Finding the European Union's Grand Strategy

Understanding the Commission's role in formulating grand strategy

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Complexity is a crucial barrier to our understanding of how actors behave in the international arena. Market power, normative power, regulatory power, global power, civilian power, are all concepts which have been utilised to describe the EU international actorness. However, the interaction between these concepts, and how the EU employs these comprehensively has been less debated. Complexity, in this case, has the upper hand, as it is naturally an overwhelming task to parse the pieces together of the EU's strategic behaviour, because of the unique nature of the EU and the numerous avenues it utilises to exert influence in the international arena. It is only natural that different academics argue that the EU behaves according to different sources of power, as after all, the EU power has many facets. If we concentrate on trade agreements, there would be a natural inclination to think of market power.[1] However, if the focus is on the EU's use of its international identity and its diplomatic efforts to defend liberal values, a rather normative power would be more visible.[2] However, focusing on only one does not provide us with the full picture. Thus, this thesis argues that to avoid the tunnel vision which may result from looking at only one aspect of the EU's strategic behaviour prism it could be more useful to analyse these as comprehensive tools, as the EU regularly employs all of them in the international arena, in an attempt to behave strategically.

However, there are several questions which arise when speaking about international organisations (IOs) and their strategic behaviour. Mainly, how can an IO apply all of its tools of influence to behave strategically in the international arena? Many other questions originate from this, such as what is to behave strategically for an IOs? Is there any "national" interest which would make it behave strategically? The EU is often described as a *sine qua non* actor of international relations, as it can be found between an international organisation and a state-like actor. It is an international organisation, but it differs from others on the fact that it has supranational powers, it has had a history of pursuing its own agenda, and most importantly, it has several tools of power. Thus, the concepts which we utilise to analyse strategic behaviour could be applicable to the EU.

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[1] See Meunier and Nicolaïdis, '10. The European Union as a Trade Power'.
[2] See Manners, 'Normative Power Europe'.

One of the most prominent concepts utilised to analyse strategic behaviour is that of grand strategy. Grand strategy, by some considered as a buzzword given its numerous interpretations,[3] originated as a practical term to better understand how policymakers use the full scope of its states' capabilities in order to achieve their objectives.[4] However, as a concept, it has been subject to several iterations; even some argue it lost its meaning.[5] While indeed, discussions around grand strategy have sometimes paired with a seeming disregard for the actual meaning of the term;[6] if adequately defined and discussed, it provides a powerful tool to understand strategic actors. In this regard, grand strategy can be broadly defined as a framework where actors coordinate all of its resources to achieve a specific grand goal. Thus, grand strategy provides a valuable tool to solve the puzzle of how the EU behaves strategically - how does the EU utilise all of its tools comprehensively and strategically?

The relevance of this type of analysis is paramount. The international arena is facing a number of constraints and pressures, from growing great power competition, to the fallout of a global pandemic. Thus, with the backdrop of such instability, there are two essential reasons why addressing the puzzle on how the EU behaves grand strategically is so important. Firstly, the EU is facing a challenging period, where its geopolitical future it is at stake, either be, left behind giants like the US and China, or settle itself as a nexus of multilateralism.[7] In this context, current Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has proposed the Commission to become a "geopolitical commission", however it offered little information on how this geopolitical Commission would be achieved. This research provides important insights on how the EU can utilise all of its tools to formalize a framework which guides future actions to achieve the role of a geopolitical commission. Secondly, in line with efforts of the current Commission to become a geopolitical commission, the number of initiatives that the EU plans to carry on has grown and will continue to do so, on top of the numerous initiatives put forth by the previous administration. However, there have been few discussions on how the Commission would be able to articulate all these new initiatives and tools in a common framework providing coherence to its international behaviour. In this regard, the EU is becoming more capable, but the question is, how effective can it be? How can the EU bring all

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[3] See Silove, 'Beyond the Buzzword'.
[4] See Layton, 'The Idea of Grand Strategy', 56–57.
[5] See Milevski, *The Evolution of Modern Grand Strategic Thought*, 1.
[6] For an example of this disregard on the definition of the concept, see Makarovič, Šušteršič, and Rončević, 'Is Europe 2020 Set to Fail?'
[7] Naturally, these represent two ends of the spectrum, and in reality it will fall somewhere in between these two extremes.

of its new tools and initiatives in a way to act strategically in the international arena, where transatlantic allies seem somewhat unpredictable, and its influence in faraway regions, such as East Asia or Latin American, appears to decrease?

This thesis attempts to address such puzzle, through the analysis of past EU's interactions with grand strategy. In doing so, it asks "Does the EU have a grand strategy?". By asking this question, this thesis differentiates from previous approaches to understanding the EU and grand strategy, where the debates have been rather theoretical discussions of whether the EU can or cannot have a grand strategy.[8] Instead, this thesis theorises that international organisations are capable of having grand strategies and that as such, the EU could be considered as an actor who already attempts to behave grand strategically. In this regard, the hypothesis is that the EU already had a grand strategy during the Jean-Claude Juncker's Commission. To find if this assumption is valid, this thesis engages in a critical discourse analysis of EU official communications to identify the presence of a grand strategic framework during Juncker's Commission. Moreover, by focusing on the Commission, this thesis attempts to place the focus in an underestimated actor in the EU and grand strategy debate, as this debate has surrounded mainly the Council.

The thesis is structured in the following way. The next chapter provides a rather lengthy but comprehensive discussion around grand strategy, engaging with what grand strategy means and what actually comprises grand strategy. The third chapter presents the research design of this thesis, first arguing the need to include International Organisations in the debates around grand strategy, and how in theory international organisations engage with grand strategy, followed by presenting the research question and the case justification. The fourth chapter presents the findings of the analysis, illustrating Juncker's grand strategy, divided into two phases following the two overarching goals of its grand strategy. Finally, the conclusions summarise the previous sections and offer certain insights from this research as well as future recommendations.

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[8] See Biscop and Coelmont, *Europe, Strategy and Armed Forces*; Berindan, 'Not Another "Grand Strategy"'; Vennesson, 'Competing Visions for the European Union Grand Strategy'; Simon, *Geopolitical Change, Grand Strategy and European Security: The EU-NATO Conundrum*.

Chapter 2: Literature Review: What is Grand Strategy?

Grand strategy as a concept has seen a significant number of changes. It has evolved from an innovative approach on understanding war,[9] to an inanimate and unrealistic conception of strategy by a given actor which can last for hundreds of year,[10] and to a systemic framework as it is conceptualised today.[11] It is this history of constant change and debate which erupted much of the criticism towards Grand strategy. Milevski, an academic of such view, went forward to argue that there is not much use for grand strategy as a concept if there is no clear definition.[12] Others, such as Balzacq et al. argued instead that it is this lack of a standarized definition which gives grand strategy advantages in order to analyse actors in international relations.[13] Naturally, there is some truth to both statements. On the one hand, the lack of a clear definition for grand strategy leads to a significant amount of mysticism and confusion when the concept is utilised.[14] On the other, setting a hard-set definition for what grand strategy is or is composed of, can run the risk of limiting the number of cases where grand strategy could be utilised to effectively analyse specific strategic behaviour.[15] This is to a large extent the debate in the literature when concerns to the EU or other non-state actors, where often, "strawmen" utilise the lack of military power as an absolute argument of why there is no capability for grand strategy without justifying how this undermines an entire grand strategic framework.[16]

The purpose of this chapter will be to illustrate the primary debates around grand strategy, and locate how this work contributes to the literature as to how it conceives the use of grand strategy by international organisations. In order to illustrate the different debates in the literature, the outline is as follows; First, the following section will go over the classical definitions of grand strategy. Second, it discusses grand strategy when concerning war and peace, an important distinction as it shows the evolution of the original concept. Thirdly it goes through the main components of grand strategy. Fourth, it addresses the European question by analysing how scholars have debated whether the EU ought to have, or is capable of having a grand strategy,

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[9] Hart, *Strategy*, 335.

[10] Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, 4.

[11] Brands, *What Is Good Is Grand Strategy?*, 3.

[12] Milevski, 'The Mythology of Grand Strategy', 32; Milevski, *The Evolution of Modern Grand Strategic Thought*, 1 & 151–52.

[13] Balzacq, Dombrowski, and Reich, *Comparative Grand Strategy*, 3.

[14] See Layton, 'The Idea of Grand Strategy'; Milevski, 'The Mythology of Grand Strategy'.

[15] Balzacq, Dombrowski, and Reich, *Comparative Grand Strategy*, 3–4; Kornprobst, 'Building Agreements upon Agreements', 269–70.

[16] See Simon, *Geopolitical Change, Grand Strategy and European Security: The EU-NATO Conundrum*.

and it provides its own argumentation on why such debate needs to be put aside as the EU already behaves in a grand strategic fashion.

2.1. Classical Definitions

Strategy has often been seen through a militaristic bias, at least in strategic studies. While utilised across different fields of study, strategic studies have traditionally limited it to military strategy. Grand strategy has not been free from such a trend. However, even from the classics in strategic studies, the idea of only analysing war only through military strategy was not considered to be sufficient. The famous quote from Clausewitz, "War is the continuation of politics by other means",[17] and later the idea that military strategy should not be analysed as a bubble with no connection to political goals, are proof of that.[18] Hence, in 1911 the first references to grand strategy, and a comprehensive approach to war, appeared. It was Sir Julian Stafford Corbett who first spoke of "major strategy", alluding to an upper layer of strategy dealing with "ulterior" objects; and "minor strategies" which dealt with primary objects, guided by the major strategy.[19] While not directly mentioning the phrase "grand strategy", its definition closely resembled that proposed by Sir B.H. Liddell Hart some years later.[20] Hart, often regarded as the father of grand strategy,[21] proposed that the task of grand strategy is to coordinate all the resources of a nation or a coalition of nations to achieve a political objective in war.[22]

It is no surprise that Hart focused on non-military strategies in the context of war, given that he wrote his contributions during the 1930s.[23] By the 1930s and 40s, with the experience of World War I and World War II, the relevance of other strategies instead of just the military strategy was becoming apparent in the context of war, such as economic and political strategies.[24] An example of this is what is sometimes referred to as the "English way of war", which involves a substantial degree of economic coercion through the primacy of blockades and attacking

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[17] Clausewitz, *On War*, 28.
[18] Gray, *The Strategy Bridge*, 28–29.
[19] Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, 309; Milevski, *The Evolution of Modern Grand Strategic Thought*; Caliskan, 'Hybrid Warfare through the Lens of Strategic Theory', 18–19.
[20] For Corbett's definition, see Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, 308.
[21] Milevski, 'The Mythology of Grand Strategy', 29–30.
[22] Hart, *Strategy*, 335.
[23] Kennedy, *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, 3.
[24] See Milevski, *The Evolution of Modern Grand Strategic Thought*, 46–47.

economically-relevant targets.[25] To this extent, grand strategic authors have also included Alfred T. Mahan as a reference for pre-grand strategic thinking, as he also considered non-military strategies, in particularly naval power, as of primal importance for influencing other nations.[26] However, conceptualisations of grand strategy as a matter of war have not always been updated with regards to the current state of affairs in international relations. For example, some authors still utilise Hart's definition as given, holding to either the notion that grand strategy is the ultimate goal of war or the presence of military strategy to be of foremost importance for grand strategy.[27] This is the example of Simon's 2013 book, where he utilised Hart's definition to exclude the EU of grand strategic capabilities because there is no "military" component on the EU's toolkit.[28] Moreover, Colin Gray exemplifies this approach by stating that grand strategy without the military aspect, was simply not grand strategy.[29] In a most recent book by Balzacq and others, these adherents to the classical definitions are considered as "The classicist approach".[30]

Attempts to define grand strategy, however, did not stop with Hart or Corbett; neither did they stop after the inter-war period. Although as with geopolitics, there was a slump in the concept's popularity, given the rise of nuclear strategy.[31] When grand strategy resurged, the Cold War brought an important question: how would two great powers wrestle against each other while avoiding military means, but with the threat of such always looming?[32] Nonetheless, during the Cold War era, a common definition was still not achieved. Hart did not expand on its study of grand strategy, further contributing to the stagnation and the eruption of different debates, such as that between war and peace.[33] The Cold War illustrated how is it that the lines between peace and war become blurred in the context of grand strategy. While during both world wars, military strategies became the central aspect of any grand strategy, in the case of the Cold War that was less evident. Inevitably, nuclear strategy and deterrence became prominent during the Cold War, however other non-military elements also rose to prominence such as economic strategies, political strategies, and informational strategies as tools for state competition. While which of the aforementioned non-military elements was more important falls outside the scope of this

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[25] See Lambert, 'Brits-Krieg: The Strategy of Economic Warfare', 123–47.
[26] Milevski, 'The Suitability of Grand Strategy for Today', 1.
[27] See Art, *A Grand Strategy for America*; Caliskan, 'Hybrid Warfare through the Lens of Strategic Theory'.
[28] Simon, *Geopolitical Change, Grand Strategy and European Security: The EU-NATO Conundrum*, 36.
[29] Caliskan, 'Hybrid Warfare through the Lens of Strategic Theory'.
[30] Balzacq, Dombrowski, and Reich, *Comparative Grand Strategy*.
[31] Milevski, *The Evolution of Modern Grand Strategic Thought*, 83.
[32] See Brands, *What Is Good Is Grand Strategy?*
[33] Milevski, 'The Mythology of Grand Strategy', 29–30.

thesis, what the Cold War made clear was that military resources and strategies were no longer the most critical aspect of grand strategy. The resurgence to prominence of non-military strategies as part of state competition depicted that even without the physicality of war - through the lack of kinetic confrontations in the territory of state -, grand strategy was still as relevant and necessary during peacetime. However, it is the fact that war and peace require different conditions to achieve success, which leads some authors to argue for a different term instead of grand strategy during peace times, referring to it as statecraft.[34] In the following section, we will discuss such divergence; How grand strategy can be understood during peace and war, and how do these conditions shape our understanding of what grand strategy is.

