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STRATEGIC AUTONOMY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION: A HISTORICAL INSTITUTUONALIST ANALYSIS

by

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Abstract

In June 2016, Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, presented the Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy and introduced the ambition of "strategic autonomy" referring to the ability to deter, respond to, and protect the Union against external threats autonomously. Although, realizing these grandiose aims requires high-end operational capabilities and capacities, the mechanisms developed for operational autonomy and developing capabilities for operational autonomy do not promise to serve the aim. The EU, in fact, in fact prioritize the industrial aspect of this ambition while the mechanisms such as the Euroepan Defence Fund, announced as a Commission initiative to foster competitiveness and innovativeness in European defence industry through funding defence-oriented research and development activities, and its forerunner, the Preparatory Action on Defence Research, are seen as "game-changers". In this sense, the EU seems to tilt towards a pragmatic way, that is the EU prioritizes what proves achievable under the current conditions. In the light of these developments and arguments, this study aims to analyse whether the EU pursue pragmatic approach in handling the notion of strategic autonomy and whether this can be explained with endogenous factors, particularly the path-dependency of the institution. In pursue of this aim, the study borrows from historical institutionalism as the theoretical approach. Drawing on this theoretical background, the study scrutinizes the official documents and discourse from a historical perspective and also uses the primary data from various EU officials so as to present a full picture of institutional perspective. The study arrives into three conclusions. First, the EU has been clearly pursuing a pragmatic approach to strategic autonomy as it determines the degree of its autonomy according to the realities as in the case of its prudent balance between the Europeanist vs. Atlanticist division. Second, this pragmatic approach leads the EU to prioritize what is achievable for the realization of strategic autonomy under these conditions, that is moving on with the supranational mechanisms and keeping with the low-profile consensus due to member states divergences. Third, the way this pragmatism is handled in industrial autonomy area proves is considerably shaped by the path-dependency of the Commission.

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Dedication

… to the memory of Hasan Eroglu, who inspired me as a caring grandfather, a dedicated teacher, and a lifelong learner.

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> 'The vision was delineated in the 1950s by the same founding fathers… Several decades and a few bumps later… the vision came back with the Lisbon Treaty that was signed exactly 10 years ago today… But as we know, history is never linear… So, the work continues: ambition and pragmatism, step by step, vision and action.'[i]

1. Introduction[ii]

In June 2016, Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP), presented the Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy (EU Global Strategy/EUGS) in the midst of an existential crisis. The weakening of the transatlantic alliance after President Trump's palpable warnings for an equitable burden-sharing, the ongoing instability the neighbourhood since the 'Arab Spring', and Russia's increasingly aggressive foreign policy towards the former Soviet republics are only a few of the developments creating this crisis for the EU. The EUGS introduced the ambition of "strategic autonomy" referring to the ability to deter, respond to, and protect the Union against external threats autonomously, which requires the European Union (EU) to enhance its defence and security efforts primarily on defence, cyber, counterterrorism, energy and strategic communications (European External Action Service, 2016). Strategic autonomy is not a novel idea in the European context; rather the aspirations have occasionally been raised since its establishment. Indeed, the autonomy ambition was first declared by the UK and France with the 1947 Dunkirk Treaty, expanded to include the Benelux states with the 1948 Brussels Treaty (Howorth, 2017). The 1998 Saint-Malo Declaration even called for developing the capacities for autonomous action for the EU (CVCE.eu, n.d).

Considering the fact that strategic autonomy aspiration has never been fully realized and the member states' divergence in interests and strategic cultures, persists, why the EU is putting the ambition of strategic autonomy at the forefront again? Mostly, the answers to that question rely on the 'rationalist' side of the spectrum, trying to explain this recent move as a balancing act or as a hedge (Fiott, 2018; Biscop, 2016). As the definition itself was primarily about the external threats, when the EUGS set this ambition, the initial deduction was that it was a response to the aforementioned external crises. However, the concomitant developments –in fact, lack of developments- on the EU's foreign and security policy have created doubt on the explanatory power of these arguments. Realizing these grandiose aims requires capability and, as Coelmont recently argued, 'a strategy without capabilities is nothing but a

hallucination' (Coelmont, 2016, p.11). His argument even makes more sense in the wake of the referendum in the United Kingdom (UK), one of the most capable members in a military sense. A study by Round and others shows that the EU might lose 40% of its defence-industrial capabilities after the Brexit (Round et al., 2018). Looking at the EU's capability of conducting concurrent out-of-border operations (peace enforcement, conflict prevention, humanitarian assistance, rescue and evacuation, and stabilization and support to capacity building) through five illustrative scenarios, Barrie and others argue that the EU has notable capability shortfalls in the land, naval and air domains even though all the current capabilities of the EU 28 are included (Barrie et al., 2018). Furthermore, Drent states that, in case of United States' withdrawal from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), it would take up to 15 years for the European countries to replace the conventional military capabilities that they have under the American contributions'. However, the mechanisms developed for operational autonomy and developing capabilities for operational autonomy - Revised Capability Development Plan (CPD), Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), and Permanent Structure Cooperation (PESCO)- do not promise the fulfilment of this autonomy (Duke, 2019; Biscop, 2018; Giegerich, 2016). Techau argues that this 'halfhearted approach' to strategic autonomy is the biggest weakness of the EUGS (Techau, 2016).

The EU has not provided a detailed elaboration of strategic autonomy since 2016 except the Council Conclusions and action plans and all of which in fact prioritize the industrial aspect of this ambition. For example, the Council states in the Implementation Plan on Security and Defence that contribution of this plan to Europe's defence industry and capability development, specifically to European defence technological and industrial base, will serve eventually to the strategic autonomy of the Union. Moreover, the European Defence Fund, which was announced as a Commission initiative to foster competitiveness and innovativeness in European defence industry through funding defence-oriented research and development activities, and its forerunner, the Preparatory Action on Defence Research (PADR), are seen as "game-changers" (Blockmans, 2018; Besch, 2018; Zandee, 2017). In this sense, the EU seems to tilt towards a pragmatic way, that is the EU prioritizes what proves achievable under the current conditions. The June 2016 Council Conclusions proves the embeddedness of pragmatism in autonomy ambition as the Council expect that 'this new ambition should take the form of accelerated practical cooperation in selected areas' (European Council, 2016, p.7).

As the rationalist arguments fall short of fully comprehending the EU's pragmatism in strategic autonomy, there appears a need to turn into the internal reasons for complementary explanations. Indeed, Nathalie Tocci, the director of Italian think-tank IAI and the penholder of EUGS, stated in her own book that the bureaucratic touch on the EUGS made it more realistic than it would be if the consultation were limited to the academic circles and pundits, and she called this the bureaucratic rationale (Tocci, 2017). Furthermore, in a recent lecture, a senior official from the European External Action Service (EEAS)

stated that the EU has been dealing with the external crises with the same method of bureaucratization since fifty years, which shows that the rationale and the conduct of external relations of the EU are indeed experience-driven.[iii]

In the light of these developments and arguments, this study aims to analyse whether the EU pursue pragmatic approach in handling the notion of strategic autonomy and whether this can be explained with endogenous factors, particularly the path-dependency of the institution. In pursuit of this aim, the study borrows from historical institutionalism (HI) as the theoretical approach. Drawing on this theoretical background, the study scrutinizes the official documents and discourse from a historical perspective and also uses the primary data from various EU officials so as to present a full picture of the institutional perspective.

The study is structured as follows. The first part of the next chapter provides an overview of HI as the conceptual framework while the second part presents how HI approaches to European integration particularly in security and defence area. The third chapter informs the reader on the methods employed, namely document analysis and elite/expert interview. The fourth chapter offers a conceptual analysis of the notion of strategic autonomy in the EU context. This chapter first elaborates on the multi-dimensional, relative, and contextual nature of strategic autonomy then offers an explanation on the pragmatic approach to this concept. The fifth chapter elaborates on the Commission's approach to industrial autonomy and the path it has taken till the announcement of the EDF as a case to understand whether this pragmatism is shaped by the path-dependency of the institution. In the last chapter, the study arrives at three conclusions. First, the EU has been clearly pursuing a pragmatic approach to strategic autonomy as it determines the degree of its autonomy according to the realities as in the case of its prudent balance between the Europeanist vs. Atlanticist division. Second, this pragmatic approach leads the EU to prioritize what is achievable for the realization of strategic autonomy under these conditions, that is moving on with the supranational mechanisms and keeping with the low-profile consensus due to member states divergences. Third, the way this pragmatism is handled in industrial autonomy area proves is considerably shaped by the path-dependency of the Commission.

2. Theoretical Framework

Institutions can be defined as formal rules, procedures, and organizations as well as informal rules and norms that shape the relations between units (individuals or states) (Thelen and Steinmo, 1992). These rules and their role in shaping the behaviour have always been an important topic in political science. The main tenet of the institutionalist approach is that institutions are not simply instruments that serve to the interest of their constituents by pursuing the tasks mandated to them; but they also affect their constituents and the political environment they operate in precisely through the tasks they deliver and the way they deliver them, i.e. their

expertise in these tasks (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004). Although it is possible to track the institution-oriented political thinking back to the earliest examples of political pieces by ancient Greek philosophers, institutionalism had a relatively silent period in the early 20th century, which was primarily the result of the dominance of modern political theory which treats institutions as secondary actors and define institutional behaviour as merely a function of its constituents' -the states- preferences and expectations reflected upon them (March and Olsen, 1984). As globalization has gained pace in the early 1980s, institutions have increased in number and expanded their mandates and thereby have become prominent actors in the political stage. Also, the existing ones, particularly those designed for the regulation of the market or those concerned with the social welfare, have been increasingly questioned (March and Olsen, 1984; Sanders, 2006). This led to the re-emergence of the institutionalist approach on the scholarly literature in the form of "new institutionalism".

