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Untangling the Trio: Understanding the Role of the Domestic Factors in the Creation of the AUKUS Military Pact.

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Figure 1: AUKUS cartoon by Rebel Pepper made September 17th, 2021 <https://www.rfa.org/english/cartoons/aukus-cartoon-09202021095010.html>

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Inspirational Music: Toreador Solo by Andrea Giuffredi (trumpet) & Lizzo “It’s About Damn Time”

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Abbreviations

AUKUS- Australia-United Kingdom-United States pact.

PM- Prime Minister

MSF Multiple Streams framework

ANAO- Australian National Audit Office

ANZUS – Australian-New Zealand-United States alliance. – got technically dissolved in 1986

QUAD – The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue.

Chapter I: Overture -Introduction

1.1 Contextualizing AUKUS

On the 15th of September, 2021, a press release was held by the three Anglophone countries, Australia, the US, and the UK, to discuss their new trilateral partnership, aimed at increasing information and technology-sharing between the three countries to increase stability and peace in the Indo-Pacific region (The White House 2021a, *Joint Leaders Statement*).

Following the announcement, Australia canceled its previous deal with the French Naval group to deliver Attack-class submarines the same time worth over 90 billion Australian dollars (Sheftalovich, 2021). Described by French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian as a ‘stab in the back’ (Sheftalovich, 2021), the deal was considered a surprise to many. While China criticized the agreement for perpetuating and aggravating a cold war mentality (Davidson & Blair, 2021), others have hailed the agreement as a concrete effort to counter China (Burgess, 2021). The security partnership, while still in its infancy, promised Australia access to the US’ nuclear-powered submarines and would be delivered to Australia around the 2030s, while Australia is going to extend the life-expectancy of its own 6 Collins-class submarines while the submarines are being built (Clarke, 2021). According to the leaders’ statement, Aukus goes beyond providing nuclear access to submarines for Australia and is a precedent for increased integrated cooperation amongst the three countries in terms of cybersecurity and technology (White House 2021a.). Some consider the Aukus alliance a more concrete version of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, which is the discussion between Australia, the US, India, and Japan on global affairs along the lines of a security dialogue (Tandon, 2021). While the Quad was broader in both amount of partners as well as topics of discussion, the Aukus agreement is more specialized in the military alliance aspects, compared to the Quad’s more diplomatic nature (Tandon, 2021). Many scholars sought to analyze the causes and consequences of the Aukus agreement, with most pointing out that the

purpose of the agreement was to counter Chinese influence in the Indo-Pacific region (Babones, 2021; Carr, 2021). In addition, some scholars still approach this military partnership through the perspective of power politics, referring to the agreement first and foremost as a balance of power effort (Walt, 2021). However, it could be said that all these different perspectives overlook the domestic factors that played a role in the formation of the Aukus agreement. The domestic actors and factors which have advised both politicians and prompted the policymakers to even investigate this agreement remain overlooked in the quest to understand the creation of military alliances. Moreover, by centering the explanation of military alliances around the causes, more attention is drawn towards the outcome rather than the policymaking process, which in the case of the Aukus agreement involved three different countries. This introduces the question of to what extent the motivations, considerations, and circumstances for joining the Aukus agreement were truly homogenous for all three countries, and how this potential difference could help us better understand the creation of a military partnership or alliance. Furthermore, as the deal was being crafted in secrecy, one could question how that secrecy was maintained, and who promoted the policy solution of nuclear submarines to the Australian Prime Minister? These questions challenge the generalizability of the actors involved in the creation of military alliances beyond heads of state and give more attention to the domestic actors involved in creating the Aukus agreement. To address these questions, this thesis will attempt to fill this gap, and attempt to understand how the role of domestic factors can be explained to create a military alliance. To do so, this thesis believes a public administration perspective on policy change might be able to complement the explanations of power and economics put forward by other scholars concerning the creation of a military alliance, which in this case is the Aukus agreement (Walt, 2021). For this reason, the research question is as follows: *“To what extent can a public administration perspective explain the role of domestic factors in creating the Aukus agreement?”*

The core objective of this thesis is primarily exploratory and seeks to explain the creation of the Aukus agreement and the role of domestic factors through a model of policy change, which has been introduced by Kingdon (2014). This framework believes the policy process can be understood through the convergence of three streams, the problem, policy, and political stream respectively, with each stream serving a different purpose (Kingdon, 2014). The problem stream serves to identify which problem was framed that policymakers believed was in need of action, while the policy stream aims at explaining the pool of policy solutions presented to solve the policy problem (Kingdon, 2014). Lastly, the political stream of Kingdon explores the national mood, ranging from election changes and the stance of the opposition to public support for the policy proposal, determining whether the policy proposal is in enough people's interest to pursue the policy change (Hofer, 2022). Although this will be further elaborated on in later chapters, it provides the theoretical overview of the model used to examine the role of the domestic factors in facilitating the policy outcome that is the Aukus military agreement.

