



**Parahyangan Catholic University**  
**Faculty of Social and Political Sciences**  
**Department of International Relations**

*Accredited "UNGGUL"*

*SK BAN-PT No. 2579/SK/BAN-PT/AK-ISK/S/IV/2022*

**“Unequal yet Dependent Security Relations: The  
Foundation of the Australia–United States Military  
Defense Alliance”**

Undergraduate Thesis

Study of International Politics and Security

By

Caitlyn Leonardi

6091901002

BANDUNG

2024



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**BANDUNG**

**2024**

Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik  
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**Tanda Pengesahan Skripsi**

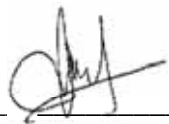
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Foundation of the Australia–United States Military  
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Telah diuji dalam Ujian Sidang jenjang Sarjana  
Pada Kamis, 11 Januari 2024  
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No.	Catatan Revisi	Perbaikan	Letak Perbaikan
1.	Singkatan pada judul dihilangkan	Perubahan judul skripsi menjadi: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hubungan Keamanan yang Kebergantungan namun Tidak Setara: Dasar dari Aliansi Pertahanan Militer Australia—Amerika Serikat</li> <li><i>Unequal yet Dependent Security Relations: The Foundation of the Australia–United States Military Defense Alliance</i></li> </ul>	<i>Cover, Abstract</i> (halaman v), <i>Abstrak</i> (halaman vi), <i>Preface</i> (halaman vii)
2.	Definisi dan pengertian aliansi yang kurang spesifik dan mendalam	Penambahan penjelasan mengenai definisi aliansi dan kecenderungan aliansi dibentuk dalam struktur kekuatan simetris	Bab I pada bagian sub-judul 1.1 <i>Research Background</i> (halaman 2-3)
3.	Kurang kuatnya argumen mengenai aliansi simetris yang seharusnya menjadi struktur ideal bagi negara-negara yang membentuk aliansi	Penambahan sub-judul baru yang berjudul <i>Symmetrical vs. Asymmetrical Power Structure in Alliances</i> yang menjelaskan tentang bagaimana para realis memandang aliansi simetris sebagai bentuk aliansi yang ideal dan dapat bertahan lama dibandingkan aliansi yang bersifat asimetris, guna memperkuat anomali dan argumen yang terkandung dalam skripsi ini	Bab II pada bagian sub-judul 2.1 <i>Symmetrical vs. Asymmetrical Power Structure in Alliances</i> (halaman 17-18)
4.	Penggunaan kata yang kurang akademis dalam pertanyaan penelitian	Perubahan pertanyaan penelitian menjadi: <i>Why have Australia and the US kept maintaining their military defense alliance despite the asymmetrical structure in their political standing and capabilities of power?</i>	Bab I pada bagian sub-judul 1.2.3 <i>Research Question</i> (halaman 5-6)
5.	Kurang adanya pendalaman mengenai basis teori aliansi	Penambahan pendalaman teori aliansi mengenai apa itu aliansi, mengapa negara-negara membentuk dan/atau bergabung dalam aliansi, di saat apa negara membutuhkan aliansi, dan bagaimana negara-negara bertindak dalam aliansi mereka.	Bab I pada bagian sub-judul 1.7 <i>Theoretical/ Conceptual Framework</i> (halaman 11-12)
6.	Argumen yang dibuktikan di bagian analisis di Bab III diperkuat dengan pendalaman teori mengenai aliansi	Penambahan argumen mengenai bagaimana Australia dan Amerika Serikat berperilaku dan melakukan aksi-aksi tertentu dalam aliansi mereka sesuai dengan pendalaman teori aliansi pada Bab I	Bab III pada bagian sub-judul 3.2 <i>Shared Perception of Threat: Conflicts of Japan, ex-Soviet Union, Terrorism, China</i> (halaman 50)

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## STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

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Hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own research and has not been presented, proposed, or published by other institutions to acquire any scholarly and/or academic degree prior to the creation of this thesis. Any quoted idea or information from other parties is written in accordance to the principles of a research paper.

I declare this statement with full responsibility and am willing to accept any consequences given by the established regulations, if later this statement was proved false.