2.1.Historical Institutionalism

According to Olsen and March, new institutionalism attributes a more autonomous role to the institutions while still accepting the importance of the constituents and the social, political, and economic context. Therefore, unlike the modern political theory's stress on the determination of exogenous factors on institutional behaviour, the new institutionalist approach assumes that preference formation and resource distribution can also be determined endogenously by the institutions. This becomes possible not only through their regulatory competencies but also their potential to develop and/or manipulate the rules, procedures, and agendas and therefore create 'moral or cognitive templates' that can legitimize or delegitimize certain actions (Hall and Taylor, 1996, p.939).

A vast majority of the literature defines three different approaches to new institutionalism: rational/rational-choice, historical, and sociological. All three perspectives agree that institutions do matter yet they differ on how institutions matter. Similar to the modern political theory, the rational perspective approaches to institutions as a set of formal rules that assist the interactions between states and reduce the transaction costs and thereby facilitate the decision-making process. In doing so, the institutions can frame strategic behaviours of states to the extent that the constituent sticks with the rules and processes within the institution. In this sense, the rational perspective treats institutions more like a dependent variable while the rationality-driven states, who follow the "logic of consequences", are treated as independent variables (Pollack, 2004; Delreux, 2015; Steinmo, 2008). On the contrary, the sociological perspective

assumes that the institutions' role goes beyond serving merely as discussion platforms or the guardians of formal rules and agreements. Rather, ideas, norms, experiences acquired by the daily interactions, learning and socialization processes among the actors have a transforming impact on them. From a sociological perspective, the constituents do not only pursue their rationality. They also follow the "logic of appropriateness", that is they pursue what deems appropriate within the informal rules and normative features of an institution. Hence, the preferences within the institutions are not exogenous anymore but they are also endogenous and shaped by the institutional structure itself (Delreux, 2015; Steinmo, 2008; Fioretos, 2011; Pollack, 2004).

HI is 'eclectic', as Hall and Taylor define, in the sense that it embraces parts of both the rational approach, i.e. 'the logic of calculus' and the sociological approach, i.e. 'the logic of culture'. HI embraces the rational argument that the institutions exist because they help to establish 'a Nash equilibrium' where states stick to the rules and procedures yet still pursuing their strategic interests. HI accepts the rational notion of power imbalances among the states and does not disregard that there are winners and losers within a structure (Hall and Taylor, 1996, pp. 939-941). Embracing a sociological perspective, HI also accepts that institutions help the formation of collective behaviour and thereby shape the actions of these strategic actors (Hall and Taylor, 1996, p.939). According to Steinmo, the notion of "equilibrium", the idea that institutions remain stable until an exogenous shock, attributes political and institutional change simply to fate and underestimates the role of human agency (Steinmo, 2008). March and Olsen contribute to the equilibrium discussion suggesting that equilibrium may not be achieved because historical processes may occur at a slower pace than the changes in the political environment and 'history cannot be guaranteed to be efficient' (March and Olsen, 1984, p.737). Therefore, instead of focusing on the equilibrium point of various strategic interests, HI aims to explain causality behind certain behaviours and political outcomes. In order to do that, one would dig into the historical mud and seek for evidence. Political behaviours may be motivated by either strategic and/or cultural reasons but, for whichever reason it is, it takes place in a historical/political context and actors (states) do act within this context learning from the past, not with a blank memory (Steinmo, 2008).

Similar to Hall and Taylor's arguments on the logic of actions, Delreux argues that HI does not choose a side in the endogenous vs. exogenous debate in terms of preference formation. Rather, 'the carriers of historical dynamics', make choices from a variety of options based on their previous choices and evaluate their options accordingly (Delreux, 2015, p. 158). To put it

simply, institutions are path-dependent, meaning that their previous experiences have consequences that shape the current (collective) behaviours. Pollack argues that institutions are 'sticky' or 'locked-in' in the sense that they resist changing because there is an embedded ambiguity regarding the future decisions' impact on the broader design and hence the cost of reversal is high (Pollack, 2004, p.127). Likewise, Pierson borrows the notion of increasing returns from economic literature to explain path-dependency and argue that each step taken in a certain path provokes another step into the same path and thereby each step increases the probability of further steps down the same path (Pierson, 2000). Therefore, from a historical approach, the small steps are significant because it is these small steps taken in a certain pattern and within a certain time span that eventually give meaning to a major political development. Yet, increasing probability does not necessarily mean that the choices are predictable. Neither does HI have a tendency for predicting political outcomes as rationalist empirical studies do. Path-dependence is not necessarily deterministic in the sense that the actor is predisposed to a single, pre-determined path because, as Weaver and Rockman state, 'institutions are not static; and institutionalization is not an inevitable process; nor is it unidirectional, monotonic or irreversible' (cited in March and Olsen, 2011, p. 163). Institutions can choose among a variety of paths and 'historical institutionalism does not show any favouritism for one path over another' (Aspinwall and Schineider, 2000, p.17). So, from the HI approach, institutions act pragmatically while choosing their path from among existing options, but both the paths and the decisions are not created arbitrarily because generally, they accommodate the remnants of its history.

Over-emphasizing the pattern and thinking of it as simply a reproduction of previous steps downplays the potential of institutions to change and evolve in time. Reform within the institution may also happen and this brings us to the notion of "critical junctures" which may be triggered by internal and/or external shocks and lead to significant changes. Yet, even in those critical moments, the legacy of the previous steps needs to be taken into account to understand the outcome of these moments (Wolff, 2012). Who drives the change remains as a question with different answers because there are scholars who would argue that it is the top (elite) and others who would argue that it is the bottom (the public or the states) that drives the change and in fact the answer to the question determines the methodology to be employed (Sanders, 2006). Therefore, it should be kept in mind that there are varieties within the HI approach in this sense. Likewise, one should also be cautious of drawing strict lines between these three variants. There are studies that synthesize these strands and they slowly diminish

the differentiating lines between these categories. The convergence created by these syntheses, the 'border crossers' as Thelen defines them, are reflected on various elements such as the preferences (endogenous vs. exogenous), foundations (micro vs. macro), and processes (equilibrium point vs. historical process) of an analysis (Thelen, 1999, p.370). One example of this synthesis is the "rational–choice-historical Institutionalist approach" (RCHI). RCHI accepts the interest-maximizing nature of the states and the role of their strategic behaviours within the institutions but at the same time accept that preferences and behaviours are constrained by the institutions' path-dependency. It was developed by Rittberger and Stacey as a 'hybrid theory' to explain the European integration (Stacey and Rittberger, 2003, p.860) and was later employed by Wolff to analyse how the EU developed the external dimension of its internal security through border management, counter-terrorism and rule of law promotion (Wolff, 2012).

2.2. Historical Institutionalism in EU Studies

European integration is such a central topic of research for institutionalist studies that, almost any Europeanist 'flags herself as an "institutionalist" at the moment' (Aspinwall and Schineider, 2008, p.3). Applying their main tenets to the European integration process, the three different approaches come up with different explanations regarding the drivers and consequences of the integration. The rational-choice studies mostly focus on the strategic motivations of the member states in delegating their sovereignties to supranational agents, power distribution and its outcomes, analysing the integration through exogenous preferences (Pollack, 2007; Aspinwall and Schineider, 2008). Sociological institutionalism is also employed in EU studies. Drawing on the notion of the logic of appropriateness, these studies analyse how norms are diffused within the EU and how they reflect on the preferences of the states. This perspective is particularly common in Europeanization and enlargement studies that present a normative explanation to the deepening and widening of Europeanization (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2000; Jacquot and Wall, 2003).

HI takes all the aforementioned actors and processes account and adds a historical perspective to European integration. For HI scholars, putting integration into a historical context is significant because integration is a long-term and ongoing process and changes in the context change the context and accordingly the interests and preferences. For example, Bulmer criticizes the intergovernmental approach for only stressing the bargaining process and neglecting the fact that even the bargains take years to finally reach common ground (Bulmer,

2009). Moreover, neither the member states nor the institutional bodies are blank sheets; rather these actors sit on the table with the existing legislation and practises, i.e. the acquis communautaire, in their mind and make further commitments accordingly. That is why, for Pierson, an attempt explaining the integration process from a single point in time can only give a 'snapshot' and may crucially distort the reality (Pierson, 2000, p.263). With this perspective, Pierson puts an example of HI approach to European integration. He explains the evolution of social policy in the EU with path-dependency, the path created by the integration-driven efforts of the Commission and the European Court of Justice. The Commission's role as process manager, its network of experts, and additional influence coming from the 'labyrinths of regulatory policy-making' together with the ECJ's activist role in turning Treaty articles and directives into an extensive set of requirements were the drivers behind concrete steps taken in issues such as gender equality, health and safety regulations, and enactment of the Social Protocol (Pierson, 1994).

Yet, the EU CSDP remains an exception to institutionalist theories. This is largely because the realist explanations have been dominant to the explanation of this specific policy area. The realist approach to the CSDP mainly assumes three things about the CSDP: the CSDP as a balance of American power; the CSDP as a tool to engage the United States in Europe's regional security order; and the CSDP as a balance of German power in which the United States will play a limited role (Rynning, 2011). Therefore, the realist explanations follow the rational approach of explaining institutional behaviour (CSDP) with exogenous (primarily the US) factors and attribute a minor role to the supranational bodies. However, the gaps in member states' control over the institution cannot be underestimated for two main reasons. For example, Pierson criticizes the intergovernmental account for disregarding these gaps and their 'unintended consequences'. He argues that the gaps exist because, in fact, states function in a highly interdependent and ubiquitous environment with limited access to information and feedback. in such a complex and increasingly interdependent environment, the member states rely on the 'gate keepers', i.e. the expertise of the institutions, which eventually widens the gaps and weakens the control of the member states (Pierson, 1994, p.13). Indeed, the EU itself is an institution built on the ruins of power competitions and to prevent future and CSDP is an institutionalized response of the EU member states to the challenges they face. Therefore, one needs to approach the institutional perspective and try to understand the institutionalist mechanisms of the CSDP.