1.2 Chapter Outline

To structure the analysis of the AUKUS agreement as a window of opportunity, chapters II and III focus on establishing the context of the military alliance literature and the Kingdon model itself. Chapter II specifically focuses on providing a clearer understanding of modern understandings of the questions regarding how and why military alliances exist, as well as regarding their purpose. Chapter III aims to provide a clearer understanding of some of the concepts introduced by military alliance theory, as well as expand on the justification and use of Kingdon's (2014) Multiple Streams Framework (MSF)¹, and the subsequent concepts associated. It will also introduce some of the insights from Deborah Stone's book *The Policy Paradox, the Art of Political Decision-making*, which is used to further understand the broader concepts such as framing and usage of narrative, which are central to understanding the problem and policy stream of the Kingdon model. Chapter IV discusses the methodology of how analyzing the different country cases through the Kingdon model is supposed to look. Furthermore, it covers the different types of data sources used to establish an analysis of the data. Chapter V carefully addresses each of the different streams per country case, followed by a short comparison of the findings, indicating differences and similarities between the countries regarding their respective streams. Chapter VI then readdresses the exploratory research question with the findings of the respective streams, and what this means for the explanation of the Aukus agreement in terms of domestic factors. This will be followed by a linkage to the current scholarly literature and what this means for future research on military alliances. Lastly, chapter VI will also discuss the limitations encountered in the thesis.

¹ The original work is from 1984 but I had only access to the second edition from 2014

Chapter II: Allemande - Reviewing the Scholarly Debate on Military alliances

2.1 Introducing the different themes

To explain how the AUKUS military alliance came to be and its underlying causes, we must first understand what constitutes a military alliance. According to Bergsmann (2000), there is no set definition of military alliances that is agreed upon by the scholarly literature. Instead, different approaches to the conceptualization of a military alliance within the literature have led to different perspectives on the causes, consequences, and explanations for the existence of military alliances. Interestingly, most scholarly literature surrounding military alliances peaked near the end of the Cold war in the 1980s and 1990s (see for instance Snyder 1990; Waltz 1979; and Walt 1987). An example of Walt's alliances under examination is the regional King's alliance in the middle east between Saudi Arabia and Iraq due to the emergence of Egypt's power under their leader Nasser (Walt 1987, p.16). He used this to examine the theories of bandwagoning and balancing. Snyder (1990) used the examples of US vs Soviet alliances during the Cold war, although he mostly referred to Europe as a singular continent and not as singular allies. The main point however is that all examples of alliances were mostly set in a period of bipolarity during the cold war. This is particularly relevant because this was the point in history after which the Soviet Union dissolved, and there existed a brief period of unipolarity followed by what is currently known as multipolarity (Waltz, 1990). This influenced the topic of military alliances significantly, as it introduced different ideas about the relationship between power, crisis, and military alliances as the primary focus of explaining the use of military alliances in the cold war period. However, later scholarly literature on military alliances has re-examined this relationship between power, crisis, and military cooperation from a different angle. To be more specific, this group of scholars

introduced the market perspective on the nature of military alliances, examining the need for states to engage in military alliances versus what is available on the market of the military alliances (see Kim, 2016). An example of this was Kim's brief discussion on the case of the military alliance between Japan and the US which started in 1951 and is still effective today (Payle 2010 p.6; mentioned in Kim 2016, p.35). This particular alliance was categorized by its non-military contributions and commitments, which went against previous literature that focused on military commitment (Walt, 1980). This also introduced the subgenre of treating military alliances as a public good, as well as the perspective of viewing security inside or outside borders as a public good (Olsen & Zackhauser 1966, Alley 2021). In other words, the thematic perspectives on the conceptualization of military alliances have mostly been viewed from either a structural international relations perspective or from a market perspective, which introduces the relationship of supply and demand as well as public goods to the question of how military alliances are born. This literature review centers around exploring these two perspectives not only through their conceptualization of military alliances but also through their perspective on future alliances as well as their view on the role of institutions and non-state actors. Lastly, it should be noted that these two perspectives are not mutually exclusive, as some of the elements of alliance formation can overlap between them.

2.2 The neorealist perspective: states, power, institutions, and crises.

Although this thesis coined this viewpoint as a neorealist perspective, it rather functions as an umbrella term for the different scholars whose explanations for the existence of military alliance have focused on the role of power politics, state power in international systems, and the role of national interest, among others. As mentioned previously, the neorealist perspective includes a lot of scholarly literature from the period either just before or after the end of the cold war period, which includes authors such as Kenneth Waltz (1980), Stephen Walt (1985), and Snyder (1990). Some of the major overlapping themes can be divided into

subcategories. These include military alliances and power politics, and the critique of neorealist explanations.

