A thin red line[1]: Continuity and Change in the United States Foreign Policy

Name: Charel Nesser

Student number: 575051

Program: International Public Management and Policy (Erasmus University)

1st Reader: Assistant Professor Adrià Albareda Sanz

2nd Reader: Prof. Dr. Markus Haverland

Date: 26.06.2021

Wordcount: 19 955

---

[1] Credits: Terrence Malick

Abstract

The election of Donald Trump has raised broad interest in the direction the United States foreign policy is taking, especially because of the promises Trump made during his campaign. This thesis thus adds to the literature which analyses continuity and change in US foreign policy by taking a case study approach, analysing the United States' NATO policy over the mandate of President Trump. The objective is thereby threefold. First, show the alignment between campaign rhetoric and policy outcomes. Second, which of those elements constitute change compared to the previous two presidencies of the 21st century. Third, what factors explain these policy outcomes. The thesis therefore choses the causal-process tracing method in combination with the theory of neoclassical realism to answer the three questions.

The main argument of the thesis is thus that President Trump tried to implement his main campaign promises in combination with the Alliance, but several factors stopped the President from completely following through with his convictions. Furthermore, President Trump has been very disruptive for the Alliance yet most of his policies have been part of US administrations NATO policies for years, they were just articulated differently. And finally, the structure of the United States institutions favours the strategic culture and the positions of the majority of the elites when it comes to institutionalized security priorities, which makes change even with a disruptive President unlikely.

Acknowledgment

List of Contents

List of Figures

Abbreviations:

Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM treaty)

Causal-Process Tracing (CPT)

Congruence Analysis (CON)

Co-variational Analysis (COV)

Department of Defense (DoD)

Federal Register (FR)

National Defense Strategy (NDS)

National Security Council (NSC)

National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

United States of America (USA)

United States (US)

1. Introduction

Since the end of the 2nd World War the United States of America (USA) have been the most dominant actor on the international scene thanks to their military, economic and technological capabilities (Burns, 2019). Still international politics are evolving and so is the foreign policy of the United States (US) as it is reacting to both domestic and international changes. The election of Donald J. Trump might have been a first glimpse of change in the foreign policy orientation of the US, and although his presidency ended in 2021 the factors that enabled Trump to be elected have not disappeared (Ashbee & Hurst, 2020; Stokes, 2018). It is therefore of upmost importance to study the Trump administration's foreign policy to understand the various evolutions against the backdrop of continuity and change.

From the moment, Donald J. Trump stepped on the political stage his message was clear, he wanted to break with the mainstream politics which has been promoted by both the Republican and the Democratic party for the last 70 years. In various interviews and campaign speeches he shared his visions of both domestic and international issues in connection with the United States (Macdonald, 2018). The central message of Trump's foreign policy vision consisted in his conviction that the United States is losing as he sees foreign policy as a zero-sum game where others are winning at the expense of the US (ibid.). He attacked the elites which were the basis for the US foreign policy since the end of World War II, promised to "drain the swamp" and put new elites in charge (Trump cited in Hughes, 2016). Thus, it was time to put America First, which consisted of his central promise related to his presidential agenda (Trump, 2016a).

Some scholars were afraid when solely looking at Trump's presidential campaign that he as President would completely tear up the foreign policy rule book (Cox & Stokes, 2018). Others were less pessimistic and concluded that Trump's foreign policy approach would mainly break in relation to three pillars from previous administrations (Macdonald, 2018; Wright, 2017). First the United States position vis-à-vis an open interdependent global economy. Second, the rejection of America's leadership through multilateralism and long dating alliances. Third, the US's position toward democracy as well as democratic leaders and societies. (ibid.) Yet commentators also saw the incoherence in Trump's foreign policy goals as they highlighted that many of them were not compatible thus doubting on whether he could follow through with his convictions (Macdonald, 2018).

The discussions on how President Trump's foreign policy approach breaks with the US traditions continued when he was already in the White House. As scholars were undecided whether Donald Trump's foreign policy differed from those of his predecessors. Some

commentators such as Abrams (2017) argued that his approach consisted of nothing "revolutionary". Others such as Goldgeier and Saunders (2018) saw a more radical break with the past. Brands (2017) predicted that the heavy load of unilateralism would lead to isolationism. Thus, breaking heavily with the US practices since 1945. Porter (2018) instead insisted that we see more continuity than change because of the so called "Blob" (p.11).

Yet, those discussions only consist of parts related to a bigger picture. Now that the Trump presidency is officially over, scholars can make a concrete assessment of the administration's foreign policy compared to past practices and explain the respective outcomes. As Aronica and Parmar (2018) advocate for a holistic approach to the four years of foreign policy making by the Trump administration that could enable a more comprehensive understanding of how the United States foreign policy evolved over the course of the mandate. Forming a basis for better assessments on future policy directions the United States.

The foreign policy of the United States of course consists of several elements, encompassing inter alia commercial interests, security policies and the promotion of the liberal international order. Yet, an analysis of all these foreign policy areas would not be feasible within the scope of the thesis. Therefore, the focus will be solely on the area of security policies which is extraordinarily important, when looking at the role the US plays in the world (Burns, 2019). The case selection will fall within this sphere.

The goal of the thesis therefore consists in clarifying how the Trump administration shaped the foreign policy of the United States in the sphere of security policies, how the policies reflect in comparison to both the Obama and Bush Jr. administration and what factors enabled the policy outcomes.

The thesis will respond to two research questions and one sub-question. The first research question analyses how the United States' NATO policy evolved over the mandate of President Trump. The sub-question explains what elements of the policy consist in continuity and which in change compared to previous practices. And the second research question explains what factors enabled the policy outcomes.

Research question 1:

> To what extent is the foreign policy vision by candidate Trump in connection with the sphere of security aligned to the policy outcomes of his administration's mandate?

Sub-question 1:

> Do the policies of the Trump administration reflect change in comparison to the previous two administrations?

Research question 2:

> What explains the (un)changed policy outcomes in the sphere of security during Trump's mandate?

The underlying thesis uses a case study focus to respond to these questions. Hence one explanatory case will be selected, which reflects as many as possible central promises of candidate Trump's electoral campaign. Furthermore, the goal is to choose one case which reflects numerous different policy choices not only limited to short time decision-making but expanding over the time of analysis. Enabling the active involvement of the bureaucracy as well as external pressures to shape the process. The chosen case will consist of the United States' North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) policy.

1.1. Social relevance

"Socially relevant research furthers the understanding of social and political phenomena which affect people and make a difference with regard to explicitly specified evaluative standards" (Lehnert, Miller, Wonka, 2007, p.27). Focusing on the citizens and the policymakers instead of the academic audience (ibid.).

The thesis researches the foreign policy of the United States which based on its economic, technological, and military capabilities already gives relevance to any research conducted in combination with it. Especially because the United States as one of the most dominant countries in the international system are involved in all the regions of the world, thus shaping policies in the respective countries (Burns, 2019). Consequently, changes in the United States foreign policy are not only limited to the US but impact many policy processes of other states. Moreover, the focus of the research is on a timeframe where according to the news many things changed, so clarifications are necessary to separate pure rhetoric from facts. The research also helps to make better assessments on how every incoming administration policy objectives will play out. Furthermore, the fact that Donald Trump was able to become President of the United States raises questions on the United States foreign policy which go beyond his term and relate to the United States foreign policy orientation for many years to come (Sestanovich, 2017).

This remains especially important when looking at the political and social map of the United States, which suggests that the Republican Party will remain dependent on the non-college educated white voters, meaning that we might be over Trump but the ideas behind his policies have not yet vanished (Ashbee & Hurst, 2020; Stokes, 2018). Additionally, the Republican party as of now (June 2021) has not yet moved beyond Trump, thus making even more probable that many of his political ideas will survive (Bokat-Lindell, 2021). This makes the research valuable for both policymakers and the public.

1.2. Theoretical relevance

The theoretical relevance of research refers to "an inside perspective which is exclusively directed at the discipline's efforts to advance the knowledge in a specific subfield" (Lehnert, et al., 2007, p.25).

The theoretical relevance of the thesis lies in the theoretical approach to the topic, as the theory encompasses as many variables as possible to enable a comprehensive analysis. Furthermore, the analysis through the lens of neoclassical realism and its deep running conclusions which this theoretical perspective enables, foster the overall relevance of the theory. Especially against other realist theories, which might be able to establish when we will see continuity or change but will not be able to explain in detail why these changes are occurring. The approach based on neoclassical realism also provides a good basis for further research in the same area of interest as there is not yet a dominant theoretical approach to the topic as it will be seen in *section 2*.

Additionally, the use of causal-process tracing in combination with the research question fosters the use of the methodology in connection with polarized and complex topics, which evolve over a longer timeframe. As it enables a detailed analysis, which does not use selective data, instead mirroring the complete picture, helping to get un-biased results.

1.3. Structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured as follow. First, the state of the art of the literature is presented, highlighting the incoherence in the research done up to date on the subject. Second, the theoretical framework follows explaining the approach through which the research question will be answered. Third, the research design is presented, forming the basis for the analysis.

Fourth, the data analysis section follows to assess the alignment between policy vision and policy outcome. Fifth, the results section follows responding to both the research questions and the expectations. Sixth, the overarching conclusion follows.

2. Literature Review

The election of Donald Trump and its impact on the US foreign policy has initiated a lot of scholarly interest. Yet, the approaches to the analysis have differed. In broad terms, there are two major strings of literature. The first one has a focus on the elites to explain foreign policy evolutions in the US. The term elites is thereby used for a variety of individuals, some scholars only focus on administration officials' others incorporate academia, foreign policy pundits from think tanks and the corporate elites as the literature review will show. The analysis of the elites bears interesting findings because those individuals bring certain ideas and policy visions with them which enable conclusions on the foreign policy. The second string of literature focuses on actual policies to explain the US foreign policy. Scholars choosing this path select specific policy areas and policies then analyse the executive's approach to it, through both policy documents and informal policy actions. The decision to analyse policies consists of a valuable approach because it reflects tangible changes in the foreign policy. As Macdonald specifies "the most common way to assess continuity versus change in American foreign policy is to focus on the specific policy choices presidents make" (2018, p. 405).

2.1. Elite focus as an explanation for foreign policy developments

In the literature on how the elites, inside and outside of government, shape and change the foreign policy of the United States, there exist different approaches.

Krebs (2015) for example analyses the political rhetoric of presidents over time to draw conclusions on the foreign policy of the United States. He uses a quantitative approach in combination with process tracing, to show that dominant narratives are used to deprive the opposition's space to critique one own's foreign policy. Löfflmann (2019) also focuses on rhetoric of Presidents but solely on the example of Trump to show how the language has impacted the foreign policy establishment. A special emphasis is thus laid upon Trump's challenge to the international liberal order and the reaction by the other elites.

Others such as De Graaf and Van Apeldoorn (2019) make an analysis of the members inside the administration and compare it with previous administrations. Their research goal is "to identify the networks of the foreign-policy makers within Trump's team and gauge exactly how they differ from other extant elite power structures and elite policy networks" (ibid., p.3). The argument for the need of this research is that these findings "will give important clues on the future direction of and current contradictions in America's foreign policy" (ibid.). Porter (2018) makes a similar analysis but includes more than just the members of administrations and instead expands his research to the so-called "Blob" as Obama's Deputy Security Advisor Ben Rhodes likes to call the United States foreign policy establishment (Samuels, 2016). Through this analysis the scholar wants to strengthen his point that "an interaction of power and habit makes U.S. grand strategy stable" (Porter, 2018, p.11). He thus uses the Clinton and the Trump administration as case studies in combination with both domestic and systemic theories on grand strategy to validate his argument. Expanding the analysis on all foreign policy elites to explain US foreign policy is also the theme in Layne's (2017) research, as the scholar argues that there should be change in US grand strategy but explains, why such change is not happening. Layne thus raises two crucial elements, first, "American foreign policy establishment imposes a broadly uniform world view on those who comprise it" (ibid., p. 261) and second, "the foreign policy establishment's preferences invariably prevail because it exercises discourse dominance" (ibid.).

The literature with the focus on elites is thus multifaced in its approach as many different aspects can be analysed. The findings also show that as soon as the elite focus is broader, the scholars are more likely to find explanations for continuity whereas the focus on the rhetoric of presidents enables more nuanced explanations. Still, it consists of an interesting approach and can bear important explanations when used in the right way.

2.2. Policy focus and foreign policy developments

Within the literature that has a policy focus there are again different approaches.

The first important work comes from Biegon and Watts (2020), who assessed continuity vs change of the United States foreign policy based on the Trump administration's counterterrorism policy. Their main goal is to explain "why the administration maintains the costly military response to transnational terrorist organizations" (ibid., p.2) as they use a "historical materialist informed framework" (ibid., p.1) to approach their research question.

Hence, the authors explain the continuity in the counterterrorism strategy through the "the structural realities of US interests" (ibid., p.8), which explains that the reality of the policy remains the same even though the rhetoric around the issue changed under Trump.

Kitchen (2020) analyses policy changes but puts his focus on the bigger picture analysing American grand strategy from the Clinton administration till the second year of the Trump presidency (2018). The author therefore applies Hall's (1993) framework, which rests on three pillars. First, incremental first order shifts in the settings of policy, second more strategic second order adjustments to the instruments used and as a third pillar paradigmatic changes that alter the goals of policy (Kitchen, 2020). Kitchen is thus able to find policy change especially along the second and the third pillar of Hall's theoretical framework (ibid.).

Macdonald (2018) also analyses continuity and change in US foreign policy and puts a direct focus on the Trump administration during the first year in office. The scholar starts his analysis by stressing that one might expect change when a new administration gets elected, yet he also gives good arguments why there will be continuity (ibid.). To analyse whether there was change or continuity, Macdonald takes a sample of 19 policies and examines how Donald Trump's foreign policy evolved along them. His findings are that he observes both continuity and change along two dimensions, first his campaign pledges and second with the policies of Obama (ibid.).

The literature with a policy focus is less multifaced than the literature with an elite focus. And even though the approaches are more similar the lessons differ according to the analysed policy areas. Instead, what is mostly missing in the presented articles is an explanation for the findings.as the articles remain mostly descriptive.

2.3. Lessons

Based on the literature review we get mixed findings related to the topic of interest. This is mainly because in the existing literature the scholars try to verify their own beliefs. Thus, they use specific examples and theories to justify their arguments. Furthermore, there is no research (to my knowledge) that analyses simultaneously in great detail both mentioned elements, the elites (defined in a broad sense) together with a similarly specific focus on the policies. Yet, both strings of literature bear interesting elements, which when combined enable more explanatory answers to the topic.

3. Theoretical Framework

This section presents the theoretical framework, clarifying the theory of neoclassical realism and establishing the link to the research questions.

3.1. Theory

Explaining American foreign policy consists of a complex endeavour (Schmidt, 2018). Part of it is because there are many different factors which shape foreign policy. Therefore, we rely on theory as it helps "us organize all the information that can overwhelm us on a daily basis" (ibid., p.2). Yet, the goal to construct "an overarching theory to explain the foreign policy behaviour of the United States has proven to be illusive" (ibid.). Consequently, there are numerous theories, which put their emphasis on different levels of analysis. Hence, there exists a first cut difference between theories which explain foreign policy behaviour of states through external factors (systemic theories) and those which explain it through internal factors (domestic theories). (ibid.)

Scholars favouring the systemic explanation of foreign policy explain foreign policy behaviour through the relative amount of power in the international system a state possesses at a particular moment (Schmidt, 2018). In these theories, foreign policy choice only exists in two situations (Meibauer, 2019). "Either there are two options that have the same costs and consequences" or, "decision-makers fail to interpret systemic conditions accurately" (ibid., p. 23). Consequently, structural theories would not expect foreign policy change solely through the election of a new leader. Instead, they would argue that the election of a new leader, who implements change is based upon the decision-takers reaction to the systematic changes, he/she perceives. The two main strings of this theory consist in offensive and defensive realism (Schmidt, 2018).

Proponents of domestic theories instead explain foreign policy behaviour through the analysis of internal factors. Advocates of this branch of theory believe that inter alia elections, the state of the domestic economy, and the degree of national unity determine a State's foreign policy actions (Schmidt, 2018). Thus, not really considering the systemic factors in their theoretical explanations. An example of such theory consists in liberalism, which argues that states domestic values will shape a states foreign policy and not the systemic influences (ibid.).

The "renowned political scientist James N. Rosenau" as Schmidt (2018, p.3) calls him, tried to overcome this issue of limited foreign policy explanations as he constructed an "insightful […]

theoretical framework" (ibid.) to determine the main sources of a state's foreign policy. Rosenau (1971) identified five sources (ibid.). First, the international system. Second, the domestic/societal environment of a nation state. Third, the governmental structure that shapes the policy-making process. Fourth, the bureaucratic roles occupied by individual policy makers. And fifth, the personal characteristics of the policy makers and government elites. (Rosenau, 1971) A concrete foreign policy assessment requires a theory which reflects and explains all these factors to avoid partial explanations. A more comprehensive theory combining all these elements consists in neoclassical realism as Schmidt (2018) writes. Neoclassical realism will be the theory for the thesis.