The growing multi-level tendency in the EU's foreign and security policy also legitimizes adding an institutionalist perspective to the picture. In areas where different bodies (Council, Commission, Parliament, EEAS etc.) have different responsibilities (decision making, consultation, approval), it is hard to speak about the influence of a specific body (Schmidt, 2018). For example, in his study on the institutional autonomy of the EEAS, Furness states that the Commission, in fact, has firm control over the functioning of and coherence among bodies dealing with specific policy areas with an external dimension such as trade, enlargement, climate action, energy and fisheries (Furness, 2013). There is also considerable evidence that the Commission influenced the Eastern enlargement process not only by acting as policy entrepreneur in supporting the enlargement as an idea but also shaping the meritocratic nature of the pre-accession process and brokering this process. In the end, the Commission was able to influence and benefit such a complicated process (Vachudova, 2007). Migration is another good example as it moved from the intergovernmental space to the "communitarised" space as it incrementally gained and external as well as the security dimension. The cross-sectoral knowledge in development, migration, and security gave the Commission an active role in drafting the goals of the mobility partnerships and helped it to exert its expert authority into the process (Chou and Riddervold, 2015).

Studies show that the institutions, primarily the Commission, has also gained influence in directly CSDP-related decisions. For example, Riddervold's analysis of the EU NAVFOR Somalia (Operation Atalanta) and the adoption of EU Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS) reveals how the Commission exerts its influence into this intergovernmental policy domain (security and defence). The analysis of the decision-making process in the case of Operation Atalanta shows that the Commission's expertise on establishing legal agreements with third states and its competence in development aids paved the way for legal agreements for transferring the suspected pirates and hence facilitated the decision of Member States to launch an EU operation despite an ongoing humanitarian NATO mission in the area. The influence of the Commission was even much 'clearer' in the adoption of the EUMSS as the Council decided that that the EUMSS would be developed based on a joint communication by the Commission and the HR/VP and DG Mare, together with other DGs with the competence in this policy area, was heavily involved in the drafting process (Riddervold, 2016). In another study again based on the two aforementioned cases, Riddervold and Rosen add the European Parliament to the picture and argue that the Parliament also has an influence on the CFSP decisions to some extent and that the influence stems from its formal control over the budget as well as its regular

deliberations with other institutions. Hence, the authors conclude that although the Parliament does not any mandate over the CFSP decisions, it has managed to advance its influence beyond the expectations via its limited competencies (Riddervold and Rosén, 2016).

Still, CFSP is an intergovernmental area and in the end, it is the member states who decide on the policies and actions. Hence, one needs to stay prudent of focusing on the role of institutions over politics and accepts the role of power competitions among the constituents of institutions. In this sense, Menon argues that the institutions do not always function based on mutual benefits; rather they may serve to the legitimization of those who pursue their own favour through the bureaucracies. In the end, the divergences may intensify in favour of the strong ones and the institutional structure may create 'losers as well as winners' (Menon, 2011, p.88) Hence, HI approach that is cautious to privilege the role of institutions at the expense of disregarding the dominant role of member states on the security and defence issues stands as an explanatory framework. For example, in her study on the externalization of the Justice and Home Affairs pillar, Wolff scrutinizes the EU's Mediterranean policy with the RCHI approach and founds that both states' preferences and historical legacies have shaped the externalization process yet in a different combination in different cases, namely border management, counter-terrorism and rule of law promotion. In this sense, Wolff identifies that in 'grey areas', an area that does not fall under the competency of a single intergovernmental or supranational competence, the member states are able to exert their influences more (Wolff, 2012). Another important reason to add a historical perspective into the analyses is the fact that CSDP is still an evolving policy. Therefore, any attempt that does not touch upon the historical background of it resembles 'shooting at a moving target.' (Bickerton et al, 2011, p.3).

3. Method

The theoretical framework of the dissertation determines the appropriate method of data collection. Accordingly, the theoretical framework of this study has implications on the methods used, namely document analysis and expert interview.

3.1.Document Analysis

HI is concerned with macro-level behaviours, i.e. collective behaviours, and their consequences in the long-term. This approach seeks answers in the institutional design and behaviour because, in Sanders' words, 'the place to look for answers to big questions about class, power, war, and reform is in institutions, not personalities, and over the longer landscapes

of history, not the here and now' (Sanders, 2006, p.53). Any study focusing on the "top" is more likely to use documents, decisions, speeches, memoirs, and press reports produced by the relevant bodies while an analysis. Therefore, the main method of data collection in this study is document analysis. In order to show how the small steps have formed a pattern of thinking at the institutional level and how this pattern has affected the current discussions and action. the study analyses the official documents -primarily the Council decisions, Commission communications and commissioned reports- and the institutional discourse in a broad time span. The selection of the time span is again based on the HI logic. From the HI perspective, it is the ideas and practises embedded in an organization that shape the appearance of new ideas. According to Fioretos, these embedded ideas may even serve to the legitimization of new ones even before they appear on the institutional agenda (Fioretos, 2011, p. 381). Therefore, although the strategic autonomy discussions appeared in the mid-1990s, this period analysed in this study begins with the mid-1970s, when the EU bodies had launched the defence industry discussions that serve as the base for today's defence-industrial autonomy discussions.

3.2.Elite and Expert Interview

In order to present a full picture, this study also benefits from elite and expert interviews as a complementary method. Interview as a data collection method serves to acquire data that is not accessible to researchers through secondary sources and/or to cross-check the existing data (Tansey, 2007). In a HI study, the political elite is especially crucial to gain information and insight about the political processes. Accordingly, this study benefits from the interviews with the elites from the EU bodies involved in the conceptualization of strategic autonomy and the governance of the mechanisms developed for the realization of strategic autonomy, namely the Commission, the External Action Service (EEAS), the European Defence Agency (EDA) and the European Union Military Staff (EUMS). The researcher employed two methods for the selection of interviewees: purposive sampling and snowball/chain-referral sampling. Purposive sampling can be used when there is a pre-determined list of individuals/positions or when the researcher is able to identify the individuals/positions at the beginning of the process while snowball sampling is used when the populations are unknown or not reachable (Ibid.). As the researcher had prior information from her observations and event participations about the positions involved in strategic autonomy discussions, the sampling started with the purposive method and then continued with the snowball sampling when until at least one official from each institution is interviewed. The researcher approached the candidates by e-mail and presented the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix 1). The researcher and the interviewees

signed the Consent Form (Appendix 2) at the beginning of the interview. The interviews took place in a semi-structured format, which is the style often used in elite interviewing allowing the interviewee to relieve enough detail, depth, and insight while still being guided by the pre-determined questions (Leech, 2002). For this reason, the researcher started the interview with the Guiding Questions (Appendix 3) but made sure to give enough flexibility to the interviewee to get their insights through context-related questions.

Like any method, the elite interview has its own limitations. The political elite tends to be "politically correct" in their statements due to their institutional positions, making it harder for the researcher to access crucial information. Also, the elite may exaggerate or minimize their role (individual or institutional), causing the downplaying or inflating of data (Littig, 2009). In order to compensate these deficiencies, this study also benefits from expert interviews. As a methodology, the expert interview is defined as the interviews with people who have not only the expertise but also the procedural knowledge about the research topic. Accordingly, the researcher interviewed with the experts (academic and policy-analysts) who have been researching, publishing, and convening events on the research topic and also take part in the EU-commissioned works on the topic in question. The researcher employed purposive sampling for the selection of experts and applied the same interview procedure.

4. Strategic Autonomy and Pragmatism: The European way

Autonomy is an omnipresent concept and one can encounter this concept in both micro and macro-level analyses. At the micro (individual) level, Nordlinger defines autonomy as the 'correspondence between preferences and actions', meaning the ability to pursue actions in line with your preferences (Nordlinger, 1981, p.8). Yet, autonomy is not only about the "self"; rather, it implicitly refers to the "other" and the relation between them. The "relational autonomy" concept accepts the embedded socialness of autonomous agents. Groenleer also mentions the relational aspect of autonomy and argues that autonomy, the capacity to manage one's own affairs, does not mean that one is completely free from the restrictions (Groenleer, 2009).

When the state is involved in the discussion, the unit of analysis shifts from the micro to the macro level. This takes us to the debate on state autonomy meaning the ability of the state to exert its power over its domestic constituents (citizens and institutions). The realists perceive autonomy and sovereignty as inextricable concepts and put much emphasis on territoriality. For

example, Krasner describes autonomy as the ‘core of Westphalian sovereignty’ (Krasner, 1999, p.8). Similarly, in structural realist evaluation of power competition among the states, Mearsheimer defines maintaining the territorial integrity and the autonomy of domestic political order as main goals of states seeking for survival (Mearsheimer, 2013). The liberal interpretation, which institutionalism derives its roots from, makes a distinction between autonomy and sovereignty. Just as autonomous individuals participate in the social, political and economic relations with each other, the units in the international system (states and organizations) engage in constant interactions. In such an environment, the autonomy is not only about the self or the capacities owned and to ensure autonomy does not dependent merely on ensuring your own capacities but also to ensure that the relations are designed so (Christman, 2004). Therefore, states relations with each other and these relations are determinant on the level of their autonomy. Indeed, the transnational relations is a challenge to the traditional state autonomy and globalization is seen as an increasingly constraining force on the domestic policy-making autonomy of state (Hay, 2013).