2.2.1 Military Alliances as power politics

The main argument that these subtheme covers starts with the assumption that the world in essence remains an “anarchical system” in which states all struggle for a position within the international system, and that the main power within international systems lies with states (Waltz 1979, chapter 6). It has been started by Kenneth Waltz and was the birth of neorealism, which attempted to explain state behavior in a conflict in international systems. Differences in capabilities between states dictate their behavior due to their worry for survival, and in cooperation cases, the fear of relative gains, as well as the uncertainty of not knowing either party’s next move, the uncertainty of not knowing either party’s next move will restrict cooperation in the international system (Waltz 1979, p.105). However, other authors such as George Liska (1968) made the first conceptualizations of military alliances, being defined against serving the function “for or against something (p.12, mentioned in Waltz 1979). Subsequent authors such as Stephen Walt (1985), and Glenn Snyder (1990) have extended this view to the topic of military alliances and cooperation. Walt’s addition to this viewpoint came from introducing a critical review of different explanations for states to ally with other weaker states or against a dominant state (1985). This became known as the balance of power theory vs the bandwagoning theory, which states that to prevent a potential hegemon from emerging, states will join alliances (Walt 1985, p.5). Conversely, bandwagoning proposes for states to ally with the aggressor rather than against it to either obtain a share of the rewards from the aggressor or to avoid an incoming offense from the aggressor and divert attention elsewhere (Walt 1985, p.10-13). Although the theory of balancing or bandwagoning was not invented by Walt, he critiqued the sole focus of the bandwagon/balance of power theory on power by introducing the idea that statesmen consider

different sources of power when deciding to join allies, including who is considered the most threatening power (Walt 1985,p.7). Lastly, Walt explains the implications of ideology and belief in the balance of power system or bandwagoning system on conflict, as some ideologies like bandwagoning increase the likelihood of conflict (Walt 1985, p.7-8).

The contributions of Waltz (1979) and Walt (1985) have advanced the field of alliance theory by discussing their purpose and need. However, neither author addressed what was conceptualized as an alliance and mostly focused on the behavior of states explained by power relations. Snyder's work aimed to complement the neorealist literature by distinguishing between alliances and types of alignment, as well as the necessary conditions to transition from an alignment to an alliance (Snyder, 1990,) He conceptualized alliances as "formal associations of states for the use (or non-use) of military force, intended for either the security or the aggrandizement of their members, against specific other states, whether or not these others are explicitly identified"(Snyder 1990, p.105). In other words, he limited the idea of an alliance specifically to associations of states rather than informal associations or coalitions within international organizations to better identify the difference between alignment and alliances. Alignments refer to the expectations between different states concerning how they would provide support in case of an attack, ranging from common interests to a common opponent, while alliances are the formal manifestations of such alignments which are strengthened by declarative power (Snyder 1990, p105-108). It is important to note that he does name some examples of strengthening alignment in a broader sense, but he does not specifically refer to examples of alignment vs alliances himself. He does discuss the interest in alignment based on the criteria mentioned in the case of the US and non-communist states (p.118) The choices of bandwagoning or balancing described by authors such as Walt (1987) are more similar to the process of strengthening alignment because they are still choosing sides and identifying the common interests or expectations.

The alliance or military pact that flows from that is the product of such dynamics (Snyder 1990). Interestingly, Piccoli (1999) has categorized these approaches to military alliances as focused on external security and conceptualized these approaches as the aggregate power model, which argues that states primarily value allies' ability to enhance their military capabilities, and as such, military contributions, as well as a security interest, determine state behavior rather than domestic factors (Piccoli 1999, Ch. 1.1) Piccoli (1999) himself, however, used this approach as well as the internal factors approach to test its explanatory power on the Turkish-Israelian cooperative effort to fight terrorism, and found that some elements of Walt's proposed factors of perceived external threat such as geographical proximity do factor into the need for seeking allies, seemingly confirming at least one case in which the neorealist perspective has been successful in explaining military alliances (Piccoli 1999, Ch. 5.2).

2.2.2 Contradictions and Critiques of Neorealist theories

Although the neorealist strand of theory seems to have a clear and straightforward explanation for military alliances as well as conflicts, there are some authors (Sylvester 2014; Keohane 1995, other authors,) who have raised some questions and contradictions regarding neorealism explanations of international relations as well as their perception of alliances in general.

Firstly, although Kenneth Waltz argues against the viability of alliances due to the self-help-oriented nature of the world, NATO has been one of the longest-standing military alliances so far. Moreover, Kenneth Waltz himself said the introduction of nuclear weaponry has replaced the main purpose of the alliance as a form of enemy deterrence (Waltz 1993,p.72-63). He stated that *“Since no one has been able to figure out how to use strategic nuclear weapons other than for deterrence, nuclear weapons eliminate the thorny problems of estimating the present and future strengths of competing states and of trying to anticipate their strategies. And since nuclear states easily generate second-strike forces, they do not need one another's help at the strategic level. Strategically, nuclear weapons make alliances obsolete(...)”* (Waltz

1993, p73). However, in practice, we see that proliferation of nuclear weaponry does still entail entering into military alliances to obtain such weapons of mass destruction.

Other scholars such as Keohane (1995), and Sylvester (2014) have criticized the neorealist's reduction of states to a single unitary power, disregarding the power of domestic or regional actors which can influence the balance of power between states (Sylvester 2014, p.548).