2.2. War and Peace

Establishing the difference between war and peace is a fundamental prerequisite for understanding grand strategy. In war, the context is one where physical security predominates, whereas, in peace, soft power tools predominate, i.e. diplomacy. In this regard, the concept of grand strategy cannot be considered in the same way as it is understood during war if defined through the classical approach. When thinkers such as Art or Gray, argue that the notion of military power is a vital part of grand strategy, they do so with the understanding of a certain degree of predominance of military power over other forms of power, characteristic of war-like contexts. At the same time, classical thinkers such as Hart clearly understood military power as an essential part of grand strategy given the context of intra war period, where the analysis of "war" was the main interest. On the other hand, thinkers such as Brands or Mor put elements such as foreign policy or public diplomacy and culture, as of primary importance in grand strategy given the rather peaceful context to which states are surrounded today.[35] In this regard, we refer to "peace" in a similar approach to that proposed by Galtung and the concept of negative peace.[36] Negative peace can be defined as by the absence of violence and war.[37] This does not exclude the presence of military power, but it certainly relegates it to a less predominant role as diplomacy, economics, and informational domains may become more relevant.

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[34] Milevski, 'Strategy Versus Statecraft in Crimea', 24–25.
[35] See Mor, 'Public Diplomacy in Grand Strategy'; Brands, *What Is Good Is Grand Strategy?*
[36] Martín, 'Critical Analysis of the Concept of Peace in International Relations', 46.
[37] Galtung, 'An Editorial', 2.

However, the distinction between war and peace creates another debate: that between grand strategy and statecraft, mainly where do the limits between grand strategy and statecraft lie. Few other concepts have had such a divisive history when it comes down to its definition, as statecraft and grand strategy. Statecraft, on the one hand, has been argued differently in political science and international relations. Because of the nature of grand strategy, as well as this thesis' scope, the concept of statecraft as regarded by political science, which is mainly focused in party politics, will not be contemplated here. In international relations, statecraft has been defined by some authors, as foreign policy strategy, where diplomacy is considered vital in the pursuit of political interests.[38] Other works such as Hill 2010, consider statecraft through a rather macro-level approach, assuming that statecraft involves almost every element of politics and how leaders shape all elements of politics for national "interest".[39] In both cases, the prevailing assumption is that leaders will utilise statecraft as a matter of coordination the resources of a nation for the "national interest", which seems to be rather an abstract political goal than a concrete policy goal.[40] This brings an important distinction, as grand strategy is concerned with the goals which focus in a closer timespan than that of statecraft, and which tend to have direct policy implications,[41] contrarily than abstract political goals of statecraft which often inform grand strategies albeit these do not represent their objective. The distinction between political goals for statecraft and grand strategy will be further elaborated in section 2.3.

The cloudiness surrounding the definition of grand strategy, and statecraft, lead to the convoluting of both concepts. For example, Kennedy argues that grand strategy "[w]as about the evolution and integration of policies that should operate for decades, or even centuries".[42] Kennedy's definition only creates further confusion in separating statecraft and grand strategy. A pre-defined strategy can hardly be sustained for decades or even centuries, as unknown developments will likely take place, making it hardly plausible for a grand strategy to be sustained for "centuries". That can be further exemplified by one of the cases that Kennedy argues to prove a century-long grand strategy, the Roman Empire. In Kennedy's book, the chapter concerning the Roman empire argues that throughout Augustus' reign, several reconceptualisations of policy and political goals took place, corresponding to one grand

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[38] See Kaplan, 'An Introduction to the Strategy of Statecraft'.
[39] Hill, *Grand Strategies*; Also see Brands and Inboden, 'Wisdom without Tears'.
[40] Craig, *Force and Statecraft*.
[41] Gray, *War, Peace, and Victory*, 24.
[42] Kennedy, *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, 4.

strategy.[43] However, several reconceptualisations of policy goals may instead characterise several different grand strategies. Hence, Kennedy's definition seems to appeal more to the definition of statecraft than that of grand strategy. However, that is not to say that Kennedy's definition of grand strategy is rendered erroneous, as that would also be incorrect. Instead, Kennedy's definition seems to take statecraft for granted, as it would be the role of statecraft to guide and motivate the creation of different grand strategies which are connected through a broader, and abstract political goal. In that regards, grand strategy must be considered inside the realm of statecraft, as statecraft may command the political goal, and grand strategy the policy goal informed by statecraft. Grand strategy does not occur in a vacuum, where each grand strategy is an unconnected and individual framework of a given polity or leader; instead, they are connected by the sense of statecraft.

The differentiation between statecraft and grand strategy is one of crucial importance for the debate between grand strategy during war and peace, as these ultimately differ in terms of what is the actual goal. That is, in war, it is almost mandatory to defeat an enemy, either from submission or through surrender, to achieve the greater political ends. [44] During peace, however, the political end could be a multiplicity of things, as in war, but there is no mandatory pre-condition to achieve such goal, such as forcing an enemy to surrender or submit. It is no surprise then, that both concepts – statecraft and grand strategy – hint at the differences between war and peace. If the purpose of grand strategy is to deal with a threat to an actor's security,[45] war provides a more explicit example. On the other hand, statecraft could seem rather predominant during peace, where the presence of an enemy is generally diffused, and the urgency of a threat is not as visible as in war. However, neither concept is exclusive to either peace or war.[46] Statecraft is always part of the wartime conceptualisations of strategy, as it is statecraft which commands grand strategy.[47] On the other hand, the role of grand strategy during peace cannot be ignored. An illustration of its importance can be seen through periods of great power competition, where two or more great powers employ a broad set of strategies, from diplomatic

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[43] Ferrill, 'The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire', 74.
[44] Milevski, 'Choosing Strategy', 16.
[45] See Posen, 'A Grand Strategy of Restraint', 84.
[46] Cf. Milevski, 'Strategy Versus Statecraft in Crimea'.
[47] Gray, *The Strategy Bridge*, 18; 113.

to the military, in order to achieve a significant advantage against its enemies even without a declaration of war.[48]

As the objective of this thesis is to explore how international organisations engage in Grand Strategy, -in particular the EU-, the concept of statecraft will not be explored further. Having distinguished grand strategy and statecraft, this thesis will focus on concrete political and policy goals rather than abstract political goals which correspond to statecraft instead of grand strategy. By taking such an approach, this thesis engages directly with the concept of grand strategy and the practical implications it has for policymakers. This thesis differs from other authors contributions which did not differentiate between political and policy goals, placing them closer to the concept of statecraft rather than grand strategy, which is something that this thesis attempts to avoid.[49] At the same time, that means that this thesis will not be employing the definitions of grand strategy by Gaddis or Kennedy, as these do not provide a clear delimitation in order to analyse concrete political and policy goals, as discussed previously. Neither it will focus on grand strategy as an abstract, non-coordinated or spontaneous approach to build state power, as Popescu suggests grand strategies can be.[50] As we will discuss in the next section, the focus of this thesis will be to identify the concrete political and policy goals, means and the structure of the EU's grand strategy, and what these elements mean.

2.3. Grand Strategy: what is it comprised of?

To illustrate what grand strategy is, a useful approach can be that of delineating what grand strategy consists of. This approach has been taken by other academics, such as Balzacq et al. or Brands.[51] The reasoning behind this approach is not to fall into the pitfalls of what could be called the American debate on grand strategy. In American academia, there are a set of assumptions to which grand strategy falls upon. According to Balzacq. Et al. 2019 these are; first, a need for a single definition of grand strategy, although this is heavily contested across the literature. Second, only a superpower has sufficient institutional or material resources to formulate and implement grand strategy. Third, grand strategy is a predominantly rational and

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[48] For examples in the importance of the US Grand Strategy in a period of great power competition, see Gaddis, 'Grand Strategies in the Cold War'; Hill, *Grand Strategies*; Brands, *What Is Good Is Grand Strategy?*; For a Chinese example, see Jisi, 'China's Search for a Grand Strategy'.

[49] See Berindan, 'Not Another "Grand Strategy"'; Vennesson, 'Competing Visions for the European Union Grand Strategy'.

[50] Cf. Ionut Popescu, 'Grand Strategy vs Emergent Strategy in the Conduct of Foreign Policy'; For further critism on the myth of opportunitist grand strategies, see Layton, 'The Idea of Grand Strategy'.

[51] Balzacq, Dombrowski, and Reich, *Comparative Grand Strategy*; Brands, *What Is Good Is Grand Strategy?*

objective response to the exigencies of the environment. Fourth, the international order is a stable one, and hence there is no need for grand strategies. Finally, grand strategy focuses on shaping the nature and characteristics of the global system, instead of adapting to it.[52]

While some of the aforementioned contributions are positive for the debate around grand strategy, there are limitations which arise from these assumptions. First, there is a clear debate around the need (or not) of a clear-cut definition of grand strategy. Milevski and Grey are clear examples of this side of the debate, which argues the need for a clear definition. In this regard, Milevski points out that grand strategy definitions must be revised in order to be useful for policymakers.[53] Contrarily, Freedman and Gaddis argue for broader definitions or some even challenge the need for a clear definition at all.[54] This thesis locates itself in the middle ground of both debates. Which means that, while there is a need for a definition in order to avoid making too broad of assumptions; that definition has to be sufficiently broad so as not to disregard representative case studies which would be often disregarded by a limited or arbitrary definition. In order to satisfy such condition, elaborating a framework of what can grand strategy be, could become a preferable and more compatible approach towards the goal of the concept, than a "hard-set" definition.[55]

To find a guiding framework of what grand strategy consists, an appropriate approach would be to take out the fundamental elements of the classical definitions of grand strategy. In Hart's definition, we can identify three components. First, resources, addressed by sub-strategies[56] which theorise how to employ such resources in order to achieve the given objective.[57] Each of these resources must be understood in relation to the context of a given player and its real capabilities.[58] About "resources", Hart suggested that the domains of economics, culture and diplomacy are all of vital relevance for the conduct of grand strategy.[59] As illustrated in the sections above, a major difference between the so-called classicist and international relations theorists is that they assume different resources or strategies as necessary. However, a common limitation of both approaches is that by assuming a specific resource/strategy as a necessary condition, such as military power, which does not allow to analyse different actors in the

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[52] Balzacq, Dombrowski, and Reich, *Comparative Grand Strategy*, 2–3.
[53] Milevski, *The Evolution of Modern Grand Strategic Thought*, 153.
[54] See Gaddis, *On Grand Strategy*; Freedman, 'Capsule Review- The Evolution of Modern Grand Strategic Thought'.
[55] For a similar approach, see Balzacq, Dombrowski, and Reich, *Comparative Grand Strategy*.
[56] Or "minor strategies" as argued by Corbett.
[57] Layton, 'The Idea of Grand Strategy', 57.
[58] See Martel, *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice: The Need for an Effective American Foreign Policy*.
[59] Hart, *Strategy*, 335–36.

international system effectively.[60] In response to this, a plausibly more reliant approach is that of defining indicators which show relevant domains, but not mandatory, for the realm of grand strategies.

In this sense, this thesis draws upon the contributions of Layton and Martel,[61] by understanding that sub-strategies must be able to be influenced by the actor employing them, have an effect on an opposite actor, with a direct relation towards the grand strategic goal. On this subject, Deibel suggests the utilisation of the "diplomatic, information, military and economic framework" (DIME), as a guidance road in order to analyse statecraft.[62] Bekker et al. offered a similar approach order to analyse hybrid tactics.[63] Hybrid tactics can be understood as the use of power instruments which may fall, mainly, under the realm of Diplomatic, Military, Informational and economic domains, employed below the threshold of war to coerce adversaries, ideally without the resource to violence.[64] It could be argued that the comprehensive approach of hybrid tactics presents a similar approach to what grand strategy aims to achieve,[65] hence the validity of Bekker's contribution. Finally, Caliskan 2019 also argues that the DIME framework constitutes an effective one for grand strategic analysis. It is from such notion that this thesis argues on utilising DIME as a guiding parameter to identify relevant domains for EU's engagement with grand strategy, without considering all of the four domains as mandatory for the presence of grand strategy. By doing this, this thesis can include strategies which may fall on the blind spot of other approaches such as the Classicist approach which predominantly focus on military strategies, potentially missing the impact of cultural or cyber strategies. Thus, that would pair this thesis closer to the approach of the international relations for grand strategy, instead of the classicist approach.[66]

Secondly, another component of Hart's definition is that of the objective or goal. The goal is a pivotal aspect of grand strategy, which also differentiates it with other types of strategies. Gaddis argues that it is the goal -an "existential" goal- which gives grand strategy its status of grand.[67] However, Gaddis also argues that once there is an existential goal, there is a grand

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[60] See Balzacq, Dombrowski, and Reich, *Comparative Grand Strategy*.

[61] Layton, 'The Idea of Grand Strategy'; Martel, *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice: The Need for an Effective American Foreign Policy*.

[62] Deibel, *Foreign Affairs Strategy*, 208–9.

[63] Bekkers, Meessen, and Lassche, 'Hybrid Conflicts: The New Normal?', 8–9.

[64] See Caliskan, 'Hybrid Warfare through the Lens of Strategic Theory'; European Commission, Joint Framework on countering hybrid threats a European Union response.

[65] See Caliskan, 'Hybrid Warfare through the Lens of Strategic Theory'.

[66] Balzacq, Dombrowski, and Reich, *Comparative Grand Strategy*, 7–8.