4.1.Strategic Autonomy as a Concept

Strategic autonomy is a multi-dimensional, relative and contextual concept. It is not single-dimension in the sense that it has political, economic and military inputs as well as implications. For example, Hartley defines strategic autonomy as having the ‘national military and defence industrial capabilities needed for an independent foreign policy’ (Hartley, 2017, p.16). Having military capabilities and the industrial autonomy to secure military supplies enables a state to pursue an independent foreign policy, which allows the state to pursue political interests. Also, having a strong defence industry creates economic benefits not only at the national level (job creation, technology development, etc.) but also at the international level (defence exports, the balance of payments, etc.) (Ibid). Kempin and Kunz make a more detailed definition and suggest three dimensions of strategic autonomy: political, operational, and industrial. Political autonomy refers to the ‘ability to decide and act freely in an interdependent world’ while industrial autonomy of a state would mean having the capacities, capabilities, and access to the defence technologies to conduct operations on its own in order to achieve what has been decided as a strategic interest (Kempin and Kunz, 2017, p.12). Operational autonomy, the third dimension, means ‘an actor’s ability to use the institutional framework to assess and plan for, and more importantly, to conduct a variety of possible civilian-/military operations without major contributions of others. It also refers to the actor’s having the necessary capabilities at its disposal’ (Ibid, p.15). It is significant to remind that, with regard to a nation’s “own” industrial

or operational autonomy, Kempin and Kunz do not disregard the alliances and their restrictions on states.

The relativity of strategic autonomy comes from the fact that being autonomous does not mean being totally independent of any kind of external influence neither does it mean being free from any commitments. Indeed, recent literature proves that there are different conceptions regarding the level of strategic autonomy. For example, Monsonis' study exposes how the Indian foreign policymakers have shifted from the idealistically non-aligned position to multi-faceted diplomacy and selective partnerships in order to preserve their strategic autonomy while still having good relations with the USA (Monsonis, 2010). Similarly, Japanese efforts to normalize its relations with North Korea in the post-Cold War era and to take part in the competition with China and Russia while keeping its security relations in place with the USA stands as an example to relative strategic autonomy (Fouse, 2004).

Finally, strategic autonomy is contextual because the substance and degree of it may change according to the conditions of the time. For example, Latin American countries had pursued 'the logic of autonomy' and the 'logic of acquiescence' as two grand strategies for more than a hundred year although these logics represent the two opposite ends in their hard-core meanings. According to Russel and Tokatlian, these countries managed to apply both logics with variations at different periods. This unique interpretation -that autonomy is not always a systematic opposition to a great power and it may involve a high level of agreement with such an actor - can be explained with the Latin American political context, particularly the context that Latin America-US relations take place. In other words, the characteristic of small and medium-sized states together with the conjectural conditions have determined the degree of tilt between autonomy and acquiescence, which implies a pragmatic behaviour and a less ideological one (Russel and Tokatlian, 2015).

4.2.The Background of Strategic Autonomy Discussions in the EU

Strategic autonomy is not a novel idea in the European security and defence context; rather the aspirations for autonomy have occasionally been raised in the last few decades. Until the late 1980s, strategic autonomy was not a highly relevant concept as the European security and defence structure was dominated by NATO. However, in the wake of the Cold War, the security vacuum stimulated the debates for common security policy and operational capability. The debates swiftly turned into a binding commitment when the member states adopted the common foreign and security policy 'including the eventual framing of a common defence policy' in the

Maastricht Treaty (Title V-Article J.4) (Council of the European Communities, 1992, p.126). Still, the same article acknowledged the sensitivity of this specific policy area and the delicate balance between the "European" and the "Atlantic" interests as the same article stated that the Union would 'respect the obligations of certain Member States under the North Atlantic Treaty' as well as the bilateral cooperation between member states and that the efforts would be compatible with the NATO framework (Ibid).

Adoption of the CFSP was important yet embryonic in the sense that it did not refer to the operational aspect whereas the Union would need these capabilities in a few years. Indeed, the negative impact of the autarchic tendencies of the European states in security and defence matters multiplied by the peace dividends in the early 1990s resulted in a dramatic reduction in capabilities (Camporini, 2017). It was not only their "backyard" that needed the attention of the member states. Also, the developments in the broad neighbourhood –the unrest in the Middle East as well as the former Soviet territories (Baltics, Ukraine, Caucasus, Caspian Basin and western Russia)- were influential in this new momentum (Shepherd, 2000, p.18-19). The dramatic lesson of these conflicts and the subsequent realization of the Europeans brought operational autonomy and capability development on the agenda. The first major political attempt was the Franco-British Summit in Saint-Malo in December 1998. In their declaration after the Summit, two powerful members of the Union declared that 'the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so' to respond to the international crises that NATO was not engaged so that Europe can 'make its voice heard in world affairs' (CVCE.eu, n.d). Similarly, the Franco-German Summit in Toulouse May 1999 produced a joint declaration emphasizing European autonomy, both states showing their of the Union to secure 'the necessary autonomous assets it needs to be able to decide and act in the face of crises' and their intention to contribute to achieving this autonomy 'including the pooling of certain assets' (Shepherd, 2000, p.15).

With the momentum created by the strategic needs, the EU took incremental steps for the realization of this ambition such as the integration of WEU's Petersberg Tasks to the EU with the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997, adoption of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) in the Cologne Summit and the adoption of the Helsinki Headline Goals in the Helsinki European Council in 1999. Indeed, the new security environment required a range of instruments and being able to do that autonomously so some concrete steps towards operational autonomy were much needed. The 1999 Report of the WEU, 'Audit of Assets and Capabilities

for European Crisis Management Operations', stated that European states ‘in principle’ had the forces ad resources to conduct Petersberg Tasks but strategic intelligence and planning capabilities as well as the ‘availability, deployability, strategic mobility, sustainability, survivability and interoperability and operational effectiveness’ of the forces needed to be improved (Parliament UK, 1999).

Despite the strategic needs and expectations from the EU, the production of operational capabilities and a “militarily” autonomous Europe could not be materialized fully. The failure was attributed to two main reasons that in fact feed into each other. First, the consensus-based decision making in CFSP and CSDP (then ESDP) prevented the EU from engaging in large-size operations or even capability development initiatives. Menon argues that the operations are undertaken by the EU then stand as empirical evidence to the fact that the EU’s engagement was limited in capacity even in the near abroad where it was most ambitious, generally following the first step by NATO or the UN (Menon, 2011). Second, the member states were traditionally involved in contestation over the substance and degree of ‘autonomy’. A group of “Europeanists” members were supportive of establishing defence capacity based on EU member states’ capabilities, within the ESDP framework, and therefore develop joint defence equipment acquisition programmes and defence research programmes. Those with the “Atlanticist/Euro-Atlanticist” logic, on the other hand, tended to keep the heavyweight of the Euro-Atlantic security alliance by strengthening European capabilities under the EU-NATO cooperation framework and keep the acquisition and research programmes open to NATO allies (Batora, 2009). Yet, even for the Europeanist members, the aim has never been full independence from NATO. Howorth once noted that Saint-Malo Declaration demonstrated an ambition for a Union that would decide and operationalise its own strategic interests ‘without instructions from Washington’ (Howorth, 2017, p.22). However, it should be reminded that the Declaration reaffirmed the mind-set of the Maastricht Treaty stating that the special relations with NATO would be respected (Parliament UK, 1998).

In the light of the failure of the European states and their dependence on the American defence capabilities and technologies, sticking with the Alliance and developing European capabilities to pool was seen as ‘a pragmatic and politically sensible choice’ (Sepherd. 2000, p.17). This *longue durée* balance between dependence and autonomy has been ensured by the EU in the following years and the EU has chosen a path towards the achievable ambitions. Indeed, the nature of the ESDP has shifted subsequently to the include civilian matters instead of the early stress on the military aspect (Menon, 2011).

4.3.Pragmatic Conceptualization of Strategic Autonomy

Pragmatism has an embedded meaning of practicality and taking action in line with reality. Wood argues that pragmatism is opposition to steadiness (as in dogma) and in the international system it is pragmatism that allows the actors to exist together in peace. However, pragmatism does not mean hard-core realism; it refers to an effective combination of the 'idealist ends with realistic means' in a problem-solving manner so that the actor can achieve its goals in an optimum way (Wood, 2011, p.243). Similar to Wood's argument, Hellmann suggests that pragmatism helps an actor to evaluate problematic situations and then come up with the appropriate ways of overcoming it. Just as a person needs a toolkit to fix the problem, the actors of international system use their experiences (thoughts and actions of the past) and expectations (intentions and predictions for the future) of themselves and the others as well as their creativity to produce solutions (Hellmann, 2009, p.639). It is also worth to mention that pragmatism may also mean silence; delay or vagueness because remaining silent and vague may be the most accurate action under specific circumstances (Wood, 2011, p.245). In the end, pragmatism is to act within constraints and this is valid for any actor seeking autonomy in its relations with the other actors.

The political and social unrests created by the collapse of the bipolar system and the deteriorating security environment forced states to turn their faces to 'real-world developments' and become more pragmatic in their foreign policies (Hellmann, 2009, p.638). As early as 1991, Hyland suggested that in this "new world order", in which the political lines got blurred and the structure was radically altered, foreign policy would be guided by a greater pragmatism instead of a 'heroic' ideology or high principles (Hyland, 1991/1992, p.45). But pragmatism arrived late to the EU CFSP for two main reasons. First, the EU itself is a latecomer in terms of an institutionalised CFSP. There are examples that the EU has pursued pragmatic policies where it was already an "actor" such as trade policy. For example, after the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre and the subsequent arms embargo on China, the Commission assumed a pragmatic stand on the EU-China relations and proposed the EU to work with China to improve the human rights situation (Wood, 2011). Similarly, the Commission made efforts to find a compromise between the divergent views of the EU member states and industrialists as well as the Chinese leaders and the Union as a whole in the wake of the human rights infringements in the early 2000s (Ibid). Second, the idealistic legacy in its establishment made it harder for the EU to find a pragmatic and still credible balance in its external relations. Therefore, pragmatism emerged first in the more "problematic" areas, that is the areas where the EU aspired to be an actor and

mattered most. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is a prominent example in this sense. Seeberg uses the term "pragmatic bilateralism" for the ENP referring to the EU's transition from a democracy promoter, i.e. normative actor, to a more pragmatic actor with a renewed, differentiated yet deliberately vague agenda in bilateral relations (Seeberg, 2010). Indeed, this well-considered shift is recognized in a recent statement by Johannes Hahn, EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood and Enlargement, where he acknowledged that Europe's 'self-fulfilling prophecy' in its neighbourhood created a 'ring of fire'. In the same speech, Commissioner Hahn, stated aspirations 'for a new European pragmatism' not only in the relations with the neighbours but as a broad concept to shape the European integration including the CFSP and CSDP (European Commission, 2017a).