Keohane (1995) however is a neoliberal institutionalist, whose critique of neorealist theories specifically mentions the lack of focus on the power of institutions and domestic factors in driving military alliances. Sylvester (2014, p. 548) points to the revolutionary actors such as the people during the Arab Spring as well as the effect of a group of men initiating terrorist attacks which subsequently changed the idea of international security and its threats. Keohane & Martin (1995) have pointed out that the considerations for alignment or bandwagoning as Walt (1980) and Schweller (1994) called it can go beyond cost-benefit analyses and threat perception, stating that performance, normative and ideological considerations also play a role in joining forces, rather than just common interest and relative gains. Indicatively, Zenon Tziarras (2016) coins the term "comfortable quasi-alliance" to describe the military alignment among Greece, Cyprus, and Israel in the Eastern Mediterranean as the by-product of their common perception of Turkey as a threat and economic calculations related to the monetization of the recently discovered gas reserves offshore Israel and Cyprus. Indicatively, Zenon Tziarras (2016) coins the term "comfortable quasi-alliance" to describe the military alignment among Greece, Cyprus, and Israel in the Eastern Mediterranean is the by-product of their common perception of Turkey as a threat and economic calculations related to the monetization of the recently discovered gas reserves offshore Israel and Cyprus.

In addition, Snidal (1991) has shown that the concerns for relative gains undermining potential cooperation in practice decline when multiple partners enter the agreement (mentioned by Keohane & Martin 1995, p.44). Moreover, the pacifying nature of institutions is allegedly overlooked when attempting to explain the change within alliances from responding to a direct threat to long-term cooperation (Keohane & Martin 1995). To elaborate, Keohane & Martin pointed out that suspicions of unequal relative gains undermining cooperation can be countered through institutions as well, meaning distributional conflict and information asymmetry between partners can be countered by the very institutions thought to fail because of it (Keohane & Martin 1995, p.44-45). Despite these criticisms, however, neoliberal institutionalism and neorealism still have a few commonalities when it comes to explaining the origins of military cooperation due to their mutual agreement on the existence of a perceived threat and subsequent response.

2.3 The Economics Perspective: a capitalist take on military alliances?

2.3.1 Market Approach

The second type of explanation that has surfaced has shifted its angle away from the power relations that have dominated the political science realm and instead focused on an explanation through theories from a market perspective. One of the most noteworthy authors is Tongfi Kim's book "*The Supply Side of Security: A Market Theory of Alliances*" (2016), who pointed out that previous scholarship on the existence of military alliances has focused primarily on the role of an adversary which created the demand for security, but rarely addresses the suppliers of military commitments or the competitiveness that might exist within military alliances themselves (Kim, 2016). Kim attempts to address this lack of focus by discussing not only the supply side dynamics of security. However, his work does not intend to completely challenge existing assumptions but rather serve as an addition to the scholarly debate. For example, Kim (2016) states that without the presence of a threat there is

no direct demand for alliances(p.1), which corresponds with the consensus made in neorealist writing (See Walt, 1980). However, he states that because alliances are always discussed in the context of adversary games, it neglects the fact that during more peaceful times, alliances are connected through strengthening potential economic and social ties rather than through a common adversary (Kim 2016, p.31-32).

The focus on the dynamics of bargaining between allied members not only provides new insights into alliances in the multipolar system, but also changes the lens through which we view what constitutes a military alliance, and what is exchanged in a military alliance. He has conceptualized military alliances as “*contracts in which states agree to a continuous exchange of goods and services, at least one of which is a military commitment*”(Kim 2016, p.28). Moreover, he remarked that military alliances have always been accompanied by economic incentives to make alliances or ententes sustainable and succeed (Grieco and Ikenberry 2003, p.124-125, cited in Kim 2016, p.37), implying that military alliance theory based on the adversary and power relations is not enough to create a complete comprehensive understanding. It is important to note however that Kim views the military commitment and security derived from an alliance more as a private good rather than a public good due to their support and military as well as nonmilitary goods mostly being provided for the other few members (Kim 2016,)

2.3.2 A Policy Approach – A focus on political actors and the tradeoffs.

Although the market theory does provide considerable insight into the nature and interaction of states and economic factors, it is not the only one. Other authors have sought to explain the existence of alliances through the approach which has become known as the public goods model. While Kim’s argument rests on the assumption that military security provided by alliances is a private good, other scholars have remained with the public goods model. The public goods model was originally proposed by Olsen & Zeckhauser, which proposed that

because international alliances suffer from a collective action problem, by which smaller member states of an alliance free ride on bigger states by spending disproportionately less on their military defense than other members, specifically the US, do (Olsen & Zeckhauser, 1966; Alley 2021). This came hand in hand with the concept of burden-sharing, which referred to the distribution of costs to defend the alliance (Alley, 2021). To prove this, Olsen & Zeckhauser investigated the relationship between contribution and state size to determine whether an alliance member was free-riding. While military spending in the percentage of GDP was used to measure contribution, GDP was measured to use state size, specifically looking at the aggregate military cap (Olsen & Zeckhauser, 1966). However, this was found to be problematic due to the GDP size affecting both the dependent as well as the independent variable (Alley 2021, p.x). Moreover, the lack of empirical evidence in the case of NATO as well as other military alliances has shown that it is difficult to prove this link between free-riding based on economic weight and military alliances as a public good (Alley 2021).