Bandung, 18 December 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caitlyn Leonardi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Caitlyn Leonardi  
6091901002

## ABSTRACT

Name : Caitlyn Leonardi  
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Title : Unequal yet Dependent Security Relations: The  
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This research aims to understand the nature of the tightly-bound Australia–US military defense alliance as both countries are able to thrive through this alliance despite having a large gap in their capabilities of power and political standing. Henceforth, this research seeks to answer the reason behind why have Australia and the US maintained their alliance for all these years despite their huge differences in power. By utilizing a deductive logic approach and an in-depth narrative analysis in accordance to Morrow’s concept of Asymmetrical Alliances, findings show there is a division of roles based on the country’s power in the US–Australian alliance, where the US takes on the role of the major power and Australia holds the role of the minor power. Through this division of roles, it is concluded that the asymmetric nature in the Australia–US military defense alliance itself, shared threat perceptions from both countries, and the benefits they have reaped over the time through their trade commitments are the main reasons to why both countries refuse to let go of their tightly-bound alliance.

**Key Words:** Australia, United States (US), Asymmetrical Alliance, Power Difference, Shared Perception of Threat, Trade Commitments

## ABSTRAK

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Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami dasar dari keterikatan erat negara Australia dan Amerika Serikat (AS) melalui aliansi pertahanan militer mereka karena kedua negara tersebut mampu berkembang melalui aliansi ini meskipun memiliki kesenjangan yang besar dalam kapabilitas kekuatan dan kedudukan politik mereka. Maka, penelitian ini dilakukan dalam upaya untuk menjawab alasan mengapa Australia dan AS mempertahankan aliansi mereka selama bertahun-tahun meskipun terdapat perbedaan kekuatan yang sangat besar. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan logika deduktif dan analisis naratif berdasarkan konsep *Asymmetrical Alliances* milik Morrow, ditemukan bahwa adanya pembagian peran berdasarkan kekuatan negara dalam aliansi pertahanan Australia–AS, dimana AS berperan sebagai *major power* dan Australia memegang peran sebagai *minor power*. Melalui pembagian peran ini, disimpulkan bahwa sifat asimetris dalam aliansi pertahanan militer Australia–AS itu sendiri, adanya persepsi ancaman yang serupa dari kedua negara, dan manfaat-manfaat yang telah mereka peroleh selama ini melalui *trade commitments* mereka adalah alasan utama mengapa kedua negara menolak untuk melepaskan keterikatan mereka terhadap aliansi ini.

**Kata Kunci:** Australia, Amerika Serikat (AS), Aliansi Asimetris, Perbedaan Kekuatan, Persepsi Ancaman, *Trade Commitments*

## PREFACE

This undergraduate thesis, “*Unequal yet Dependent Security Relations: The Foundation of the Australia–United States Military Defense Alliance*” was written as a requirement in fulfilling my studies and obtaining a Bachelor’s Degree from the Department of International Relations at Parahyangan Catholic University.

At first, I was not a person with a keen heart in politics as I thought it was a dirty and corrupt world. So, I thought I wouldn’t study anything related to politics. Of course, the irony for me to be a university student who studies international relations and an author to this thesis. Personally, my opinion towards politics have not change much after 4.5 years of study but I do understand the logical approach of maximizing your benefits at the littlest amount of cost.

Honestly, this thesis was a little difficult to write as I had quite a hard time in the beginning of deciding what topic to discuss about until I landed on the Australia–US military defense alliance. During the last few months, I actually lost my motivation along the way for a certain period of time. However, despite that, I know that this thesis is still my responsibility as a student and I hope this finished product can give future readers some further insight in regards to the nature of the US–Australian alliance and their foreign policy decisions through their dynamics over the past few decades.

I would also like to use my opportunity by utilizing this platform to raise my voice in regards to what has been going on for these past few months. I am truly disheartened by the recent escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the fact that the two countries I’m researching for this thesis are funding the genocide and ethnic cleansing that’s happening in Palestine does not sit well with me. I have seen the horrors and suffering that Palestinians had to endure and the reality that this has been going on for the past 7 decades completely blew my mind.