3.2. Neoclassical Realism

Neoclassical realist scholars follow the tradition of realism, "as they acknowledge the importance of the structure of the international system" (Wivel, 2005, p.357). Yet they see the necessity to incorporate more elements to the theory to be explanatory (ibid.; Meibauer, 2019). Consequently, they incorporate variables from other levels of analysis to make better sense of foreign policy developments (Ripsman, Taliaferro, Lobell, 2016; Rose, 1998). As Rose notes: "Its adherents argue that the scope and ambition of a country's foreign policy is driven first and foremost by its place in the international system and specifically by its relative material power capabilities." (1998, p.146) Still the choices are being made by elites and hence their perceptions on the material truths and systemic pressures matter (ibid.). Moreover, in most cases these elites do not have the freedom to act as they wish thus some additional variables need to be consulted (Ibid.; Ripsman et al., 2016). "The structure of the international system and structural modifiers shape the broad parameters of possible strategies that states can pursue" as Ripsman et al. write (2016, p.43) instead of determining foreign policy behaviour. Neoclassical realists thus see four key limitations to the structural realist model: "the ability of leaders to perceive systemic stimuli correctly, the lack of clarity in the international system, the problem of rationality, and the difficulty of mobilizing domestic resources" (Ripsman et al., 2016, p.20). The solution by neoclassical realists to incorporate additional variables to overcome the boundaries of structuralist theory is being criticised by some scholars as incoherent and thus not being able to add additional value to the overall theory as neoclassical scholars select these variables on an ad-hoc basis without any theoretical foundation (Wivel, 2005; Ripsman et al., 2016). Different adherents to the theory therefore try to bridge this gap by giving well founded

arguments for why to incorporate certain variables and leave out others. In the following section, the theoretical explanations by Ripsman et al. will be elaborated, as they are best suited to help respond to the research question.

3.2.1. Ripsman et. al. Neoclassical Realism

Ripsman et al. (2016) use on the one side the typical structuralist variables, the structure of the international system as well as structural modifiers (examples geography and technology), which they see as independent variables and thus form the baseline for neoclassical research. They term these two variables "Systemic Stimuli" (Ripsman et al., 2016, p. 8). The authors then add three variables, "the domestic level-processes" (ibid.) which can alter the reaction of a state to a systemic stimuli: (1) Perception, (2) Decision making and (3) Policy Implementation (ibid.). (See Figure 1)

Figure 1: Neoclassical Realism
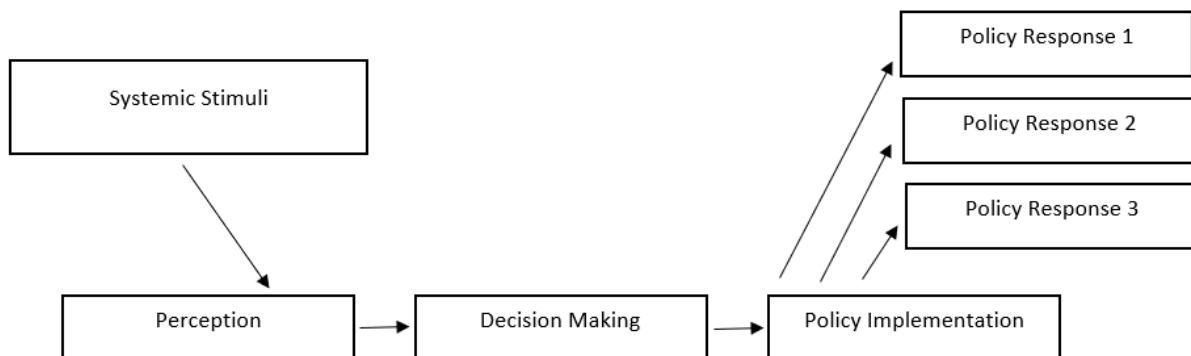
Source: Ripsman et al., 2016, p.31

Yet, Ripsman et al. are not content to leave it at these three variables. Therefore, the authors add a set of "domestic-level intervening variables" (ibid., p.8-9) to overcome the criticism that these variables are being chosen on an ad-hoc manner. They organise them in a set of "four coherent clusters" (ibid., p.9): leader images, strategic culture, state-society relations, and domestic institutions. (Ibid.) These variables will be explained in greater detail in the upcoming section.

This thus constitutes the starting point for the scholars to develop a theory which can explain short-term foreign policy decisions by states, as it illustrates why states react in particular ways to respective systemic stimuli. They label this Type I neoclassical realism. Type I situations

range in the time frame of days, weeks and months as specified by the authors. Ripsman et al. advocate that their theory also explains short to medium-term foreign policy as the theory helps to understand the processes of policy planning and strategic adjustments. Medium-term explanations focus on a time frame ranging from months to years. Ripsman et al. label this as Type II neoclassical realism.

3.2.2. The domestic-level intervening Variables

The first set of domestic-level intervening variables for Ripsman et al. consists in the leader images (2016). Leaders often possess information unavailable to other groups, therefore "it is the most important actor to focus on when seeking to explain foreign policy and grand strategic adjustment." (ibid., p.61-62) Under the term leader the authors classify the individual who takes the decisions, which in the case of the thesis consists of the President of the United States. Furthermore, they add key cabinet members as well as close advisors to the category of decision maker as all those individuals help shape foreign policy making (ibid.). Hence, Ripsman et al. see these individual characteristics and the group dynamics between the decisionmakers as the basis for why leaders react differently to similar situations. Furthermore, the analysis of the leader images is essential as in political systems with a strong executive, policy change will not appear in the absence of the will of the leaders.

The second set of intervening variables identified by Ripsman et al. consists in the strategic culture of a country as it can influence the perception of a state to systemic stimuli and shifts in material capabilities (2016). There exist different approaches toward the analysis of it. In this thesis the notion by Charles Kupchan, who sees strategic culture as the conception of national security by the elites and the broader public will be used (Kupchan, 1994). Thus, underlying perceptions form a distinctive character of a country's foreign policy as they shape the understanding and the foreign policy behaviour of states (Ripsman et al., 2016). As Ripsman et al. write, "Strategic culture can place severe constraints on the ability of elites to undertake strategic adjustment to systemic changes" (2016, p.69).

The third set of intervening variables for Ripsman et al. consists in the state-society relations (2016). The authors define it "as the character of interactions between the central institutions of the state and various economic and or societal groups." (ibid., p. 70-71) State-society relations consequently encompass questions related to the degree of harmony between the state and society when it comes to foreign policy matters as well as public support for foreign policy

objectives and decisions. Furthermore, it encompasses the degree of authority state leaders have in terms of foreign policy (capacity to act autonomously). And finally, it considers the relative power of various lobbies when it comes to influencing foreign policy. Neoclassical realists argue that the nature of state-society relations consists of an important explanation for the strategic behaviour of states, as decision-making can be hampered by domestic processes and thus needs to be included in foreign policy analysis. (ibid.)

The fourth and last set of intervening variables which according to Ripsman et al. need to be included in a neoclassical foreign policy analysis consists in the state structure and the domestic political institutions (2016). The authors see them as important as they "set the broad parameters within which domestic competition over policy occurs" (ibid., p. 75). Hence, they determine at what stage the different actors can make a difference in the policy-making process, setting the framework for policy changes (ibid.).

The neoclassical realist theory by Ripsman et al. thus includes a wide range of variables to explain in best way possible the patterns of policy responses when it comes to foreign policy. Figure 2. illustrates the explanations of the above section.

Figure 2. Domestic-level intervening variables
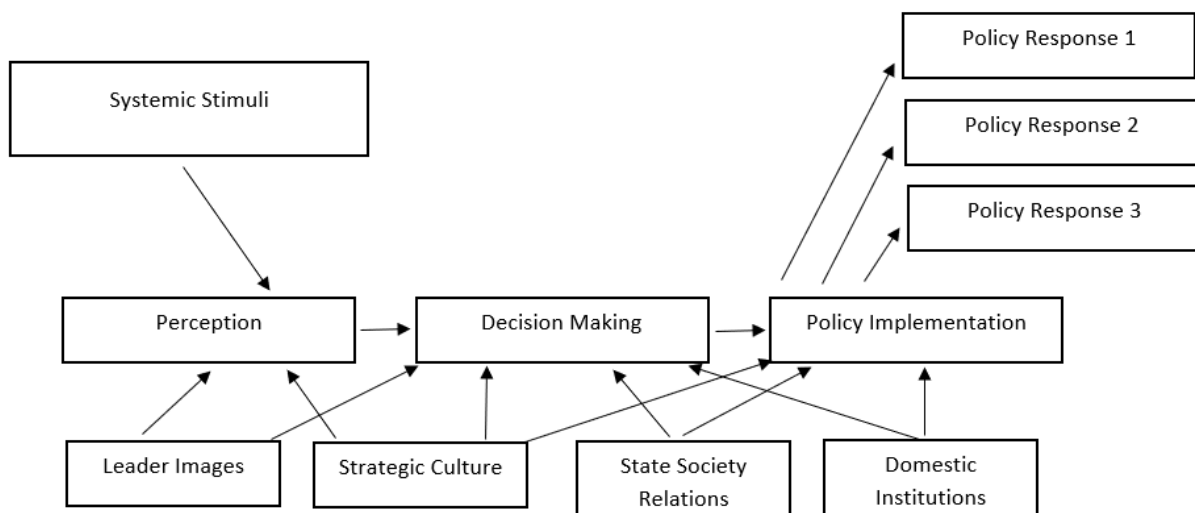
Original version Ripsman et al. (2016) p.59

3.3. Connecting the theory to the research question

Now that the variables have been introduced the next step can be taken, clarifying the link between the research puzzle and the theoretical framework.

Ripsman et al. indicate that the selection of the different variables flows directly from the research puzzle (2016). Recalling the second research question:

> What explains the (un)changed policy outcomes in the sphere of security during
> Trump's mandate?

The (un)changed policy outcomes in the sphere of security consist of the dependent variable. Ripsman et al. also specify that the dependent variable expands over two dimensions: the time frame and the level of analysis (2016.). Time frame constitutes "the temporal dimensions of the phenomena of interest [..] within a particular case" (ibid., p. 109). The time frame in the case of the thesis ranges of the four years Donald Trump has been President of the United States January 2017 till January 2021. The level-of-analysis on the other hand constitutes "the level of aggregation at which the dependent variable is observable" (Ripsman et al., 2016, p. 109). Thus, simply referring to the analysed case, United States' NATO policy.

These clarifications are important as especially the time frame plays a major role in how the independent intervening variables influence the respective situations leading to the policy outcomes. As Ripsman et al. specify "as decision time increases, however, an individual leader's control over policy decreases, as more actors […] have opportunities to contribute to defining problems and devising policy solutions" (2016, p. 91). Meaning that personal images matter most in Type I situations. The strategic culture instead has both important influences on short to long term foreign policy making, as it influences short time behaviour of respective individuals and on the longer run affects how the central decision makers speak and think about systemic stimuli. The other two intervening variables state society relations and domestic institutions have little significance in Type I policy making but expand their importance over Type II and III foreign policy making as the authors acknowledge. (Ibid.)

3.4. Expectations

After the variables have been explained and their link to the research question has been clarified, the thesis has a firm basis for the analysis, as this broad theoretical concept is necessary to

explain the sometimes-contradictory policy paths that have been taken during the Trump administration's mandate. Moving now to the expectations which can be deduced from the theoretical framework. The expectations for the analysis are the following:

Expectation I: The leader images will be the most dominant variable in Type I situations.

Expectation II: The strategic culture will be the most dominant variable in Type II situations.

Expectation III: The state-society relations will have a strong impact upon the policy paths, which will be taken.

Expectation IV: Based on the state-structure and the domestic political institutions, there will be new policies when the executive and the legislative agree upon issues.

4. Research design

In this chapter, the design of the study and its methodology will be presented. The research will be qualitative as the goal of the thesis consists in explaining outcomes out of the researched case (Ripsman et al.,2016).

4.1 Research Design

Research designs with a case study approach usually rely on one of three basic types of designs: Co-variational Analysis (COV); Congruence Analysis (CON); or Causal-Process Tracing (CPT) (Haverland & Blatter, 2012). In the following section the main elements of each approach will be explained to justify the most appropriate research design for this thesis.

The COV analysis has dominated small-N research designs since the 1970s (Haverland & Blatter, 2012). The approach "presents empirical evidence of the existence of co-variation between an independent variable X and a dependent variable Y to infer causality" (ibid., p.33). The goal of this approach is "to determine the effect of a specific factor" (ibid., p.37). Researchers are thus searching for a causal effect of a factor, this means that in the absence of it, the perceived outcome would not have happened. The interest thus mainly lies in the independent variable, the approach is therefore "X-centered in the sense that it focuses on the effects of causes and not on the causes of effects" (ibid., p.41).

The CON approach on the other hand uses a small-N research design "to provide empirical evidence for the explanatory relevance or relative strength of one theoretical approach in comparison to other theoretical approaches" (Haverland & Blatter, 2012, p.144). The research chooses a number of theories and evaluates which of the theories is best suited to explain empirical realities, hence contributing to the theoretical debate (ibid.).

Finally, the CPT approach also uses a small-N research design and is sometimes "used as a complementary technique to co-variational analysis" (Haverland & Blatter, 2012, p.79) but in other cases it can also be used as strategy on its own (Haverland & Blatter, 2014). In contrast to COV analysis researchers using this design are interested in certain outcomes, thus it consists of a (Y)-centered analysis instead of a (X)-centered analysis (Haverland & Blatter, 2014). The essence of CPT in social science is defined by its ambition to trace causal mechanisms (Bennett, 2008; Beach & Pedersen, 2013). The study of causal mechanisms through CPT methods allows researchers "to make strong within-case inferences about the causal process whereby out comes are produced, enabling us to update the degree of confidence we hold in the validity of a theorized causal mechanism." (Beach & Pedersen,2013, p. 2) Furthermore, as Ripsman et al. emphasize, it also consists of "the most appropriate strategy for investigating causal chains in specific cases" (2016, p.132) as it "concentrates on the processes and/or mechanisms that link the causes and the effects within specific cases." (Haverland & Blatter, 2014, p.60) Thus, timing is of relevance in the CPT approach.

Beach and Pedersen (2013) separate CPT in three different variants: theory-testing, theory-building, and explaining-outcome. The theory-testing variant "deduces a theory from the existing literature and then tests whether evidence shows that each part of a hypothesized causal mechanism is present in a given case" (Beach & Pedersen,2013, p.3). Allowing the researcher to conclude whether the causal mechanism worked as predicted by the theory. This variant has one major downside, it does not explain whether that causal mechanism was the only cause for the outcome. The theory-building variant: "seeks to build a generalizable theoretical explanation from empirical evidence, inferring that a more general causal mechanism exists from the facts of a particular case" (ibid.). And finally, the explaining-outcome variant: "the aim is […]to craft a (minimally) sufficient explanation of the outcome of the case where the ambitions are more case-centric than theory-oriented" (ibid.). This of course leads to the downside that a generalization from the tested cases becomes difficult, as the cases are often too complex to generalise without the majority of factors being similar (ibid.).

Still, the CPT and especially the explaining-outcome approach constitute the appropriate research method to the topic of interest of the thesis. Additionally, the research method enables to grasp as much as possible of the complexity of the issue and works in combination with the theoretical framework as an excellent basis to explain the respective outcomes in the dependent variable.

4.2 Case selection

Now that research method is selected the next step can be taken, explaining how the case selection should come about in a CPT research.

Haverland and Blatter write the following about the case selection in the CPT approach: "The selection of cases is not as crucial within a CPT approach as it is in a COV approach because causal inference is not based on comparison between cases. Nevertheless, the case selection has to be justified and considered carefully." (2012, p.99) One of the major elements the authors mention include is "accessibility" of data concerning the case (ibid., p.102). Further they write that cases can be selected which have a positive outcome meaning that the case reflects what we want to see. Yet, in the case of the thesis different outcomes are of interest, as those are more explanatory for the research question. The case which will be used in the thesis will be analysed over the course of four years thus consisting out of several situations which require explanations.

The following section will present Donald Trump's foreign policy rhetoric, which will constitute the basis for the selected case of NATO. The function of the section is to establish and defend the case selection.

4.2.1. Candidate Trump's foreign policy vision

Before Donald Trump became President of the United States, he used the electoral campaign and several interviews as a stage to tell the world how the future foreign policy of the United States would look like with him as President. This part uses the content of these speeches and will also rely on secondary sources, to make the case of Trump's foreign policy vision. The approach is chosen as the "leader's speech is likely to reveal that leader's political views, whether or not the leader intends to reveal them" (van Dijk 2005, cited in Suedfeld, Morrison,

Kuznar, 2021, p.42). Furthermore, the fact that Donald Trump was able to become President means that his speeches can be perceived as politically relevant (van Dijk, 2006).

All Presidential candidates make campaign promises when running for office, still the campaign trail by Donald Trump was special as he made an extensive number of promises, which included substantial changes to previous foreign policy practices (Graham,2017; Renshon, 2021). Furthermore, some commentators found it relatively difficult to determine what Trump wanted from US Foreign Policy as for example Glasser (2018) writes: "Donald Trump is a really hard person to read on foreign policy because I don't think he actually knows what he thinks." Yet, when looking at Trump's major speeches and interviews certain patterns become observable. The overarching theme of the candidacy and especially on the foreign policy of the United States resolved around "America First" which became one of the major slogans of the campaign after a journalist from the New York Times proposed it to him (Renshon, 2021). The notion of America First includes in Trump's view many different aspects but in the center is always that the United States is losing in some regard to other states, as he sees international politics as a zero-sum game (Macdonald, 2018). This perception on world politics included both adversaries and allies. When looking at the campaign three major topics become evident.