Nevertheless, some alternative versions of the public goods model have produced further understanding in examining an alliances capability such as the joint-product model which distinguished allied contributions resulting in pure public, impure, public, or private benefits to explain potential free-rider behavior (Conybeare & Sandler 1990, mentioned in Conybeare, Murdoch & Sandler 1994, p.525-526). Conybeare and Murdoch expand this model by focusing on the contributions of the weakest link model and the strongest shooter rather than the summation of contributions (Conybeare, Murdoch & Sandler 1994, 526). Although it did show that some alliances might behave more towards either type, it also stated that some alliances might portray characteristics of either model,(Conybeare, Murdoch & Sandler 1994, 541), meaning it still provides limited insight into the presence of other alliances and would need to be tested consistently.

Regarding AUKUS, neorealist theories of this strand would explain the actions of Britain, the US, and Australia primarily as processes of alignment against a perceived common enemy, which would be China's military threat in the Pacific ocean. The motives would be mostly explained through a balance of power rhetoric, and the choice to form the AUKUS pact can mostly be treated through a security lens.

In conclusion, by examining different types of explanations and factors influencing military alliances, it becomes clear that the nature and exact conceptualization of a military alliance has differed over the years. While many post-cold-war scholars have typified alliances purely through the existence of a common enemy and power relations, other authors have attempted to address this question through a more economic approach. One could say that within the economic approach regardless of viewing military security as a private or public good, their rhetoric for explaining member state behavior to join and act within an alliance does come through cost-benefit considerations. Moreover, both perspectives have approached the topic of military alliances more through a systemic explanation of the functioning of state actors. In the case of AUKUS however, these types of explanations would only be able to give a surface explanation of why Aukus came into existence and would neglect the role of not just domestic political actors but also the role of public perception and response, and the role of advisory bodies. Moreover, the explanations for military alliances lack the public administration perspective. Although authors like Keohane & Martin (1995) praise the causal role of institutions and their pacifying nature, they overlook how those actors within the institutions might have influenced the perspective of the countries involved in the AUKUS pact respectively. This thesis contributes to the scholarly debate on military alliances by employing a public administration theory of policy change to uncover the domestic factors of the countries involved in creating a military alliance or partnership.

Chapter III – Allegretto: Discussing the Theoretical

Framework

3.1 Main concepts for alliance theory

Firstly, it must be clear which conceptualization this thesis uses in its understanding of a military alliance before discussing further theories. Building on the definition of Tongfi Kim, this thesis believes that military alliances consist of an agreement to provide a continuous exchange of goods and services of which at least one is military commitment (Kim 2016, p.26). This is because the AUKUS military pact primarily focused on the proliferation of nuclear-powered submarines to Australia, but according to later news coverage also referred to the sharing of military technology information between the US, the UK, and Australia (*Prime Minister Press Release 2021*). This definition still provides space for military alliances to discuss the role of a common enemy but does not place it as the main function of the alliance, but rather as one of the motivations which might have aided the formation of the AUKUS nuclear pact.

Other concepts that deserve reiteration are the concepts of burden sharing, deterrence, and bandwagoning. Burden-sharing is important because it will help explain the benefits and costs of the AUKUS military pact not through the perspective of collective action, but rather through the lens of the potential relative gains that each of the countries might have motivated them differently. For example, the relative gains for Britain might be expressed not through direct economic gain, but rather through improvements in their bilateral relationships or their image. Secondly, it is worth mentioning that deterrence within the context of the AUKUS pact refers not to the deflection of a specific threat, but rather through the rhetoric of the balance of power theory. To explain, deterrence through the proliferation of nuclear arms has been mentioned by Waltz (1993) as the main purpose for military alliances, and should

therefore be treated as such. Moreover, military reports might reiterate this purpose of deterrence as their main justification for the proliferation of nuclear arms. Lastly, the theory of bandwagoning vs balance of power theory is useful for this case analysis because the theory which has been proliferated by many US foreign policy experts might be reflected in the domestic policy actors which have influenced the US policy decision to ally with Australia and the UK.

3.2 Using the Kingdon Model

As mentioned previously, the main goal of this thesis is to use a public administration model of change to explain the influence of domestic actors in the creation of the AUKUS military pact. To do so, this thesis has chosen to adopt the Kingdon model to analyze the impact of domestic actors through the three different streams proposed by Kingdon (2014) which will be shown in figure II below.