When strategic autonomy came to the surface again with its appearance in the EUGS in 2016, the conjuncture was more pragmatic than it was born into in the mid-1990s. As Nathalie Tocci -one of the penholders of the EUGS- once told, looking at the world pragmatically would mean dealing with the reality in the "European" approach but remain faithful to the "European" values (Tocci, 2017). Therefore, the EU approaches strategic autonomy with its own interpretation of pragmatism: it does not aim a high-degree of autonomy that would exclude the US and NATO from the European security structure. In December 2013, the Council mandated HR/VP Mogherini to make a strategic reflection which would be 'in compliance with the decision-making autonomy and procedures' of both CFSP and NATO (European Council, 2013, p.2). The strategic reflection, i.e. the EUGS, stated that the EU needed 'an appropriate level of ambition and strategic autonomy … for Europe's ability to foster peace and safeguard security within and beyond its borders' (European External Action Service, 2016, p.20). Yet the document also acknowledged that the NATO would the primary framework for most of the member states and pledged that the effort to act autonomously would also contribute to the EU-NATO cooperation for undertaking actions (Ibid). Although, the content and degree of autonomy ambition were not clear much; the stress on keeping the transatlantic framework in place was clear. Since then, the EU has given this message many times. An important moment in this sense was the 2016 EU–NATO Joint Declaration (Warsaw Declaration), which reaffirmed the 2013 Council Conclusions in the matter of compliance and declared the commitment of the two actors to cooperate in protecting the European citizens, especially in areas of maritime security, responding to hybrid and cyber threats, and counter-terrorism (NATO, 2018). One of the most recent and most important statements came from HR/VP Mogherini during her speech at the Munich Security Conference in February 2019:

> 'No duplication, no competition and when we refer to strategic autonomy – which we do inside the European Union –it is very clear to us what we mean. For us Europeans, strategic autonomy and cooperation with our partners are two sides of the same coin. We have chosen the path –if you allow me to use a new expression– of cooperative autonomy. Cooperation with NATO, but not only.' (European Union External Action, 2019)

Without instruments to realise it the ambition for strategic autonomy would be nothing but an abstract notion. In this vein, the EU has launched three mechanisms to ensure that the ambitions are translated into capabilities: CPD, CARD, and PESCO. These mechanisms also reveal that the EU is adding hard power into its capabilities the "European way", in a cooperative and pragmatic way as Mogherini stated in her Munich speech. EDA, with the contribution from the EUMC and EUMS, has been delivering CPD regularly since 2008. The aim of the CPD is to increase coherence in national defence planning, encourage cooperation between member states and thereby facilitate the development of defence capabilities for future operational needs in line with the EU Capability Development Priorities. CDP represents primarily an output-driven approach but in the end, aims to generate a common understanding of EU defence. In the last revision of the CPD in 2018, EDA Steering Board identified 11 new EU Capability Development Priorities in consultation with the member states and the aim is to identify the shortfalls in these priority areas and generate cooperative projects to overcome them (European Defence Agency, n.d./a). For the operationalization of the CDP, the EU endorsed the CARD in May 2017. The Council decision was based on the outline prepared by the EDA in cooperation with the EEAS and with the advice from the European Union Military Committee (EUMC). The objectives of CARD are to present the overall picture of the capabilities, to make an assessment of the aggregate defence capability level of the EU, to steer the level of implementations by gathering national capability development and defence spending plans. In the autumn of 2017, CARD was launched as 'trial run' under the secretariat of EDA (European Defence Agency, n.d/b). With this instrument, EDA, in fact, aims to contribute the strategic autonomy ambition by creating an awareness in member states as one EDA official states:

> 'What we are suggesting to member states is they should list what are the components, the technologies, the skills which we are already dependent on third countries and try to create a sort of matrix of technologies which are particularly relevant for strategic autonomy. This is where the EDA intervenes. This is very complex and very challenging. At the EDA, we try to contribute to countries to raise their awareness and tell them "Please be aware if you

> buy an equipment from a third party, you can have some vulnerabilities". Can this be easily achieved? No. It is extremely complicated. It is a tough political choice.'[iv]

However, as in most of the policies and instruments that are intergovernmental in nature, the limit of the CPD and the CARD is that they depend on the political commitment of the member states, they are implemented on a voluntary basis and that there is hardly any measure other than naming and shaming to penalize those who do not comply. Without compliance by the member states, the CSDP becomes what Menon once stated for the ESDP: 'a forum within which they can specialize in talking a good game' (Menon, 2011, p.95). There is also a budgetary issue. As one of the interviewees observes: '(Member states) have no intention of actually doing them because that is in a way an exercise in a void, because it is detached from the budgetary debate… The CDP is like you and me having a discussion supposing you do not need to take into account the money.'[v]

The deficiencies of intergovernmental governance in defence is even more prevalent in the case of PESCO. The first time PESCO came to the EU's agenda was under the Belgian Presidency in 2010 but there was not enough political interest into it. After the EUGS set high-end ambitions for the EU and proposed PESCO as an instrument, the interest was revived by a core group. On 13 November 2017, 23 member states delivered a joint notification to the Council and the High Representative declaring their commitment for stronger cooperation in line with the Article 42(6) of the Treaty on European Union.[vi] On the day the Council adopted Decision (CFSP) 2017/2315 establishing PESCO, Commission President Juncker expressed the excitement with his famous statement: 'In June I said it was time to wake up the Sleeping Beauty of the Lisbon Treaty: permanent structured cooperation. Six months later, it is happening.' (European Commission, 2017). With PESCO, participating states made binding commitments to increase defence budgets and the share of expenditure allocated to defence research and technology, and to increase joint and collaborative defence capability development projects which would be financed primarily by the member states themselves (Official Journal of the European Union, 2017). In March 2018 and November 2018, the Council approved 17+17 projects to be developed under PESCO. However, the early assessments of PESCO revealed a disappointment as the projects selected and funded under the PESCO framework does not promise the required level improvement in capabilities, leaving major capability development projects such as Eurofighter to bilateral cooperation (Duke, 2019; Biscop, 2018; Giegerich, 2016). It is worth to remind that this was not "unexpected" to the EU. Rather, aware

of its limitations, the EU has kept its expectations pragmatic, which is acknowledged by HR/VP recently:

> 'Second reason why we made it (PESCO) is that I followed your wise advice -ambition and pragmatism. We decided -and that was subject to long discussions -not to re-open the ideological debate- for instance about to the European army or about a single European Defence Minister. And we decided to set the goal, using the full potential of the treaties high -the highest- and we identified the small, huge concrete steps that would have led us there and it worked.' (European Union External Action, 2017).

Moreover, the member states remain reluctant to engage in cooperative projects and rely upon these projects for developing their capabilities in the much sensitive defence area. The lack of commitment is largely the result of 'PESCO's historic baggage' which means that, despite its intergovernmental nature, the binding commitments of PESCO are seen as part of 'a top-down machination' by the defence ministries (Coelmont, 2016a). Indeed, the Council decision on PESCO reflects this plea for national sovereignty: 'The decision of Member States to participate in PESCO is voluntary and does not in itself affect national sovereignty or the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States' (Official Journal of the European Union, p.1). This plea is understandable considering that the member states have quite diverging perspectives towards PESCO. For example, France has a long-standing desire for strengthening European capabilities for expeditionary purposes and that is why the French government tended to limit PESCO with an exclusive group of willing and able states. For Germany, on the other hand, the main motivation is not ensuring EU defence capabilities to take such as action; rather it is about the integration project itself and strengthening the EU as a central political framework in the middle of the existential crises. (Major and Mölling, 2018, p.12). Belgium is supportive of "PESCO-lite" (Santopinto, 2018). The Dutch government does not even have an ideological debate on European defence cooperation and see PESCO as a means only to strengthen European operational/military capabilities (Zandee, 2018). There are also the Baltic sceptics who fear that focusing on European operational capability development may divert the NATO allies from developing collective defence capabilities needed to respond to any Russian aggression (Maulny and Bernardini, 2019). This fear is clearly reflected in the statements of the Minister of Defence of a Baltic member state:

> 'We have to be extremely realistic in our ambitions because EU treaties do not allow defence cooperation at the ideal level. That is why we are moving with industrial matters and research. This is not only about financial issues but also about the political will and

> different strategic cultures… Defence is an intimately national, sovereign matter. Some say that this is like Euro but that Euro was created as a currency at a time the members were willing for it.'[vii]

The institutional structure cannot be neglected as well. Although the EUMS is involved at the initial phase of the whole process as a supranational institution with 'pure' military concerns, it is the EUMC, a truly intergovernmental body, that determines the final military contribution.[viii] As the Chairman of the EUMC once stated in his speech, the EUMC was engaged in the drafting of the EUGS from the beginning with their 'timely' inputs (European External Action Service, 2018). Yet, one has to remind that the EUMC inputs are shaped by the national ministries at the end, which bears an embedded risk that the EU-level concerns may lag behind the national concerns while the EU-level concerns are not even clear. This institutional deficiency and vagueness is very much reflected in the EUMS's institutional perspective:

> 'A good draft, the first input that makes sense to all member states is the real contribution. If we contradict, the document is dead. We try to understand the member states in all the documents they give us. We read between the lines what is achievable, what is the time frame. We try to feed the member states with the right input with these considerations. We cannot publish something that is against the member states' interest. In that sense, there is a clear difference between trade and defence for example. In trade, the Commission can say "This is in the Treaty". Strategic autonomy as a concept, as headline, is clear. Military perspective is clear. But the link between them is not crystal clear. The political bodies are avoiding a written task on the part of the military in this ambition.'[ix]