All in all, I end this with my call for an immediate ceasefire and for the US to stop using its power and veto rights oppressively. #CeasefireNOW

Bandung,  
Caitlyn Leonardi



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- First and foremost, my beloved family. To *Papa*, you have supported me through my ups and downs with your laughter and wisdoms. You guided me through my hardships, believed in me, and never questioned my judgements in life. To *Mama*, you have inspired me to be the best version of myself. Your willingness to learn new things and your dedication through it never cease to amaze me. To *Dede*, my lifelong roommate and the first person I'd find whenever I need someone to vent to. You have grown to a lovely human being and I hope you never let go of your dreams. To *Nai Nai*, who always made sure that I am loved and taken care of in the comfort of our own house and through the countless gifts and meals you've prepared for me. I couldn't have made it through life without all 4 of you.
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- At last, ending this section, is a special thank you to *Caitlyn Leonardi*. Thank you for not simply giving up, thank you for pushing through, thank you for being responsible for your studies. Even though you are tad bit later to graduate than the majority of your peers, I am so proud that you were able to get on your feet and run towards the finish line. I don't know what the future holds for us, but I hope to not let go of our dreams. Keep fighting till the end, may happiness and success accompany us in every part of our journey.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ANZUS	Australia, New Zealand and United States
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AUKUS	Australia, United Kingdom, and United States
AUSFTA	Australia-United States Free Trade Agreement
AUSMIN	Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DSR	Defense Strategic Review
DTCT	Defense Trade Cooperation Treaty
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NTIB	National Technology and Industrial Base
NZ	New Zealand
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO	World Trade Organization

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background

From the start of their tightly-bound relationship throughout the Second World War, relations between Australia and the United States (US) have flourished through decades of cooperation and collaboration. The establishment of a tripartite security agreement named the ANZUS Treaty in 1951 and a high-level consultation platform between the two countries named the Australia–US Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN) in 1985 furtherly signified the military defense alliance between the two countries in means to deepen their foreign security and strategic partnerships with each other, especially amidst the fight against the ex-Soviet Union (USSR) during the Cold War.<sup>1</sup> The war then eventually ended with the US victory, bringing forward ‘peace’ and an era of US superiority as a ‘superpower’ and the ‘global hegemon’.

As the US position in the international world rose to the highest, new interests began to form between the two countries and the stronger their alliance came to be. Reflecting the dedication and commitment of both Australia and the US in their military defense alliance, bilateral talks

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<sup>1</sup> “AUSMIN - Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations,” *Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*, accessed April 10, 2023, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/united-states-of-america/ausmin/ausmin-australia-united-states-ministerial-consultations>.



between the two have been held regularly almost every year for nearly four decades to this day.<sup>2</sup> Consultations between the two have discussed various topics and issues that are crucial to fulfilling both countries' interests. In particular, US security presence and the importance of the Asia-Pacific region, nuclear weaponry ban (CTBT), the global war on terrorism, maritime security activities especially regarding the South China Sea dispute, and many more involving their foreign security and defense cooperation.<sup>3</sup>

Alliances in the international discourse are originally formed to allow sovereign states work together in fulfilling their national and shared interests. Some of them are established to achieve more general goals as mentioned beforehand to maintain world peace and stability, while others are formed as countermeasures to address certain issues such as conflict management.<sup>4</sup> However, in the case of military alliances, states usually establish them in order to face a rising conflict so that member states of the alliance itself would be able to commit and defend their allies, especially in regards to concerns of a perceived threat. Normally, through this context, military alliances also apply other obligations to their member states to cooperate in other fields, for instance in economic matters, to strengthen the commitment between them. Hence, this aspect serves as a countermeasure that if one of

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ryan Hawkins, "Explainer: A Brief History of AUSMIN," *United States Studies Centre*, July 18, 2018, <https://www.ussc.edu.au/a-brief-history-of-ausmin>.