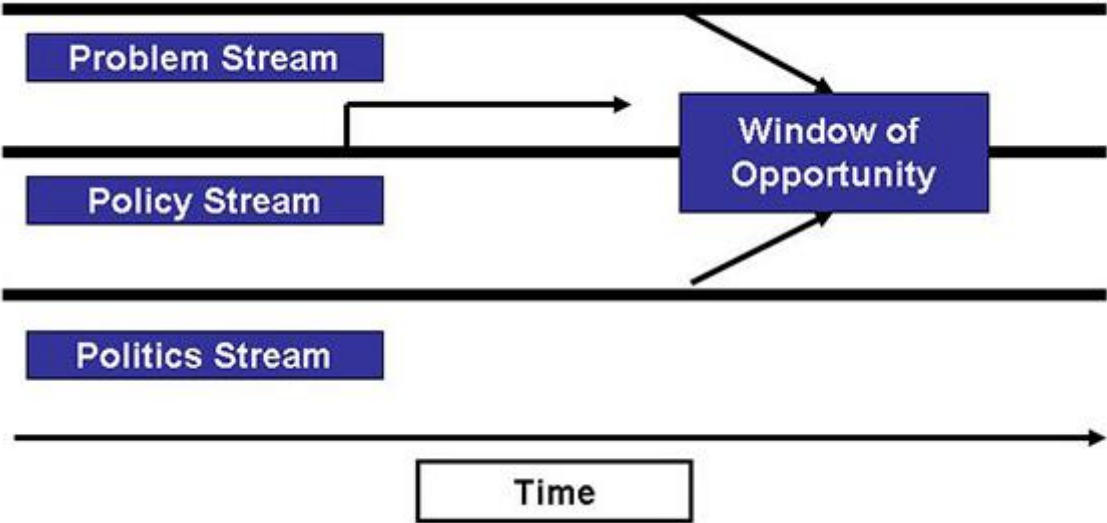


Figure II Kingdon Policy Stream Model - Obtained from PolicyNL policy models

<https://www.policynl.ca/policydevelopment/pages/policymodels.html>

Because Kingdon's Multiple Streams Framework (MSF moving forward) aims to analyze the decision-making process and build-up towards the initial introduction of the policy, it already provides a basic structure to analyze domestic factors driving a particular policy change. This thesis believes it can go beyond the question of just what constitutes a military alliance and examine the AUKUS case in depth based on the dissection of the different countries' processes. The original purpose of the Kingdon model was to explain policy change by examining the agenda-setting process (Kingdon 2014). To elaborate, the Kingdon model looked at the factors which influenced what came on the agenda of the politicians and decision-makers, and therefore would lead to policy change.

The Multiple Stream Framework derives from the garbage can model of organizational choice, formulated by March and Olsen (1966) which stated that policymakers had solutions and looked for the problems to match them to (Kingdon, 2014). The different sources which influenced the eventual decision-makers were divided into 3 separate streams – the problem stream, the policy stream, and the political stream, which all came together through a window of opportunity (Kingdon, 2014). As reiterated in the introduction, we treat the formulation of AUKUS as a window of opportunity, because the different circumstances in each of the member countries led them to look to a different and new form of military cooperation in the Pacific which also served to protect Australia from China's increasing military dominance (Bates, 2021). The Aukus pact itself, therefore, served as an opportunity to attack these problems head-on. Although the Kingdon model has been criticized for its lack of depth in specifying the specific actions and capabilities of the different actors within the problem stream (Knaggård, 2015), it lends itself best for examining the process across the different member countries, allowing for cross-case comparisons. The three streams will be elaborated on below.

3.2.1 The Problem stream & Aukus

The problem stream was considered to focus on the framing of a particular policy crisis, and how the narrative was constructed that convinced the public of a need for a policy solution (Kingdon, 2014). To elaborate, the problem discusses not only the existence of a focused event but also how the actors involved in the policy change have framed the event to legitimize the policy solution or proposed change, as well as bringing the issue to the agenda of the policymakers. Firstly, the concept of focused event and framing is important and needs some elaboration. The concept of a focused event has been introduced by Kingdon as “sudden rare or harmful events which might reveal an underlying problem which mobilizes groups of people as well as policymakers to act on this event. (Kingdon 1984; Birkland, 1998). This effect has also been called the opening of the window of opportunity to implement a policy change (Birkland, 1998). However, just identifying a focused event is not enough, as Kingdon and Birkland stress the role of the political actors in framing this event as a crisis that needs solving. This has been discussed thoroughly in *The Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision-making* by Deborah Stone (2012). In her book, she criticizes the use of scientific methodology only as the primary force behind policy-making, stating that *scientific analysis can reduce uncertainty but it cannot reduce ambiguity*(Stone 2012, p.9-10). She states that policy problems and solutions involve forms of ambiguity by necessity because problems and solutions can differ depending on the audience, the interests that are at stake, the narrative that is presented, and who will and will not be affected by the policy (Stone 2012,p.158) This falls in line with Kingdon’s idea of the problem stream involving the framing and storytelling of political actors and can therefore offer multiple insights in which methods of influencing storytelling put forward by Stone a present in the AUKUS case. Moreover, due to the AUKUS case involving three different countries, each actor might have a slightly different narrative to offer. For example, the framing of security concerns might be more present in the

case of Australia than in the case of the UK, as the AUKUS military pact was supposedly influenced by the focused event of the creation of a systematic, powerful and aggressive Chinese state under Chinese president Xi Jinping between 2016 and 2021, which was now considered a threat to the security in the Indo-Pacific (Shoebridge, 2021). By investigating the Chinese military transformation proposed as a focused event, this thesis can test how domestic security concerns in the case of Australia as well as external security concerns in the case of the US and UK, have been framed through the problem stream as a need for action and military cooperation.