The institutional logic behind PESCO poses a similar deficiency. PESCO is largely governed by the EDA with a Steering Board consisting of the participating states' defence ministers and a representative of the Commission without a voting right. As one of the interviewees put it:

> 'What is still missing is: We have all the instruments; we have all the pieces of the puzzle but who is to bring them together? When we sing a song with our instruments of music, where is the conductor? I think, as always in the EU, it has to be on the one side within the organization (EU), on the other side as well in the European Council. I think we have to make sure that in both levels this element of

leadership is taken into the consideration. Perhaps, I would say, a commissioner on security and defence could help into the Commission.'[x]

All in all, the current situation of the instruments developed to realize strategic autonomy reflects the need for pragmatism. It is obvious that, there are developments though very incremental. However, the fact that national planning and spending are still prioritized while the intergovernmental mechanisms do not offer much added-value in strategic terms leaves the question whether the EU will successfully translate its ambition into "reality". At this point, there appears a need for supranational support because 'with bottom-up without the top-down you stay at the bottom and with top-down without going to the bottom nothing happens'.[xi]

5. Taking the Path: Industrial Autonomy and the EDF

Strategic autonomy cannot be realised without industrial autonomy. However, in the European context, it is believed that 'industrial autonomy is often a desire instead of a reality' (Round et al., 2018, p.4). This is primarily because the divisions in strategic thinking lead to deep fragmentations in the European defence industry. To illustrate, Europe has 178 different weapons systems while it is 30 in the US (Hartley, 2017). One side of the problem is political. The political-military concern over the autarky makes defence a sensitive area for states fearing that dependence on foreign defence supply will make them vulnerable in their foreign policies (Barrinha, 2010). In the European context, acquisition of military equipment from third countries suffers not only from autarkic tendencies but also the "liberalisation vs. Europeanization" division which is a reflection of the long-standing Europeanist vs. Atlanticist division, preventing the member states from progressing towards a common position in acquisition of defence equipments and procurements. The division of the member states on the acquisition of the US-made F35 stealth fighters is a good example in this sense. Some member states such as Belgium already committed to acquiring the US jet fighters while the German Defence Ministry recently announced its decision to replace the Tornado fighters with the Eurofighter or F-18 and reaffirmed its commitment to build the sixth-generation Franco-German Future Combat Air System (Insinna, 2018; Tobias, 2019).

There is also an economic aspect of the discussion which strongly relates to the democratic aspect. Creation of jobs and technological advances due to public investment in defence sector not only legitimizes the military expenditures in the eyes of the citizens but also forms the backbone of industrialisation and sustainable economic development (Barrinha, 2010). That's

why it is hardly possible to see integrationist tendencies in Europe apart from the regulatory and facilitative efforts of the European Commission. Even in this case, it is a general caveat for the member states to provoke Article 346(1)(b) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which allows them to hold derogations from the rules of the internal market due to "essential security interests" (Official Journal of the European Union, 2016). A significant problem for European defence industry is the low level of spending on procurement and research. Economic crisis crushed the European defence industry already suffering from peace dividends so hard that the European countries could reach 98% of its 2007 level of defence spending in 2017.[xii] Again due to the crisis, the military research and technology development (RDT) expenditure of the EU member states decreased from €13.5 billion in 2006 to €9.5 billion in 2013 including the spending of France, Germany and the UK, which together hold 90% of the RTD capacity (Belin et al, 2017). The data becomes more concerning considering the protectionist policies of the US in terms of defence research and technologies, denying access to the know-how. As one analyst once succinctly stated, 'the problem is not fortress Europe; it is fortress America'.[xiii]

European countries rarely manage to pool their sources. The failure of the largest merging project between the Franco-German EADS and UK-based BAE Systems in 2012 is an illustrative case to this difficulty. However, the 2017 CARD Trial Run findings reveal that 81% of the total EU defence investment is conducted by 12 member states while 95% of European defence RTD expenditure is made by eight members, showing that the European states, in fact, bear a high potential (European Defence Agency, n.d/b). At this point, the creation of the EDF and the Commission's appearance as a stronger actor in defence industry seems promising. Indeed, the EDF is welcomed by many as an instrument to establish the long-expected link between the defence priorities and defence capabilities. Even the EUMC states that EDF would not only provide financial support to the defence industry; it would also 'guarantee the security of supply and, finally, to realise the all-important strategic autonomy of Europe' (Chairman of the European Union Military Committee, 2017).

5.1. Constructing the Path

After decades of silence by the member states due to the failure to establish a European Defence Union, the EU bodies, specifically the Commission, raised their voices for some concrete steps in defence integration. In 1978, the European Parliament presented the Klepsch Report. In the report the Parliament stated the need for a single market for armaments sector,

demanded the establishment of a defence procurement agency, and called for common research, development and standardization of weapons arguing that ‘only the European Community had the organizational ability to create a structured market for weapons within the context of an industrial policy’ (Wyatt-Walter, 1997, pp.114-115). Adopting a Europeanist approach, the report argued against NATO as the basis of European defence cooperation as this would intensify the imbalance in arms trade between the US and the European allies. Following the Klepsch Report, the European Commission presented a document entitled 'A Policy for Promoting Defence and Technological Cooperation among West European Countries', also known as the Greenwood Report. The Greenwood Report was moderate in the sense that it envisioned more coordination in arms production and remained cautious of the ambitions in the Kelpsch Report. The Greenwood Report was seen as a retreat mainly because the Commission was aware of the member states’ reluctance toward a common action in defence (Ibid, p.115). That is why the Commission approached the issue from a market perspective and stick to this perspective through the 1990s.

The conflicts of the 1990s did not only create awareness at the operational dimension; it had an economic dimension. The European defence industries launched reform in the mid-1990s, which was largely the result of an awareness that Europe lagged behind the competition in the wake of the increasing globalization and that there was a need to overcome the fragmentation. This reforms process was realized at three levels: merger of the giant defence companies such as the merger of the British Aerospace and GEC Marconi into the BAE Systems; further consolidation of big companies such as the European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company; and the expansion of companies via integrating smaller firms such as Thales (Barrinha, p.475). In this conjuncture, aware of its competencies and the institutional limitations, the Commission sticks to its market-driven approach and advocated liberalization of the defence market, which would inevitably increase the volume of intra-EU transfers in defence industries and thereby decrease the cost of member states (Fiott, 2015b). The Commission thought that it would be the regulating body for EU-level cooperation in defence and liberalization of the market would be realized through the means it has such as regulations, project-based mechanisms ad hoc solutions (Fiott, 2015a). For example, in 1996, the Commission presented a Communication entitled “The Challenges Facing the European Defence-Related Industry, a Contribution for Action at European Level”. Based on the study carried out on behalf of the Commission in 1992, the Communication stated that contraction of the defence industries due to declining demand since late 1980s had significant impacts on

European economies such as reduction of employment in this sector by 37% from 1984 to 1996 and losing the overall international competitiveness of the European defence-related industry especially compared to the US industry, which were largely the result of obstacles to cross-border mergers and inability to benefit economies of scale due to deep fragmentation (Commission of the European Communities, 1996). With this perspective, the Commission cautioned that this trend would lead to the shrinking of certain defence-industry related sectors and result in massive job losses unless the Community took an urgent action against these challenges. The Commission also mentioned that defence industry-related actions would have political implications as Europe's security was depending on 'western European countries' capacity to form a centre of stability and integration' and therefore deepening of the European Union, 'to include a defence policy in the long term', was a priority (Ibid, p.11). For this reason, the Commission called for actions utilizing the existing Community instruments where it already had the power and experience, possibly in a combination of the CFSP tools and 'in the light of the security needs and of the political guidelines to be defined within the framework of the CFSP'. The Communication was important in the sense that even before the 1998 Saint-Malo Declaration, it mentioned a 'sufficiently autonomous, competitive industrial and technology base' as a requisite for defence of Europe and for developing the operational capacity to prevent and manage conflicts as stated in the Petersberg Declaration because 'common defence policy inevitably entails integration of the defence-related industries' (Ibid, pp.11-12). Emphasizing this link in proposals for actions and players, the Communication proposed that armaments issue be discussed in CFSP-related bodies but the economic dimension be taken into consideration within the EC Treaty. The Commission also offered its service to define the tasks and principles of the future European Armaments Agency (Ibid). Yet, the resolution did not trigger a concrete action. A subsequent resolution by the European Parliament in May 1997 endorsed the Communication, stressing the need for a European armament policy but noting that 'intra-European cooperation must not prevent cooperation with other countries such as the United States' (Article 8) (Committee on Foreign Affairs, 1997).

In 1997, the Commission adopted another Communication entitled "Implementing European Union Strategy on Defence-related Industries". In the Communication, the Commission proposed the Council to adopt the "Draft Common Position on Framing a European Armaments Policy", which was drafted by the Commission with reference to the Article J.2 of the Treaty on European Union (Commission of the European Communities, 1997). This meant that the Commission linked the industrial dimension to the provisions the

common foreign and security policy as stated in Title V (Articles J-J11) in the Treaty. Indeed, the Draft Position (Annex I) established a link between issues such as intra-community transfers, public procurement, and employment, which were normally dealt with Community instruments in trade, competition, and innovation policies, with the CFSP area (Ibid). In Section III of the Action Plan (Annex II), consolidation of the "European defence technological and industrial base" was stated among the action proposals, which in fact formed the basis of the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) (Ibid, p.17). In response to the Communication, the Parliament adopted a resolution in January 1999, which welcomed the Action Plan and called on the Council to adopt the draft Common Position. Yet again, there was no action by the member states. The Commission would refer to these inactions in the 2003 Communication stating 'perhaps, that the proposals were before their time'(Commission of the European Communities, 2003, p.3). Indeed, when Martin Bangemann, then- Commissioner for Industry, proposed member states to coordinate national defence research programmes with the Commission's programmes, the member states opposed to this proposal arguing that it would be an infringement to the intergovernmental domain (Haroche, 2019).

