-Lex. http://data.europa.eu/eli/treaty/lis/sign

Macron, E. (2017). *Speech on new initiative for Europe* https://www.elysee.fr/en/emmanuel-macron/2017/09/26/president-macron-gives-speech-on-new-initiative-for-europe

Macron, E. (2020, 07.02). *Speech of the President of the Republic on the Defense and Deterrence Strategy:* https://www.elysee.fr/en/emmanuel-macron/2020/02/07/speech-of-the-president-of-the-republic-on-the-defense-and-deterrence-strategy

National Public Radio. (2018). U.S. Announces Its Withdrawal from U.N.'s Human Rights Council. https://www.npr.org/2018/06/19/621435225/u-s-announces-its-withdrawal-from-u-n-s-human-rights-council

Paravicini, G. (2017, 28.05.2017). *Angela Merkel: Europe must take 'our fate' into its own hands*. Retrieved 29.04 from https://www.politico.eu/article/angela-merkel-europe-cdu-must-take-its-fate-into-its-own-hands-elections-2017/

The American Presidency Project. (2017a). Memorandum: Withdrawal of the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership Negotiations and Agreement. . https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/memorandum-withdrawal-the-united-states-from-the-trans-pacific-partnership-negotiations

The American Presidency Project. (2017b). Remarks by President Trump on the Iran Strategy. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-president-trump-the-iran-strategy

The American Presidency Project. (2018a). National Security Presidential Memorandum Ceasing United States Participation in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. . https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/national-security-presidential-memorandum-ceasing-united-states-participation-the-joint

The American Presidency Project. (2018b). Proclamation on Adjusting Imports of Steel into the United States. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/proclamation-adjusting-imports-steel-united-states

The American Presidency Project. (2018c). Remarks at the Dedication Ceremony of the United States Embassy in Jerusalem. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-the-dedication-ceremony-the-united-states-embassy-jerusalem

The American Presidency Project. (2020). Remarks by President Trump on Actions Against China. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-united-states-actions-against-china

The New York Times. (2019). Trump Approves Strikes on Iran, but Then Abruptly Pulls Back https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/20/world/middleeast/iran-us-drone.html?module=inline

The White House. (2017a). Inaugural Address. https://www.whitehouse.gov/inaugural-address

The White House. (2017b). Remarks by President Trump at NATO Unveiling of the Article 5 and Berlin Wall Memorials - Brussels, Belgium https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/05/25/remarks-president-trump-nato-unveiling-article-5-and-berlin-wall

The White House. (2017c). Remarks by President Trump to the People of Poland https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/07/06/remarks-president-trump-people-poland-july-6-2017

The White House. (2017d). Statement by President Trump on the Paris Climate Accord. https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/06/01/statement-president-trump-paris-climate-accord

The White House. (2018). Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America. . https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf

Von der Burchard, H. (2020). *German defense minister to Macron: EU depends on US security guarantee*. Retrieved 29.04 from https://www.politico.eu/article/german-minister-to-macron-eus-dependence-on-us-is-sobering-facts/

Wagner, M., Mahtani, M., Macaya, M., & Rocha, V. (2021, 13.02). Donald Trump
        acquitted in second impeachment trial. *CNN*. https://edition.cnn.com/politics/live-
        news/trump-impeachment-trial-02-13-
        2021/h_3c8fc6e437ba33f31d8df8dca6c38c20

Wright, T. (2017, 27.05). Trump Remains a NATO Skeptic. *The Atlantic*
        https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/05/trump-nato-article-
        five-israel-saudi-arabia/528393/

7.2 Secondary Sources

Aggestam, L., & Hyde-Price, A. (2019). Double Trouble: Trump, Transatlantic Relations
        and European Strategic Autonomy. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, *57*(S1),
        114-127. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12948

Bennett, A., & Checkel, J. T. (2014). *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool*.
        Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139858472

Bennett, A., & Elman, C. (2007). Case Study Methods in the International Relations
        Subfield. *Comparative Political Studies*, *40*(2), 170-195.
        https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414006296346

Biscop, S. (2016). All or nothing? The EU Global Strategy and Defense Policy after Brexit.
        Contemporary security policy, 1-15.
        https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2016.1238120

Biscop, S. (2018). European Defence: Give PESCO a Chance. *Survival*, *60*(3), 161-180.
        https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2018.1470771

Claes, D. H., & Førland, T. E. (2020). *EU : mellomstatlig samarbeid og politisk system* (5.
        utgave. ed.). Gyldendal.