[67] Gaddis, *On Grand Strategy*, 21–22; Gaddis, 'What Is Grand Strategy?'

strategy, and openly argues that even a student designing its student plan can be considered to have a grand strategy.[68] At the same time, the definition proposed by Kennedy (see Section 2.2) assumes a long term goal, which can sustain grand strategies for hundreds of years, potentially conflicting with the separation between grand strategy and statecraft. Following this line of argumentation, authors such as Milevski and Layton have criticised such approaches for ignoring the practical applications that grand strategy looks to provide.[69]

It has been the nature of such goal which has been a controversial aspect around what grand strategy is. Silove 2018 exposes three interpretations to grand strategy across the literature: *as a plan*, *as an organising principle*, *as a pattern of behaviour*. The first, as a plan, describes to an extent a rather concrete and concise approach to grand strategy, understanding it as a codified, limited, and enforceable strategy rather than purely ideological.[70] The second describes a framework without an actual plan but instead, a set of parameters through which actions should take place and develop.[71] The third is characterised by a broader and abstract understanding of grand strategy, as a pattern of state behaviour which runs closer to the articulation of Kennedy's definition, where grand strategy is the sum of several actions by a state. While the three interpretations of grand strategy contribute to the debate of strategic behaviour, there is an inherent need to clarify what grand strategy in this thesis refers to. With regards to the third approach, that of state behaviour, this speaks closer to that of statecraft than grand strategy. As addressed before, statecraft is in itself a pattern of state behaviour, which runs for long periods of time, and which its goal is one rather abstract. That is not to say that Kennedy's definition is *per se* incompatible with grand strategy as there have been decades-long grand strategies; however, the idea of a century-long grand strategy must be carefully examined as not to be confused with statecraft. Thus, the second and first approach, this thesis argues, provide a better understanding of grand strategy as a concept. Grand strategy as a plan offers a more precise subject of study, as well as it reduces the uncertainty of what grand strategy can and cannot be. In order for something to be grand strategy, there must be a goal, which must be a security-related goal, requiring it to be closer to reality than a merely ideological goal, and there must be a set of actions proposed to achieve such goal.[72] Grand strategy as an organising principle does not differ completely, as the goal is defined along the

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[68] Gaddis, *On Grand Strategy*, 21.
[69] See Layton, 'The Idea of Grand Strategy'; Milevski, 'The Mythology of Grand Strategy'.
[70] Posen, 'A Grand Strategy of Restraint', 84.
[71] See Brands, *What Is Good Is Grand Strategy?*
[72] Posen, 'A Grand Strategy of Restraint', 84.

lines of the previous approach, but the difference relies on the presence of a codified set of actions. Grand strategy as an organising principle regards grand strategy closer to a framework rather than to a concrete an actual plan.

The quest for a codified goal speaks to the need of policymakers to have a base from which they design policy. Stolberg, for example, argues that an example of such codification of grand strategies is national security strategies. [73] An illustration of this can be seen on the Finnish "Security Strategy for Society" -2017 being the most recent update of it-, a document produced by the Finnish government which sets the different strategies and goals to be achieved by the different sectors of the state as to achieve a final goal.[74] An alternative approach is proposed by Popescu, suggesting the presence of "emergent" grand strategies, which do not have a codified goal from the start, but instead, find one "on the go".[75] This is similar to that of opportunistic strategies, to which they assume that countries can have grand strategies which take advantage of sudden changes in the international arena. However, while these alternative approaches may contribute to understanding how countries react to the international environment, they do not fully correspond to grand strategy. Both emergent strategies and opportunistic strategies run counter to the purpose of grand strategy as they do not define a policy goal from its inception and instead found that along the way.[76] That makes grand strategy a context-specific framework, in its framing of a goal, which is not to say that grand strategies are rigid or fixed frameworks. Grand strategies can be modified as the proposed strategy is applied, however, the goal is somehow stable.[77] Moreover, if we understand grand strategy as a framework, the absence of a goal would lead to an absence of a priority making mechanism, and thus, the lack of a grand strategic framework.

The need for grand strategic goals to be limited and enforceable cannot be excluded. Both necessities sprung from the practical aspirations of grand strategy. If grand strategy is to be a concept to which policymakers can look to make coordinated and effective manoeuvres internationally,[78] then grand strategy cannot just be an entirely abstract or ideological framework. Nonetheless, the need for a time-limited grand strategy cannot ignore the fact that creating a strict time restriction would be unrealistic in politics. An illustration of such

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[73] Stolberg, 'How Nation-States Craft National Security Strategy Documents', 14–15.
[74] See 'The Security Strategy for Society'.
[75] Popescu, 'Grand Strategy vs Emergent Strategy in the Conduct of Foreign Policy', 446.
[76] Layton, 'The Idea of Grand Strategy', 59–60.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Brands, *What Is Good Is Grand Strategy?*, 3.

distinction is present in the differences between assuming International Hegemony as a grand strategic goal in the one side and defeating a great power in the other. While both are clear goals, the former assumes a rather general and political approach, where the latter assumes a more immediate and concrete approach. At the same time, if the need was that to coordinate resources or sub-strategies, "assuming international hegemony" would not give a clear picture on which are the tools required to do so, neither which are the most present threats or opportunities. On the other hand, "defeating the soviet union" -for example- gives more practical information, as policymakers can effectively utilise those strategies which may target weaknesses on the opponent and maximise influence.[79] To this regard, containment was not the goal of grand strategy, but instead, the type of grand strategy that was opted for. The discussion around types of grand strategies has been one which requires a further discussion in future works.

Another critical discussion involves the type of goal to be achieved as a determinant element for grand strategy. To this regard, authors such as Posen or Art, articulate that grand strategy should be focused towards security, hard power-related goals, and not in other soft power objectives such as fighting climate change or economic goals.[80] On the other hand, authors such as Layton or Kornprobst, challenge this assumption and seem to argue that grand strategic goals are to be determined by the needs of the actor rather than by one theme.[81] It must be pointed out that both Posen or Art's approaches are characterised by the American approach to grand strategy and discuss grand strategy in the context of US foreign policy and great power competition. While goals which are characterised by a traditional definition of security, that is a physical characterisation of security, are of particular importance for great powers, to consider these as a mandatory condition for grand strategy follows a realist view of international relations rather than the practical context to which grand strategy operates.

The international order faces constant change, and power competition changes with it.[82] The presence of hybrid threats has moved power competition from a physical confrontation to the grey zone, where different domains interact with one another.[83] In this environment, grand strategic goals may not correspond to traditional conceptions of security -defence of the

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[79] See Brands, *What Is Good Is Grand Strategy?*
[80] Posen, 'A Grand Strategy of Restraint', 84.
[81] See Layton, 'The Idea of Grand Strategy'; Kornprobst, 'Building Agreements upon Agreements'.
[82] Haass, 'How a World Order Ends'.
[83] See Torossian, Görder, and Fagliano, 'Hybrid Conflict: Neither War, nor Peace'; Van Manen and Sweijs, 'Military Competition in Perspective: Trends in Major Powers' Postures and Perceptions'.

territory-, as actors may find more convenient to exploit informational domains to achieve a superior stance in the international order to put forward its agenda. That is not to say there is no validity on the presence of traditional security-related goals in grand strategy. However, reducing grand strategy only to such goals does potentially ignore a broad number of case studies. Such a blind spot constitutes a negative development for grand strategy, as states have moved beyond traditional conceptions of security, and maybe ignored because a physical connotation of security is not pursued by its grand strategy. This thesis argues that the EU is a victim of such approach and a case study which must be analysed in a closer look, as its grand strategic aspirations seem to be connected with influencing the international order although traditional physical-security concerns are less of a concern than other aspects, such as economic security or political security.

Finally, Hart's definition assumes a relationship between the goals and the means. To a larger extent, is this relationship which gives grand strategy its meaning. Grand strategy as a framework aims to effectively distribute the scarcity of resources of a nation to achieve a specific goal.[84] In this regard, grand strategy assumes a priority-setting mechanism, to designate which strategies would be more efficient and more present.[85] Because of this priority setting mechanism, the role of strategic culture cannot be ignored. Strategic culture provides an underlying framework of the strategic decision-making community behavioural patterns, ideals, and responses, which influences countries strategic behaviour.[86] The role of strategic culture in strategic theory saw its prime time during the Cold War when there was a need of the west to understand the behaviour and responses from the Soviet Union.[87] It is in this context that the relationship between strategic culture and grand strategy also surfaced. Helmut Schmidt, Germany's chancellor between 1974 and 1982, writes in his book *A Grand Strategy for the West*, about the need to understand the Soviet Union reactions and how would they respond, in an attempt to predict their grand strategic objectives.

Moreover, the role of priority setting mechanisms also works as a differentiator between grand strategies, and it is a crucial element to understand the differences between how different actors pursue power. The role of priority setting mechanisms in grand strategy is a crucial aspect to

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[84] Gaddis, *On Grand Strategy*; Layton, 'The Idea of Grand Strategy'; Brands, *What Is Good Is Grand Strategy?*; Schmidt, *A Grand Strategy for the West*.
[85] Martel, *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice: The Need for an Effective American Foreign Policy*; Biscop and Coelmont, *Europe, Strategy and Armed Forces*.
[86] Snyder, 'The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Options'; Biava, Drent, and Herd, 'Characterizing the European Union's Strategic Culture: An Analytical Framework'.
[87] Freedman, *Strategy: A History*.

understand the strategic bridge between the goals and the end. It means, that grand strategy by its nature, coordinates the different resources of the nation following a set of goals which are influenced by the rational preferences of a given actor. Thus, the top-down connotation of grand strategy is informed by such a priority-setting mechanism, which acts a bridge between ends and means, informed by the strategic culture of a given player and its context.[88]   This differentiation is not a minor one, as it helps inform the decisions on the EU's soft power approach against the US's hard power approach, which is pointed out through several sections of this thesis. [89]

Grand strategy must be understood as a framework, where the role of goal, means, and the relationship between those takes primary importance. At the same time, the player must be able to coordinate significant resources, such as diplomatic, economic, military or informational capabilities, to an extent to influence other players in the international arena or during a conflict. Moreover, grand strategies cannot be considered as a process which can extend for "hundreds of years", but instead, it must be a policy objective, with a clear framework for its success. To this effect, Brands defined grand strategy as "an integrated scheme of interests, threats, resources and policies. It is the conceptual framework that helps nations determine where they want to go and how they ought to get there".[90] Following this example, this thesis incorporates the aforementioned elements of strategic culture and the nature of scarcity management mechanism to the definition.

Thus, this thesis draws upon the previous literature to define grand strategy as the framework[91] where strategies are connected through a policy goal[92] and aimed at regulating scarcity of means through top-down mechanisms informed by strategic culture. This definition contributes to several gaps in the literature. First, it contributes by providing a guiding framework to the analysis of grand strategy, without limiting potential countries or non-state actors because of the different means to its disposals. At the same time, it should incentivise further debate over the role of strategic culture in grand strategy, and the relation between different components of grand strategy which are not part of the strategy itself.

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[88] Gray, *The Strategy Bridge*.

[89] See Biscop and Coelmont, *Europe, Strategy and Armed Forces*; Roger, 'From "Civilian Power" to "Global Power"'; Smith, 'A Liberal Grand Strategy in a Realist World? Power, Purpose, and the EU's Changing Global Role'.

[90] Brands, *What Is Good Is Grand Strategy?*

[91] See Ibid., 14.

[92] Layton, 'The Idea of Grand Strategy'; Milevski, *The Evolution of Modern Grand Strategic Thought*.

2.4. Europe and Grand Strategy: Can the EU have a grand strategy?

While grand strategy attempts to understand how international actors behave through the combination of different strategies, the EU has been a relatively underestimated actor among grand strategy scholars. The discipline of grand strategy has been mostly focused on the US,[93] and to a certain extent, widely analysed for other state actors who are considered great powers, such as China or Russia.[94] The EU, however, has featured in a number of academic articles on the topic, albeit with conclusions which generally deem it unfit to have a grand strategy[95] or others which argue that there EU has the theoretical capabilities for having a grand strategy, but it has not been able to produce one.[96] The contradictory aspect in such claims lies in the fact that members of academia have already analysed the EU's behaviour internationally through a comprehensive number of approaches. Market Power Europe, Normative Power Europe, Civilian Power Europe, or Soft Power Europe, or more recently "the Brussels effect" or Regulatory Power Europe, are all terms that academia has associated with EU's external power.[97] However, by denying the EU the capacity of grand strategy, we risk on understanding the types of power the EU has as single and unconnected entities, which is not the case as these often work together. Moreover, while the EU continues to be ignored in grand strategic analysis and academia continues to debate over the theoretical capabilities of the EU, the EU already behaves strategically, reflecting the potential presence of a grand strategy. This illustrates the potential risks of grand strategy being so limited as to ignore potentially relevant case studies such as International Organizations.[98]

The debate around the EU and grand strategy has been rather divided. Authors such as Howorth, Biscop, Smith, or Vennesson have argued the need, or the presence, of an EU grand strategy.[99] On the other hand, authors such as Barrinha, Simon (2010) and Berindan, have either denied the possibility of EU grand strategy,[100] or portraying discussions around EU grand strategy

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[93] See Howorth, 'The EU as a Global Actor'; Silove, 'Beyond the Buzzword'; Balzacq, Dombrowski, and Reich, *Comparative Grand Strategy*.

[94] Jisi, 'China's Search for a Grand Strategy'; Basrur, 'The BRI and India's Grand Strategy'; Brands, 'Barack Obama and the Dilemmas of American Grand Strategy'; Tsygankov, 'Preserving Influence in a Changing World'.

[95] Simon, *Geopolitical Change, Grand Strategy and European Security: The EU-NATO Conundrum*.

[96] Biscop and Coelmont, *Europe, Strategy and Armed Forces*.

[97] Damro, 'Market Power Europe'; Biscop and Coelmont, *Europe, Strategy and Armed Forces*; Roger, 'From "Civilian Power" to "Global Power"'; Bradford, *The Brussels Effect*; Orbie, 'Civilian Power Europe'.

[98] Kornprobst, 'Building Agreements upon Agreements'.