3.2.2 The Policy Stream and Aukus

The policy stream focuses on the policymakers advised by the policy entrepreneurs to come to the best-proposed solution to the problem raised in the problem stream, which can be provided by both epistemic communities as well as advisory institutions. According to Kingdon, the policy stream also encompasses the process of selecting alternatives, insights, and other valuable information that has been gleaned from it, as there is a competitive sphere between the policymakers in which solution is chosen. Kingdon refers to these actors as policy entrepreneurs, stating that they are *“those individuals who exploit opportunities to influence policy outcomes to promote their own goals, without having the resources necessary to achieve this alone”* (Kingdon, 2014). This means that policy entrepreneurs themselves do not have any particular powers of themselves, but rather rely on their resources and persuasion to push their policy solutions to the forefront. In the case of AUKUS, these policy entrepreneurs can vary from institutions advising politicians to advisors. For example, Admiral Tony Radakin was said to have first approached the UK in March of 2021 with the need for assistance in acquiring a nuclear-powered submarine, and Dominic Raab, a UK foreign affairs secretary was instrumental in ‘brokering the deal’(Malnick, 2021). Further

investigation of the actions of these individuals will also give further insight into the less overt forces behind military alliance creation, which in our case is the AUKUS military pact.

3.2.3 The Political Stream and Aukus

The political stream, as formulated by Kingdon, is the combination of the national mood, elected officials, and reactions from the opposition to understand the policy window that is created (Hoefler 2022). To elaborate, the political stream is centered around the debate and reaction to a policy problem that has been defined by the policymakers and the policy solution that has been presented. Hoefler (2022), stated that ‘political will exists to do something’, meaning that when the policy problem and solution have been given, it is the political arena along with the national mood that will enable or disable the opening policy window (Hoefler 2022). In the case of the AUKUS pact, the various reactions to the policy solution which is nuclear cooperation with the US and the UK in the case of Australia, the national mood as well as reactions of the opposition can tell us much about the domestic circumstances not only accepting or rejecting the policy window that is the opportunity to cooperate on delivering nuclear submarines, but also how the proposed narrative set forth by the framing of the actors in the problem stream has been received by the other players. In essence, the political stream is focused on the reception of a policy solution that examines the different political reactions in the US, UK, and Australia respectively. More specific information on the actors of interest and their relevance will be further elaborated on in the research methodology chapter.

Chapter IV: Courante – Methodology & Research

Design

4.1 From Research Question to research methods

Firstly, To answer the question of how the role of domestic factors can be explained in creating the Aukus pact through a public administration lens, one must consider the type of approach that would fit accordingly. This thesis seeks to explore the underlying factors leading up to the conclusion of the AUKUS military pact. However, establishing the context or environment in which a policy was formed is not easily identifiable nor measurable. For this reason, performing discourse analysis by using the Kingdon model as the reference point seems the most appropriate for this research compared to cases with qualitative analysis based on Moreover, as this thesis presently has no primary data to present yet at this stage, referring to the choice of not conducting any interviews with American/British/Australian officials, the thesis will rely on secondary data instead. To give a basic overview, the variables have been identified according to table I below.

Table I- Overview of the Variables

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables
AUKUS agreement, framed as a window of opportunity	Problem stream (Framing)
	Policy Stream (discussion of policy solutions by potential policy entrepreneurs)
	Political Stream (discussion of opposition reaction as well as national mood).

4.2 Data Collection

The following section of the thesis will discuss the different forms of data collection sorted by