<sup>4</sup> Michaela Mattes, "Reputation, Symmetry, and Alliance Design," *International Organization* vol. 66 no. 4 (2012): 682-683. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s002081831200029x>.

the member states ever violated the alliance obligations, they would risk losing other forms of beneficial cooperation with the other states.<sup>5</sup>

To be able to address certain conflicts, both the political standing and capabilities of power of states here perform crucial roles for the member states of an alliance to stay in the same wavelength in ensuring the accomplishment of their goals.<sup>6</sup> This is because an alliance formed by states with similar powers are established to amass their resources for them to be able to wage a more successful deterrence and/or compellence against potential threats. This results in an alliance to have state members with similar political standing and capabilities of power where they view the alliance itself as a pledge of commitment to assure mutual benefit and also fulfill their national interests without having one overpowering the other.<sup>7</sup>

## **1.2 Problem Identification**

### **1.2.1 Problem Description**

Nearly 80 years have passed since the Australia–US military defense alliance has been established and the relations between both countries have remained strong and thriving to this day. As stated in the previous section, alliances should normally consist of state members that are similar in terms of political standing and capabilities of power to ensure the accomplishment of their shared goals and reach mutual benefit while also fulfilling their national interests. In this case, however,

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 687.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 683.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 688.

there is clearly a difference in the alliance formation of Australia and the US back in 1940s, where clearly the two of them were states with different political standing and capabilities of power.

Although Australia undoubtedly holds the spotlight amongst other countries in the Oceania region, this does not mean that Australia is anywhere close or near US' political standing and capabilities of power in the international political discourse. For instance, we can see the huge difference in the military expenditures of both countries over the course of 1986 to 2022 where the average spending per year by the US is at an immense amount of US\$503.26 billion, while Australia sits at the average of only US\$15.45 billion.<sup>8</sup>

Not only that, Australia's position also differs hugely from the position that the US has been holding ever since the end of the Second World War and the Cold War as the global hegemon and a superpower in the international world. Although the US remained in the sidelines to recover from their economic fallout after the First World War, the remaining 4 years of Second World War and the Cold War era became the perfect stages for the US to showcase their acts of valor and military force by successfully subduing France, Germany, Japan, and also the ex-Soviet Union.<sup>9</sup> In addition to that, the establishment of various

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<sup>8</sup> "Military expenditure (current USD) – Australia, United States," *World Bank*, accessed April 12, 2023, [https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.CD?end=2022&locations=AU-US&name\\_desc=false&start=1986&view=chart](https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.CD?end=2022&locations=AU-US&name_desc=false&start=1986&view=chart).

<sup>9</sup> "How Did the United States Become a Global Power?," *World101 Contemporary History (Council on Foreign Relations)*, last updated February 14, 2023,

international organizations and treaties uniting multiple countries that were founded by the US such as the United Nations (UN) in 1945 and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949 severely furthers the gap of political influence and capabilities of power between the US and Australia.

### **1.2.2 Scope of Research**

This research takes a deeper dive in the analysis of the relationship between Australia and the US on what factors and indicators that have influenced the two to become inseparable and dependent towards each other. This research is interested in limiting the scope of actors into only Australia and the United States, in regards to their commitment to the military defense alliance. Thus, this also limits the focus of the research into the long and tightly-bound relationship between both countries to furtherly understand the dynamics and actions of Australia and the US through their alliance in protecting both their shared goals and interests.

### **1.2.3 Research Question**

Therefore, through this research, the author aims to answer the research question of: Why have Australia and the US kept maintaining

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<https://world101.cfr.org/contemporary-history/world-war/how-did-united-states-become-global-power>.

their military defense alliance despite the asymmetrical structure in their political standing and capabilities of power?

### **1.3 Research Purposes**

The purpose of this research is to show how the power gap between Australia and the US contributes as one of the main factors to why they have maintained their alliance to this day.

### **1.4 Research Utilities**

By developing this research, this paper is able to contribute in widening the field of research in regards to the topic of alliances and dynamics between member states with a difference in political standing and capabilities of power. Not only that, this research hopes to also be helpful towards theoretical debates on international relations, particularly on issues related to power, cooperation, and security.

### **1.5 Literature Review**

Alliance formation between states have always been the focus of analysis amongst scholars as to explain the complexity of actors and each of their interests involved. In regards to the importance of a state's political standing and capabilities of power, these aspects need to be in balance in order for the member states of an alliance to continue fulfilling their shared goals and interests. Numerous scholars have agreed that the bond between the US and Australia through their military defense alliance exists deep and

of high importance to both parties, as proven from their historical relations and the alliance lasting for almost eight decades without any signs of disbandment to this day. However, there are still discussions and debates existing of how these two countries were able to form such a strong and long-lasting alliance, as stated in the next paragraphs.