[99] Howorth, 'The EU as a Global Actor'; Biscop and Coelmont, *Europe, Strategy and Armed Forces*; Smith, 'A Liberal Grand Strategy in a Realist World? Power, Purpose, and the EU's Changing Global Role'; Vennesson, 'Competing Visions for the European Union Grand Strategy'.

[100] Simon, *Geopolitical Change, Grand Strategy and European Security: The EU-NATO Conundrum*.

useless because of the lack of homogeneity in the EU, the fact that the EU is an International organisation, or because of the lack of military capabilities.[101] However, while the debate rages on, there have been few analyses of actual case studies, aside from the analysis of particular documents such as the European Security Strategy of 2003 or the EU Global Strategy of 2016.[102] There is an evident gap in the literature on understanding what comprised the EU grand strategies or what did it they attempted to include, successfully or not. This thesis seeks to address such gap.

In 2010, Simon analysed grand strategy in Europe, mainly that of France and Britain. In his work, he presents an argument that could be categorised as the main argument against the EU's capacity for grand strategy: the lack of military power. He further argues that it is the EU's lack of military sovereignty which further negates the possibility of an EU grand strategy.[103] To a similar extent, Berindan further criticised the attempts from other authors to answer the question of whether the EU can have a grand strategy or not. [104] He does so by arguing that the lack of congruence inside the EU does not allow it to conceive a grand strategy and that the mere fact that the EU cannot be considered a superpower renders grand strategic discussion as meaningless.[105] Both authors represent the core of the argument against grand strategy in the EU, although they are not the only ones.[106]

The reason behind such arguments can be understood as twofold. First, there is a profound influence of the American debate about grand strategy, which seems to somehow guide scholars in EU grand strategy to the same road. The argument presented by Simon's 2010 book is clearly influenced by the classical approaches to grand strategy, and particularly by the centrality that actors still associate with military strategy and state-centric approaches to international relations. At the same time, Simon approach follows the realist reality of the primacy of nation-states and the concept of sovereignty, which has traditionally guided the classical approaches in grand strategy.[107] However, both assumptions should not be considered as a limitation for grand strategy in the European Union. With regards to the first, the primacy of military strategy,

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[101] Berindan, 'Not Another "Grand Strategy"'.

[102] Kornprobst, 'Building Agreements upon Agreements'; Smith, 'Implementing the Global Strategy Where It Matters Most: The EU's Credibility Deficit and the European Neighbourhood'; Mälksoo, 'From the ESS to the EU Global Strategy: External Policy, Internal Purpose'; Biscop and Coelmont, *Europe, Strategy and Armed Forces*.

[103] Simon, *Geopolitical Change, Grand Strategy and European Security: The EU-NATO Conundrum*.

[104] By seemingly mocking authors such as Holworth, or Biscop, which had by that time published several papers on the topic of EU grand strategy. His title "Not another "Grand Strategy""is a hint to that.

[105] Berindan, 'Not Another "Grand Strategy"'.

[106] See Barrinha, 'Progressive Realism and the EU's International Actorness: Towards a Grand Strategy?'

[107] Kornprobst, 'Building Agreements upon Agreements'.

as addressed before, answered to an intra-war reality, and this primacy does not reflect the changes in power competition. Yet, the argument that the EU is significantly impaired by its lack of military power cannot be ignored, as it is a major constrain for the EU although the EU is still able to articulate some military power through CSDP missions.[108] Nonetheless, this lack of military capabilities cannot be considered as a sufficient reason not to analyse the case of the EU as a grand strategic actor. It is the longevity of strategic actions, the influence capacity, and the presence of other types of power, which provides the EU with the possibility of having a grand strategy.

Moreover, the argument proposed by Berindan must be contrapose with what grand strategy is attempting to achieve. Berindan's argument relies on the lack of homogeneity in decision-making inside the EU, given the presence of a broad number of veto players, and inconsistency in the aspirations of the EU abroad. However, the purpose of grand strategy is to understand how such frameworks work by different actors, and how policymakers should guide their decision-making. While it is true that in the case of the EU there is a larger number of veto players, that does not exclude the possibility of an EU grand strategy – in particular, it does not exclude the formation of a grand strategy, but it may result in difficulties for its implementation.

In the case of this thesis, it analyses the proposed grand strategy by the Commission, albeit the result of such grand strategy may have become quite different from that on the onset of the Commission.[109] Moreover, while the EU is indeed not a superpower or a player with hegemonic aspirations that cannot rule out its strategic behaviour, as middle powers or regional powers often have strategic behaviours of their own which scholars have argued should be analysed in more depth.[110] Against this backdrop, the arguments that the EU is not an actor capable of having a grand strategy, or that the discussions around Grand strategy are not "worthy" in the EU, become harder to sustain.

Finally, there seems to be an evident gap in the literature regarding grand strategy in the EU. Several types of taxonomies have been offered to discuss the EU as a global actor, based on the type of power it utilises. For example, Damro argued that the EU acts as a market power, utilising its market size and the conditionality for its market as an influence method.[111] Others have called the EU a normative power, which utilises discoursive and soft power tools in order

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[108] Howorth, 'The EU as a Global Actor'; Vennesson, 'Competing Visions for the European Union Grand Strategy'.
[109] See chapter 3 for the argumentation on case selection.
[110] See Buzan and Wæver, 'Theories and Histories about the Structure of Contemporary International Security'.
[111] Damro, 'Market Power Europe'.

to influence other actors into a rules-based, liberal international order.[112] The EU has been regarded as a soft power, and a powerful actor, given its capacity to influence neighbouring countries through the benefits of its institutions like the common market, or the "club" of benefits of the EU.[113] Moreover, aside from the US where the discussions around great power competition have become isolated to the competition between the US and China -and sometimes Russia-, in other regions, the EU is often considered as an important contender in world politics.[114] At the same time, with the recent movements in the international arena, where international politics seem to be shaped by a "camps" mentality, the EU has been regarded as an influential actor.[115] All of these developments, and the fact that academia regards the EU as a sort of power, although with few consensuses on which type of power, there is a clear indication that the EU is a strategic actor. In this regard, this thesis utilises the concept of "strategic", not as a machiavellian, non-liberal, or non-transparent way of action. Instead, it is strategic because of the aspiration and implementation of strategies to rationally pursue its interests, be that though soft power or through regulatory power, or through whatever means the EU is able to articulate meaningful influence. Even more, contrary to Berindan's argument, the EU is not only a player who projects different types of power in the international arena, but also, a player who aspires to exert influence in the international arena.[116] Thus, this thesis aims to addresses the apparent gap in the literature relating to how the EU aspires to influence international affairs, and how it combines the different types of power that it has in its toolkit within an overarching grand strategic framework. The main contribution, then, will be to the understanding of what the EU's grand strategy looks like, what its components are, how it is organised, and what lessons can be drawn from the EU as an example of how can International Organizations engage in grand strategy.

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[112] Biscop and Coelmont, *Europe, Strategy and Armed Forces*; Smith, 'A Liberal Grand Strategy in a Realist World? Power, Purpose, and the EU's Changing Global Role'; Council of the European Union, *European Security Strategy - A Secure Europe in a Better World*.

[113] Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe. Rules and Rhetoric.*

[114] García, 'The European Union and Latin America'; Smith, 'Implementing the Global Strategy Where It Matters Most: The EU's Credibility Deficit and the European Neighbourhood'.

[115] Creutz et al., 'The Changing Global Order and Its Implications for the EU'; Gaub, 'Global Trends to 2030'; Haass, 'How a World Order Ends'.

[116] Bel and Fleck, 'A Geopolitical European Commission'; European External Action Service, 'EU Global Strategy'; Council of the European Union, *European Security Strategy - A Secure Europe in a Better World*.

Chapter 3: Research Design

The purpose of this thesis is to answer the question, does the EU have a grand strategy? In order to answer it, and to contribute to the ample body of literature on EU studies, this work will conduct a critical discourse analysis to identify the presence of an EU's grand strategy. Given time and length considerations, this thesis will focus on the analysis of the EU 2014-2019 Commission, headed by Jean Claude Juncker.

Throughout this chapter, we will present our research design and framework. First, the next section theorises on how international organizations engage in grand strategy. Second, the second section presents the research question and hypothesis guiding this research project. Third, the decision of analysing the Commission is further discussed, mainly why is it relevant and why are we focusing on the Juncker administration. Fourth, the basis for the critical discourse analysis are explained and introduced, as well as the framework utilised to carry the critical discourse analysis influenced by the concept of securitization. Finally, the documents utilized for the analysis, as well as their selection, is presented.

3.1. Towards a Theory of International Organizations and Grand Strategy.

The contributions of this thesis follow the current trend in grand strategy, where authors such as Balzacq et al. are attempting to broaden the scope of cases analysed regarding grand strategy.[117] While Balzacq et al. focus primarily on portraying how different state actors utilise grand strategy, this thesis attempts to shed light into a type of actor which is generally ignored in grand strategic studies, international organisations (IOs). As addressed before, grand strategy as a concept does not prevent the EU or IOs in having a grand strategy, as it is not a concept tided to state actors.[118] Thus, this thesis runs counter to the grand strategic trend of focusing in state-actors rather than in non-state actors, and by doing so, it draws upon the recent developments in the field of internationalisation and the studies of international organisations.

International organisations acting as crucial actors in the international system is not a new phenomenon,[119] although their grand strategic capabilities have been majorly undervalued

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[117] See Balzacq, Dombrowski, and Reich, *Comparative Grand Strategy*.
[118] See Kornprobst, 'Building Agreements upon Agreements'.
[119] See Mathews, 'Power Shift'.

when compared to that of the state actors. The purpose of this thesis is to engage with such gap, elaborating a theory on how international organisations can engage with grand strategy. IOs as actors have often been somewhat underscored by the realist tradition which views international organisations as a tool is majorly influenced and controlled by its Member States.[120] Two examples portray why such categorisation is erroneous. First, the EU as an international actor is not entirely dependent of Member States, as actors such as the Commission and the External European Action Service (EEAS) behave almost autonomously from Member States to the degree of sometimes clashing with Member States.[121] Secondly, Orchestration has been able to prove several cases where organisations such as the UN Global Compact have been able to utilise power independently from that of Member States.[122]

Moreover, other schools of thought in International relations such as Internationalism and Universalism also support this view. Internationalism argues that globalisation has advanced to the point where states require to cooperate, creating complex interdependencies[123]. The concept of complex interdependencies, as argued by Keohane and Nye, postulates that developed states have shaped their relationships to their point that military power is no longer the central concept of power.[124] This thesis draws upon such a concept to illustrate a context of complex interdependencies, where international organisations can position themselves firmly in the international arena, as their lack of military power is not the obstacle once was. However, internationalism does not differ with the realist tradition on which is the main actor of analysis, that being the state. Thus, it ultimately views IOs as an extension of Member States actions.[125]

While both realist and internationalist traditions provide essential contributions to the understanding of IOs, the universalist tradition provides a more efficient framework in order to analyse IOs as grand strategic actors. The universalist tradition, instead, argues against a state-centric approach, in which that ideas and global society are becoming more relevant than the society of states. While both internationalist and universalist approaches argue that IOs can act as independent actors, the Internationalist approach assumes that even if these are somehow independent actors, these answer ultimately to states. Contrary to such view, the universalist tradition understands IOs more importantly as "expressions of, and creators of, global civil

[120] Barkin, *International Organization*, 10–11.
[121] See Holland, 'The European Union's Common Foreign Policy', 18.
[122] See Boer, 'Institutionalising Ecologically Sustainable Development'; Abbott et al., 'Orchestration', 5.
[123] Barkin, *International Organization*, 11.
[124] Keohane and Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, 21–25.
[125] Barkin, *International Organization*, 11.

society, rather than they are as regulators of relations among states".[126] This thesis draws upon both traditions, as the EU is understood not only as a regulator among European states but also as an expression of European civil society, through institutions such as the Commission or Parliament which do not respond directly to Member States.

Hence, if IOs are to be considered as somehow independent actors, this work differs with other works where IOs have been analysed vis-à-vis Member States and how these create change into the organisations.[127] In order to elaborate a theory on how international organisations engage with grand strategy, this work draws upon the neoinstitutionalist approach of international organisations, closer to that of functionalist institutionalism. The former focuses in the study of the internal organisational dynamics of organisations, and the later goes more in-depth into internal dynamics in order to analyse the role of rules and procedures of the organisation in shaping the behaviour of the organisation itself. Neoinstitutionalism provides a clearer understanding of whether international organisations can behave as grand strategy actors, in the sense of, which are the actual dynamics and procedures in place, which would allow for the creation of grand strategies.[128] Functionalist institutionalism further supports the neoinstitutionalist approach by providing context in order to understand how internal rules and procedures will shape IO's grand strategies. At the same time, functionalist institutionalism argues that while IOs are indeed created and empowered by Member States, as time passes by, and these organisations start to create their own norms and procedures as well as having an impact in international affairs, this creates a functional autonomy for IOs. [129]

Following these efforts in understanding how IOs behave as international actors, the question arises: do international organisations can engage with grand strategy? If so, how? By drawing upon the central tenants of grand strategy, those of goals means and the relationship between those; and drawing upon International Organisations studies theory, mainly that neo-institutionalism and functional institutionalism, we can devise a theory on how international organisations engage with grand strategy. There are several patterns which must be accounted for. First, the given actor must be able to produce a grand strategic goal. Second, there must be a presence of enforceable and actionable power capabilities, which the international organisation is able to articulate in its quest to achieve the grand strategic goal. Lastly, the

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[126] Ibid., 12.
[127] See Hanrieder, 'Gradual Change in International Organisations' and the analogy of "black box" approaches to IO studies in Barkin, *International Organization,* 29.
[128] Barkin, *International Organization*, 35–36.
[129] Ibid., 37.

relationship between means and ends must be present, as without it, goals and means do not necessarily meet each other, or resources needed for the necessary means cannot be granted.