The first major topic of the candidacy relates to the relationship between the United States and its allies. Candidate Trump thus specifically targeted the unequal relationships with those partners as he saw other states taking advantage of the US without getting any benefits from it. In one of his major foreign policy speeches on the 27 of April 2016, Trump stated:

> "our allies are not paying their fair share, and I've been talking about this recently a lot. Our allies must contribute toward their financial, political, and human costs, have to do it, of our tremendous security burden. But many of them are simply not doing so." (Trump, 2016A)

> "They look at the United States as weak and forgiving and feel no obligation to honor their agreements with us." (Trump, 2016A)

> "The countries we are defending must pay for the cost of this defense, and if not, the U.S. must be prepared to let these countries defend themselves. We have no choice." (Trump, 2016A)

Through this message Trump targeted the security infrastructure previous Presidents had carefully constructed from the allies in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East as he named nearly all of them: NATO, Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia... (Trump, 2016A). Moreover, Trump

not only criticised the unfair balance of payment but also the very essence of whether the relations with those allies were even necessary, calling NATO "obsolete" and a "relic" (Parker, 2016). Related to the partners in the Asia-Pacific he made similar ground-breaking comments about the security infrastructure, which has been in place for decades, stating that he preferred Japan and South Korea to have nuclear weapons, to defend themselves against North Korea and China (Sanger & Haberman, 2016). For Saudi Arabia Trump made similar suggestions, saying that they should pay for their own defence (ibid.).

A second major theme for Trump was the "respect" which the United States receives in the world (Trump, 2016A). He tied "respect" to the need to have "victories" against other countries as he stated in his presidential announcement speech (Trump, 2015). In the speech on 27 of April 2016, Trump said the following:

> "The list of humiliations go on and on and on. President Obama watches helplessly as North Korea increases its aggression and expands further and further with its nuclear reach. Our president has allowed China to continue its economic assault on American jobs and wealth, refusing to enforce trade deals and apply leverage on China necessary to rein in North Korea. We have the leverage. We have the power over China, economic power, and people don't understand it. And with that economic power, we can rein in and we can get them to do what they have to do with North Korea, which is totally out of control." (Trump, 2016A)

Trump thus indicated his willingness to use the economic leverage the United States has to make other countries do what the United States wants. Related to the competition with China in the South China Sea he responded in a similar fashion to a question by a *New York Times* journalist, stating: "I would use trade, absolutely, as a bargaining chip." (Sanger & Haberman, 2016). Further, Trump stated his intention to reverse the trends of losing out on the competition against China and Russia especially in the military arena (Trump, 2016A, Trump 2015, Graham, 2017). Therefore, he promised to: "spend what we need to rebuild our military." (ibid.). Another imminent crisis which needs to be mentioned in this section is the struggle against ISIS. Trump here stated that he would "bomb the shit out of" ISIS (Engel, 2015). Yet, he did not indicate the intention to use military force when it is not absolutely necessary, criticizing his predecessors, who used military interventions to spread democracy (Trump, 2016A).

A third major theme in all his campaign speeches was the intention to renegotiate bad deals. On multiple occasions Trump mentioned the "disastrous deal with Iran" (Trump, 2016A). During

a speech at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, he then stated that his "My number one priority is to dismantle the disastrous deal with Iran." (Trump, 2016B). He also criticized the Paris Climate Accord, as he said on a campaign event in North Dakota that he would "cancel" the Paris Agreement (Trump, 2016C). He voiced similar language on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) as well as on North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA): "The Trans-Pacific Partnership is another disaster done and pushed by special interests who want to rape our country" (Trump cited in Miller, 2016). When mentioning those deals Trump also stressed the need to use a different approach to negotiations as he advocated for a more unpredictability in the US foreign policy (Trump, 2016A; Sanger & Haberman, 2016).

There are certainly several cases which reflect at least one of those main themes from the campaign. Still there are not many cases which reflect all three of the major topics, but the case of NATO does as it encompasses to some degree all three of them. Particularly on the first theme competition with allies, NATO consists of an exemplary example. Further, the Alliance reflects the second element, the need to regain respect as already cited in the above part: "They look at the United States as weak and forgiving and feel no obligation to honor their agreements with us." (Trump, 2016A) Lastly the third element, the need to renegotiate bad deals is also reflected as Trump's obsession with the burden sharing is also a major topic of NATO. Thus, NATO consists of the perfect case to respond to the research question, as it also reflects the sphere of security policy. Furthermore, the chosen methodology is ideal to analyze NATO as it enables a thorough analysis of the case over the course of the four years in connection with the research question.

4.3 Variables

Now that the case for the research has been selected the variables for the analysis can be defined and their operationalization can be explained in connection with the two research questions. First for *RQ1*:

>To what extent is the foreign policy vision by candidate Trump in connection with the sphere of security aligned to the policy outcomes of his administration's mandate?

For *RQ1*, the independent variable (IV) consists of the foreign policy vision connected to the sphere of security by candidate Trump presented in *section 4.2.1*. It encompasses Trump's vision on the selected case and especially encompassing the three main elements of the campaign trail.

The dependent variable (DV) consists of the policy outcomes of his administration's mandate, again with a special emphasis on the three main topics presented in *section 4.2.1*. The DV will be operationalized through the analysis of both official documents from the executive (Federal Register) and the legislative (bills from Congress). For a list with all the consulted official documents from the FR and Congress see Appendix 1. Furthermore, other relevant documents will be taken into consideration and finally news reports relevant to the case will also be consulted. These sources will be analysed individually to determine how the United States NATO policy evolved over the course of the four years. For further details on which documents are used and how to find the respective documents see Footnote 4 and 5.

These findings will enable to establish a general picture of the policy outcomes, consisting of the basis to make the comparison with Trump's campaign vision. Enabling the response to the first research question: To what extent is the foreign policy vision by candidate Trump in connection with the sphere of security aligned to the policy outcomes of his administration's mandate?

For sub-question 1 Do the policies of the Trump administration reflect change in comparison to the previous two administrations?

The IV consists of the policies by the Trump administration. The IV will be operationalized through the analysis of the policies, which will be done in *section 5*. The DV consists of change compared to previous administrations, which will be operationalized through secondary literature.

For *RQ2*: What explains the (un)changed policy outcomes in the sphere of security during Trump's mandate?

The variables presented under the theoretical framework (*section 3*) will be used to enable a thorough response to the research question. The following section recalls the variables and explains their operationalization. See Figure 3 to recall the variables. As specified, there are four domestic-level intervening variables: the leader images, the strategic culture, the state-society relations, and the state structure and the domestic institutions.

Figure 3. Domestic-level intervening variables
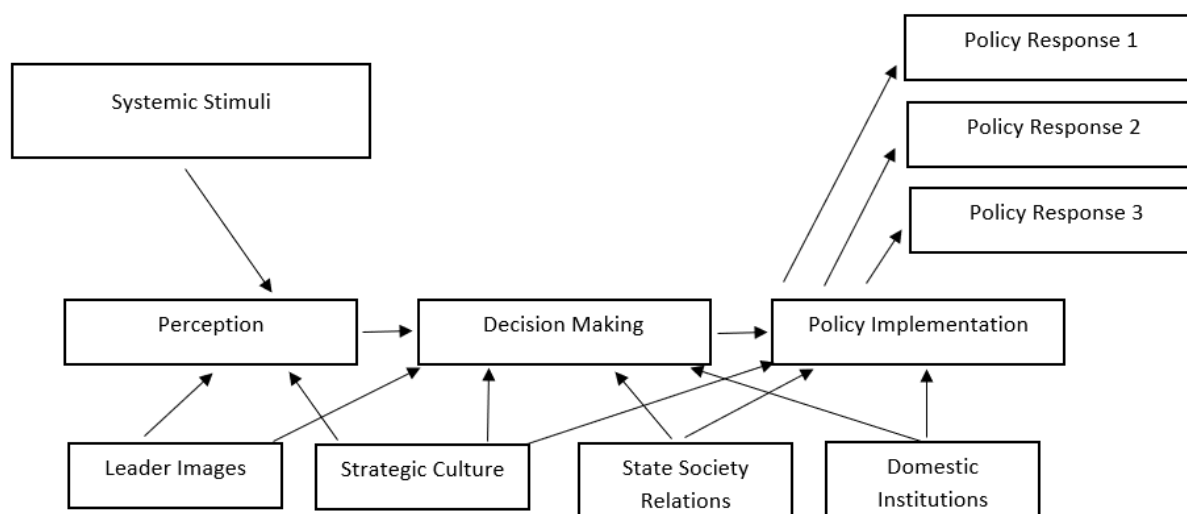
Original version Ripsman et al. (2016) p.59

The first variable, the leader images will be operationalized through the measurement of cognitive filters. To measure the cognitive filters of the President, Ripsman et al. (2016) advocate to rely on a wide range of literature to best capture the main elements of the leader images. This task consists of more of a psychological work. Therefore, the evaluation needs to rely on a variety of secondary literature from psychologists, who have taken up the task to evaluate the principal features of Trump's personality based on well-founded personality evaluation methods (Nai, Martinez and Maier, 2019), as otherwise the risk of biased outcomes would be high. The three works, which are used are first a psychological study from Nai, Martinez and Maier (2019), second a study from Visser, Book and Volk (2016) and third an evaluation by the psychologist Dan McAdams for *the Atlantic* (2016). For more detailed explanations on how these scholars worked see Appendix 2. In addition to the President his closest advisors and their interactions will also be analysed. The operationalization will be done through insider reports.

The second variable, the strategic culture will be operationalized through sets of norms, beliefs and assumptions expressed by the elites and public. Strategic culture is the result of various distinctive national factors, such as geography, history, material resources, cultural considerations, historical experiences, and self-perception of the state (Soomro, 2020). To measure strategic culture basic facts about the United States will presented, which form the baseline for how the elites and public can perceive the strategic culture of the US (Ripsman et

al., 2016). In addition, essential documents from the Trump administration will be consulted as well as polls, which measure sets of norms, beliefs and assumptions of both elites and public.

The third variable, the state-society relations measure the degree of harmony between the state and society as well as within society itself (Ripsman, et al., 2016). The emphasis of the variable will be on the harmony within society, which will be operationalized through polls.

And fourth, the state structure and the domestic institutions will be analysed, which is important for the analysis as it determines the broad parameters for the competition between the respective stakeholders (Ripsman et al., 2016). This variable will be operationalized through the analysis of the degree to which power is concentrated in the executive's hands, executive-legislative relations as well as the involvement of the different ministries and agencies in the policy making process (2016).

4.4. Data Collection

The collection of the data for the empirical research will be based on both official documents accessible on the webpage of the Federal Register[2] (FR) and Congress[3], and secondary sources in relation with the respective cases. The FR is used as it publishes all agency promulgated rules and regulations as well as all Presidential proclamations and executive orders (McKinney, 2016). For the thesis, the Presidential Documents (proclamations and executive orders) and the rules in the FR will be analysed as only those have a legal impact. For the documents in the research engine of Congress only those bills will be analysed that subsequently became law. The period of research will run from the 20 January 2017, the day of the inauguration of President Trump until the 19 January 2021, the last official day in office for the President. For the Congress documents, the two legislature periods of the 115 and 116 Congress will be analysed, covering the period from 2017 until the end of 2020.

See Federal Register[4] and Congress[5] on how to find the respective documents.

---

[2] https://www.federalregister.gov/
[3] https://www.congress.gov/
[4] 1) Enter "NATO" in the search engine; 2) specify "R" (rule); 3) search; 4) choose "Advanced Search" 5) Choose "Effective Date" (Range) and enter: 01/20/2017 – 01/20/2021; 6) select "Document Category": Rule; 7) Search. 17 rules should become available. For the Presidential Documents: 1) Enter "NATO" in the search engine; 2) specify "PD" (presidential document); 3) search; 4) choose "Advanced Search" 5) Choose "Publication Date" and enter: 01/20/2017 – 01/20/2021; 6) select "Document Category": President: Donald J. Trump; 7) Search. 10 documents should become available.
[5] 1) Enter "North Atlantic Treaty Organization" in the search engine; 2) Search; 3) choose "Advanced Search"; Congress, select 115 and 116; Words and Phrases, select: Only these fields, bill text, summaries, and enter again

The available documents will be analysed on everything in connection to both keywords "NATO" and "North Atlantic Treaty Organization".

5. Data Analysis

The upcoming section consists of the empirical analysis on how the United States policies towards NATO evolved over the course of the four years. Consisting of the basis to respond to *RQ1*: To what extent is the foreign policy vision by candidate Trump in connection with the sphere of security aligned to the policy outcomes of his administration's mandate? Appendix 1 specifies all the consulted documents, which have been analysed. Not all consulted documents are included in the analysis because some elements are repetitive.

5.1. NATO
2017

After entering office Trump suddenly voiced more traditional language toward NATO than during the campaign. In early February and in one of the first speeches as elected official he addressed a crowd at MacDill Airforce Base, stating the following: "America stands with those who stand in defense of freedom." (Trump, 2017) Further repeating his claim about the need that every ally spends its fair amount on defence: "That also means getting our allies to pay their fair share. It's been very unfair to us." (ibid.). But at the end he stated what the allies wanted to hear: **"**We strongly support NATO." (ibid.) Around the same time (February) Secretary of Defense Mattis was on a trip to Europe and reassured the NATO allies of the United States' support for the Alliance: "The alliance remains a fundamental bedrock for the United States and for all the transatlantic community, bonded as we are together. As President Trump has stated, he has strong support for NATO." (Mattis cited in DoD, 2017) On the first visit to Washington by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in April 2017, Trump himself then expressed a much more positive view about the Alliance, stating the following: "I said it was obsolete. It's no longer obsolete," (Trump cited by Johnson, 2017). Furthermore, he welcomed the Alliance actions on the fight against terrorism and took credit for it "I complained about that a long time ago, and they made a change — and now they do fight terrorism," (ibid.). Shortly after the visit by Stoltenberg, the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017*, passed

---

"North Atlantic Treaty Organization" as well as select "word variants"; Legislation Types: only legislation that can become law; Quick List: Passed/agreed to in the House and the Senate (the not mentioned fields, leave blank); 4) Search. 17 documents should become available.

Congress, which consists of the first bill in relation with NATO. Yet, it has no significant impact for the Alliance as it shows up in the research because "NATO" is mentioned in combination with the Arms Export Control Act (§Sec.7068). Thus, specifying that NATO as well as other key allies are allowed to receive commercial leases of military equipment instead of directly purchasing the equipment when the President deems it is in the national interest of the US to do so (ibid.).

On 25th of May 2017, Trump then participated on his first NATO summit. Expectations were high that he would finally endorse the essential Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, especially because an administration official as well as Secretary of State Rex Tillerson told the press that it was planned (Shear & Landler, 2017). During his speech he failed to directly do so and instead commented the following "never forsake the friends that stood by our side" (Trump cited in Shear, Landler, Kanter, 2017) when looking at the memorial at the Brussels Headquarters that is partially made of wreckage from the World Trade Center. The White House officials later saw this as an affirmation for the mutual defence (ibid.). Trump instead put the focus of his address on the unfair burden sharing and demanded a greater focus of the Alliance on terrorism and migration (The White House Office of the Press Secretary, 2017). Two weeks after the NATO summit Trump then officially endorsed Article 5 during a press conference, stating: "Well, I'm committing the United States, and have committed, but I'm committing the United States to Article 5," "Yes, absolutely I'd be committed to Article 5." (Nelson, 2017)

Then on the executive and legislative side there have been some documents of relevance to the research. First, the *Revisions to the Export Administration Regulations*, "NATO" is mentioned because the rule specifies that there is an exception for "NPT Nuclear Weapons States that are also members of NATO" (§744.3(2)). Second, there is the *Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act* from Congress, which is of great significance, as it addresses among others Russia's increasing aggressive posture against the Alliance. Therefore, the Act highlights the following: "the United States supports the institutions that the Government of the Russian Federation seeks to undermine, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union" (§Sec.252(5)). The Act also proposes certain measures, which should be taken in accordance with it. Furthermore, and possibly the most important part consists in the reiteration of Congress's support for Article 5 of the Washington treaty, which receives a whole section (§Sec.292). Third and fourth, there are two rules from the federal agencies. The first

one is the establishment of the Tricare reforms[6], "NATO" is mentioned in this rule because its personnel are explicitly excluded from it (§199.17(ii)). The second one is a clarification to the *Export Administration Regulations*, which does not implement any changes in relation with NATO.

The last and possibly the most important legal document of 2017 in relation with NATO consists of the *National Defense Authorization Act from 2017 (NDAA)* by Congress. The NDAAs are of high importance as they allow to analyse the positions of all Congress to the major foreign policy issues of the United States. One of the focal points of this Act is the behaviour of the Russian Federation (§Subtitle D: Matters related to the Russian Federation). It is also in those sections where the importance of NATO is emphasized. Under the section where the tools to deter Russian behaviour are highlighted, the document mentions the European Deterrence Initiative[7] (EDI) in relation with the NATO forces (§Sec.1232(a)(4)). Furthermore, it makes a clear statement to support the Alliance: "A strong NATO alliance is the cornerstone of transatlantic security cooperation and the guarantor of peace and stability in Europe." (§Sec.1232(a)(5)). The act defends all the recent decisions, which have been taken by NATO since 2014 including the explicit support for the accession of Montenegro (§1232(a)(7)). The bill then continues with the section "the sense of Congress" that the United States should implement a policy and a strategy that is able to deter Russia and in worst case even able to "defeat a Russian aggression" (§Sec.1232(b)(2)). Congress then reiterates the United States commitment to its obligations under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, but also calls on the NATO states to fulfil its commitments from the 2014 Wales summit (§Sec.1232(b)(2)(B)(5)).