As the Cologne and Helsinki Summits of 1999 provided a new impetus to European security and defence policy, the Commission presented another Communication in 2003, this time using the 'European defence equipment policy' instead of armament policy (Commission of the European Communities, 2003, p.3). The Communication, which was presented in response to the Resolution of 10 April 2002 by the European Parliament during the preparations for the Convention on the Future of Europe, the Commission stated that it was 'determined to make progress at once wherever this may be possible' (Ibid, p.3). The Commission also emphasized that there should be areas to be handled with Community instruments, most likely in "defence equipment market" and "research", two of the four main objectives together with defence equipment demand and supply. The Commission also proposed to work on an EU Defence Equipment Framework, which would include collaborative programmes, research and technology programmes and off-the-shelf procurement and would be managed by an Agency (Ibid). This proposal was realised one year later with the establishment of EDA, showing that the creation of an intergovernmental body to facilitate defence integration including the operational/military aspects was partly the result of dedicated efforts of the Commission.

In 2003 the EU adopted its first security strategy, "A Secure Europe in a Better World", and this became a cornerstone for the foreign and security policy of the Union including the defence-related areas. The security perspective that the EU developed was also reflected in the

Commission's efforts. In 2004, the Group of Personalities, co-chaired by European Commissioners Philippe Busquin and Erkki Liikanen and with the participation of the High Representative Javier Solana, developed proposals for a EU Security Research Programme in their report entitled "Research for a Secure Europe-Report of the Group of Personalities in the field of Security Research", which was commissioned by the Commission. As the title suggests, the report was the result of a strongly securitized perspective to RTD in Europe. The report was incentivising research and technology both for the protection of territory, sovereignty, population and critical infrastructure of the member states and strengthening international peace through peacekeeping and conflict prevention missions. In this sense, the report strengthened the path that the previous Commission statements had created since the late 1990s. In their report, the Group stressed the increasing overlap between civil and defence-related technologies due to security-related implications of the former. Based on the "duality of technologies" and "multi-functionality of capabilities" arguments, the Group proposed that the EU needed to have a stronger role in the defence-related research (European Commission, 2004, p.14). To realize this, the EU needed to provide funding to and ensure the coherence of the efforts conducted at member state and EU levels and ensure that the European Security Research Programme would be launched by 2007 and managed with a capability-related approach. The arguments and proposals in the report in fact further legitimized the establishment of a Community funding programme for capability-driven projects, the basis of which was already formed by the *longue durée* competitiveness-driven perspective of the Commission and later strengthened by the newly emerging securitizing perspective in EU's external relations. The existing nexus between security and competitiveness was clearly stated by Commissioner Liikanen, responsible for Enterprise and the Information Society, in 2002 when he said that restructuring the European defence industry, increasing its competitiveness, and creating a single market for defence products was vital for European Security and Defence Policy (European Commission, 2002).

The 2007 Communication of the Commission, which presents the "Strategy for a Stronger and More Competitive European Defence Industry" further strengthen the defence industrial perspective to autonomy. The Communicationn acknowledged that the ESDP was designed to provide the EU with the capacity of autonomous action for responding international crises without any prejudice to NATO actions and EDTIB would contribute to this by producing the required capabilities (Commission of the European Communities, 2007). Communication also presented policy measures. Apart from previously determined measures such as the promotion of standardisation, two important measures were mentioned. The first was the

proposal for a directive on intra-EU transfers of defence products. This was realized in 2009 when the Commission issued two directives (2009/81/EC and 2009/43/EC) to regulate and thereby support the defence equipment procurements in Europe. This was a development often referred to as the development that the Commission has become a central actor in procurement policies and consequently in European defence policy (Haroche, 2019). Arguably, the Directives meant that the member states were much more willing to adopt supranational legislation in a traditionally sensitive policy area. Although the member states were reluctant towards legislation in this area for a long time, these efforts together with Commission's overall dissatisfaction with the under-progress in the ESDP as it often reflected in the meetings with the governments paved the way for this secondary legislation (Blauberger and Weiss, 2013, p.1128). The ambitious role of the Commission was even considered as deliberate actions to circumscribe the role of EDA as the Commission was dissatisfied with its intergovernmental approach to market integration (DeVore, 2015). Another factor, again related to the Commission's role, was that it successfully managed to use the ECJ to threaten the member states with leaving the process to the supranational judiciary. When the Commission sued Spain before the ECJ for its broad interpretation of the ex-Article 296 (now Article 246) of the Treaty, which allowed the member states to have exemptions from procurements. The Court ruled in favour of the Commission, who insisted on a narrow reading of the Article (Blauberger, 2013). So, the Commission was able to expand its mandate over market integration using the ECJ prosecution as an instrument just as it did when it threatened Greece in 2010 again with the ECJ prosecution for acting against EU procurement regulations (DeVore, 2015). In other words, the Commission played a pivotal role by pushing the member states into this process with its prudent yet determined efforts. The second measure included defence planning and coordination of investments by the member states for pooling of the demands from the defence industry, which is to be realized by CARD and EDF respectively. The measures also included the pooling of research and development investments in defence, which is again to be realized with the EDF.

5.2. The EDF: following the path

In 2011, Michel Barnier, then-Commissioner for Internal Market, established a Defence Task Force, which consisted of officials from relevant DGs of the Commission, the EEAS and the EDA. In its 2013 Communication, the Commission presented the work of the Task Force as an input to the preparations of the December 2013 Council on defence and security. In the Communication, the Commission proposed the Council 'consider launching a preparatory

action for CSDP-related research focusing on those areas where EU defence capabilities are most needed' (European Commission, 2013, p.5). This would serve as the basis of the EDF as Philippe Brunet, Director of Aerospace, Maritime, Security and Defence Industries in DG Enterprise and Industry, later stated: 'In the Commission's budgetary jargon a Preparatory Action is a generic budgetary term used to describe the testing of a new policy approach requiring financial resources, outside the existing legal base' (European Defence Agency, 2015, p.11). The decision to establish the PADR was officially adopted by the Council in 2013 Conclusions. In the same document, the Council adopted three priorities in defence and security in 'increasing the effectiveness, visibility and impact of CSDP; enhancing the development of capabilities and strengthening Europe's defence industry' (Article 4) (European Council, 2013, p2). More importantly, when the Council mandated the HR/VP Mogherini to make a strategic reflection of the challenges and opportunities the EU had been facing in the face of the global changes, the Council asked Mogherini to conduct this assessment in close cooperation with the Commission (Ibid, p.4). Therefore, in the process leading to the EUGS, the institutions, specifically the Commission, was officially involved from the very beginning. The effort for 'joined-up EU foreign policy', as Tocci defines it, became more institutionalised when President of the Commission reactivated the Commissioners' Group on External Action, which is chaired by the HR/VP Mogherini at the headquarter in the Berlaymont, in November 2014. In his letter on the setting up of the new Commissioners' Group, President Juncker also announced that the Commission would run the human resources for Mogherini's office and would have control over the EU's external budget (Rettman, 2014). Mogherini's moving back to the Berlaymont was symbolic yet significant action to show how the internal and external had increasingly become intertwined and how the institutional set up together with the double hatted position of the HR/VP reflected the comprehensive approach in the making of foreign and security policy. This "joined-up" approach continued in the drafting of the EUGS through formal consultations with the European External Action Service, the European Commission, the Council Secretariat and the European Council in the form of working groups and regular meetings (Tocci, 2015). Strengthening the Commission hat of the HR, in fact, existed in Junker's agenda since his candidacy. In his Mission Letter of 2014, Juncker expressed his expectation that the HR/VP would play her part as full (European Commission, 2014). Indeed, when Juncker took office, he made clear that he would employ a pragmatic approach and focus on the priority issues including defence: 'I want a European Union that is bigger and more ambitious on big things, and smaller and more modest on small things… We do not necessarily

all have to move at the same speed – the Treaties provide for that and we have seen that we can work with different arrangements.' (European Commission, 2014a).

The PADR was launched by the new Commission in April 2017 as a pilot project with a total budget of EUR 90 million. The grant agreements with the participants from the 17 member states were signed in 2018. Meanwhile, the Commission proposed the regulations establishing the EDF and the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP) in its June 2017 Communication. The EDIDP, which will dedicate EUR 500 million to capability development projects for 2019- 2020 term, is agreed by the co-legislators in May 2018. As the EDF will be operationalized with the 2021-27 Multiannual Financial Framework, currently the funding of the projects relies on the PADR and the EDIDP (Policy Department for External Relations, 2019).

It was important that the idea for EDF came from the top. According to Haroche, the EDF came as a surprise to member states. The Proposal came from the cabinet of Elżbieta Bieńkowska, then-Commissioner for Internal Market and Industry, and was accepted by Juncker (Haroche, 2019). It may be true that the top-down approach was prevalent in the whole process however, it should also be noted that member states were already in ready for this development. As Inge Ceuppens, then-EDA Project Officer, stated in 2015, 'the Member States have clearly pointed to the need for something new, namely defence-oriented research' (European Defence Agency, 2015, p.12). The industrial representatives were especially demanding, pressuring the institutions to put the EDF in place (Majör and Mölling, 2018).

The demand from the member states and especially the industry shows that despite the growing security emphasis in the Commission positions and referrals to this body as a driver in the security-related policies and actions, the Commission is still careful in observing the balance and remain in its pragmatic position. The Commission was specifically careful about interpreting Article 41.2 of the Treaty on European Union, which forbids the EU to invest in the defence area. In the discussion over the possibility of funding defence research through the EDF, the Commission argued that 'defence industry is like any other industry and produces jobs' (Haroche, 2018, p.5). Then, the Commission used the Article 173 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU as its legal basis, which allows the EU to engage in measure to 'ensure that the conditions necessary for the competitiveness of the Union's industry exist' (Official Journal of the European Union, 2016b). Indeed, the interview with the Commission official clearly reveals that the cautiousness in Commission behaviour:

> ‘By stimulating the defence industry to develop capabilities for the military, we want to make our contribution to stronger defence cooperation in Europe. As a secondary objective, so it is not a primary objective, we see that this can lead to greater strategic autonomy. So we really look at strategic autonomy from a technological and industrial perspective. This is our pragmatic way of doing it… All these initiatives are separate. We do not want them to spill over to one another. But we, of course, hope with our EDF to have a big impact on the others.’