An important caveat to be made is that of capabilities, as grand strategies cannot be just speech acts without any enforceable connotations. State-actors can easily suffice such capabilities, as their internal sovereignty allows them to enforce their proposed strategy across every domain of statecraft (military, economic, diplomatic, political). International organisations, however, depending on their structure, cannot make full use of every domain, as these are generally restricted by the powers that the Member States grant them. While in a first glance, such limitation may appear as an argument to why international organisations cannot have grand strategies,[130] upon further reflection such argument can be dismissed. First, by the fact that not every IO is constructed equally. Secondly, IOs are granted with other types of power which are not necessarily available to states, such as Moral power and further informational capabilities.[131] Thirdly, through orchestration, IOs are able to effectively utilise power which is not necessarily granted by Member States, through the utilisation of intermediaries to influence the desired targets.[132] Thus, International Organisations can -in theory- engage with grand strategy if these are able to produce the three tenants of grand strategy -goals, end, and the relationship between them-, and if they are able to execute the grand strategy through the different strategies at its disposal.

3.2. Research Question & Hypothesis

This thesis is inspired by a number of academic contributions by authors such as Kornprobst,[133] Roger,[134] or Smith,[135] where the use of discourse analysis is paired with that of grand strategy, as tools to understand the strategic behaviour of the EU. The main focus of this thesis is understanding the EU's approach towards grand strategy and how it is composed. This thesis will attempt to theorise how, why a grand strategic framework is built by the EU, and what this framework contains. Hence, given the gaps in the literature -illustrated in chapter 2- this thesis attempts to answer the question: does the EU have a grand strategy? This question constitutes the main research question to which this work attempts to answer. At the same time, in the

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[130] See Simon, *Geopolitical Change, Grand Strategy and European Security: The EU-NATO Conundrum*.
[131] Barkin, *International Organization*, 26.
[132] Abbott et al., 'Orchestration', 5.
[133] Kornprobst, 'Building Agreements upon Agreements'.
[134] Roger, 'From "Civilian Power" to "Global Power"'.
[135] Smith, 'A Liberal Grand Strategy in a Realist World? Power, Purpose, and the EU's Changing Global Role'.

efforts to answer our main research question, an important sub-question is that of, how the EU grand strategy is composed? Through these questions, the objective is to understand the different components which form the EU's grand strategy.

Drawing upon the assumptions of how international organisations interact with grand strategy, this thesis hypothesis is that; the EU had a grand strategy during Juncker's administration, guided by the goals and the means put in place by the Commission. The hypothesis draws upon the reflection that international organisations which are able to articulate a grand strategic goal, have means at its disposal and can coordinate such goal and ends, are capable of engaging in grand strategy. In order to determine if the hypothesis is correct and if there is indeed an EU grand strategy, critical discourse analysis was conducted across different official documents and communications from the EU Commission. Through the critical discourse analysis, this thesis attempts to identify the three main tenants necessary for international organisations to utilise grand strategy. The framework of the critical discourse analysis and its justification will be explored further in section 3.4. Moreover, our research was conducted mainly through analysing Juncker's Commission, and in particular, the process to which the grand strategy was formed and employed, hence, utilising process-tracing analysis.

3.3. Subject of analysis: European Commission

States have often been the focus of grand strategic analysis,[136] and in the case of the EU, the Council has often been the focus of works surrounding the EU's grand strategy.[137] The institutional framework of the EU, however, presents a compelling case when it comes to grand strategy and the Commission, as its structure illustrates a two-layer structure in grand strategic decision making. As addressed previously, grand strategy is composed of three elements: the goal, the means and the relationship between both. With regards to the first -goals-, the focus is often placed in the Council because of its role as agenda-setter. To this effect, Article 15 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and Article 22(1), explicitly grant such power by stating "[…] the European Council shall identify the strategic interests and objectives of the Union".[138] Hence, there is no surprise that there is a keen interest by grand strategy scholars to utilise the

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[136] Kornprobst, 'Building Agreements upon Agreements'; Neumann and Heikka, 'Grand Strategy, Strategic Culture, Practice'; Balzacq, 'Constructivism and Securitization Studies'.

[137] Biscop and Coelmont, *Europe, Strategy and Armed Forces*; Kornprobst, 'Building Agreements upon Agreements'; Berindan, 'Not Another "Grand Strategy"'; Vennesson, 'Competing Visions for the European Union Grand Strategy'; Howorth, 'The EU as a Global Actor'.

[138] van Ooik and Vandamme, *European Basic Treaties*, 8.

Council as a subject of study, often analysed through the communications and the posturing of the Council.[139] Howorth and Venneson can be seen as an example of such interest, as their papers focus on the types of grand strategic goals for the EU to pursue, utilising the Council as his main actor of reference.[140] However, by focusing on the Council as the main object of analysis, there is a significant element of grand strategy which is excluded by these authors[141] - means.

In the institutional framework of the EU, it is the Commission which holds a supranational executive role,[142] granting it primacy over the utilisation of means and strategies to achieve policy goals. Thus, this thesis utilises the Commission as the subject of analysis to understand how the EU engages with grand strategy. As mentioned in Section 3.1, international organisations, in theory, require state-like features to elaborate their grand strategies, such as the capacity to formulate grand strategic goals, articulate sources of power, and relate these to one another. Thus, the Commission's executive role may provide an advantageous position for the developing of grand strategies. The reason for this is threefold. First, the institutional setup after the Lisbon treaty empowers the Commission through influence in the High Representative (HRVP), with further powers in the international arena, supported by other competencies such as being the primary agent in the areas of exclusive competence of the EU such as trade deals.[143] Second, the Commission is an active player inside the EU decision-making arena through formal and informal channels by utilising its legislative power, trusteeship power and its influence across several institutions such as Agencies.[144] Moreover, the Commission President appoints Commissioners to manage different policy areas, granting them of objectives and means. These commissioners represent the portfolio of the Commission, and their role as heads of the Directorate General and Services (DG) make them a critical aspect of the EU's bureaucratic system.[145] Third, the Commission has long been recognised as an actor who has striven for its own agenda rather than just that of the Member states, utilising different sources of power to achieve its goals, mainly those of further European Integration, managing to become an active player across different policy areas instead of those only regarded as of "exclusive competence" - often referred to as the political entrepreneurship of the

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[139] Kornprobst, 'Building Agreements upon Agreements'.

[140] Howorth, 'The EU as a Global Actor'; Vennesson, 'Competing Visions for the European Union Grand Strategy'.

[141] It is worth noting that Howorth does present a list of different ways the EU has influence or capabilities.

[142] Jones, Menon, and Weatherill, *The Oxford Handbook of the European Union*, 337.

[143] Biscop and Coelmont, *Europe, Strategy and Armed Forces*; Jones, Menon, and Weatherill, *The Oxford Handbook of the European Union*, 651; Meunier and Nicolaïdis, '10. The European Union as a Trade Power'.

[144] Jones, Menon, and Weatherill, *The Oxford Handbook of the European Union*, 337 & 342.

[145] Ibid., 338.

Commission.[146] The increase in capabilities and ambitions is of crucial relevance for the objectives of this thesis, as it stands as an argument of not only the capabilities of the EU as a grand strategic actor but also, of its aspirations to be a grand strategic actor.

The Commission must also be understood as a critical actor when it comes down to executive capabilities. In this regard, the Commission is granted a significant number of tools in order to make in effect the EU legal order and political objectives as stated by the Council. The power of the Commission to draft and initiate legislation, often with strong cooperation of civil actors, must be seen as a crucial aspect of its political power. At the same time, the EU agencies, where the Commission holds significant influence, should also be seen as a critical element inside the Commission's grand strategic toolkit. In this regard, agencies such as the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA), Frontex, or the European Defence Agency (EDA), are evidence of the wide-ranging tools the Commission has to put forward its strategies. Finally, the practical capabilities of the Commission cannot be ignored, as the role of the DG and Commissioners is even more critical. The role of individual Commissioners is of prime importance, particularly those in the areas of exclusive competence of the EU, such as Competition or Trade.[147] The Commission, in this sense, different from the Council, has a broader toolkit in order to implement grand strategic objectives.

The role of the Commission in the EU's policymaking is one of increasing presence, as it becomes more ambitious on establishing the EU as a relevant actor in international affairs. The best example of the growing ambitions ambition is the von der Leyen's Commission, where Commissioners were tasked with contributing to the "geopolitical commission", and her political guidelines presented an even more ambitious political role for the Commission.[148] Which begs the question, how did the EU went from the period of "Selbstverzwergung" in 2009,[149] to 2020's expressed interest in becoming a geopolitical Commission by von der Leyen? Our research would contribute to answering such question, by exploring the Juncker Commission, which was in between both periods, and by understanding how the Juncker Commission settled the bases for the newer, more ambitious Commission.

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[146] Ibid., 337.

[147] Meunier and Nicolaïdis, '10. The European Union as a Trade Power'.

[148] Von der Leyen, 'A Union That Strives for More: My Agenda for Europe'.

[149] *Selbstverzwergung* was a term brought forth in 2009 by a German Journalist, Ansgar Graw, to illustrate the EU's decreased presence internationally. The term can be translated as "self-dwarfing". See Graw, 'EU-Spitzenposten'; Howorth, 'The EU as a Global Actor', 456.

3.4. Critical Discourse Analysis & Securitization

In an effort to add transparency to the research project, this section introduces the framework which was utilised to analyse the documents from the Commission. This thesis utilised critical discourse analysis of the Commission official communications, to find a common framework behind the EU strategic behaviour. At the same time, the analysis focused on understanding the reasoning behind the Commission's grand strategic framework. In this regard, the framework in this thesis is inspired on the examples of Graham et al. 2004 and of Kornprobst 2015, to which they carried a similar analysis of speeches and official documents, understanding both the content of the document/speech and the context surrounding it. Aside from the case of Kornprobst 2015, or Roger 2009, works in grand strategy have not engaged with critical discourse analysis significantly, which prompts further motivations to utilise such unexplored methodology.

Critical discourse analysis is a useful tool when trying to analyse communications or speech acts, as well as to identify the social structures which lay behind them.[150] In this regard, critical discourse analysis and international relations have not been strangers.[151] Through the constructivist school of international relations, critical discourse analysis has played a crucial role in identifying social structures in the international community through the analysis of speech acts.[152] Through authors such as Barry Buzan and Ole Weaver, the Copenhaguen school contributed to the understanding of how actors utilise speech acts to securitise against a given threat and achieve further political power. The role of securitisation cannot be ignored as it became common practice throughout history to base political speeches such as calls to arms against a particular threat actor or threat,[153] or base political confrontations through the lens of which security threats are more relevant.[154] Securitisation studies further contributed to the understanding of how international actors strive for legitimacy from their population in order to carry further weight in the international arena.[155]

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[150] Graham, Kennan, and Dowd, 'A Call to Arms at the End of History: A Discourse-Historical Analysis of George W. Bush's Declaration of War on Terror.'

[151] See Balzacq, 'Constructivism and Securitization Studies'; Lupovici, 'Securitization Climax'; Graham, Kennan, and Dowd, 'A Call to Arms at the End of History: A Discourse-Historical Analysis of George W. Bush's Declaration of War on Terror.'; Jackson, 'Constructing Enemies'; Mathieu and Weinblum, 'The Battle Against Unfair Trade in the EU Trade Policy'.

[152] Balzacq, 'Constructivism and Securitization Studies'.

[153] Graham, Kennan, and Dowd, 'A Call to Arms at the End of History: A Discourse-Historical Analysis of George W. Bush's Declaration of War on Terror.'

[154] Saleh, 'Broadening the Concept of Security'.

[155] Vuori, *Constructivism and Securitizationstudies*; Saleh, 'Broadening the Concept of Security'.

In the case of this thesis, given our interest of analysing EU documents through critical discourse analysis and identifying how the grand strategy of the EU is articulated by the Commission, securitisation studies present a fitting framework for conducting such analysis. It is crucial to understand that different from our conceptual framework of grand strategy and strategic theory; securitisation will serve as a methodological framework to guide our critical discourse analysis. The concept of securitisation, as previously introduced, originated from the contributions of Ole Weaver, in their efforts to understand speech acts conducted by international players.[156] In this regard, Weaver understood securitisation as a tool to turn an element into a security threat, and thus allow the "state" to claim a special right to address such threat.[157] From the 90s, the role of securitisation and the constructivist analysis of security has only risen.[158] Vuori presents an updated definition for securitisation, as "The aim of securitisation studies is to gain an increasingly precise understanding of who (securitising actors) can securitise (political moves via speech acts) which issues (threats), for whom (referent objects), why (perlocutionary intentions/how-causality), with what kinds of effects (inter-unit relations), and under what conditions (facilitation/impediment factors)".[159] Vuori's definition is closely related to the framework proposed by Barry Buzan. The model which originates from Buzan contributions attests for seven variables: a securitising actor, a reference object, a threat, an audience, felicity conditions, facilitation factors and functional actors.[160]

Vuori's compilation of the Securitisation model will be the main framework of our critical discourse analysis. Thus, in order to carry our analysis, we identified the different elements articulated in the documents, mainly securitising actors, threats, referent objects and causality. In a similar approach to that of Kornprobst, our research was design around linking the strategies through these discursive elements and understanding their own conception of agent, scene, purpose and means.[161] At the same time, we added to our coding of the documents, the presence of specific means and goals to which the strategy refers to, as the linkage to a common document may imply the presence of a grand strategic document of reference. For a matter of clarity, our codebook focused on identifying:

- Audience

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[156] Buzan et al., *Security*.
[157] Wæver, '3. Securitization and Desecuritization', 6.
[158] Vuori, *Constructivism and Securitizationstudies*.
[159] Ibid., 64–65.
[160] Ibid., 65; Buzan et al., *Security*.
[161] Kornprobst, 'Building Agreements upon Agreements'.