"NATO" is not only mentioned in combination with Russia in the Act, instead section 1236 highlights, the importance of the nuclear deterrence through the United States for NATO. In this section Congress also stresses the need for the NATO partners to modernize its nuclear related infrastructure (§Sec.1236(b)(4)). Furthermore, in this section the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty (INF) is mentioned as this treaty is directly related to nuclear forces in Europe even though it was only signed by the United States and the Soviet Union (§Sec.1236(c)).

Then in section 1239A. similar points are reiterated as in section 1232 with more of a specific focus on the similarities between NATO members and the US. Moreover, measures to counter

---

[6] Tricare reforms are mentioned multiple times over the course of the analysed timeframe but without any significant change for NATO
[7] EDI will be explained at a later stage in closer detail

any Russian aggression are formulated, those include six subpoints: 1) Actions to counter the use of force, coercion, and other hybrid warfare operations of the military, 2) Information operations. Actions to counter information operations of the Russian Federation, 3) Cyber measures. Actions to counter the threat of malign influence by the Russian Federation in cyberspace, 4) Political and diplomatic measures, 5) Financial measures and 6) Energy security measures. (§Sec.1239A(b)(1-6))

Finally, the NDAA authorizes NATO related projects, as Congress approves the requested budgets.

A few days after the NDAA became law, the Trump administration published its National Security Strategy (NSS). This document is of importance to the analysis as it highlights the official outlook of the administration to the most pressing foreign policy issues. And even though the overall topic of the document is America First the vision presented in the document is far from a simple isolationist outlook and contains many international elements to secure the United States positions in the world (Cordesman, 2017). Thus, also mentioning the cooperation with NATO on several occasions. In the foreword to the document President Trump stresses his key elements in connection with NATO, mainly that unfair burden sharing is hurting the US and that during his first year in office the allies have strengthened their contribution to mutual defence (The White House, 2017). Yet, in the following chapters the burden sharing with allies takes a secondary position, being mentioned twice: "the NATO alliance will become stronger when all members assume greater responsibility for and pay their fair share to protect our mutual interests, sovereignty, and values" (ibid., p.48). The second time the NSS reiterates that the allies should fulfil their commitments made at the 2014 Wales summit (ibid.). The rest of the document instead highlights the strengths the United States gains from its alliances in countering threats:

> "the United States is safer when Europe is prosperous and stable, and can help defend our shared interests and ideals. The United States remains firmly committed to our European allies and partners. The NATO alliance of free and sovereign states is one of our great advantages over our competitors, and the United States remains committed to Article V of the Washington Treaty." (ibid., p.47)

At a later point in the document, the NSS then specifies the "competitors" (ibid., p.47), mentioning Europe as a whole to counter Iran, North Korea and Russia. And NATO specifically in combination with the threats emanating from Russia.

Still at the official presentation of the document, Trump was mostly highlighting his main points, stating the following: "I would not allow member states to be delinquent in the payment while we guarantee their safety and are willing to fight wars for them." (Trump, 2017B).

<u>2018</u>

The first document of importance to the analysis for the year 2018 consists of the declassified version of the National Defense Strategy (NDS), which was published on the 19. January by the Department of Defense (DoD). Even though the NDS was written by only one part of the executive and solely carries the signature of the Secretary of Defense Mattis, it strikes a similar tone as the NSS. Throughout the document the varying threats to the United States security are thus highlighted while simultaneously presenting the solutions to these threats. Therefore, alliance partners and alliances are mentioned on several occasions as a central part to the United States security. Moreover, NATO receives a special emphasis as a subsection pledges to "Fortify the Trans-Atlantic NATO Alliance" (DoD, 2018, p.9). Restating similar elements as already discussed related to the advantages the United States gains through the Alliance but also the need to increase spending and modernize the equipment to face the "shared security concerns" (ibid.).

President Trump for his part remained relatively silent about the Alliance during the first months of the year, as there were no major incidents involving the President and NATO. Instead, there are several documents of relevance emanating from Congress and the Federal Register. The first bill consists in the *Consolidated Appropriations Act from 2018,* which repeats similar points as the *Consolidated Appropriations Act from 2017*, the addition consists in a specification on the usage of funds available through the Act (§Sec.111), the annulation of the money accorded to the "NATO Security Investment Program" (§Sec.126) and specifications on funds related to NATO in connection with Turkey (§Sec.7046(d)). The second document in the search consists in a proclamation to congratulate Greece for its national celebration day, the document turns up in the search as the President explicitly congratulates Greece for fulfilling its NATO commitments[8]. The third document also from the FR consists in the *National Industrial Security Program,* "NATO" is mentioned in §2004.36 as an exception to the stricter rules to access information.

During the middle of the year and coming closer to Trump's second NATO summit, the President's rhetoric became harsher toward the Alliance, as his attitude started to resemble his

[8] The same proclamation is issued in the upcoming two years, therefore it will not be specified again

campaign trail. Thus, the president ditched the elements related to the United States support to the Alliance and instead focused mostly on the unfair burden sharing. In addition, he raised the threat of leaving the alliance and/or not fulfilling the obligation of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. All of this came to display on the 2018 NATO summit (MacAskill, 2018). Trump threatened to pull the United States out of NATO, which at that point none of the leaders' present wanted to confirm (ibid.). Instead at a later point president Trump's then security advisor John Bolton and the President himself confirmed it: "Yes, I will leave you." (Trump, 2018) Furthermore, Trump seemed to suggest that leaving the alliance was possible without the approval by Congress (Harding, 2018). Yet, it also needs to be added that after the summit and during the final declaration to the summit, where the member states stressed their will to fulfil the agreed goals from the summit in 2014, Trump suddenly sounded way more positive about the Alliance: "But I believe in NATO. I think NATO is a very important — probably the greatest ever done." (Trump cited in US Mission to NATO, 2018)

After the summit, Trump then met with President Putin from Russia in Helsinki, which again raised uncertainty with the Alliance partners against the backdrop of his behaviour in Brussels (Higgins & MacFarquhar, 2018). In an interview on Fox News during the same week of the meeting with Putin, Trump repeated his rhetoric on NATO and criticised the accession of Montenegro, questioning the very essence of the Alliance (Guardian Staff and Agencies, 2018).

Soon after Trump's visit to Europe, Congress then signed the *John McCain National Defense Authorization Act* into law. The Act includes a subtitle specifically related to the Russian Federation (§Subtitle D: Matters relating to the Russian Federation) as it has been the case in previous NDAA, with the Alliance not being mentioned as frequently as in 2017 but still playing a crucial role. In section 1244 for example the violations of the Russian Federation with the INF treaty are mentioned in combination with the security of the NATO and US forces (§Sec1244(3)(B)). In section 1248 the link between NATO and the United States security is then made more tangible as Congress reiterates its support for the alliance (§Sec.1248 (a)):

> "To protect the national security of the United States and fulfill the ironclad commitment of the United States to its obligations under the North Atlantic Treaty, it is the policy of the United States to pursue, in full coordination with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), an integrated approach to strengthening the defense of allies and partners in Europe as part of a broader, long-term strategy backed by all elements of United States national power to deter and, if necessary, defeat Russian aggression." (§Sec.1248 (a))

Furthermore, in section 1248 emphasizes upon a strengthened presence in Europe and closer cooperation with the NATO partners. Especially under section 1248(b)(12), Congress highlights what the Alliance should and could do in the future.

In the following sections, matters related indirectly with NATO are then touched upon for example the permanent stationing of US forces in Poland (§Sec.1280), efforts of the US leadership with respect to the NATO cyber defence (§Sec.1281) and the relationship between the United States and the Republic of Turkey (§Sec.1282). On all three examples Congress calls on the Secretary of Defense and Secretary of State to submit reports.

In section 1673 "NATO" is again mentioned but this time in combination with the importance of the United States nuclear posture, as Congress thinks that: "NATO should continue to strengthen and align its nuclear and conventional deterrence posture" (§Sec.1673(5)) with that of the United States.

Continuing with bills from Congress, the *Energy and Water, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, 2019* is the next law of interest for the research. This bill reiterates what the *Consolidated Appropriations Act from 2018* already mentions namely that the funding for the "NATO Security Investment Program" are rescinded (§Sec.126) and that funds made available through the Act in inter alia NATO member states must be spend American companies if the estimated prize for the project exceeds $500 000 (§Sec.111).

A very noteworthy event in relation with NATO came on the 20. October, as President Trump formally announced that the United States would withdraw from the INF treaty (Borger & Pengelly, 2018). Even though this treaty did not directly involve the other NATO states, it was very much in their interest to have it as it banned a certain type of missiles that increase the security risks for Europe. Reports by *the Guardian* show that the Security Advisor John Bolton pushed the President to do so with the argumentation that the treaty would come at the expense of the competition with China in the Indo-Pacific (Borger, 2018).

<u>2019</u>

The first important action related to NATO for the year 2019 consists in the introduction of a bill in in the House of Representatives by the representative Panetta from the Democratic party, called the *NATO Support Act*, which if voted into law would explicitly prohibit the President "to take any action to withdraw the United States from the North Atlantic Treaty" (§Sec.5). The bill passed the House of Representatives, but no vote was taken in the Senate, thus it has no

legal status. The introduction of this bill can be seen as a direct reaction to the threat by President Trump to leave NATO.

The first document with a legal status for the year 2019 is the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019*. NATO is mentioned because its professionals are excluded from training in humanitarian law (§Sec.7049(a)(4)). Then NATO is mentioned a second time, as the possibility to lease military equipment is again repeated in connection with Arms Export Control Act, which is also mentioned in the two previous *Consolidated Appropriations Acts* (§Sec.7049(b)).

Furthermore, 2019 consisted of a symbolic year for the Alliance as the foreign ministers of its member states gathered on the 3-4. April to celebrate its 70th birthday. On this occasion, Mike Pompeo praised the Alliance for its accomplishments over the course of its existence, specifically praising the allies when they stood on the US side after the 9/11 attacks (Pompeo cited in NATO, 2019a). Over the course of the two days the security related issues clearly took center stage instead of the burden sharing topic, as Pompeo tried to get momentum to use NATO in the growing competition against China (Wroughton & Brunnstrom, 2019).

In contrast to the previous two years, Trump's attitude towards the Alliance was much more prudent. Probably the most significant statement that came close to his rhetoric of the previous two terms came during his address to the United Nations General Assembly when he rebuked at Globalism and made his case for isolationism: "The future does not belong to globalists; it belongs to patriots" (Trump cited in Rascoe, 2019). To then call out the NATO allies to pay their fair share for the Alliance (Rascoe, 2019). On the NATO summit he was also much calmer as he did not leash out at the alliance partners, instead his focus was on the comments by President Macron from France, who called the Alliance "brain death" a few weeks before the summit (Brzozowski, 2019). Furthermore, the headlines were mostly about security related topics and not about frictions between the partners (ibid.).

Then on the side of Congress there are two more bills of relevance. First, the *Further consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020* and second, *the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 (2020)*. The appropriations Act reiterates a few topics, which already have been mentioned here. The new points consist in following, first, a specification on the NATO Security Investment Program (§Title I: Department of Defense). Second, the act specifies that $290,000,000 should be made available to counter Russian aggression in Europe to strengthen the cooperation between the US and NATO (§Sec.7047(d)). Third, the act specifies that none of the funds mentioned shall be made available to the ICC because of prosecution of US nationals, other allies and NATO nationals (§Sec.7049(b)). Finally, NATO is mentioned in

combination with Greece under the title of the Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership.

The *Defense Authorization Act from 2019* consists of the last relevant document for the year 2019, it does not take the same approach to NATO as the two previous Acts instead of highlighting the importance of the Alliance under matters related to the Russian Federation, NATO gets an own subtitle (Subtitle E--Matters Relating to Europe and NATO). Yet before subtitle E, there are two other parts where NATO gets mentioned. The first time in section 1214 on Matters related to Afghanistan as the text is amended reflecting the update on the policy. The second time in section 1237, this time in relation with the expiration of the New Start Treaty as Congress wants an assessment by the Secretary of State on the likely reactions of NATO allies to its expiration. Moreover, Congress wants the Secretary of State to consult with the allies related to the matter and provide Congress with an update on what has been said.

Under the subtitle E, section 1241 stresses the support of Congress to NATO, in eight subsections related to NATO Congress mentions multiple elements that clearly show Congress's support for the Alliance. Especially mentioning under Sec.1241 (5): "the United States must remain ironclad in its commitment to uphold its obligations under the North Atlantic Treaty, including Article 5 of such Treaty." (§Sec.1241(5)) In section 1242 it is then stressed that no actions are allowed to be taken that "provide notice of denunciation of the North Atlantic Treaty". In section 1243 certain amendments related to the wording in combination with the EDI are made. Section 1246 on the other hand deals with the Baltic States and their security situation, again calling on the Secretary of State to submit a report related to the expansion of training between US forces, Baltic country forces and NATO forces. Sections 1248, 1249 and 1250 deal with specific NATO projects, requesting reports from the Secretary of State and Defense on serval matters related to the projects.

Section 1680, which is under a different subtitle than the previous sections reiterates the United States nuclear deterrent to NATO as it is the case in the previous two acts. In Section 1698 on the prohibition on availability of funds for certain offensive ground-launched ballistic or cruise missile systems, Congress requests a report from the Secretary of Defense on whether the deployment of such missile systems requires the authorization by all NATO members.

Finally, section 5503(a), calls on the Director of the National Intelligence to submit an assessment related to the intentions of the political leadership of the Russian Federation, also in relation with a number of NATO issues.

2020

The year 2020 was dominated by the coronavirus crisis, which is reflected in the analysed documents especially the Presidential Documents as all of them are in relation with the health crisis. The health crisis also prevented NATO from having a big coming together between the heads of states and instead only had a smaller remote summit with the ministers of Defense (NATO, 2020a). Thus, depriving Trump of the big stage to make any kind of comments about the Alliance.

As one of the only big conferences which could still be held as scheduled, the Munich Security Conference in February hosted a large US delegation stacked with some high-ranking officials including the Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. In his address to the crowd, Pompeo tried to reassure the crowd that the United States will not abandon its leadership role and that the transatlantic relationship is in a better condition than many think (US Department of State, 2020). Yet, Pompeo also put an emphasis on "sovereignty" during his speech, which signals for many observers the decrease of interest in cooperation with allies and in multilateral institutions (Archick, Akhtar, Belkin, & Mix, 2020).

On the 27th of March NATO then welcomed its newest member, North Macedonia to the Alliance (NATO, 2020b). In contrast to the accession of Montenegro in 2018, Trump avoided to make any major comments about the accession (Prince, 2020).

In the Federal Register more rules in relation to NATO are published than during the previous years, yet none of them indicate change in connection with NATO instead the Alliance is mentioned for three reasons: First, as an exception, second due to deep running cooperation or third because the argumentation for a certain rule is based upon NATO research.

Perhaps the most relevant changes in combination with NATO came in an indirect manner as the White House announced in May that it would withdraw from the Open Skies Treaty (Sanger, 2020). And then in June the White House announced that it would withdraw a large number of troops from Germany (Herszenhorn, 2020). Yet, direct threats were rare even during the Presidential campaign, Trump remained relatively quiet about the Alliance (Crowley, 2020).

The documents from Congress are of relevance for the year 2020 as the NDAA and the *Eastern European Security Act* are of importance for the Alliance. The third bill, the *Consolidated Appropriations Act 2021* mostly reiterates points from previous documents already mentioned here.

Analysing in greater detail the *Defense Authorisation Act.* In section 1232 of the Act, Congresses reacts to the withdrawal of the United States to the Open Skies Treaty and requests an assessment on the impact of that withdrawal in connection to NATO and its member states (§sec.1232). In section 1234 the act then requests a report on military and security developments of Russia in connection with NATO. Section 1236 also touches NATO as it requests an assessment on Ukraine and its efforts to meet its NATO targets. Same goes for section 1241, which is related to Turkey and the current situation with the United States yet the text in the section shows that for Congress any action related to Turkey must be thought about in the context of NATO.

Section 1244, is then of upmost importance as it reaffirms Congress support for the Alliance: "the United States reaffirms its ironclad commitment to NATO as the foundation of transatlantic security and to uphold its obligations under the North Atlantic Treaty, including Article 5 of the Treaty" (§1244(3)). This section then also highlights why the Alliance is of such importance to the US and makes the link to the Security Strategy and Russia.

Section 1245 is also of great interest to the analysis as it addresses the already mentioned troop withdrawal from Germany, thus the section reaffirms the importance of Germany to the US (§Sec.1245(1)) and also states following:

"reducing the number of members of the United States Armed Forces in Germany during a time of growing threats in Europe would constitute a grave strategic mistake that would undermine United States national security interests and weaken NATO" (§Sec.1245(4))

Congress then requests a report from the Secretary of Defense and delays any troop reduction until 120 days after the issuance of the report.

The rest of the Act repeats similar points as during the previous years, therefore it is not repeated again.

The last bill of interest, which was only signed into law in 2021 consists of the *Eastern European Security Act*. The act is framed directly in combination to the newer Alliance members and reaffirms Congresses' support for their security. Additionally, many already mentioned aspects from previous bills are reiterated.

In addition to all the documents mentioned in relation with the Alliance, two separate points need to be made. First, the budget for European Deterrence Initiative which is not directly linked to NATO but consists of the DoD's goal to enhance the United States deterrence in Europe had

a strong increase compared to the Obama years (see figure 4.) (Congressional Research Service, 2020). Second, the overall the number of American troops stationed in Europe also increased over the mandate of President Trump (Welna, 2019; Mhundwa, 2020).