The first side in the discussion talks about how a number of scholars have argued that the reason to how Australia and the US were able to form such a strong relation and long-lasting alliance is influenced by **internal factors**. For instance, Iain D. Henry in his article titled “Adapt or atrophy? The Australia-US alliance in an age of power transition” demonstrates the tightly-bound relations between those two countries through a concept of ‘reciprocal loyalty’ because the Australian government believes that loyalty to the US will guarantee back US’ loyalty to Australia, and is later regarded as one of Australia’s core interests.<sup>10</sup> Another internal factor can be analyzed from Travis J. Hardy’s “Race as an Aspect of the U.S.-Australian Alliance in World War II” on how both countries utilized their shared racial identity as the foundation of their tightly-bound relationship, especially during the Japan’s invasion and the rise of Communism, in which Australia appeared as a natural ally with a strong cultural affinity that could stand alongside the US as Anglo-Saxon powers.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Iain D. Henry, “Adapt or Atrophy? The Australia-U.S. Alliance in an Age of Power Transition,” *Contemporary Politics* 26, no. 4 (June 19, 2020): 407-408, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2020.1777043>.

<sup>11</sup> Travis J. Hardy, “Race as an Aspect of the U.S.-Australian Alliance in World War II,” *Diplomatic History* 38, no. 3 (June 7, 2013): 567, <https://doi.org/10.1093/dh/dht103>.

Meanwhile, the other side of the discussion talks about how **external factors** were the main causes of how Australia and the US have maintained such a strong alliance to this day. In an article titled “Still Great Mates: Australia and the United States”, Anthony L. Smith displays how geopolitics play a vital role as the foundation of a strong and long-lasting alliance between the two in regards to Australia’s geographical location and role as a middle power in the Asia-Pacific region, acting as US’ foothold in their pivot strategy towards Asia.<sup>12</sup> Another perspective on an external factor is also discussed by Paul Dibb in his article “Is the US Alliance of Declining Importance to Australia?”, where he exhibits how the global power transition from Pax Britannica to Pax Americana serves as a primary reason to the thriving US-Australian alliance and that the potential decline of the US power could heavily influence Australia’s defense posture in the international world.<sup>1314</sup>

The four scholarly articles mapped above have clearly presented the two sides of a debate between internal and external factors to why have the US-Australian alliance remain prosperous after all these years. On one side, scholars like Henry and Hardy argue that a strong alliance between these two countries is possible due to internal factors, which are the concept of reciprocal loyalty and shared racial identity. Meanwhile, other scholars like

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<sup>12</sup> Anthony L. Smith, “Still Great Mates: Australia and the United States,” *Asian Affairs* 30, no. 2, *The Responses of Asian Nations to Bush Administration Security Policies* (January 2003): 116, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00927670309601521>.

<sup>13</sup> Paul Dibb, “Is the US Alliance of Declining Importance to Australia?,” *Security Challenges* vol. 5, no. 2 (January 2009): 32, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26459242>.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, 35-36.

Smith and Dibb see the tightly-bound alliance between the two countries possible as caused by external factors like geopolitics and the phenomenon of global power transition.

Henceforth, this research seeks to contribute to this debate by proving that the reason why the US-Australian military defense alliance is still thriving as of now despite being states with different political standing and capabilities of power is due to a mix of both internal and external factors themselves. A mix of both internal and external factors as reasons to why have the alliance between these two countries prevailed to this day are thus explained by utilizing the concept of Asymmetrical Alliance by James D. Morrow, which takes place in this research to provide in-depth analysis of the relationship between the two states.