6. Conclusion

The point of departure for this study was the lack of enough explanations on why the EU remains short of operationalizing the mechanisms that would develop the capacities and capabilities for operational autonomy and why the industrial autonomy stands at the forefront in the face of the grandiose ambition of strategic autonomy. Drawing on this puzzle, this study aimed to answer two questions: whether the EU has been pursuing a pragmatic approach to strategic autonomy ambition and whether this could be explained with the path-dependency of the institution. For this aim, the researcher employed HI as the conceptual framework and scrutinized the actions and discourses of the EU with regards to strategic autonomy from a historical perspective. The analysis specifically focused on the path to the announcement of the EDF for a better understanding of the discussions on industrial autonomy, the way it is approached by the Commission as the primary actor in that specific area, and its relevance for the strategic autonomy as a broader aim.

The analysis proves both observations and gives us three conclusions. First, the EU has been clearly pursuing a pragmatic approach to strategic autonomy. In line with the core of pragmatism, the EU has been carefully determining the degree of its autonomy from third parties, particularly the US and NATO, acting in accordance with the requirements of the conjuncture. For this reason, the EU as an institution remains prudent to choose a side between the Europeanist vs. Atlanticist dichotomy. Related to that, the second conclusion is that this pragmatic approach leads the EU to prioritize what is achievable for the realization of strategic autonomy under these conditions. A closer look into the mechanism developed for strategic autonomy reveals that the EU sticks with a low-profile consensus in operational-defence matters and prefers inclusionary mechanisms due to member states’ divergences on security and defence matters and their autarkic tendencies. In terms of operational autonomy, the EU consciously remains vague not to open an ideological discussion, which is again very much in line with the core of pragmatism. Instead, the EU’s

proceeding in areas where there is a certain degree of supranationalism and supranational mechanisms seems more promising, which takes us to the third conclusion. Third, the way this pragmatism is handled in industrial autonomy area is considerably shaped by the pragmatism and path-dependency of the Commission. The Commission's consistent and deliberate efforts for defence integration through market liberalisation and increasing intra-EU defence equipment transfers since the late 1970s still forms the main lines of its approach to industrial autonomy. Although the Commission has increasingly gained a central place in defence industry autonomy through its policy entrepreneurship and regulatory power, its careful assessment of member state preferences and consultation with other EU bodies shows us stickiness to its historical role and competence. As in the case of Article 41.2 TEU, the Commission carefully uses the mechanism in its hands and do not risk the integration process with over-ambitions while incrementally adapts to the overarching securitization perspective of the EU. In this sense, it is possible to see HI's assumption of the institutions as historically bounded yet still rational actors as reflected in the Commission's behaviour. Whether the Commission will transform into a more "strategic" actor and becomes influential in other aspects of autonomy remains to be seen.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet

(Version 23/06/2019)

Project: Strategic Autonomy of the European Union: A Historical Institutionalist Analysis
Researcher: Seray Kilic

What is the study about?
This study aims to analyse the EU's approach towards the strategic autonomy ambition as stated in the EU Global Strategy (2016) and the concomitant efforts with an institutionalist perspective. Specifically, the study will assess whether and to what extent the historically defined roles and practices of the relevant EU institutions and bodies affect the formulation of the strategic autonomy concept and the instruments designed to realize it, primarily the Permanent Structured Cooperation and the European Defence Fund. In pursuit of this aim, the researcher will conduct semi-structured interviews. The interviews are expected to help the researcher gain insights from the relevant policy-makers and policy-analysing experts on the topic in question.

Do I have to take part?
It is up to you to decide on whether or not to take part. You can withdraw from the interview at any time without giving a reason.

How do I take part?
If you decide to take part, you will be asked to agree for an interview in Brussels at a place convenient to you. As the interviews are scheduled to be completed on 19 July 2019 at the latest, the interview may take place at any time convenient to you until this deadline. You will be given a copy of this information sheet and a consent form (and be asked to sign it) during the interview.

Are there any benefits to taking part?
There are no direct benefits to taking part but your knowledge and insights will contribute to the scholarly literature on the research topic. It is only through your genuine interest in the production of scientific knowledge that the interviews can take place.

Will my data be identifiable?
This decision is up to you and your decision will be fully respected.

- The participants will remain anonymous unless they explicitly consent to share their names.
- The researcher will ask the participants their consent to record the interview. If the interviewee does not consent to the recording, the researcher will proceed by taking hand-written notes.
- All data will be kept confidential. The recordings and transcripts (typed version of your interview) will be kept in an encrypted drive that can be accessed and decrypted only

by the researcher herself. Your personal data will be kept separately from your interview responses if you request so. Transcripts and notes of the researcher will be made anonymous and will only include an identification number for each interviewee by removing any identifying information including your name.

- Anonymised direct quotations from your interview may be used in the reports or publications from the study. Your name will not be attached to them.

What will happen to the results?
The results will be summarised for the dissertation and papers to be later submitted for publication in academic conferences and/or academic journals.

Are there any risks?
There are no risks anticipated with participating in this study. However, if you experience any distress following participation you are encouraged to inform the researcher.

Who has reviewed the project?
This study has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Review Board of the University of Kent.

Where can I obtain further information about the study if I need it?
If you have any questions about the study, please contact the researcher at sk718@kent.ac.uk.

Appendix 2: Consent Form Template
(Version 23/06/2019)

Title of the Project: "Strategic Autonomy of the European Union: A Historical Institutionalist Analysis"

Name of the Researcher: Seray Kilic

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information sheet (23/06/2019) for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. I am aware that I can contact with the researcher (sk718@kent.ac.uk) for inquiries regarding the interview. ☐

3. I understand that my responses will be anonymised before the analysis. I give permission for the researcher to have access to my anonymised responses and use direct quotations if need be. ☐

4. I give permission for the researcher to list my name as an interviewee at the annex of the dissertation. ☐

5. I agree to take part in the above research project. ☐

Name of the Participant (Identification Number)	Date	Signature
Name of the Researcher	Date	Signature

Appendix 3: Guiding Questions for Interviews
(Version 23/06/2019)

Project: Strategic Autonomy of the European Union: A Historical Institutionalist Analysis

Researcher: Seray Kilic

1. How would you describe strategic autonomy in the EU context?

2. Which components of strategic autonomy do you think stands more attainable under the current conditions?

3. In what ways do you think strategic autonomy efforts affect the European integration as a general process?

4. Would you perceive strategic autonomy ambition as stated in the EUGS 2016 as a continuation of the previous autonomy debates or do you see it as a fundamentally new concept?

5. In what way(s) do you think your institution/department contributes to the formulation of the strategic autonomy concept in the EU context? Can you give practical examples?

6. In what way(s) do you think your institution/department contributes to the efforts for the implementation of the EU's strategic autonomy as stated in the EUGS 2016? Can you give practical examples? *

7. How would you describe the relations between your institution/department and other relevant EU institutions regarding their contributions strategic autonomy? Can you give practical examples? *

8. How would you describe the role of the Member States and their interaction with your institution with regards to the formulation of strategic autonomy and implementing efforts? *

9. What is your general perception of the roles/effects of the relevant EU institutions in both the formulation of the concept of strategic autonomy and the concrete efforts to realize it? Can you give practical examples? **

10. How would you perceive the relations between member states and the relevant EU institutions with regards to their efforts in achieving strategic autonomy? Do you think that we can specifically talk about a top-down or bottom-up approach in this sense? **

* This question is asked to the indivisuals who hold a position in an EU, officially represent the EU and provide their institutional views only.

** This question is asked to the individuals who hold an position in an academic institution and/or a think-tank and provide their professional expertise only.

[i] European Union External Action. (2017). *Speech by HR/VP Federica Mogherini at the "Building on vision, forward to action: delivering on EU security and defence" event.* Available from: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/37355/speech-hrvp-federica-mogherini-%E2%80%9Cbuilding-vision-forward-action-delivering-eu-security-and_en [Accessed 09 July 2019].

[ii] This chapter is largely based on the dissertation proposal submitted by the researcher to University of Kent Brussels School of International Studies on 15 March 2019 in partial fulfilment of the MA in International Conflict and Security.

[iii] Statement of a senior EEAS official, 25 February 2019, Brussels.

[iv] Interview with an EDA official, 15 July 2019, Brussels.

[v] Interview with a senior policy analyst from Egmon Institute, 04 July 2019, Brussels.

[vi] Article 42(6) TEU: 'Those Member States whose military capabilities fulfil higher criteria and which have made more binding commitments to one another in this area with a view to the most demanding missions shall establish permanent structured cooperation within the Union framework. Such cooperation shall be governed by Article 46. It shall not affect the provisions of Article 43.' EUR-Lex. (n.d.). *Document 12008M042*. Available from: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A12008M042 [Accessed 29 July 2019].

[vii] Statement of the Ministry of Defence of an EU member state, 04 June 2019, Brussels.

[viii] Interview with an EUMS official, 15 July 2019, Brussels.

[ix] Interview with an EUMS official, 15 July 2019, Brussels.

[x] Interview with a senior policy analyst from the Egmont Institute, 04 July 2019, Brussels.

[xi] Interview with a senior policy analyst from the Egmont Institute, 04 July 2019, Brussels.

[xii] Statement of a senior EDA official, 12 June 2019, Brussels.

[xiii] Statement from a policy analyst at IRIS, 21 May 2019, Brussels