Figure 4. Evolution EDI
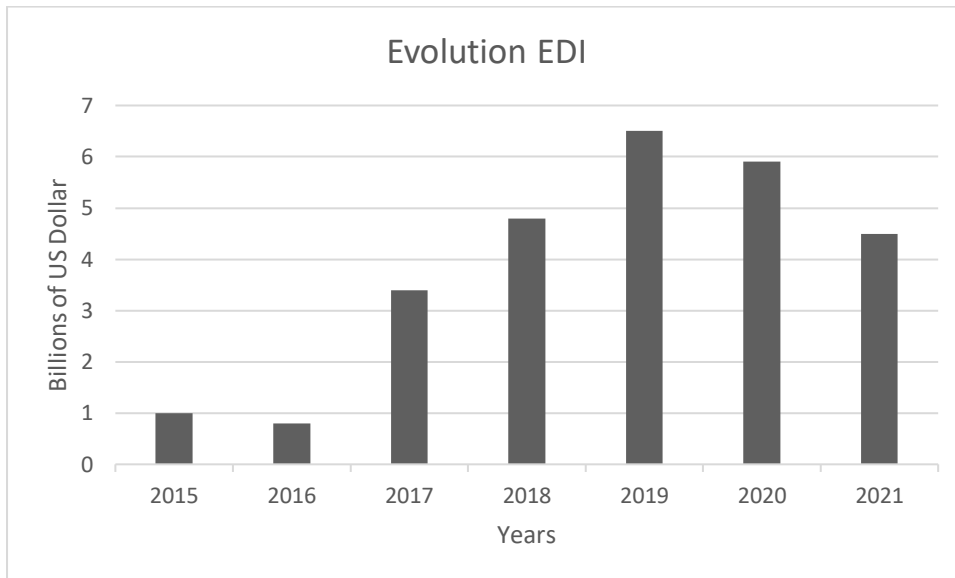
Source: Congressional Research Service, 2020

6. Results

Section 5 analysed the United States NATO policy over the course of President Trump's mandate. These findings will be used in combination with candidate Trump's foreign policy vision, that was presented in *section 4.2.1.* to respond to RQ1: To what extent is the foreign policy vision by candidate Trump in connection with the sphere of security aligned to the policy outcomes of his administration's mandate?

Sub-question 1: Do the policies of the Trump administration reflect change in comparison to the previous two administrations? Will also be answered through the comparison with of the findings in section 5 with the same policies from the Obama and Buh administrations.

Finally, research question 2 will be answered. Yet, the domestic-level intervening variables need to be defined first, before the research question can be responded to.

6.1 Response to RQ1

Starting with the first topic from candidate Trump's electoral campaign, the relationship with the allies and that they take advantage of the United States. President Trump mentioned the unfair burden sharing wherever and whenever he could as it consisted of arguably the most central message vis-à-vis the Alliance. Even though his tone differed from time to times the message was always present. Furthermore, the element of questioning the Alliance and the need for it (reflecting his comments that the Alliance was "obsolete") also consisted of part of his policy. Thus, Trump was reluctant on giving his support for the essential Article 5 of the Washington Treaty and he threatened to leave NATO as specified in the analysis.

The unfair burden sharing and the unfair relationship between the US and its allies can also be found in the documents emanating from Congress as well as the messages from other administration officials and official documents from the administration. Yet, it is expressed in a different way as those other officials and relevant documents mention the issue but hide it behind other comments, which are in most instances very positive toward the Alliance. The element of questioning the need for the Alliance is on the other hand not found in these documents, even on the contrary as other officials tried to rebuke the messages Trump sent and tried to frame him in a way that it did not assault the allies. On the side of Congress an even stronger response to Trump's messages can be found as Congress started to further strengthen its support for the Alliance over the analysed period, which can be especially seen in the NDAAs as well as the *NATO Support Act*. On all instances analysed above where Trump was not physically present, the policy element took center stage as officials tried to reassure the allies of the US support and even tried to expand the policy agenda of the Alliance as for example the Secretary of State Pompeo's efforts to mobilise the allies in the rising competition against China show. Also, the official documents from the administration analysed in the above section emphasize on the need for NATO. This clearly highlights that except for Trump the Alliance is not obsolete.

Moving now to the second element, regain respect and the need for victories. Trump's already mentioned stance towards the allies related to the first pillar is again of value here. Thus, Trump was able to show through his performance and his remarks what kind of power the United States has, he tried to constantly use this as a leverage to make others do what he wanted to. Furthermore, Trump was able to implement some of his policies as he used the leverage the United States has over Germany and thus ordered the withdrawal of around 9000 troops from German military bases. Trump's message was also felt on the other side of the Atlantic as

numerous high-ranking officials, including chancellor Merkel and president Macron, were seemingly exhausted by the relationship with the US and officially demanded European alternatives to the Alliance[9]. Yet, the inability of President Trump to implement more policy changes due to his inability to mobilise both all his administration officials as well as Congress to follow his lead, weakened the ability to regain respect.

Moving now to the last central topic of the campaign, the need to renegotiate bad deals. During the four years this again played a crucial role as Trump tried to push the Allies to pay more. Moreover, the Trump administration withdraw from the INF treaty and the Open Skies treaty that indirectly affected the NATO partners. His administration thereby fulfilled its promise to withdraw from treaties which it does not see to its benefit. On the withdrawal of those two treaties, his administration stood in strong support, as for example *the Guardian* reported that officials form the administration were the main advocates for the withdrawal (Borger, 2018). On this topic, Congress showed less resistance than toward the previous two elements from the campaign, which can be partially explained through the lack of clarity in the Constitution on the exit from international treaties, leading to the observation that the executive often simply bypasses Congress on such matters (Galbraith, 2017).

To sum up and to respond to *RQ1*: To what extent is the foreign policy vision by candidate Trump in connection with the sphere of security aligned to the policy outcomes of his administration's mandate?

All three themes from the campaign are observable over the course of the mandate of the Trump administration. Especially the third theme, renegotiate bad deals played an important role in the second half of the presidency, as the United States withdrew from two treaties. Furthermore, the aim of renegotiating with the alliance partners was also present as Trump continuously tried to get more from the Alliance with Congress and his cabinet members sending a similar message even though in a different tone. The second theme regain respect and the first theme, the allies take advantage of the US, can also be observed as the President constantly tried to use the US's leverage against the allies to force them into strengthened commitments. Yet, the institutionalized security interests and the position of Congress prevented those actions from transforming into tangible policy outcomes. Meaning that overall, only the third theme translated into tangible policy outcomes.

---

[9] examples: Merkel "Bierzeltrede" in: Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2018; Macron exchange with Trump on NATO in: Rogers & Karni, 2019; Macron NATO is experiencing "brain-death" in: The Economist, 2019

6.2. Sub-question 1

Now that RQ1 has been answered, sub-question 1: Do the policies by the Trump administration reflect change in comparison to the previous two administrations? be responded to. This section assesses the main elements of the United States' NATO policy during the mandate of President Trump (*section 5*) and compares them to previous practices. The response to the sub-question enables the evaluation of the Trump administration in light of continuity and change.

The first element, the unfair burden sharing does not constitute change in the US foreign policy as many officials already raised this issue (Archick et al., 2020). Furthermore, the fact that it is also mentioned in most relevant bills from Congress shows that it is an element which Trump did not invent. Instead, the chosen tone about the issue constitutes change, the Obama administration, as an example framed the issue as follow: "The burdens of a young century cannot fall on American shoulders alone" (President of the United States, 2010, ii). Yet, the linkage between the burden sharing and questioning the overarching need for NATO by the President constitutes change, as the Congressional Research Service writes:

> "Over the decades, U.S-European relations have experienced numerous ups and downs and have been tested by periods of political tension, various trade disputes, and changes in the security landscape. However, no U.S. president has questioned the fundamental tenets of the transatlantic security and economic architecture to the same extent as President Trump." (Archick, et al., 2020, p. 1)

The second element, regain respect, the need for victories and the case for the withdrawal of troops from Germany. Since the end of the Cold War the number of troops in Europe have been drastically reduced and so have troops been withdrawn from Germany. In 2012 for example Obama withdrew two combat brigades from Germany (Gibbons-Neff, 2021). Yet, since the Russian aggression in Crimea (2014), there has been no withdrawal of troops in Europe (Herszenhorn, 2020). This thus constitutes change, furthermore, the way that the situation was handled also consists in change as the troop withdrawal was not consulted with the NATO authorities beforehand (ibid.). As Herszenhorn writes: "Perhaps only Donald Trump could turn a withdrawal of troops into an act of aggression". (2020)

The third element exit bad deals, the Trump administration left two essential security treaties during the analysed period. To evaluate whether this consists of continuity or change is a difficult task because the Bush administration withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM treaty) in 2002 another essential security treaty in the context of NATO (Arms Control

Association, n.d.). In contrast the Obama administration criticised certain treaties, even the same as the Trump administration but refrained from leaving instead trying to renegotiate them to their favour. The way in which the United States left both treaties on the other hand consists of change as there was no extensive consultation with the allies about future scenarios even though NATO members supported the withdrawal of the United States from the INF treaty as NATO documents show (NATO, 2019b). The situation with the Open Skies Treaty is similar, as NATO members acknowledge their problems with the compliance of Russia and the treaty, still the United States withdrawal came abrupt and without broad consultations with the allies (NATO, 2020c). The Bush administration's withdrawal from the ABM treaty was instead presented in another way, here the comment of then President Bush on the matter:

"I've made it clear from the beginning that I would consult closely on the important subject with our friends and allies who are also threatened by missiles and weapons of mass destruction […] These will be real consultations. We are not presenting our friends and allies with unilateral decisions already made. We look forward to hearing their views, the views of our friends, and to take them into account." (Bush, 2001)

Hence, we see on the third element a mixed picture, on the policy element it looks more like continuity, but the implementation constitutes a clear break with the past.

To respond to sub-question 1. All three main themes from Trump's campaign have been part of the United States NATO policy during the last 20 years. Burden sharing consisted of one of the main critiques of the United States toward its allies over the last several years, representing continuity. The withdrawal of troops from Germany constitutes change but since the overall number of troops has increased over the Trump's presidency as well as the spending for the EDI increased, one cannot speak of change when looking at this theme (Mhundwa, 2020*)*. Finally, the United States withdrawal from two essential security treaties has also precedents in the US NATO policy, thus we can again not speak about change. Yet, what constitutes change is the manner how Trump administration presented, communicated, and engaged on the policies with the allies.

6.3. Response to RQ2

The first research question and sub-question have now been answered. The question which remains is RQ2: What explains the (un)changed policy outcomes in the sphere of security during Trump's mandate?

The response to this question is important because it enables an explanation for the outcomes in the previous to questions. Still, what is needed first is the definition of the four domestic-level intervening variables presented in *section 3.2.2.* These explanations will be used in combination with the results from the data analysis section to respond to RQ2.

6.3.1. Domestic level Intervening variables
  – The leader images

As already specified in *section 4.3.* Ripsman et al. (2016) advocate to analyse the core values, beliefs and images that guide the interactions between the elites. This section will do this based on secondary literature, first President Trump will be analysed and then his closest security advisors. (See Appendix 2 for closer details on the used literature)

The results from the three used studies (Nai et al., 2019, Visser et al., 2017 and MacAdams, 2016) differ in their approaches to the evaluation of the personality traits of President Trump but find similar results, which indicates the reliability of their work. The main features of Trump's personality thus constitute the following. First, Trump shows extraordinarily high scores on extraversion, which pertains sociable as well as active life (Nai et al., 2019; Visser et al., 2017; MacAdams, 2016). Consequences of this finding predict that that Trump will show "relentless reward-seeking" (MacAdams, 2016) as well as a "spontaneous and unconventional approach to politics" in addition to "exuberant confidence" (Nai et al., 2019, p.621). Second Trump shows low levels of agreeableness (ibid.), describing "the extent to which a person appears to be caring, loving, affectionate, polite, and kind" (MacAdams, 2016). This reflects Trump's tendency to be "extremely critical" (Nai et al., 2019, p.621), it also reflects Trump's aggressive rhetoric and his "bleak vision for the country" (ibid). The third feature of his personality in relation with the political office is his low level of consciousness, as he lacked prior experience about politics which is reflected in his approach to the various topics (Nai et al., 2019). Fourth, Trump scores low on emotional stability, reflecting similar aspects as the low level of consciousness (Nai et al., 2019; Visser et al., 2016). Fifth, Trump gets an average score on openness (Nai et al., 2019; MacAdams, 2016). MacAdams interprets this finding as an ability of Trump to be a "flexible and pragmatic decision maker" (2016). On the Dark Triad Trump scores exceptionally high on narcissism and psychopathy (Nai et al., 2019; Visser, 2016). Furthermore, in the study of Nai et al. he also scores high on Machiavellianism. Based on these findings, the studies predict that President Trump will consist of "a daring and ruthlessly aggressive decision maker who desperately desires to create the strongest, tallest,

shiniest, and most awesome result—and who never thinks twice about the collateral damage he will leave behind." (MacAdams, 2016)

In addition to the President, Ripsman et al. (2016) consider a closer evaluation of the central foreign policy officials as important to get the full picture for the leader images. Figure 4 highlights three time periods marked by different officials. The table only includes the officials, who have been in office more than six months, this explains why there are certain voids in the time frame as the high turnover in the positions resulted in several officials staying for a period inferior to six months.

Figure 4: Trump administration important officials

Periods	Position	Timeframe
1	Secretary of State Rex Tillerson	01.02.2017 - 31.03.2018
	Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis	20.01.2017 - 01.01.2019
	Security Advisor H.R. McMaster	20.02.2017 - 09.04.2018
	Political Advisor Steve Bannon	20.02.2017 - 18.08.2017
2	Secretary of State Mike Pompeo	26.04.2018 - 20.01.2021
	Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis	20.01.2017 - 01.01.2019
	Security Advisor John Bolton	09.04.2018 - 10.09.2019
3	Secretary of State Mike Pompeo	26.04.2018 - 20.01.2021
	Secretary of Defense Mark Esper	23.07.2019 - 9.11.2020
	Security Advisor Robert Charles O'Brien Jr.	18.09.2019 - 20.01.2021

Source: The Trump White House Archives (n.d.)

The first period (1.20.2017-9.04.2018) was marked by two competing camps on the one side were those individuals who held more traditional views toward foreign policy (Cottam, 2021). Encompassing the former CEO of Exxon Mobile Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, the Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis a former General and another former General H.R. McMaster as Security Advisor (ibid.). The other camp was made up out of Trump's political advisor Steve Bannon and his advisory team (Cottam, 2021; Woodward, 2018). Bannon received a seat in the National Security Council (NSC), an unusual position for a political advisor through an executive order by the President (Trush & Haberman, 2017). This enabled him to challenge the established foreign policy visions directly through the institutionalized apparatus (Woodward, 2018). The struggle between the two camps resulted in a meeting in the Pentagon in August 2017, where a team around Mattis tried to explain the benefits of globalism to the President and the nationalist advisors (Lee & Lemire, 2017). According to insider knowledge, the nationalist camp then began to counter argue (Woodward, 2018). Trump saw this meeting as a victory of the nationalistic camp against the establishment (Cottam, 2021). Similar accounts exist about discussions surrounding NATO as senior officials from the traditionalist camp tried to explain

facts to Trump to persuade him to not leave the Alliance (ibid.). Yet, Trump was also not very keen on the nationalistic camp as he restored traditional rules after a few months and dismissed Bannon from the NSC (Ackerman, 2017). Furthermore, Bannon exited the administration all together on the 18th of August 2017 (Prokop, 2017). But still the rifts between Trump and the traditional camp continued and ended with both Tillerson and McMaster leaving the administration in the first quarter of the year 2018.

The second period (9.04.2018-10.09.2019) was marked by the successors of these two officials, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, National Security Adviser John Bolton and the remaining Secretary of Defense Mattis. The relationship between Trump and the two new officials was more harmonic than with the previous holders of the posts. Especially with Pompeo, Trump claimed to have a near perfect relationship: "I argue with everyone," […] "Except Pompeo," (Trump cited in Nuzzi, 2018). Pompeo came from a military background and "embraced the same military mentality to confront the world" as the *New York Times* journalist Lara Jakes writes (2021). Yet, she also notes that Pompeo was far from a traditional Secretary of State and instead mirrored President Trump's style of policy making. But Pompeo is also credited for persuading Trump on not weakening NATO more than he did. (ibid.) Bolton for his part is a known figure due to his roles in several Republican administrations and an advocate of hard-line foreign policy positions on the side of the Republican party for many years (Finnegan, 2020; Landler & Haberman, 2018). Even though he agreed with Trump on several positions such as the dislike for multilateralism, their relationship was marked by rifts as Bolton tried to "restrain the president from making what he considered unwise agreements with America's enemies." (Baker, 2019) Bolton also tried to push his policy convictions as the reports about the US withdrawal from the INF by the Guardian show (Borger, 2018). Mattis was instead less dominant in this period than in the first one.