## **1.6 Research Methods**

This research in particular utilizes the deductive logic approach, starting with a general theory and then deducing a specific hypothesis that is eventually tested through empirical observation.<sup>15</sup> In this research, the author formulates the hypothesis of why Australia and the US have maintained their military defense alliance despite having differences in their political standing and capabilities of power based on existing literatures done by various scholars in regards to the topic itself and a conceptual framework. This is then tested through data observation and findings in

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<sup>15</sup> Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 24.



order to gain an in-depth understanding of the complex relationship of the Australia–US in their military defense alliance.<sup>16</sup>

This research method involves the collection and analysis of textual data, specifically through the usage of official statistics over time and documents from numerous sources, such as government papers and mass-media outlets. Henceforth, this research is able to collect data from high-profiled and authentic sources such as international organizations without any concerns of time constraints.<sup>1718</sup> In addition to that, the compilation of these data over time also provides context that relates to the dynamics of the two states throughout the years in regards to their military defense alliance and supports the argument of this research.<sup>19</sup>

To provide an in-depth analysis according to the research methods mentioned above, this research runs through a narrative analysis that involves examinations of data and its contexts to deliver a detailed interpretation through a certain conceptual framework in regards to the phenomenon between the two states.<sup>20</sup> By identifying the themes and patterns from the collected data, this research is able to contribute by providing a deep understanding to the perspectives and contexts behind the phenomenon itself.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 36.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 320-321.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 549-553.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 582.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

## 1.7 Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

To provide further analysis into the relationship between Australia and the US in their tightly-bound military defense alliance and how it has prevailed through this far despite having gaps in their political standing and capabilities of power, this research adopts the concept of Asymmetrical Alliance by James D. Morrow, where it is published as one of his works titled “Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances” in 1991.

As one of the most critical tools in international politics, there are many definitions of alliances by numerous scholars. According to Stephen Walt, alliances are a security cooperation relationship between states that shoulder a certain level of commitment and ensures an exchange of benefits.<sup>22</sup> The main purpose of most alliance formations relates to the collaboration of the state members’ powers in a power structure, either symmetric or asymmetric, to protect and fulfill their interests, primarily when faced against a potential threat.<sup>23</sup>

States establish and/or join in alliances with other states when they see their interests being threatened and they do not have enough power to fight against their enemy on their own. Through the establishment of an alliance would then states expect to be capable and competent of facing the enemy together with their allies. This prompts states to behave accordingly based on the structure of the alliance, the benefits and costs they will reap,

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<sup>22</sup> Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 15.

<sup>23</sup> Stephen M. Walt, “Why Alliances Endure or Collapse,” *Survival* vol. 39, no. 1 (March 1997): 157, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396339708442901>.

and the dynamics of the state members itself as long as their interests stay fulfilled through the alliance and the perceived threat remains.<sup>24</sup>

As an arena for its member states to pursue their national interests and coordinate their actions with each other to reach mutual benefit and the accomplishment of their shared goals, alliances reflect how states, or mainly great powers, use alliances to assert their foreign policies in the international political arena.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, minor powers or weaker parties usually offer political concessions that will increase the freedom of action of their stronger allies while also protecting them from external threats. Through this formation of an alliance, its members states are able to advance both diverse and compatible interests, resulting in a shared goal, that will help strengthen the ties of the alliance by having its member states thrive to fulfill that certain goal together.<sup>26</sup>

Through the concept of Asymmetrical Alliance, Morrow emphasizes that by consisting of member states with a gap in their political standing and capabilities of power, asymmetrical alliances are able to survive and last longer than symmetrical alliances based on a wider choice of how they can advance either autonomy or security as a trade-off for both parties.<sup>27</sup> Not only that, as time passes and realities change, asymmetrical alliances are proven to more likely continue providing benefits to their member states

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> James D. Morrow, "Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances," *American Journal of Political Science* vol. 35 no. 4 (1991): 905, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111499>.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 905-906.

even though a rise of power in its member states overtime are bound to happen and how asymmetrical alliances are able to avoid the alliance from falling apart because of that certain factor.