- Goal / Objective

- Threat / Threat actor

- Means

- Causality

- Actorness

If we are to understand grand strategy as a framework to which all sub-strategies are subordinated too, there is a clear need to have a common thread throughout the strategies. In this regard, we argue that the elements above are of critical importance for the presence in grand strategy. First, strategic documents are speech acts, as they are often part of official communications, either to communicate to other elites or to communicate to its public. At the same time, in democratic regimes, grand strategic frameworks must be legitimised by the electorate, [162] which further motivates political actors to utilise securitisation.[163] Secondly, in a grand strategic framework, sub-strategies must address a common goal. In this regard, the goal may serve as a legitimising force as well as an identifier throughout strategies. While each sub-strategy will naturally hold its own objective, there must be a common goal which relates it to the grand strategic framework.[164] In the case of the strategies which were analysed in this research, the connection to a common goal sometimes appeared through the explicit recognition of a referencing grand strategic document, such as the EU Global Strategy (2016). Thirdly, a grand strategic framework should understand the same threats, either it is through the understanding of the same threat actor or threat.[165] In this regard, it would be unrealistic to expect a degree of sustainability in a grand strategic framework where totally different threats or threat actors are understood, as they do not manage to become part of the commonplace.[166] In the end, perceived threats relate to the policy goal to which they must address.[167] Fourth, identifying the means which are proposed by the strategy, through the actions proposed. This followed the efforts to utilize the DIME framework, which is also employed by different authors in grand strategy, such as Caliskan.[168] Complementing such effort, by identifying different domains, we can draw the layout of Juncker's grand strategy. Finally, our efforts to identify the common actorness is inspired by the contributions of Kornprobst, and the role of actorness in

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[162] Gaddis, 'What Is Grand Strategy?'
[163] Saleh, 'Broadening the Concept of Security'.
[164] Layton, 'The Idea of Grand Strategy'.
[165] Kornprobst, 'Building Agreements upon Agreements'.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Posen, 'A Grand Strategy of Restraint'.
[168] Caliskan, 'Hybrid Warfare through the Lens of Strategic Theory'.

the success or failure of grand strategic efforts in the EU. In her work, the role of the Agent, Scene, Purpose and Means, and its soundness across the Member States, bringing the EU's grand strategy in a position of either compromise or commonplace.[169] The former - compromise- did not hold to become a sustainable grand strategy, as compared to that of the later -commonplace-, as the Member States where in the same page on what to do to avoid obfuscating the EU's decision making.[170]

3.5. Document Selection

In order to accurately identify the EU's grand strategy, several documents were utilized to analyse and identify the presence of grand strategic elements such as goals, ends and an ideological framework which articulates the two previous elements. In order to select the documents which were to be analysed, this research took two approaches.

The primary documents used in the critical discourse analysis were those which can be understood as the strategy documents of the Commission, as Table 1 in the appendix illustrates. These were identified and selected across three lines. First, their time period, filtering the document to those only relevant for Juncker's Commission, and ideally those in the first years as these represent the proposed grand strategy instead of opportunistic changes along the way. However, this was expanded as the research progressed, and the two stages of the EU's grand strategy were identified. Second, the documents utilized for the critical discourse analysis were connected, either through a common goal or through references to other strategies. That is not to say that in the course of this research, strategies which were not connected to the grand strategic framework were ignored, however, these were not included in the final list of documents used to identify the EU's grand strategy. Third, given the time and funding considerations, this thesis focused on what could be called "first-level strategies", rather than lower-tier strategies. What first-level strategies refer to is their hierarchical position inside the grand strategic framework. As chapter 4 elaborates, each phase had a document of reference for that phase, to which several strategies are created to address the goals in such document of reference. These last strategies are what are referred to as first-level strategies. Moreover, this work attempts to incorporate as many relevant documents as it is possible and following the DIME framework as a guiding line to which strategies may be relevant. Table 1 in the annex illustrated the final list of documents analysed.

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[169] Kornprobst, 'Building Agreements upon Agreements'.
[170] Ibid.

Second, other documents were utilized as context documents which were also part of the critical discourse analysis. These context documents were a compilation of other official and non-official sources. The most relevant of these context documents were, mission letters to Commissioners from Juncker, Confirmation hearings of Commissioners to the European Parliament, State of the Union speeches by Juncker, EU External Delegations statements and official statements from the Press office of the Commission. These documents are not listed below, given space limitations, and also, their relevance is limited in comparison to the strategic documents listed above.

A vital comment to be made of the document selection is that our results are heavily influenced by the strategies analysed. The entirety of strategies published by the Commission is too numerous to be analysed by a single master thesis project. Thus, future and more extensive works may build up from this thesis and include a broader selection of strategies, where newer insights may appear. The primary documents analysed -Table 1- were those who were most relevant for the grand strategic framework. Another important recommendation for future work is to analyse those documents which were not part of the grand strategic framework, to understand better the processes and the reasons behind their exclusion of the Commission's grand strategic framework

Chapter 4: Juncker's Grand Strategy

Having established the components of a grand strategic framework, the focus of this chapter is to explore the proposed grand strategic framework of the Juncker Commission, as identified through the analysis of the Commission's communications. As we will discover, the analysis of strategic documents published by Juncker's Commission gave a clear impression of what the administration's grand strategy was composed of. At its core were two grand strategic goals – 'Rebuilding Europe' and 'Securing the Neighborhood' – motivated by threats ranging from populism and internal fragmentation to terrorism and migration. Alongside this, the Commission articulated the use of resources across different domains of statecraft, such as diplomatic, political, economic, cultural, and informational strategies and resources. As the chapter argues, both grand strategic goals represented two phases in the Commission's grand strategy, instead of two separate grand strategies, as both were connected in the threats identified, and the connected nature of each phasis. At the same time, the importance of this chapter is that it provides a clear understanding of how the Commission approached the goals in hand, and how it articulated its own understanding on how to be a strategic actor.

As this chapter argues, the Commission was able to construct a grand strategic goal, equip them with a range of resources from different domains, articulating these resources for the pursuit of its grand strategic goals. To showcase the Commission's efforts in engaging with grand strategy, the chapter's outline is as follows. First, the following section will address the first phase of the Commission's grand strategy, by introducing the perceived threats, what rebuilding Europe means, the resources and strategies which were employed to achieve it, and the ideological and normative framework behind both means and ends. Second, it will utilize the same structure to address the second phase of the grand strategy, making emphasis on the changes between the first and the second phase. Finally, this chapter will illustrate the layers in the EU's grand strategic framework, as its influence in the Commission's grand strategic efforts was evident across the analysis.

4.1. "Rebuilding Europe", the first phase of the Commission's grand strategy.

"[I] see it as my key task to rebuild bridges in Europe after the crisis", with these words, Juncker encapsulated the first phase of its grand strategy. The first phase was an inward-looking exercise addressing the numerous challenges the Juncker administration inherited from the international

scene, and previous European crises. Juncker came into power in 2014, in the aftermath of an economic and political crisis, and an international scene which was relatively calm relative to 2016, when the second phase began. The Eurocrisis produced a number of challenges and reconceptualisations of what the EU is. It struck directly on the most basic *raison d'etat* of the EU, economic prosperity. The Eurocrisis, motivated by the 2008 financial crash and the Greek sovereign debt crisis, contributed to a deep politicization in the EU.[171] At the same time, divisions between northern and southern Member States, became noticeable, as these represented to ends in the spectrum of economic responses to the crisis. Furthermore, the Eurocrisis provided further fuel to a growing problem in Europe, that of populism and Euroscepticism, which in turn generated a deep political crisis, which Brexit illustrates quite clearly.[172] Internationally, the role of the EU was somewhat elusive, as the previous Commission -the Barroso Commission- focused on the creation of the EEAS, spurring divisions internally which took the attention of the Commission.[173] However, upon the backdrop of increasing assertive behaviour by Russia, in 2014, the Euromaidan revolution takes place, leading to a period of profound internal instability in Ukraine continuing up to today, a direct border of the EU. Crises were looming, in almost every domain, and these certainly affected the EU discourse and self-perception, creating a discursive breakdown for EU grand strategies. [174]

All of these crises had a significant role in shaping Juncker's grand strategic goals, as these became predominantly featured across the different strategic documents analysed. Upon this strategic context, it seems understandable that the first phase of the Commission's grand strategy is that of "Rebuilding Europe". This is because of two reasons. First, all of the above crises, while motivated by an external event, these had also internal components which created detrimental effects for the unity of the EU. Second, the Commission had from the very beginning, the aspiration to boost EU's presence abroad.[175] However, it openly stated the need first to build the foundations from which the EU would be able to express its power abroad. The approach to enlargement is a clear example of this, where Juncker states that during his

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[171] Statham and Trenz, 'Understanding the Mechanisms of EU Politicization'.
[172] Ibid.
[173] See Allen, 'The Common Foreign and Security Policy'.
[174] See Roger, 'From "Civilian Power" to "Global Power"'.
[175] Juncker, 'Political Guidelines', 10–11.

Commission, no countries would be allowed as new members given the need to strengthen the unity between the Member States.[176]

Rebuilding Europe can be understood as the attempt from the Commission to fortify, reconceptualize and rebuild elements of power of the EU, such as as the Single Market, the security union and the political unity of the Member States and EU institutions. This goal comprises, however, more than just the rethinking of political institutions, as it also proposes new elements, such as the creation of a Digital Single Market. Rebuilding Europe can be best illustrated in Juncker's *Political Guidelines*.[177] The *Political Guidelines* act as the reference document for Rebuilding Europe, as it seems to be the document which articulates the main grand strategic framework of the Commission, from which all of the other strategies fall upon, following the top-down mechanism which grand strategies are characterised by. Illustrations of this top-down mechanism can be found by the direct quotes to the *Guidelines* in order strategies, such as in the case of the Digital Single Market Strategy (DSMs) or the DG Communications' Strategic Plan.[178] However, the articulation of the *Political Guidelines* as the primary strategic framework is characteristic solely of this first-phase, as in the second phase -with a new goal-there was another document of reference, the EU's Global Strategy 2016, addressed in the next section. A crucial element to point out of this goal is the fact that it should not be understood as an ideological or abstract goal, but instead a practical goal. The goal of "Rebuilding Europe" is a composition of different goals from other strategies, such as rebuilding the monetary union, fortifying the Single Market or rebuilding trust in the EU institutions. In this regard, the economic goal is connected with restarting investment and growth in the EU and reinforcing financial institutions, given the effects of the Eurocrisis and the political crisis.[179] The political goal focuses on addressing the democratic deficit and injecting support for the European project among citizens, directly related to the political crisis and the populist threat.[180] Moreover, in the political domain, the Commission attempts to address the public security issues spawning from the threat of terrorism and migration.[181] Finally, Rebuilding Europe places an important amount of effort in making the Commission a nexus for cooperation between the Member States, mainly through the political domain. All of the above should be understood as policy-

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[176] Ibid., 11.
[177] Juncker, 'Political Guidelines'.
[178] See European Commision, A Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe, 2; DG Communication, 'Strategic Plan 2016-2020', 3.
[179] Juncker, 'Political Guidelines', 5; European Commission, 'Trade for All: Towards a More Responsible Trade and Investment Policy', 7.
[180] See Juncker, 'Political Guidelines', 12.
[181] European Commission, The European Agenda on Security, 2.

driven goals, with specific indicators to measure its success, and coordinating the use of specific resources in order to attain these goals.

In order to achieve the success in Rebuilding Europe in the eve of several crises, the Commission articulated a number of strategies corresponding to the grand strategic domains which it employed. These were the economic, political and informational domains. With regards to the economic domain, the Commission made an emphasis on its regulatory and trade power, utilizing them as elements of internal cohesion as well as foreign influence. In the case for the regulatory power, the Single Market strategy illustrated the Commission's intentions, proposing a joint initiative for standardisation, in its attempts to "enable Europe to become a global standardisation hub".[182] In the case of trade power, the Commission often articulated the need to continue the negotiations of different trade agreements, as well as the need to strengthen the single market. Both elements of economic power should be understood as in orchestration with each other, as it was often through the use of trade power, and the negotiation of trade agreements, that the regulatory power was utilized.[183] Examples of this can be seen through the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and how newer trade agreements introduced social and environmental issues, as these became embedded in EU standards.[184]

The political domain was characterised by the utilization of legislative and intra-institutional tools to enhance internal unity and address the threat of fragmentation from Member states, and the threat from populism and Euroskepticism. In this regard, Juncker often expressed the concern over the democratic deficit of the EU, and the need to involve Parliament into the decision-making process of the Commission as that would contribute to addressing such deficit.[185] Thus, an element incorporated throughout the first phase was the consultation with Parliament in almost every topic, and the Commission repeatedly utilized it as a legitimizing actor in its strategies. An example of such use can be seen in the security agenda.[186] At the same time, the use of political manoeuvring and the enhancing of intra-institutional relations was further utilized in the formation of a security agenda. The security agenda in itself addresses a public safety goal, mainly those of terrorism and how to address the security concerns in cyberspace, however, it indirectly serves another goal, that of fostering unity between the Member States and addressing the threat of fragmentation. For example, it states that "Member

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[182] European Commision, A Single Market Strategy for Europe - Analysis and Evidence, 56.
[183] European Commission, 'Trade for All: Towards a More Responsible Trade and Investment Policy', 5.
[184] See Bradford, *The Brussels Effect*.
[185] See Juncker, 'Political Guidelines', 11.
[186] European Commission, The European Agenda on Security, 3, 21.

States have the front line responsibility for security, but can no longer succeed fully on their own."[187] A further example of this can be seen through the Energy Union strategy, where the EU utilizes a political inward-looking tool to address an external threat, that of threats to energy security as seen in the Ukrainian Crisis.[188] Thus, through the articulation of intra-institutional relations and the need for creating new institutions, the Commission managed to go beyond its traditional competences, that of economics and trade, and include in its portfolio, security and energy issues.