For the third period (10.09.2019-20.1.2021) only the Secretary of State Pompeo stayed with both Mattis and Bolton leaving the administration. Being replaced by Mark Esper, who became the Secretary of Defense and Charles O'Brien the new Security Advisor. Esper held previous positions in both the military and the private sector, working as a lobbyist for Raytheon (Cooper, 2019). According to insider information the Secretary of Defense had limited power during his time in the administration and fell out of the President's favour after rejecting the deployment of troops against protestors in the US (Cohen, et al., 2020). O'Brien on the other hand was portrayed by the media as a man with "a record of traditional conservative foreign policy views" (Crowley, Baker & Haberman, 2019), who turned out to be a strong supporter of

the President. He flattered Trump by calling for his nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize (Schwartz, 2020) and reassuring the public that the President is an expert on foreign policy topics (Barnes & Goldman, 2020). Accordingly, he was able to influence the President's policies, as his advocacy of the withdrawal of troops in Germany show (Cohen, Salama, Starr, 2020).

  – Strategic culture

As specified the strategic culture needs to be analysed, which will be operationalized according to *section 4.3*, through the presentation of underlying factors that shape the US as well as essential documents from the Trump administration and polls about the public and the elites' perception on the United States strategic culture.

The United States is currently the most powerful nation in terms of economic and military capabilities (Burns, 2019). Moreover, since its inception there has been no direct threat to its territorial integrity. In addition, the United States have been the main constructor and upholder of the liberal international order since the end of World War II (Ikenberry, 2018). The international liberal order forms a baseline for the US power in the world as it has partially institutionalized its supremacy (ibid.). Therefore, Deudney and Meiser write about the "American Exceptionalism" (2020, p.1), as they try to capture all these mentioned elements and transform them into a national and cultural feeling. Based on this position in the world, the Congressional Research Service deduces four elements for the role of the US in the world since 1945. First, global leadership. Second, defense and promotion of liberal international order. Third, defense and promotion of freedom, democracy, and human rights. And fourth, prevention of the emergence of regional hegemons in Eurasia. (O'Rourke, 2021)

Although there has been some debate whether the strategic culture of the US has evolved over the last years (O'Rourke, 2021), key documents from the Trump administration show that the administration at least in its strategies abided this strategic direction and thus also followed the strategic culture of previous administrations. In the foreword to the National Security Strategy, it is for example stated: "My Administration's National Security Strategy lays out a strategic vision for protecting the American people and preserving our way of life, promoting our prosperity, preserving peace through strength, and advancing American influence in the world" (The White House, 2017, p.ii). The strategy not only repeats the United States ambition to lead on several occasions but also defends and promotes the liberal international order as well as freedom, democracy and human rights. Furthermore, it states the clear ambition to prevent regional hegemons in Eurasia as both China and Russia are singled out in the document: "China

and Russia challenge American power, influence, and interests, attempting to erode American security and prosperity" (ibid., p.2) and "We will compete with all tools of national power to ensure that regions of the world are not dominated by one power" (ibid., p.4).

Public opinion is instead detached from expert opinion in connection with the four pillars as a poll by the Eurasia Group Foundation (EGF) shows. The poll included several questions, which are valuable to identify the positions of public in connection with the strategic culture and alliance systems of the United States. For example, the question related to the responsibility to protect, the results in the poll show that 43% of the public advocates for restrain, 34% for UN-led action and only 21% for US-led action (Summa & Hannah, 2019, p.12). The experts' poll results showed 61% in favour of US-led action, 28% for restrain and 11% for UN-led action (ibid.). This shows a clear break between the elites and public in connection with the third pillar of the United States role in the world. The poll also asked a specific question about NATO and America's treaty obligation. The questionnaire described a hypothetical scenario where Russia would invade Estonia (ibid., p.13). Whereas 95% of the experts indicated that they would retaliate only 54,2% of public was of this opinion (ibid., p.14). This has strong indications for the second, third and fourth pillar of the role of the United States. Furthermore, a question was included measuring the general view on the US foreign policy. For this question only 9,5% of public indicated that they think that the US role in the world is indispensable (referring to the necessity of US leadership to guarantee stability in the world), 44% advocated for a more independent role of the US (meaning that the US focus should be on domestic instead of global issues), 19,5% advocated for Moneyball (meaning that the foreign policy should be a cost benefit calculation for the national interest) and finally 27% gave a response which the pollsters did not categorize in either of those three categories (ibid, p.16). On the same question, 47% of the experts indicated that they think the US role is indispensable, only 9% said the US should pursue more of an independent role, 15,5% were for the Moneyball option and 25% of the opinions fell in neither of these categories (ibid.).

Based on the literature dealing with the US strategic culture, documents from the Trump administration as well as the results from the poll. A general picture can be observed, showing that the elites are convinced of the United States strategic culture and prefer to continue the same path as for the last 70 years. Public is instead more doubtful about this perception of strategic culture.

– State-society relations

The state-society relations consist of the third domestic-level intervening variable and encompasses questions related to the degree of harmony within society. The variable will be operationalized through polls.

As already specified for the Strategic Culture variable, there exists a divergence between public and expert opinions related to foreign policy matters. Yet, this divergence is not only between these two groups but also within society itself as polls show that opinions between Republicans and Democrats strongly differ when it comes to foreign policy related issues (Doherty, Kiley & Johnson, 2017 and 2018). This same gap is also observable when it comes to matters related to NATO (Fagan & Poushter, 2020). As 61% of the interviewed Democratic Party leaning individuals expressed a favourable position toward NATO in comparison to only 45% of Republican leaning individuals (ibid.).

This finding is important as Trump was a candidate of the Republican party and therefore relies on the Republican support making him more susceptible for their opinions.

   –   State structure and domestic institutions

The fourth and last set of intervening variables for Ripsman et al. (2016) consists in the state structure and the domestic institutions, they are important as they determine when the different actors are able to shape the process. They will be operationalized according to section *4.3.*, through the analysis of the degree to which power is concentrated in the executive's hands, executive-legislative relations as well as the involvement of the different ministries and agencies in the policy making process.

The foreign policy making process in the United States is enshrined in a system of checks and balances, with primacy given to the President but also a strong role for Congress (Aronica & Parmar, 2018). Presidents have been able to increase their power vis-à-vis Congress over the last decades. The great power the President has over the foreign policy making process results from several agencies (Defense Department, Central Intelligence Agency and National Security Council). These agencies are part of the executive and are the key drivers of the foreign policy of the United States. NATO matters have been partly integrated into these agencies (see Analysis in *section 5*). Furthermore, on some policies such as the withdrawal from International Treaties the executive possesses much greater powers than the legislative, being able to bypass Congress (Koh, 2018). Despite all this the power of the President can be limited especially because the role of Congress should not be underestimated. Especially if the opposition party has a majority in either one of both chambers as it has been the case with the 116 Congress

where the Democratic Party had the majority, giving the legislative considerable power to block the executive's initiatives. (Aronica & Parmar, 2018) In addition, insider accounts show that bureaucrats from within the agencies tried to actively prevent President Trump from taking certain decisions (Woodward, 2018).

The United States political system does not only allow the executive and legislative to shape the political process other actors also get the possibility for influence although to a varying degree. First the elites need to be mentioned being made up of the corporate elites, bureaucracy, and the knowledge networks (Aronica & Parmar, 2018; van Apeldoorn and de Graaff, 2019). These elites can influence decision-making both directly because most individuals inside of the administrations have one of the mentioned backgrounds (see van Apeldoorn & de Graaff, 2019 for the backgrounds of the Trump administration) or indirectly through voting, donations to candidates, and they are able to frame the political discourse (Layne, 2017).

The public for its part disposes of much less opportunities to shape the policymaking process, not being represented in the administrations (van Apeldoorn and de Graaff, 2019) and not disposing of the financial possibilities to support a candidate. Instead, the public's influence upon United States politics is restrained to voting every four years for the Presidential office and every two years for members of Congress.

6.3.2. Lessons from the independent intervening variables

Looking at the interplay of the domestic-level intervening variables, the state structure and the domestic institutions put the President in a privileged position. Meaning that President Trump's foreign policy vision should have considerable impacts upon the policy outcomes. Furthermore, Trump's personality traits predict that he consists of a "a daring and ruthlessly aggressive decision maker" (MacAdams, 2016) with a foreign policy vision that mirrors the Republican electorate's perception of US foreign policy, which adds to his strong position. Yet, his personality traits also predict that he is pragmatic as he is in search of outcomes, translating America First into "far from a simple isolationist approach to foreign policy" (Cottam, 2021, p.130). Moreover, the domestic-level intervening variables show that the President's powers can be weakened, especially when administration officials and bureaucrats from the agencies are not fully supportive of the President. This has been the case over the analysed timeframe as numerous examples exist where the President has been rebuked (Woodward, 2018). Lastly, the state structure variable highlights the importance of Congress especially because the elites'

perception on the Alliance is clear as they perceive NATO as a "key pillar of U.S. national security and economic policy for the past 70 years" (Archick, 2020, p.1) translating ito broad support (ibid.).

6.3.3. Theoretical expectations and response to RQ2

Now that the independent-intervening variables have been defined, the last step can be taken responding to the expectations from the theoretical framework and to RQ2. First, the expectations will be responded to, this will enable the response to the research question.

Expectation I: The leader images will be the most dominant variable in Type I situations.

The analysed case exhibits many contrasting policy situations as especially the positions of the executive and the legislative differed on several occasions. Yet, the observation is that the executive has an edge in Type I situations because it represents the United States on big conferences and meetings thus being more often in the position to shape the policies in these settings (see *section 5*). It was thus especially in the Type I situations when President Trump could voice the messages from the campaign, as has been shown during the first two NATO summits as well as other Type I events. Furthermore, an important finding is that because there were officials within the administration, who opposed some of the positions of the President, the messages of the administration were not coherent, especially when looking at the first period (see leader images). Thus, the messages differed according to the respective officials. Which means that *Expectation I* holds, the leader images are the most dominant variable in Type I situations. Moreover, the leader images of not only the President but also the other central officials shape the United States NATO policy in Type I situations.

Expectation II: The strategic culture will be the most dominant variable in Type II situations.

The analysis shows that for the Type II timeframe, President Trump's foreign policy vision was not the main driver for the policy as the policies resembled much more those of previous administrations. Instead, the agencies and Congress shaped most of the United States NATO policies over the analysed timeframe. The explanation for this finding is that as expected the strategic culture is the most dominant variable in Type II situations. Yet, in the case of the thesis it is not because all the central individuals in both the executive and the legislative have the

same convictions when it comes to NATO but because the deep integration of NATO into the security apparatus of the US. Thus, both bureaucrats and elected officials from Congress shape the policy process, meaning that numerous individuals are involved in the process of NATO policymaking (directly and indirectly), which favours the strategic culture and projects continuity in the policy. Thus, *Expectation II* is also approved.

Expectation III: The state-society relations will have a strong impact upon the policy paths, which will be taken.

As mentioned in *section 6.3.1.* the elites and the public disagree when it comes to foreign policy matters, with the gap between voters identifying as Republicans even bigger than between Democrats and the elites. The positions of President Trump were instead considerably closer to those of public and especially of the Republican electorates than the other elites. Yet, as shown through the analysis most of the positions of the President remained unachieved by the administration and especially on those demands from public to show less interests on global issues no progress was made on the analysed case. Hence, *Expectation III* is rejected.

Expectation IV: Based on the state-structure and the domestic political institutions, there will be new policies when the executive and the legislative agree upon issues.

As already mentioned there have been several incoherences in the United States NATO policy during the Trump administrations mandate. This was mostly because the President tried to implement his campaign promises, whereas Congress, the bureaucrats as well as some officials in the administration preferred to follow more traditional policies toward NATO. Yet, there were also cases where policies have been implemented. Those cases included bills from Congress, such as the increased budget for military affairs (EDI), which was based on the will of Congress but can also be found in candidate Trump's rhetoric about the need of increased spending for the military. Additionally, there have been the withdrawals from the INF and the Open Skies Treaty. On the two withdrawals Congress raised some questions but could not intervene (Koh, 2018). On the withdrawal of German troops Congress instead raised its objections leading to the postponement of the withdrawal for a period of 120 days.

Yet, *Expectation IV* is still accepted as on the few policies where both executive and legislative were able to agree upon new policies were decided and implemented.

6.3.4. Response to Research question 2

Now that the expectations have been answered, research question 2: What explains the (un)changed policy outcomes in the sphere of security during Trump's mandate? Can also be responded to.

The state-structure and the domestic institutions form the basis for how the varying actors can influence the United States NATO policy. And even though the President has a dominant position, with a policy vision that is supported by the Republican voters, he still needs the support of in the best case both his cabinet and Congress to implement his policy visions. Otherwise, a mixed picture will appear where the executive tries to push policies and the legislative sends opposite messages, as it was observable for the United States NATO policy from 2017-2021.

Thus, the response to RQ2 is that an interplay of several factors explains the policy outcomes in the sphere of security during the Trump administration's mandate: The strength of Congress especially on institutionalized security interests; the personality traits of President Trump, that make him push in one direction even against all odds; the structure of the political institutions that favour the dominant positions (strategic culture) within the executive and legislative; the influence of some administration officials as well as their restrain on the President; and finally the centrality of policy elements of the Trump administration that consist of already well established practices during the previous two administrations.

The interplay of all these factors form the basis for the policy outcomes and explain the contradictory paths that have been taken over the Trump administration's mandate.

7. Conclusion

This thesis analysed the United States NATO policy during the Trump administration's mandate. First, to determine how the US's NATO policy evolved over these four years and to what degree it is aligned to the campaign promises of Trump. Second, to assess whether these policies consisted in continuity or change compared to previous administrations. Third, the theory was applied to explain the (un)changed United States NATO policies.

The findings enable important lessons for multiple reasons. First, the analysis of the policy documents as well as the policy behaviour by United States officials toward NATO gives a

clear picture of the US's NATO policy for the analysed period, differentiating it from academic work with a narrow focus. Thus, offering the clear picture that President Trump tried to implement his main campaign promises but the same applies for the officials from his administration, Congress and the bureaucracy in the agencies. Second, the clarification of what consisted in continuity and what in change enables the Alliance partners to understand which elements will persist even in the absence of Trump. Furthermore, it shows that a lot of elements President Trump asked for have been longstanding practice of US administrations and that only the tone and the relevance of the respective issues have changed during the Trump administrations mandate. Third, the explanation for the factors that form the basis for the (un)changed policies enable explanations that are not limited to the analysed timeframe but instead enable more far-reaching conclusions about the United States policies in the sphere of security. It also clarifies important questions on why despite a dominant President, based on the Constitution and his reckless personality traits, the United States NATO policies resembled those of previous administration's.

Analysing the topic through the Causal-Process Tracing approach, a methodological tool that requires extensive research into the topic especially if there are numerous documents of interests and the theory of neoclassical realism, which explains all the respective factors highlighted by Rosenau (*section 3.*). Enabled a response to the research questions with both a policy and elite focus covering the mentioned literature gap in *section 2.3*. The thesis also makes important contributions to the literature analysing the Trump administrations impacts on the United States foreign policy. The used methodology has thereby turned out to be an especial valuable tool for the analysis of polarized topics, as it prevents selective use of data portraying only one side of the story. Furthermore, the use of neoclassical realism adds to the importance of the theory as the thesis shows that the theory is well suited to respond to complex research questions. Moreover, the analysis consists of one of the first works on the issue after the Trump administrations mandate ended thus being able to consider all the relevant elements to the topic to make far-reaching conclusions, distinguishing the work from the analysed literature in *section 2*.

Even though the thesis enabled far-reaching conclusions, certain limitations to the analysis need to be highlighted. First, both the methodology and the theory are extensive in their methods which enables clear explanations for the analysed topic but makes generalization of the research to other topics with the absence of similar scores for most variables, difficult as accounted by Beach and Peterson (2013). Furthermore, because both methodology and theory covered such

a wide ground, the more in debt analysis of the various explanatory factors is not feasible, which consists of a limitation. Also, the reliance on secondary literature for the domestic-level intervening variables did not enable new findings on how the administration officials interacted. Thus, having implications for a clearer understanding on how each variable impacted the policy-process.

Even though the thesis enabled important findings, future research on US administration's impacts upon foreign policy remains important. Thus, there exists definite relevance for a similar analysis based on the methodology and the theory of both the Trump administration's policies to other issues such as the United States North Korea and Iran policies, because the domestic-level intervening variables change. Furthermore, a similar analysis for incoming administrations is needed because it is explanatory on how to deal with and what to expect from the United States foreign policy. Additionally, the continuing polarization of Congress and the Republican party's drift to the far right might result in a changing strategic culture, changing the respective explanatory variables and leading to changes which will alter the outcomes of the respective policies. The topic therefore remains relevant and should continue to attract attention from scholars as changes will necessitate new explanations.