Morrow also examines the possible benefits and costs according to the advancement either one of the two factors. Security benefits commonly arise from the military capabilities of an ally where the stronger the ally is, the greater the security it will provide. On the other hand, autonomy benefits are more negotiable for both parties in which if a party is willing to offer political concessions of being in control of their internal policies, the other party gains autonomy from the alliance.<sup>28</sup> Hence, proving why asymmetrical alliances between major and minor powers are proven to last longer and able to provide more benefits in the long run. This is because major powers already have high levels of both autonomy and security in the first place, resulting in an absence of a driving force to exclusively pursue both of these factors. Meanwhile, minor powers who have high levels of autonomy but low levels of security try to form alliances with great powers by offering their autonomy in exchange for an increased level of security.<sup>29</sup>

Introduced in this concept, an asymmetrical alliance between a major power and a minor power is based on a trade-off between the two states in advancing either their security and/or their autonomy. Morrow argues that asymmetrical alliances are proven to last longer in the long run than symmetrical alliances because they are able to provide more benefits to their

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<sup>28</sup> Morrow, "Alliances and Asymmetry," 911-912.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 913.

member states in the trade-off of these two factors, rather than symmetrical ones especially between two major powers with already high levels of autonomy and security, hence making it harder to set a foundation for a tightly-bound and long-lasting alliance. However, the appeal of asymmetrical alliances does not stop here. For an asymmetrical alliance to last long and continue providing benefits to its member states, it needs to fulfill these three indicators as a strong fundamental structure, respectively (1) the relative capabilities of the major power, (2) a shared perception of threat, and also (3) the trade of commitments.

The first indicator talks about the relative capabilities of the major power, in regards to the attractiveness of the major power as an ally to the minor power. The greater the state's influence and power in the international, the more attractive it will be as an ally which will also serve as a bound for a tight alliance.<sup>30</sup> This also means that there could be a time when capabilities of one state changes and if the day comes where the minor power is able to find other alternatives to replace the major power's position or demands a higher level of security that the major power could not afford to give, then a higher chance that the alliance itself might fall apart. However, an asymmetrical alliance works differently. Morrow states that the change in capabilities of the minor state's power will not greatly affect the nature of the trade-off since the minor power provides autonomy to the major power,

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 907.

which means its contribution to the alliance will be unaffected because its benefits come from the security provided by the major power ally.<sup>31</sup>

Continuing to the second indicator, a shared perception of threat here serves as a stronger foundation to bound the two together in which works to mitigate a smooth trade-off between parties to ensure the accomplishment of their shared goal of tackling this similar perception of threat. Not to mention, by the parties of an alliance having similar identities and sharing the same ideologies in their political views, the shared perception of threat becomes more formidable and thus, resulting in a more secured bond between the parties of an asymmetrical alliance.

The last indicator mentions about the trade commitments, or the autonomy-security trade-off between respective parties, in which the minor power usually offers political concessions in the form of its autonomy in exchange for the major power's security guarantee. Hence, the name 'asymmetric' as both parties have different political standing and capabilities of power, but also because both parties will receive different benefits which results in both being able to fulfill what they have bargained.<sup>32</sup> Overall, this concept of asymmetrical alliance requires an interested minor power who needs a guarantee in increasing their security levels, which will result in them allying with major powers whose capabilities are increasing to ensure that outcome. Even though, minor powers tend to have less choice in the formation of an asymmetrical alliance, they will have to be able to utilize

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<sup>31</sup> Morrow, "Alliances and Asymmetry," 918.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 915.

their role either through their geographical position or hold a central political role in their region for their autonomy to be a selling point for major powers to ally with them and for the alliance to last even longer.<sup>33</sup>

## 1.8 Research Structure

This research is organized into four chapters. **Chapter I** introduces the background of the problem, which talks about the establishment of the military defense alliance between Australia and the US. The problem lies within the alliance formation of a military defense alliance between the two states despite having differences in positions of power in the international world. It also provides the currently available literary studies regarding the topic and further introduces the conceptual framework. **Chapter II** further discusses the difference between symmetrical and asymmetrical power structures in alliances, historical background of how Australia and the US established their military defense alliance, the dynamics between the two states throughout the years, and the foundation of their military defense alliance itself. **Chapter III** dives into an in-depth analysis of the dynamics between the two states by utilizing the concept of Asymmetrical Alliance in elaborating the factors that have contributed to the success of their alliance. Last but not least, **Chapter IV** provides a conclusion to the discussions in the previous chapters and an answer to the research question asked in the first chapter.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 920.