The bridge between its goal of Rebuilding Europe and the numerous means that the Commission employ to achieve them was found in the ideological framework of the Commission's grand strategy. An unsurprising element of the ideological framework was the concept of "European values". It should not be a surprise that the Commission boosts itself of following the values enshrined in the treaties, given that after all, they are the "guardian of the treaties". Nonetheless, these were utilized to further legitimize the Commission's actions, and also to guide them, as it was the element of European values which gives the ideological framework to the principle of "Principled pragmatism" of the second phase.

More interesting has been the presence of two other elements in the ideological framework of the Commission's grand strategy, that of the assumption that the Commission should act as a nexus of cooperation in order to address the threat of fragmentation, and the self-identification as a powerful economic actor. The reason why these elements are interesting can be found on the story that these may portray with regards to how the Commission engages with grand strategy. First, the belief of the Commission to act as a nexus of cooperation creates a significant grand strategic incentive to boost the importance of the political domain and economic domains. This belief may be found on the notion that for the Commission, the "European project" is an existential factor for the wellbeing and influence of Europe. Thus, the threat of fragmentation represents an existential threat to be addressed by the Commission's grand strategy. An example of this can be seen through several initiatives run during the first phase, such as placing the Commission as the nexus between the Member States when it comes down to energy and security issues, in particular in the realm of implementing current legal instruments.[189] Finally, the self-identification as a powerful economic actor is critical to understand why the Economic domain is given such a crucial role in the grand strategic framework.[190] The importance of this

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[187] Ibid., 2.
[188] European Commision, A Framework Strategy for a Resilient Energy Union, 4.
[189] European Commission, The European Agenda on Security, 3.
[190] See for example, European Commision, A Single Market Strategy for Europe - Analysis and Evidence, 84.

illustrates the strategic culture in the Commission, where the economic domain during the first phase is the predominant avenue to achieve grand strategic goals. In this regard, the Commission repeatedly argues its position as a global economic power, and as a regional economic power, thus justifying its use in addressing most of the aforementioned threats. The Digital Single Market is a solution which comes directly out of this strategic culture, where the Commission addresses a problem such as tech arms race, or global technological competitions, not through a national security approach, such as China or Russia, but an economic approach. [191]

4.2. Securing the neighbourhood, the second phase of the Commission's grand strategy.

From the beginnings of the Juncker Commission, the presence of a potential second phase its strategic framework was already articulated, albeit without expressing it fully. In 2014, during the confirmation hearings of HRVP Morgherini, expressed its interesting of developing a strategy which would address EU interests abroad and would look at how to utilize EU's influential toolkit comprehensively. [192] At the same time, internally, Morgherini was well aware of the need to address the Council desires of creating a document enlisting the strategic context, and on the opportunity, this provided to presenting a diplomatic strategy which would update the previous security strategy, the 2003 Solana's Europe Strategy for Security (ESS). [193] However, the EUGS -Morgherini's strategy-, cannot be understood as an isolated grand strategy, as the EUGS was the mere articulation of a second phase of the Commission's grand strategy, as this section highlights. The goal of the second phase of the Commission's grand strategy can be understood as "Securing the Neighborhood", with the EUGS as the primary document of reference for this phase.

The threats which underpinned this second phase, were similar to that of the first phase, albeit with a change of focus from internal to external dimensions. That is not to say that internal threats were ignored through the second phase, as the threat of fragmentation was significantly present. However, threats such as terrorism, hybrid threats, the loss of influence of the EU and mass migration to the EU, were the principal threats in this phase. The Commission in cooperation with the EEAS traced the origin of these threats from the instability of its

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[191] See Lewis, 'Technological Competition and China'.
[192] See European External Action Service, *Hearing of HRVP Federica Mogherini before the EP*; Mogherini, 'Answers to the European Parliament Questionnnaire to the Commissioner-Designate', 6–7.
[193] Tocci, *Framing the EU Global Strategy: A Stronger Europe in a Fragile World.*

neighbourhood.[194] The Russian presence in Ukraine -with a steadily increase in assertiveness from Russia towards the EU- was still present and it brought to the public the discussion around hybrid threats.[195] The Syrian conflict, which had started in 2011, was still ongoing, and it gave rise to problematic mass migration flows, as well as the fostering of terrorist groups such as ISIS, bringing the issues of terrorism and radicalization to the forefront of the discussions around EU's security.[196] The increasing great power competitions were also gaining traction, as even during Obama's administration, US-Chinese tensions were growing, and Russian assertiveness suggested the rise of challengers to the international system.[197] All of these crises and threats can be traced back to the first phase as well, as these are not entirely new in 2016. However, the Commission became more focused on addressing these in its second phase.

On the backdrop of further international instability, and the strengthening of the Commission role internally, the second phase of the Commission becomes visible. As stated before, the goal of this phase can be understood as that of "Securing the Neighbourhood". Securing the Neighbourhood is composed of several elements. First, "the neighbourhood" which can be best understood as the immediate neighbourhood of the EU, that of the Middle East and the Maghreb, and Eastern Europe. The EUGS illustrates the Commission's regional focus, referring to these regions as the South and Near East, by the providing the most amount of details and actions towards the region instead of others such as Latin America or the far east. Secondly, "Securing" is granted a different approach to a traditional hard power stance. The EU proposes to create resilience in the neighbourhood instead, in an attempt to prevent direct involvement -boots on the ground-, creating the necessary institutions in the neighbouring countries to address their own crises.[198] Finally, the goal of securing the neighbourhood also makes explicit another vital goal coherent across both phases, that of the creation of a comprehensive practice in the use of foreign policy tools through the coordination of EU institutions and, most importantly, through the coordination of Member States. The EUGS once again provides a clear example, where it commits its last section to the "Joint-Up union", addressing the lack of comprehensiveness in the use of EU tools. [199]

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[194] European External Action Service, 'EU Global Strategy', 17; European Commission, The European Agenda on Security.

[195] Caliskan, 'Hybrid Warfare through the Lens of Strategic Theory'.

[196] See Greussing and Boomgaarden, 'Shifting the Refugee Narrative?'

[197] See Mitchell, 'The Age of Great-Power Competition'.

[198] For a comprehensive analysis of resilience as a security concept, see Wagner and Anholt, 'Resilience as the EU Global Strategy's New Leitmotif: Pragmatic, Problematic or Promising?'

[199] European External Action Service, 'EU Global Strategy', 49–51.

The second phase of the Commission's grand strategy introduced the diplomatic strategy, which built up upon the previous resources and strategies from the first phase. In this sense, elements such as economic (regulatory and trade), political, and informational resources remained in place, albeit some changes. An essential change in the approach of the Commission towards how it would employ its resources was on its focus and the degree of international presence. In 2017, Juncker articulated the idea of Europe needing to attend to its "strategic interests".[200] The context in which he was speaking, was regarding trade, illustrating the change of discourse of the Commission. While the Trade for All strategy, more indicative of the first phase, spoke of trade defence instruments (TDIs) as elements needed to be revised and reconceptualized, it did not pair it use to a particular strategic behaviour. However, with the modernization of TDIs in 2016, there was a "drastic" change in discourse, where the Commission was pairing its use with strategic behaviour, expressing its intention to utilize it also to ensure environmental and social issues of EU interest.[201] This change of discourse was apparent across the utilization of different sources of power. In the case of informational capabilities, the Commission made a change in direction, from the use of communication tools to support the Commission's internal imagine, to the use of counter-disinformation tools and a more substantial presence of Strategic Communications.

Finally, the addition of the diplomatic strategy as a leading strategy in the grand strategic framework provided a further comprehensiveness in the Commission's use of its different tools. Through the EUGS, the Commission and the EEAS argued for a whole-of-government approach to its foreign policy by combining the full force of all of the previously stated strategies and utilizing them to achieve its goal of providing resilience for the region and security for Europe.[202] In this regard, diplomatic resources were utilized in a combined form of indirect influence, through the orchestration of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the neighbourhood and the EU's administrative agencies,[203] and with direct influence through the conditionality of economic tools to leverage neighbouring states. Moreover, the second phase of the Commission's grand strategy utilized its diplomatic resources to externalize its interests

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[200] Juncker, 'State of the Union 2017', 3.
[201] See European Commission, 'Europe's Trade Defence Instruments: Now Stronger and More Effective'. This document released in the aftermath of the modernization of trade defence instruments, is a significant contrast to the Trade For All Strategy.
[202] European External Action Service, 'EU Global Strategy', 51.
[203] For an example of the use of CSOs as tools to influence in areas of key importance for resilience, See EEAS, 'EU announces funding for eight new civil society projects for 2018-2020'; Also see Aliyev, 'Assessing the European Union's Assistance to Civil Society in Its Eastern Neighbourhood'.

in addressing some of the threats identified in the first phase, such as mass migration, leading - for example- to several agreements with different neighbouring states.[204]

It is important to address the "elephant in the room" for grand strategic discussions around the EU, the lack of military power. In this sense, military power was not articulated as a tool to be utilised for foreign influence, i.e. building a presence in different regions, but instead, as a platform to be utilised for internal harmonisation and cohesion. That is not to misrepresent or ignore the multiple times the EUGS mentions CSDP operations; however, these are granted a rather peace-building duty and resilience-building duty, rather than stabilisation or confrontation.

Moreover, the military domain, clearly illustrated a critical threat for the Commission, the threat of fragmentation or disunity in the Member States. In an effort to address such concern, the Commission and the EEAS placed a significant amount of its efforts in making the EDA as the nexus for building cohesion on how Member States coordinate their defensive capabilities. At the same time, through the EUGS, the Commission proposed to act as a supporting actor for Member States military aspirations. Not by forming its own army, but instead by being a source of funding for joint projects and a nexus of cooperation.[205] These efforts correspond to several initiatives that the EU launched, such as the Permanent Structure for Cooperation (PESCO) and the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD).[206] In this regard, military power was a fundamental aspect in the Commission's grand strategic framework, not because of its presence; but instead, because of the lack of capabilities in this arena. The Commission repeatedly articulated its lack of power in the military domain, thus its interest to become a nexus, and its grand strategic efforts to focus on areas such as Diplomatic, Economic and political response to the efforts of the administration to compensate for the lack of military power.

As the reader may already perceive from the differences between both phases, the second phase had a rather outward-looking and proactive approach, relative to the first phase. That is because there was a change in the principles underpinning the grand strategic framework, represented

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[204] An example of such strategic use of economic conditionality to address threats from both first and second phase, can be seen through the case of the EU-Jordan Compact. In its attempts to incentivize Jordan to assist in migration control, the EU utilized development aid conditionality. Anholt and Sinatti, 'Under the Guise of Resilience', 325; European Commission, EU- Jordan Partnership Priorities and annexed Compact.
[205] European External Action Service, 'EU Global Strategy', 46.
[206] Biscop, 'Letting Europe Go Its Own Way'.

by the addition of the principle of "principled pragmatism" to conceptualize the approach of the EU in its foreign affairs strategy. Nathalie Tocci [207] described the notion of "principled pragmatism" as the utilization of a number of tools –"pathways, recipes and models"- which may fall beyond the traditional scope of the EU but that are guided by international law, which functions as a benchmark for what can the EU agree to and what it cannot.[208] The addition of principled pragmatism may serve to explain the change in the discourse from the first phase to the second phase of the Juncker's Commission. As principled pragmatism already presupposes a strategic approach of the EU, without sacrificing the normative and soft power approach by which the EU is often characterised. At the same time, principled pragmatism complemented the intentions of the Commission to be a more comprehensive actor in how it employed its resources. While this intention was not exclusive of the second phase -and it cannot be said that previous administrations did not have such intentions-, the degree of interest of the Commission in expressing such intentions is of significant importance. The reason for such importance is that in the articulation of the EUGS, and on the subsequent strategies which fell beneath it, there is a relentless attempt to include different sources of power to achieve the expressed goal. For example, the Cultural strategy adds the relatively small source of military power that the EU has – CSDP missions, in order to secure culturally relevant sites in the neighbourhood. By articulating such desire, it uses cultural power (through the use of its cultural heritage as a source of influence), military power (through the use of CSDP missions), and informational resources (through the portrayal of the EU as a defender of cultural sites). While it utilizes hard power connotations, it does not surrender its normative power.

4.3. Layers in EU's grand strategic framework.

The EU, as an institution, has a complex structure, different governing institutions and a complex web of actors involved in the decision-making process. This complex structure is quite evident from the documents analysed throughout this thesis. As exposed throughout the research design and literature review, the literature with regards to the EU and grand strategy has often surrounded that of the Council and the Member States. The powers of the Council when it comes to setting the political goals of the EU may be the reason for such focus on the Council. However, what the research revealed is that there is a sophisticated grand strategic structure, where the Council, the Commission, and the Parliament, do not necessarily clash with

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[207] Former special advisor to HRVP Morgerini, and a key player in the drafting of the EUGS.
[208] Tocci, *Framing the EU Global Strategy: A Stronger Europe in a Fragile World*, 65.

one another, preventing each other of performing a real grand strategic exercise; but instead, that there is an environment of coexistence, where the inputs of each actor influences and intercedes in the making of the EU's grand strategy.

The grand strategic process mentioned above reflects that the Commission acts as the principal actor in developing the grand strategy. Two aspects support the predominance of the Commission as the principal agent in the developing of a grand strategy. First, the Commission is granted particular focus as the enforcer of most of the objectives set forth by the Council. Second, the Juncker's Commission paid close attention in identifying itself as a close ally of the Parliament by putting into motion what the parliament debates, or by recognising the Parliament as the voice of the EU citizens, a tool which seems to be further utilized by the newer Commission.[209] With regards to the first, there are several examples of the relation between the Commission and Council. For example, Juncker's Political Guidelines openly acknowledged that it draws on the Strategic Agenda set by the Council in 2014,[210] with their policy areas being sometimes almost identical.[211] The EUGS further illustrates the dynamic, where its formation was partially motivated by the Council's decision to task the HRVP to create a joint approach in its external actions, and an assessment of the strategic context of the EU.[212] However, the process which results in the 2015 Council's mandate, supporting the HRVP's ambitions of developing a new foreign policy strategy, was instead pursued and lobbied by the Commission itself.[213] Thus, it would be incorrect to assume that the Commission acts as an actor who patiently awaits for orders from the Council, and translates them into a strategy. Indeed, there is a degree of such dynamic in place, but it does not fully reflect the construction and articulation of Juncker's grand strategy. Instead, our research perceived a significant effort by Juncker's Commission to acknowledge and communicate the goals set up by the Council and the Member States, but go a step further and develop its own goals.