Reference list

Abrams, E. (2017). Trump the traditionalist. A surprisingly standard Foreign Policy. *Foreign Affairs.* Available from: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2017-06-13/trump-traditionalist

Ackerman, S. (5.04.2017). Trump's chief strategist Steve Bannon stripped of national security council role. *The Guardian*. Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/apr/05/steve-bannon-national-security-council-role-trump-shakeup

America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018, S.3021, 115 Cong. (2018). https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/3021/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22North+Atlantic+Treaty+Organization%22%7D&r=7&s=10

Archick, K., Akhtar, S., Belkin, P. & Mix, D. (2020). Transatlantic Relations: U.S. Interests and Key Issues. R45745. Congressional Research Service. Available from: https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R45745.pdf

Arms Control Association (n.d.). *U.S. Withdrawal from the ABM Treaty: President Bush's Remarks and U.S. Diplomatic Notes*. Available from: https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2002-01/us-withdrawal-abm-treaty-president-bush%E2%80%99s-remarks-us-diplomatic-notes

Aronica, V. & Parmar, I. (2018). 9. Domestic Influences on foreign policy making. In: Cox, M. & Stokes, D. (Eds.): *US Foreign Policy (3rd edn)*. (p.125-151). DOI: 10.1093/hepl/9780198707578.001.0001

Ashbee, E., & Hurst, S. (2020). The Trump foreign policy record and the concept of transformational change. *Global Affairs, 6(1)*, (5-19). Available from: DOI: 10.1080/23340460.2020.1734954

Baker, P. (10.09.2019). Trump Ousts John Bolton as National Security Adviser. *New York Times*. Available from: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/10/us/politics/john-bolton-national-security-adviser-trump.html

Barnes, J. & Goldman, A. (28.05.2020) For Spy Agencies, Briefing Trump Is a Test of Holding His Attention. *New York Times*. Available from: https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/21/us/politics/presidents-daily-brief-trump.html

Beach, D. and Pedersen, R.B. (2013). *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Bennett, A. (2008). Process- Tracing: A Bayesian Perspective. In: Box-Steffensmeier, J.; Brady, H. and Collier, D. (eds.): *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. (p.702–721). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Biegon, R. & Watts, T. (2020): When ends Trump means: continuity versus change in US counterterrorism policy, *Global Affairs*, *6(1)*, Available from: DOI: 10.1080/23340460.2020.1734956

Blatter, J., & Haverland, M. (2012). *Designing Case Studies*. Palgrave Macmillan UK. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137016669

Blatter, J., & Haverland, M. (2014). Case studies and (causal-) process tracing. In *Comparative policy studies* (pp. 59-83). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Blocking Property of Certain Persons Associated With the International Criminal Court, Vol. 85, No. 115, 85 FR 36139, (06/15/2020).

Bokat-Lindell, S. (18.05.2021) Why Can't the Republican Party Quit Donald Trump? *New York Times*. Available from: https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/18/opinion/cheney-trump-republicans.html

Borger, J. (19.10.2018). John Bolton pushing Trump to withdraw from Russian nuclear arms treaty. *The Guardian*. Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/oct/19/john-bolton-russia-nuclear-arms-deal-trump-lobbying

Borger, J. & Pengelly, M. (21.10.2018). Trump says US will withdraw from nuclear arms treaty with Russia. *The Guardian*. Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/20/trump-us-nuclear-arms-treaty-russia

Brands, H. (2017). US grand strategy in an age of nationalism: fortress America and its alternatives. The Washington Quarterly, 40(1), 73-94.

Brzozowski, A. (4.12.2019). NATO Summit 2019 – Day #1. *Euractiv*. Available from: https://www.euractiv.com/section/defence-and-security/news/nato-summit-2019-day-1/

Burns, W. (2019). Assessing the role of the United States in the world. In: *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. Available from: https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/02/27/assessing-role-of-united-states-in-world-pub-78465

Bush, G. (2001). *President Bush Speech on Missile Defence, May 1, 2001*. https://fas.org/nuke/control/abmt/news/010501bush.html

Clarifications to the Export Administration Regulations for the Use of License Exceptions, Vol. 82, No. 210 , 82 FR 50511, (11/01/2017).

Congressional Research Service. (2020). The European Deterrence Initiative: A Budgetary Overview. Available from: https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/IF10946.pdf

Cohen, Z., Collins, K., Liptak, K., Salama, V., Acosta, J. (4.06.2020). Pentagon chief on shaky ground with White House after breaking with Trump over protest response. *CNN*. Available from: https://edition.cnn.com/2020/06/03/politics/esper-insurrection-act-protests/index.html

Cohen, Z., Salama, V. & Starr, B. (26.06.2020). Germany troop withdrawal highlights rising fortunes of two White House allies amid Esper's isolation. *CNN*. Available from: https://edition.cnn.com/2020/06/26/politics/germany-troop-withdrawal-obrien-grenell-esper-isolation-pentagon-tensions-trump/index.html

Consolidated Appropriations Act 2017, H.R. 244, 115 Cong. (2017). https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/244/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22North+Atlantic+Treaty+Organization%22%7D&r=1&s=2

Consolidated Appropriations Act 2019, H.J. Res.31, Cong.116 (2019). https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-joint-resolution/31/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22North+Atlantic+Treaty+Organization%22%7D&r=9&s=2

Cooper, H. (21.06.2019). Trump Nominates Mark Esper as Next Defense Secretary. *New York Times*. Available from: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/21/us/politics/mark-esper-defense-secretary-nomination.html

Cordesman, A. (2017). President Trump's New National Security Strategy. In: *CSIS*. Available from: https://www.csis.org/analysis/president-trumps-new-national-security-strategy

Cottam, M. (2021). Foreign Policy Decision Making in the Trump Administration. In: Renshon, S. A., & Suedfeld, P. (Eds.), *The Trump Doctrine and the Emerging International System*. (p. 129-153). Springer International Publishing. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-45050-2

Consolidated Appropriations Act 2018, H.R. 1625, 115 Cong. (2017). https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/1625?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22North+Atlantic+Treaty+Organization%22%7D&s=6&r=3

Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, H.R.133, Cong.116. (2020). https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/133/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22North+Atlantic+Treaty+Organization%22%7D&r=15&s=6

Control of firearms, guns ammunition and related articles the president determines no longer warrant control under the United States Munitions list (USML), Vol. 85, No. 15, 85 FR 4136 (1/23/2020).

Controls on the exports and reexports of water cannon systems, Vol. 85, No. 194, 85 FR 63009, (10/06/2020).

Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, H.R. 3364, 115 Cong. (2017). https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/3364/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22North+Atlantic+Treaty+Organization%22%7D&r=5&s=4

Cox, M.& Stokes, D. (2018). 1. Introduction: US foreign policy—past, present, and future. In: Cox, M. & Stokes, D. (Eds.): *US Foreign Policy (3rd edn)*. (p.1-5).

Crowley, M. (3.09.2020). Allies and Former U.S. Officials Fear Trump Could Seek NATO Exit in a Second Term. *New York Times*. Available from: https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/03/us/politics/trump-nato-withdraw.html

Crowley, M., Baker, P., Haberman, M. (18.09.2019). Robert O'Brien 'Looks the Part,' but Has Spent Little Time Playing It. *New York Times*. Available from: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/18/us/politics/national-security-adviser-robert-obrien.html

Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Repeal of DFARS Clauses related to taxes applied to foreign contracts in Afghanistan, Vol. 85, No. 226, 85 FR 74611, (11/23/2020).

De Graaff, N., & Van Apeldoorn, B. (2021). The transnationalist US foreign-policy elite in exile? A comparative network analysis of the Trump administration. Global Networks, 21(2), 238-264.

Deudney, D., & Meiser, J. W. (2018). 3. American exceptionalism. In: Cox, M. & Stokes, D. (Eds.): *US Foreign Policy (3rd edn)*. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1093/hepl/9780198707578.003.0003

Department of Defense (2017). Remarks by Secretary Mattis and Secretary-General Stoltenberg at NATO headquarters, Brussels, Belgium. Available from: https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Speeches/Speech/Article/1085050/remarks-by-secretary-mattis-and-secretary-general-stoltenberg-at-nato-headquart/

Department of Defense (2018). Summary of the National Defense Strategy. Available from: https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf

Doherty, C., Kiley, J. & Johnson, B. (2017). The Partisan divide on political values grows even wider. In: *Pew Research Center*. Available from:
https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2017/10/05/the-partisan-divide-on-political-values-grows-even-wider/

Doherty, C., Kiley, J. & Johnson, B. (29.11.2018). Conflicting Partisan Priorities for U.S. Foreign Policy. In: *Pew Research Center*. Available from: https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2018/11/29/conflicting-partisan-priorities-for-u-s-foreign-policy/

Eastern European Security Act, H.R. 2444, Cong. 116. (2021). https://www.congress.gov/quick-search/legislation?wordsPhrases=North+Atlantic+Treaty+Organization&include=on&titles=on&summaries=on&congresses%5B%5D=116&congresses%5B%5D=115&legislationNumbers

Energy and Water, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, 2019, H.R. 5895, 115 Cong. (2018). https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-

bill/5895/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22North+Atlantic+Treaty+Organization%22%7D&r=6&s=9

Engel, P. (13.11.2015). Donald Trump: "I would bomb the shit out of" ISIS. *Business Insider.* Available from: https://www.businessinsider.com/donald-trump-bomb-isis-2015-11?r=US&IR=T

Establishment of Tricare select and other Tricare reforms (Defense Department), Vol. 82, No. 188, 82 FR 45438, (09/29/2017).

Fagan, M. & Poushter, J. (2020). NATO Seen Favourably Across Member States. In: *PEW Research Center.* https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/02/09/nato-seen-favorably-across-member-states/

Federal Acquisition Regulation: Requirements for DD Form 254, Contract Security Classification Specification, Vol. 85, No. 128, 85 FR 40061 (07/02/2020).

Federal Acquisition Regulation: Prohibition on contracting with entities using certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment, Vol. 85, No. 135, 85 FR 42665, (07/14/2020).

Federal Acquisition Regulation: Prohibition on contracting with entities using certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment, Vol. 85, No. 167, 85 FR 53126, (8/27/2020).

Federal Acquisition Regulation: Taxes-Foreign Contracts in Afghanistan, Vol. 85, No. 206, 85 FR 67623, (10/23/2020).

Federal Acquisition Regulation; Federal Acquisition Regulation Circular 2021-02; Introduction, Vol. 85, No. 206, 85 FR 67623, (10/23/2020).

Federal Acquisition Regulation; Federal Acquisition Regulation Circular 2021-02; small entity compliance guide, Vol. 85, No. 206, 85 FR 67623, (10/23/2020).

Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program: Extension of Eligibility to certain TRICARE-Eiligible Individuals; effective date of enrolment, Vol. 83, No. 223, 83 FR 58175, (11/19/2018).

Finnegan, C. (21.06.2020). Everything you need to know about John Bolton, Trump's former national security adviser. *ABC News.* Available from: *https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/john-bolton-trumps-expected-pick-deputy-secretary-state/story?id=44146193*

Galbraith, J. (2017). The President's Power to Withdraw the United States from International Agreements at Present and in the Future. *AJIL Unbound*, *111*, 445–449. https://doi.org/10.1017/aju.2017.99

General services Administration Acquisition Regulation (GSAR); Federal Supply Schedule Contracting (General Services Administration), Vol. 84, No. 78, 84 FR 17030, (04/23/2019).

Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2020, and Further Health Extenders Act of 2019, H.R. 3055, Cong. 116. (2019). https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/3055/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22North+Atlantic+Treaty+Organization%22%7D&r=10&s=5

Further Consolidated Appropriations Act 2020, H.R. 1865, Cong.116 (2019). https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/1865/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22North+Atlantic+Treaty+Organization%22%7D&r=11&s=6

Gibbons-Neff, (29.07.2021). U.S. Will Cut 12,000 Forces in Germany. *New York Times*. Available from: https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/29/world/europe/us-troops-nato-germany.html

Glasser, S. (16.04.2018). Just how dangerous is Donald Trump? *Politico*. Available from: https://www.politico.eu/article/donald-trump-how-dangerous-is-he-united-states-president/

Goldgeier, J. & Saunders, E. (2018). The Unconstrained Presidency. Checks and Balances eroded long before Trump. *Foreign Affairs*. Available from: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-08-13/unconstrained-presidency

Graham, D. (28.04.2017). Has Trump kept his campaign promises? *The Atlantic*. Available from: https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/04/trump-promises-cheat-sheet/507347/

Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy, 2018, Vol. 83, No. 59, 83 FR 13097, (3/27/2018).

Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy, 2019, Vol. 84, No. 55, 84 FR 10399, (03/21/2019).

Guardian Staff and Agencies (19.07.2018). 'Very aggressive': Trump suggests Montenegro could cause world war three. *The Guardian*. Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/jul/19/very-aggressive-trump-suggests-montenegro-could-cause-world-war-three

Hall, P. A. (1993). Policy paradigms, social learning, and the state: The case of economic policymaking in Britain. *Comparative Politics, 25(3)*, 275. Available from: doi:10.2307/422246

Harding, L. (12.07.2018). Could Trump pull US out of NATO and what would happen if he did? *The Guardian*. Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/12/trump-nato-threat-withdraw-what-would-happen

Herszenhorn, (6.06.2020). Trump orders large withdrawal of US forces from Germany. *Politico*. Available from: https://www.politico.eu/article/donald-trump-withdrawal-us-forces-from-germany-angela-merkel/

Higgins, A. & MacFarquhar, N. (15.07.2018). Just sitting down with President Trump, Putin comes out top. *New York Times*. Available from: https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/15/world/europe/trump-putin-helsinki-summit.html

Hughes, T. (2016). Trump calls to "drain the swamp". *USA Today News*. Available from: https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2016/2016/10/18/donald-trump-rally-colorado-springs-ethics-lobbying-limitations/92377656/

Inadmissibility on Public charge grounds, Vol. 84, No. 157, 84 FR 41292, (08/14/2019).

International Criminal Court related sanctions regulations, Vol. 85, No. 191, 85 FR 61816, (10/01/2020).

Ikenberry, G. J. (2018). The end of liberal international order? *International Affairs*, *94*(1), 7–23. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iix241

Jakes, L. (18.01.2021). Pompeo, Who Led Trump's Mission at State Dept., Leaves with a Dubious Legacy. *New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/18/us/politics/mike-pompeo-secretary-of-state.html

John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019, H.R. 5515, 115 Cong. (2018). https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/5515/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22North+Atlantic+Treaty+Organization%22%7D&r=5&s=8

Johnson, J. (2017). Trump on NATO: "I said it was obsolete. It's no longer obsolete." Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2017/04/12/trump-on-nato-i-said-it-was-obsolete-its-no-longer-obsolete/

Kitchen, N. (2020): Why American grand strategy has changed: international constraint, generational shift, and the return of realism, *Global Affairs*, *6(1)*, Available from: DOI: 10.1080/23340460.2020.1734957

Koh, H. (2018). Presidential Power to Terminate International Agreements. *The Yale Law Journal*. Available from: https://www.yalelawjournal.org/forum/presidential-power-to-terminate-international-agreements

Krebs, RR. (2015). *Narrative and the Making of US National Security*. Cambridge, UK:

Cambridge University Press.

Kupchan, C. (1994). *The vulnerability of empire*. Cornell University Press.

Landler, M. & Haberman, M. (2018). Trump Chooses Bolton for 3rd Security Adviser as Shake-Up Continues. *New York Times*. Available from: https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/22/us/politics/hr-mcmaster-trump-bolton.html

Layne, C. (2017). The US foreign policy establishment and grand strategy: How American elites obstruct strategic adjustment. *International Politics, 54(3)*, (260–275). Available from: https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-017-0033-0

Lehnert, M., Miller, B., & Wonka, A. (2007). Increasing the relevance of research questions: Considerations on theoretical and social relevance in political science. In: Gschwend, T., & Schimmelfennig, F. (Eds.)*: Research design in political science* (pp. 21-38). Available from: https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230598881

Lee & Lemire, (18.09.2017). Trump's advisers spent 90 minutes schooling the president on globalism with maps and charts. *Business Insider*. Available from: https://www.businessinsider.com/advisers-schooled-trump-globalism-importance-american-influence-abroad-2017-9?international=true&r=US&IR=T

Löfflmann, G. (2019) America First and the Populist Impact on US Foreign Policy, *Survival, 61:6*, 115-138, Available from: DOI: 10.1080/00396338.2019.1688573

MacAdams, D. (2016). The Mind of Donald Trump. *The Atlantic.* Available from: https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/06/the-mind-of-donald-trump/480771/

MacAskill, E. (12.07.2018). How Trump's NATO summit meltdown unfolded. *The Guardian*. Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/jul/12/how-trumps-nato-summit-meltdown-unfolded

Macdonald, P. K. (2018). America First? Explaining Continuity and Change in Trump's Foreign Policy. *Political Science Quarterly*, *133*(3), 401-435.

McKinney, R (2016). A Research Guide to the Federal Register and he Code of Federal Regulations. In: *law library Vol. 46, No. 1*, p.10-15 https://www.llsdc.org/assets/sourcebook/fr-cfr_research-guide.pdf

Meibauer, G. (2020). Interests, ideas, and the study of state behaviour in neoclassical realism. *Review of International Studies*, *46*(1), 20–36. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210519000214

Miller, S.A. (28.06.2016). Trumps vows to cancel Asian trade deal as president - - and puts NAFTA on notice. *Washington Post*. See: https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/jun/28/donald-trump-vows-to-cancel-trans-pacific-partners/

Mhundwa, C. (23.06.2020). Stoltenberg: US presence in Europe is important for NATO. *DW*. Available from: https://www.dw.com/en/stoltenberg-us-presence-in-europe-is-important-for-nato/a-53918183

Nai, A., Martínez I Coma, F., & Maier, J. (2019). Donald Trump, Populism, and the Age of Extremes: Comparing the Personality Traits and Campaigning Styles of Trump and Other Leaders Worldwide. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, *49*(3), 609–643. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/psq.12511

National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018, H.R. 2810, 115 Cong. (2017). https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/2810/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22North+Atlantic+Treaty+Organization%22%7D&r=4&s=5

National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020, S.1790, Cong.116. (2019). https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-

bill/1790/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22North+Atlantic+Treaty+Organization%22%7D&r=12&s=6

National Industrial Security Program, Vol. 83, No. 88, 83 FR 19950, (05/07/2018).