Collier, D. (2011). Understanding Process Tracing. *PS, political science & politics*, *44*(4),
        823-830. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096511001429

Dessewffy, T. (2024). Get realist: How the EU can secure its position amid great power
        rivalry. *European Council on Foreign Relations*. https://ecfr.eu/article/get-realist-
        how-the-eu-can-secure-its-position-amid-great-power-rivalry/

Drent, M. (2018). European strategic autonomy, Going it alone? *Clingendael Institute*.
        http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep21311

Fiott, D. (2018). Strategic autonomy: towards 'European sovereignty' in defense? , *12,
        November 2018*. https://doi.org/doi/10.2815/247228

Forsberg, T. (2011). Normative Power Europe, Once Again: A Conceptual Analysis of an
        Ideal Type: NORMATIVE POWER EUROPE. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market
        Studies*, *49*(6), 1183-1204. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2011.02194.x

Græger, N. (2019). Veivalg og spenninger i norsk sikkerhetspolitikk: Norges forhold til
        NATO og EU. *Internasjonal politikk*, *77*(1), 84–94.
        https://doi.org/10.23865/intpol.v77.1625

Görgen, A. (2021). US-EU Relations in the Trump Era: Quest for Autonomy in Europe.
        Journal of Graduate School of Social Sciences, 25(4). 1373–1395.
        https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ahmet-Goergen-2/publication/357190610_US-
        EU_Relations_in_the_Trump_Era_Quest_for_Autonomy_in_Europe/links/64668ad0702
        02663165690e6/US-EU-Relations-in-the-Trump-Era-Quest-for-Autonomy-in-Europe.pdf

Helwig, N. (2020). EU strategic autonomy: A reality check for Europe's global agenda. *Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA), Working Paper*(119). https://doi.org/https://www.fiia.fi/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/wp119_strategic_autonomy-2.pdf

Helwig, N., & Sinkkonen, V. (2022). Strategic Autonomy and the EU as a global actor: The evolution, debate, and theory of a contested term. *European foreign affairs review*, *27*(Special). https://www.fiia.fi/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/intro_helwigsinkkonen_2022.pdf

Hyde-Price, A. (2006). 'Normative' power Europe: a realist critique. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *13*(2), 217-234. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501760500451634

Haar, R., Christiansen, T., Lange, S., & Vanhoonacker, S. (2021). *The making of European security policy : between institutional dynamics and global challenges*. Routledge.

Juncos, A. E., & Pomorska, K. (2021). The EU's Response to the Ukraine Crisis. In M. Riddervold, J. Trondal, & A. Newsome (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of EU Crises* (pp. 553-568). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-51791-5_32

Knutsen, B. O. (2022). A Weakening Transatlantic Relationship? Redefining the EU–US Security and Defence Cooperation [EU defense package; EU Strategic Compass; European Union; NATO; neo-functionalism; security deficit; strategic autonomy; transatlantic relations; United States foreign policy]. *2022*, *10*(2), 11. https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v10i2.5024

Lippert, B., Ondarza, N. v., Perthes, V., & und Politik-SWP-Deutsches, S. W. (2019). European strategic autonomy: actors, issues, conflicts of interests. https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/62346/ssoar-2019-lippert_et_al-European_strategic_autonomy_actors_issues.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&lnkname=ssoar-2019-lippert_et_al-European_strategic_autonomy_actors_issues.pdf

Lynggaard, K., Manners, I., & Löfgren, K. (2015). *Research methods in European Union studies*. Palgrave MacMillan.

Manners, I. (2002). Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms? *Journal of Common Market Studies*, *40*(2), 235-258. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5965.00353

Manners, I. (2008). The Normative Ethics of the European Union. *International Affairs*. *84*(1), 45-60. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2008.00688.x

Moses, J. W., & Knutsen, T. L. (2019). *Ways of knowing : competing methodologies in social and political research* (Third edition. ed.). Red Globe Press.

Palm, T. (2021). Normative power and EU strategic autonomy. (M. Foulon & J. Thompson, Eds.). Hague Centre for Strategic Studies. http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep34841

Rieker, P., Riddervold, M., & Gunnarsdottir, E. (2023). EUs utenriks- og sikkerhetspolitikk og implikasjoner for Norge. *Internasjonal politikk*, *81*(4), 575-588. https://doi.org/10.23865/intpol.v81.6084

Svendsen, Ø. (2019). Brexit and the future of EU defense: a practice approach to differentiated defense integration. *Journal of European Integration*, *41*(8), 993-1007. https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2019.1622540

Svendsen, Ø., & Rieker, P. (2019). Spin-off av EØS? Norge og europeisk utenriks-, sikkerhets-og forsvarssamarbeid. *Internasjonal politikk*, *77*(4), 378-387. https://doi.org/10.23865/intpol.v77.1890

Tjora, A. H. (2017). *Kvalitative forskningsmetoder i praksis* (3. utgave. ed.). Gyldendal.

Tocci, N. (2021). Towards European Cooperative Autonomy In R. Haar, T. Christiansen, S. Lange, & S. Vanhoonacker (Eds.), *The making of European security policy : between institutional dynamics and global challenges*. Routledge.

Zandee, D., Deen, B., Kruijver, K., & Stoetman, A. (2020). Conceptualizing European strategic autonomy. In European strategic autonomy in security and defense: Now the going gets tough, it's time to get going (pp. 6–10). Clingendael Institute