Such dynamic is also not new to European Studies, as it has been a predominant feature of the upload and download dynamic of Europeanization.[214] What this thesis argues is that such a dynamic is also an essential element of the EU's grand strategy, influencing how these grand strategic frameworks are formulated. Through all the strategies analysed, the Commission

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[209] See Hogan, Hearing of Phil Hogan.
[210] Juncker, 'Political Guidelines', 12.
[211] See European Council, 'Strategic Agenda for the Union in Times of Change'.
[212] Tocci, *Framing the EU Global Strategy: A Stronger Europe in a Fragile World*, 33; General Secretariat of the Council, Conclusions.
[213] Tocci, *Framing the EU Global Strategy: A Stronger Europe in a Fragile World*, 35.
[214] Flers and Müller, 'Dimensions and Mechanisms of the Europeanization of Member State Foreign Policy'.

sought to legitimise its paths of action through acknowledging the co-participation of the Council or the Parliament, alluding to such upload and download processes. The Commission in this regard works as the nexus in the grand strategic structure in the EU, where its strategies are deeply influenced and determined by the upload and download of the different EU's institutions. However, its role as the executive of the EU, as the actor which has to act on these strategies, grants it a certain level of predominance. The strategies proposed by the Commission are then, characterised by a rather pragmatic and policy-driven discourse, where different agencies or DGs are empowered to follow a particular policy action. Thus, the Commission has both tasks of enforcing but also defining the EU's grand strategy.

Finally, Parliament is another actor who was mentioned repeatedly throughout the strategies. However, different from the Council or the Commission, Parliament cannot be regarded as an equal actor when it involves grand strategic making. That is so because of several reasons. First, the institutional framework of the EU does not grant the same decision-making privileges to the Parliament as it does for the Council and the Commission. The Commission has a power of initiating legislation and of enforcing legislation. The Council is granted the privilege of political guidance, and veto in CSDP decisions as well as the Multi-Annual Financial Framework. The parliament is left to behave as the legislative body, mainly reacting on the initiatives proposed by the other two institutions. For example, until recently it was not broadly included in certain dealings of the Commission, such as the negotiations of Free Trade Agreements.[215]

The role of the parliament, however, is growing and inside Juncker's grand strategic framework, it had an essential role for Juncker's aspirations. Grand strategy as with most political acts requires legitimacy; in particular, it needs to be granted a certain sense of authority in comparison by the rest of players in the political system. The Parliament worked as that source of legitimacy throughout Juncker's grand strategy. That could be seen from the initiative of the State of the Union speeches, addressing the parliament, or the inclusion of the parliament in several strategies, as well as Juncker's pledge to involve the Parliament in the Commission's decision-making process.[216] In the case of the EUGS, that was certainly the case, where while it was not granted a veto role, it was consulted several times.[217] This predominance of the Parliament as a legitimating body can be explained by Juncker's perception of the EU being

[215] Meunier and Nicolaïdis, '10. The European Union as a Trade Power'.
[216] Juncker, 'Political Guidelines'.
[217] Tocci, *Framing the EU Global Strategy: A Stronger Europe in a Fragile World*, 45.

under a political threat, as confidence by EU's citizens was decreasing, and the rise of populism across the EU. Furthermore, utilising the Parliament as a legitimating body can be explained by the potential advantages which it grants to the Commission in its efforts to deal with the threat of fragmentation by the Member States. It allows the Commission to present a stronger case towards the Council and Member States, by justifying its actions through the participation of the Parliament - the voice of the EU citizens.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

As stated in the introduction, the purpose of this thesis was to answer the question of "Does the EU have a grand strategy?". For this matter, chapter 2 focused on providing a lengthy and comprehensive discussion of what grand strategy is. In this regard, this thesis identified three main components of grand strategy - goals, end and the relationship between these. At the same time, this thesis reasoned that the distinction between war and peace is a valid one, however, that does not mean that grand strategy is exclusive to war contexts. Moreover, this thesis argued that the current trends in the grand strategic debates, which focused on a state-centric approach, generate limitations in the utilization of the term to analyse strategic behaviour in the international arena. To this effect, this thesis argues for an expansion of case studies, through a redefinition of grand strategy to avoid arbitrary distinctions such as the necessity of military power, but instead to understand grand strategy as a framework. In this regard, drawing upon literature, this work defines grand strategy as the framework where strategies are connected through a policy goal and aimed at regulating scarcity of means through top-down mechanisms informed by strategic culture.

A relevant contribution of this thesis is the addition of a theory on how international organizations are capable of engaging with grand strategy. Other works in the realm of grand strategy assumed grand strategy as an inherent practice of states and their sovereignty allows them to have access to a wide range of tools to engage in grand strategy. However, international organizations have often been associated as tools utilized by state actors to further their interests internationally, thus, undermining the potential presence of a grand strategy in international organizations. Contrary to this approach, this thesis challenges such notion by introducing the contributions of the neoinstitutionalist and fundamentalist institutionalism in the realm of international organizations, illustrating the fact that international organizations also pursue their agenda. At the same time, the nature of specific international organizations allows them to utilize methods such as Orchestration, or the use of its moral power, to pursue its own interests and agenda. In this regard, the EU, which is a unique international organization, fits the category of IOs which are capable of utilizing influence tools of their own, to pursue its desired interests, while also developing an agenda parallel that the one set by the Member States. Thus, considering the potential capabilities of international organizations, chapter 3 theorises that international organizations are capable of having grand strategies if these are capable of

generating its own grand strategic goals, having a number of influence capabilities, and are able to relate the means to the goal. In this regard, IOs with state-like functions are capable of having and implementing grand strategies.

With these theoretical assumptions in mind, the research question becomes clear, does the EU have a grand strategy? Through which the hypothesis was that the EU had a grand strategy during the Juncker Commission. To identify the presence of a grand strategy, this thesis analysed the Commission through a critical discourse analysis of official communications of the Commission. By identifying the three main components of grand strategy -goals, means, and the relation between these-, this thesis was able to prove the hypothesis correct, in the fact that the EU, through the Commission, had a grand strategy.

The analysis showed the presence of a two-phased grand strategy. The first phase of the EU's grand strategy was characterised by the goal of "Rebuild Europe", which looked to address the consequences of numerous crises affecting the EU. In this regard, the Euro crisis, the political crisis illustrated by the rise of populism and Euroscepticism, and the Ukrainian-Russian crisis provided a clear representation of the threats towards the EU. To address such threats, the Juncker Commission articulated a series of actions which would focus on strengthening the EU internally, in an attempt to make it a more influential actor internationally. The actions in this regard fell through the economic, political and informational domains. Moreover, the first phase had a referencing document, which provided the overarching grand strategic framework, the 2014 Juncker's Political Guidelines. A defining element of this phase was the inward-looking approach, as a preparation for a somewhat more outward-looking phase.

The second phase of the grand strategy was characterised by the goal of "securing the neighbourhood". In terms of the threats which motivated the second phase, these were to a significant extent the same as the first phase. However, while the first phase understood and addressed the threat as internal, the second phase externalised these threats. The means employed by the second phase were similar to a large extent to that of the first phase, with the addition of the diplomatic actions as well as a more substantial use of strategic communications. Contrarily to the first phase, the referencing document also changed, and the EUGS became the grand strategic reference. With the change of the referencing document, the idea of "Principled pragmatism" was added to the ideological strategic framework of the EU. This changes brought several analytical takeaways. First, there was a stark change in the discourse of the Commission, where the Commission openly articulated its desires of behaving strategically abroad and the continuous use of the concept of "comprehensiveness" when articulating future paths of actions.

Second, the second phase of the grand strategic framework cannot be considered as an isolated element, or as a disconnected strategic attempt. The second phase was very much connected to the first phase, through the goals which were similar in logic but different in their scope, as both of them attempted to provide security and stability to the European project through addressing the same threats. The means also remained relatively unchanged, although in the second phase these were utilized with a rather outward-looking approach. Finally, the second phase was not an opportunistic or emergent aspect in the EU's grand strategic framework, but instead a planned phase which was already mentioned through initial communications of the Commission.

It is essential to highlight some of the limitations of this research. Grand strategy speaks about security, and there is a level of confidentiality that it is often paired with strategy, which presents a significant limitation for this work. While some states seem open to the release of strategic documents, there is naturally a degree of confidentiality which is found on how these strategies come to be. At the same time, specific strategies seem to be hidden between the confidential curtain. An example of this has been the Strategic Communications strategy from DG Communication. Although traditionally we would expect the DG Communication to be reasonably transparent with its strategic objectives, these have not been published and so far, not been able to be accessed. However, in order to work around this limitation, we have focused on published strategies, following the Diplomatic, Military, Informational, and Economic framework and through the critical discourse analysis of the official documents, we have inferred the presence of these domains.

Three important conclusions of this research are worth to point out. First, this research was able to provide an answer to its research question, "Does the EU have a grand strategy?" By the end of this thesis, it should become clearer the fact that through the Juncker administration, there was a grand strategic framework in place. The EU through the Commission was able to articulate all of the elements which are associated with a grand strategic. While that could lead us to understand the Juncker Commission, and the EU, as a grand strategic actor, an essential element to be addressed by future research, is how effective as a grand strategic actor the EU actually is. The capability of formulating a grand strategy, and having one, does not equate to grand strategic success, as plans do not always achieve their success. However, a potential answer to this could be seen by the ambitions of the current Commission, and the capability of the EU to steer away from several geopolitical crises throughout the last four years. Future areas of research could focus on the success of the EU's grand strategic attempts, as well as the

informal channels that influenced the formation of the EU's grand strategy, as these were not able to be identified in the scope of this thesis.

Second, an important element which comes across through the analysis of the documents selected is the relentless articulation of the threat of fragmentation in the EU. The importance of this threat is that it would further validate the argument that international organizations have grand strategies. That is so because the threat of fragmentation is an existential one, as International Organizations depend on the Member States for their survival as these grant them with power and purpose, even if these expand after such delegation. Thus, if the threat of fragmentation is an existential one, it would be natural that international organizations would attempt to deal directly with such threat, and potentially, to elaborate their own grand strategic attempts to solve such existential threat. However these are preliminary findings from the analysis of the EU, and it would be recommended to compare in future research how different International Organizations articulate such threat, and if such threat becomes a deterministic obstacle in the grand strategic functioning of these organizations. In the case of the EU, the threat of fragmentation was a motivation for the Commission to behave as a nexus between the Member States. That provided further motivations for the Commission to behave in a grand strategic manner in areas where it could position itself as a strong player, such as trade.

Third, Juncker's grand strategic attempts were significantly influenced by the context it perceived. As mentioned before, the role of a crisis-mentality was a crucial element in the formation of its grand strategy, as it was used to justify almost every action taken. In that regard, this Commission's grand strategy is unique, and it could be unlikely for other Commissions to behave similarly. However, an important area for future research is that of analysing how other Commissions engaged with grand strategy, under which circumstances, and with which tools. By doing so, future scholars and practitioners could elaborate models on the different types of grand strategic alternatives and structures the EU could employ to achieve its objectives effectively.

Finally, with regards to grand strategy as a concept. What this thesis was able to highlight was the need to broaden the concept of grand strategy to allow other international actors also to be analysed. The EU, like many other International Organizations, is often excluded from grand strategic debates given its role as a non-state actor. However, through this thesis, the capabilities and the actual strategic behaviour of the EU has been illustrated. The fact that the EU was able to elaborate its own policy goals, utilize several strategies across different domains, and to utilize its own principles and values in order to sustain its strategic framework, proved that the

EU not only has the capability of producing grand strategies, but that is already doing so. It is paramount, however, that the theory stated in the third chapter of this thesis is tested with other international organizations, which do not share the unique characteristics of the EU. International organizations such as NATO, or the Mercosur, are examples of this. While these organizations are not equal to the EU, in neither their policy scopes nor in their level of integration, their role as strategic actors should be further assessed. This thesis, and the theory argued in it, could provide a model to analyse grand strategy in these international organizations. Finally, a comprehensive comparison of grand strategy between these three international organizations - NATO, Mercosur, and the EU- could provide further insights on how grand strategy works in international organizations. Because of length and time considerations, such comparison could not be done by the scope of this work, but it should leave the door open for further research in the area.

Appendix

Document	Year
Juncker, Jean-Claude. 'A New Start for Europe: My Agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change. Political Guidelines for the next European Commission'.	2014
European Commision. A Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe, 2015.	2015
European Commision. A Single Market Strategy for Europe - Analysis and Evidence.	2015
Juncker, Jean-Claude. 'Completing Europe's Economic and Monetary Union'.	2015
European Commission. 'The European Agenda on Security.'.	2015
European Commission. 'Trade for All: Towards a More Responsible Trade and Investment Policy'.	2015
European Commission. 'Action Plan on Strategic Communication'.	2015
European Commision. 'A Framework Strategy for a Resilient Energy Union with a Forward-Looking Climate Change Policy'.	2015
European Commission. 'EU enlargement strategy'.	2015
European External Action Service. 'Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe: A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy'.	2016
DG Communication. 'Strategic Plan 2016-2020'.	2016
European Commission. 'A New European Agenda for Culture'.	2018
European Commision. 'A Credible Enlargement Perspective for and Enhanced EU Engagement with the Western Balkans '.	2018

Table 1. Final list of strategies utilized for the critical discourse analysis

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