NATO. (2019a). *Opening remarks by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the reception to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of NATO*. Available from: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_165208.htm?selectedLocale=en

NATO. (2019b). *Statement on Russia's failure to comply with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty*. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_162996.htm

NATO (2020a). *Meeting of NATO Defence Ministers, Brussels 17-18 June* https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_176081.htm

NATO. (2020b) *Statement by the NATO Secretary General on the Open Skies Treaty*. Available from: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_175945.htm

NATO (2020b). *North Macedonia joins NATO as 30th member*. Available from: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_174589.htm

Nelson, L. (9.6.2017). Trump publicly commits to NATO mutual-defense provision. *Politico*. Available from: https://www.politico.com/story/2017/06/09/trump-nato-article-five-239362

Nuzzi (10.10.2018) My Private Oval Office Press Conference with Donald Trump, Mike Pence, John Kelly, and Mike Pompeo. *The New Yorker*. Available from: https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2018/10/my-private-oval-office-press-conference-with-donald-trump.html

O'Rourke, R. (2021). U.S. Role in the World: Background and Issues for Congress. R44891 (19.01.2021). Congressional Research Service. Available from: https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R44891.pdf

Parker, A. (2.04.2016). Donald Trump says NATO is "obsolete", UN is "Political Game". *New York Times*. Available from: https://www.nytimes.com/politics/first-draft/2016/04/02/donald-trump-tells-crowd-hed-be-fine-if-nato-broke-up/

Porter, P. (2018). Why America's Grand Strategy Has Not Changed: Power, Habit, and the U.S. Foreign Policy Establishment. *International Security*, *42*(04), 9–46. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00311

President of the United States. (2010). National Security Strategy. Available from: https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf

Prince, T. (18.10.2020). Alliance Attitudes: U.S. Election Pits Vocal NATO Backer Biden Against Frequent Critic Trump. *Radio free Europe*. Available from: https://www.rferl.org/a/analysis-u-s-election-pits-vocal-nato-backer-biden-against-frequent-critic-trump/30899301.html

Prokop, A. (18.08.2017). Steve Bannon's exit from the Trump White House, explained. *Vox*. Available from: https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/8/18/16145188/steve-bannon-fired-resigns

Rascoe, A. (24.09.2019). Trump to U.N. General Assembly: "the Future does not belong to Globalists". *NPR*. Available from: https://www.npr.org/2019/09/24/762351729/president-trump-to-address-u-n-general-assembly?t=1619771111192

Removal of Hong Kong as a separate destination under the export administration regulations, Vol. 85, No. 247, 85 FR 83765, (12/23/2020).

Renshon, S. A. (2021). The Trump Doctrine and Conservative American Nationalism, In: Renshon, S. A., & Suedfeld, P. (Eds.), (2021). *The Trump Doctrine and the Emerging International System*. (p.3-38). Springer International Publishing. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-45050-2

Revisions to the Export Administration Regulations based on the 2016 Missile Technology Control Regime Plenary Agreements, Vol. 82, No. 129, 82 FR 31442, (7/7/2017).

Ripsman, N. M., Taliaferro, J. W., & Lobell, S. E. (2016). *Neoclassical realist theory of international politics*. Oxford University Press.

Rogers, K. & Karni, A. (5.12.2019). In Tense Exchange, Trump and Macron Put Forth Dueling Visions for NATO. *New York Times*. Available from: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/03/us/politics/trump-nato-summit.html

Rose, G. (1998). Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy. *World Politics, 51*(1), 144-172. Available from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/25054068

Rosenau, J. (1971). *The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy*. New York: Free Press.

Sanger, E. (21.05.2020). Trump Will Withdraw from Open Skies Arms Control Treaty. *New York Times*. Available from: https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/21/us/politics/trump-open-skies-treaty-arms-control.html

Samuels, D. (5.05.2016). The Aspiring Novelist Who Became Obama's Foreign Policy Guru, *New York Times Magazine*. Available from:

https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/08/magazine/the-aspiring-novelist-who-became-obamas-foreign-policy-guru.html

Sanger, D. E. & Haberman, M. (26.03.2016). In Donald Trump's Worldview, America comes first, and everyone else pays. *New York Times.* Available from: https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/27/us/politics/donald-trump-foreign-policy.html

Schwartz, I. (14.08.2020). National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien: Trump Should Be Frontrunner For Nobel Peace Prize. *Real Clear Politics*. Available from: https://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2020/08/14/national_security_adviser_robert_obrien_trump_should_be_frontrunner_for_nobel_peace_prize.html

Shear, M. & Landler, M. (24.05.2017) Trump is expected to endorse NATO's mutual aid pledge, ending silence. *New York Times*. Available from: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/24/world/trump-nato.html

Shear, M. & Landler, M., Kanter, J. (25.05.2017). In NATO speech, Trump is vague about mutual defense pledge. New York Times. Available from: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/25/world/europe/donald-trump-eu-nato.html

Schmidt, B. (2018). 2. Theories of US foreign policy. In: Cox, M. & Stokes, D. (Eds.): *US Foreign Policy (3rd edn)*. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1093/hepl/9780198707578.003.0002

Sestanovich, S. (2017, May). The Brilliant Incoherence of Trump's Foreign Policy. *The Atlantic*. Available from: https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/05/the-brilliant-incoherence-of-trumps-foreign-policy/521430/

Soomro, J. (1.03.2020). Strategic Culture of the United States. *Modern Diplomacy*. Available from: https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/03/01/strategic-culture-of-united-states/

Stokes, D. (2018). Trump, American hegemony and the future of the liberal international order. *International Affairs, 94(1)*, 133-150.

Süddeutsche Zeitung. (29.05.2018). "Dies scheint das Ende einer Ära zu sein". Available from: https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/transatlantische-beziehungen-dies-scheint-das-ende-einer-aera-zu-sein-1.3525596

Suedfeld, P., Morrison, B. H. and Kuznar L. A. (2021). National Interest and the Trump Doctrine: the meaning of „America First", In: Renshon, S. A., & Suedfeld, P. (Eds.): *The Trump Doctrine and the Emerging International System*. (p.39-70). Springer International Publishing. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-45050-2

Summa, A. & Hannah, M. (2019). Worlds Apart: U.S. Foreign policy and American Public Opinion. In: *EGF*. https://egfound.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/EGF-WorldsApart-2019.pdf

Suspension of Entry as Immigrants and Nonimmigrants of Persons Who Pose a Risk of Transmitting 2019 Novel Coronavirus and Other Appropriate Measures To Address This Risk, Vol. 85, No. 24, 85 FR 6709, (2/05/2020).

Suspension of Entry as Immigrants and Nonimmigrants of Certain Additional Persons Who Pose a Risk of Transmitting 2019 Novel Coronavirus, Vol. 85, No. 43, 85 FR 12855 (Proclamation 3/4/2020).

Suspension of Entry as Immigrants and Nonimmigrants of Certain Additional Persons Who Pose a Risk of Transmitting 2019 Novel Coronavirus, Vol. 85, No. 51 , 85 FR 15045, (Proclamation 16/4/2020).

Suspension of Entry as Immigrants and Nonimmigrants of Certain Additional Persons Who Pose a Risk of Transmitting 2019 Novel Coronavirus, Vol. 85, No. 53, 85 FR 15341, (03/18/2020).

Suspension of Entry as Immigrants and Nonimmigrants of Certain Additional Persons Who Pose a Risk of Transmitting 2019 Novel Coronavirus, Vol. 85, No. 103, 85 FR 31933, (05/28/2020).

The Economist. (7.11.2019). Emmanuel Macron warns Europe: NATO is becoming brain-dead. Available from: https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/11/07/emmanuel-macron-warns-europe-nato-is-becoming-brain-dead

The Heroes Act, H.R.925, Cong. 116. (2020). https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/925/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22North+Atlantic+Treaty+Organization%22%7D&r=13&s=6

The Trump White House Archives. (n.d.). Promises made, Promises kept. Available from: https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/

The White House. (December 2017). National Security Strategy of the United States. Available from: https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf

The White House Office of the Press Secretary (2017). Remarks by President Trump at NATO Unveiling of the Article 5 and Berlin Wall Memorials – Brussels, Belgium. https://ru.usembassy.gov/remarks-president-trump-nato/

Trump, D. (16.06.2015). Here's Donald Trump's Presidential Announcement Speech. *Time.* See: https://time.com/3923128/donald-trump-announcement-speech/

Trump, D. (2016A, 27.04). Transcript: Donald Trump's Foreign Policy Speech. *New York Times*. Available from: https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/28/us/politics/transcript-trump-foreign-policy.html

Trump, D. (2016B, 21.03). Read Donald Trump's Speech to AIPAC. *Time*. Available from: https://time.com/4267058/donald-trump-aipac-speech-transcript/

Trump, D. (2016C). Donald Trump promises to cut regulation on "phony" environmental issues. *Time*. Available from: https://time.com/4349309/donald-trump-bismarck-energy-speech/

Trump, D. (2017). Trump to NATO: Allies have "to pay their fair share… they have to do that". In: *The Atlantic Council*. Available from: https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/trump-to-nato-allies-have-to-pay-their-fair-share-they-have-to-do-that/

Trump, D. (2017b). Trump's speech undermines Trump's new strategy. In: *The Atlantic Council*. Available from: https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/trump-credits-himself-for-raising-ten-of-billions-of-dollars-for-nato/

Trump, D. (2018). Trump confirms he threatened to withdraw from NATO. In: *The Atlantic Council*. Available from: https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/trump-confirms-he-threatened-to-withdraw-from-nato/

Trush, G. & Haberman,M. (29.01.2017). Bannon Is Given Security Role Usually Held for Generals. *New York Times*. Available from: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/29/us/stephen-bannon-donald-trump-national-security-council.html

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Fee Schedule and Changes to certain other immigration benefit request requirements, Vol. 85, No. 149, 85 FR 46788, (8/3/2020).

US Department of State, (2020). The West is Winning. Michael R. Pompeo, Secretary of State Munich Security Conference Munich, Germany February 15, 2020. https://2017-2021.state.gov/the-west-is-winning/index.html

US Mission to NATO (2018). July 12, 2018: Remarks by President Trump at Press Conference after 2018 NATO Summit Brussels. Available from: https://nato.usmission.gov/july-12-2018-remarks-by-president-trump-at-press-conference-after-2018-nato-summit-in-brussels/

van Dijk, T. A. (2006). Politics, Ideology, and Discourse. In: Brown, K.: *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics (2ed).* (pp. 728–740). Elsevier. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1016/B0-08-044854-2/00722-7

Visser, B. A., Book, A. S., & Volk, A. A. (2017). Is Hillary dishonest and Donald narcissistic? A HEXACO analysis of the presidential candidates' public personas. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *106*, 281–286. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2016.10.053

Welna, D. (3.12.2019). Under Trump, NATO Nations Get More U.S. Troops And Military Spending. *NPR*. Available from: https://www.npr.org/2019/12/03/784444270/under-trump-nato-nations-get-more-u-s-troops-and-military-spending?t=1624527757833

Wivel, A. (2005). Explaining why state X made a certain move last Tuesday: The promise and limitations of realist foreign policy analysis. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, *8*(4), 355–380. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jird.1800064

William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, H.R. 6395, Cong. 116. (2021). https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-

bill/6395/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22North+Atlantic+Treaty+Organization%22%7D&r=16&s=6

Woodward, B. (2018). *Fear: Trump in the White House*. Simon & Schuster: London.

Wright, T. (2017). Order from Chaos: Trump takes allies back to 19th century global order. In: *Brookings*. Available from: https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/03/21/trump-takes-allies-back-to-19th-century-global-order/

Wroughton, L. & Brunnstrom, D. (4.4.2019). Pompeo calls on NATO to adapt to new threats from Russia, China. *Reuters*. Available from: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-nato-idUSKCN1RG1JZ

Appendix 1 – All documents timeline

Document	Date	Origin
H.R. 244	5/5/2017	Congress
Revisions to the Export Administration Regulations	7/7/2017	Industry and Security Bureau
H.R. 3364	8/2/2017	Congress
Establishment of tricare select and other Tricare reforms	09/29/2017	Defense Department
Clarifications to the Export Administration Regulations for the Use of License Exceptions	11/01/2017	Industry and Security Bureau
H.R. 2810	12/12/2017	Congress
H.R. 1625	(3/23/2018)	Congress
Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy, 2018	3/27/2018	Presidential proclamation
National industrial Security Program	5/7/2018	Information Security Oversight Office
H.R. 5515	8/13/2018	Congress
H.R. 5895	9/21/2018	Congress
S.3021*	10/23/2018	Congress
Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program	11/19/2018	Personel Management Office
H.J. Res.31	2/15/2019	Congress
Greek Independence Day	3/21/2019	Presidential proclamation
General services Administration Acquisition Regulation (GSAR)	4/23/2019	check
Inadmissibility on Public charge grounds	8/14/2019	Homeland Security Department
H.R. 3055*	11/21/2019	Congress
H.R. 1865	12/20/2019	Congress
S.1790	12/20/2019	Congress
Control of firearms, guns ammunition and related articles	1/23/2020	Industry and Security Bureau
Suspension of Entry as Immigrants and Nonimmigrants […] Coronavirus […]	2/05/2020	Presidential Proclamation
Suspension of Entry as Immigrants and Nonimmigrants […] Coronavirus […]	3/4/2020	Presidential Proclamation
Suspension of Entry as Immigrants and Nonimmigrants […] Coronavirus […]	16/4/2020	Presidential Proclamation
Suspension of Entry as Immigrants and Nonimmigrants […] Coronavirus […]	3/18/2020	Presidential Proclamation
Suspension of Entry as Immigrants and	5/28/2020	Presidential Proclamation

Nonimmigrants […] Coronavirus […]		
Blocking Property of Certain Persons Associated With the ICC	6/15/2020	Executive Order
Federal Acquisition Regulation	7/2/2020	Defense Department, General Services Administration, National Aeronautics and Space Administration
H.R. 925*	10/01/2020	Congress
Federal acquisition regulation	7/14/2020	Defense Departement, General Services Administration, Nat. Aeronautics and Space Administration
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Fee Schedule and Changes	8/3/2020	Homeland Security Departement
Federal Acquisition Regulation	8/27/2020	Defense Departement, General Services Administration, Nat. Aeronautics and Space Administration
International Criminal Court related sanctions regulations	10/01/2020	Foreign Assets Control Office
Controls on the exports and reexports of water cannon systems	10/06/2020	Industry and Security Bureau
Federal Acquisition Regulation: Taxes-Foreign Contracts in Afghanistan; Introduction	10/23/2020	Defense Department, the General Services Administration, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Federal Acquisition Regulation: Taxes-Foreign Contracts in Afghanistan; small entity	10/23/2020	Defense Department, the General Services Administration, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement	11/23/2020	Defense Acquisition relation system
National Industrial Security Program operating manual	12/21/2020	Defense Departement
Removal of Hong Kong as a separate destination under the export administration regulations	12/23/2020	Industry and Security Bureau
H.R. 133	12/27/2020	Congress
H.R. 6395	01/01/2021	Congress
H.R. 2444	1/13/2021	Congress
Expansion of certain end-use and end-user controls and controls on specific activities of U.S. persons	01/15/2021	A Rule by the Industry and Security Bureau

Appendix – 2: Leader images consulted literature

The consulted literature based their evaluations on psychological methods, which have a well-founded history in personality evaluation (Nai, Martinez and Maier, 2019). And even though the three chosen works do not reflect the same analysis three times, the scholars based their assessments on similar variables making the outcomes a reliable and valuable source for the thesis.

The works, which are used to explain the leader image of Trump are first two psychological evaluations, the first is from Nai, Martinez and Maier (2019). The authors use as they specify, "Two of the most widely used inventories of personality traits" (Nai et al., 2019, p.612), the Big Five and the Dark Triad to analyse Trump. The Big Five takes five personality factors into account. First, Extraversion, which analyses sociable as well as active life (ibid., p.612). Second, agreeableness, which "pertains to the extent to which a person appears to be caring, loving, affectionate, polite, and kind" (MacAdams, 2016). Third, conscientiousness, referring to the "tendency to plan and organize all aspects of the individual and collective life" (Nai et al., 2019, p.612). Fourth, emotional stability. And fifth, openness, which pertains to experience new situations (ibid.). The Dark Triad on the other hand only takes three factors into account: Narcissism, Psychopathy and Machiavellianism. Nai et al. list among others these characteristics for narcissism: overconfidence, hypercompetitiveness, risk taking and aggressiveness. Psychopathy the authors describe as pessimistic about the intent of other individuals. And Machiavellianism they define as the "as prioritizing strategic behavior, ruse, and deception to increase direct and indirect benefits" (ibid., p.613). One of the goals of the research "then constitutes to provide systematic evidence about Trump's personality style" (ibid., p.613). To evaluate Trump's personality, the authors send a survey to external expert observers and based upon their responses, the authors construct Trump's personality style.

The second psychological evaluation stems from Visser, Book and Volk (2016). They take a similar approach as the previous authors but instead of evaluating Trump based on the Big Five and the Dark Triad, they choose to evaluate him based on the "HEXACO personality model" (Visser et al., 2016, p. 282). HEXACO relies upon six personality factors: "Honesty-Humility (H), Emotionality (E), eXtraversion (X), Agreeableness (A), Conscientious ness (C), and Openness to Experience (0)" (ibid.). The authors deem this approach more explanatory than the Big Five because it "delineates antisociality more clearly than the Big Five" (ibid.).

The third evaluation is from the psychologist Dan McAdams, who analysed Trump's personality for *the Atlantic* (2016). He also used the Big Five model to evaluate Trump. In

comparison to Nai et al., McAdams uses articles written about Trump, books from Trump as well as interviews with persons who encountered Trump (ibid.).