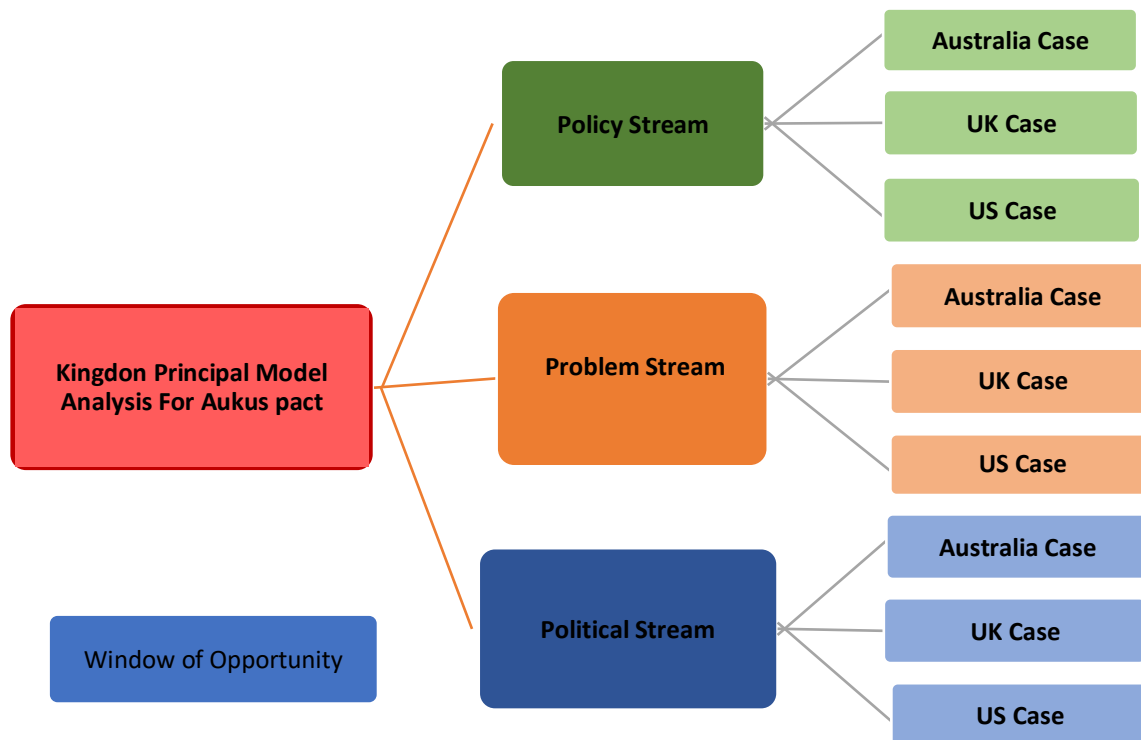


Figure III - An overview of the Research Analysis

the different streams discussed through the Kingdon model. This means that the research for this is organized according to the model, and then separated into different country cases. For instance, you would have the problem stream, with three different country sections discussing their different identities and findings. Due to the different actors' types of data sources, it is difficult to first separate the Aukus pact into country cases and then into the different streams, as this method would make efforts to compare the analysis of the different streams more difficult. The overall organization of the research design has been summarized in Figure III mentioning that some sources, especially scientific reports, are often written by transnational think tanks or institutes for strategic policy, meaning that some reports might be applicable for all three countries cases to aid in explaining the creation of AUKUS.

In this research model, the method of data collection will be through discourse analysis using secondary research, to make up for the inability to generate own direct data reports following the Aukus pact. Specifically, this thesis will make use of qualitative secondary research to obtain a clear picture of the circumstances and actors involved in the creation of the Aukus pact. Moreover, due to the Aukus pact being an ongoing project that still has not been finalized, this thesis is reliant on secondary published data reports and media coverage of the pact in the different case countries, rather than through quantitative means. Because the sources of data slightly differ based on the country of analysis, the following subsections distinguish the different sources for each country involved in the Aukus pact. However, To increase the consistency of the same types of sources for each of the countries involved in the Aukus pact, this thesis limits the types of data to interview transcripts, country reports, and media reports. Furthermore, this thesis limits the types of media coverage to newspaper coverage only newspaper coverage to maintain consistency across the different country cases. This thesis believes that by including different newspapers with different political signatures, a sufficient overview can be given of different media perspectives while retaining roughly the same units of analysis across country cases within the scope of this thesis.

4.2.1 Data Collection Australia

For the Australia case, the main data for the country cases are the media coverage, interview transcripts of prominent actors, and the Aukus policy reports by the Australian Institute of defense policy. Firstly, the media news outlets that were most prominent in Australia are *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Australian* (Hughes, 2022). These two newspapers are considered to be the two most circulated newspapers within Australia, with *The Australian* having the largest average weekly news readership of 539 thousand readers, while *The Sydney Morning Herald's* online following on YouTube has over 11 million views total (Hughes, 2022). While the Herald is considered to be more of a centrist perspective with a focus on

liberalism, the Australian is considered to be more right-wing (Allsides, 2022). These two newspapers are suitable to examine both the actors involved in the problem stream as well as the political stream, as they frequently report the ongoing tension between opposing government parties. As the papers each have a slightly different political view, differences in coverage can also serve as potential indicators or influential actors for the swing of the national mood in Australia. It is worth noting, however, that the Australian elections are on May 21st, 2022, which heightens political tensions and affect national mood as well. It is worth mentioning that although the elections have now finished and Australia now has Prime Minister Albanese from Labor as its new PM, this thesis will specifically focus on the role and actions of his predecessor, Prime Minister Morrison, under whom the Aukus agreement was constructed initially.

Interestingly, there are a few interview transcripts available from current Australian prime minister Scott Morrison defending the Aukus pact, as well as interviews with defense minister Peter Dutton on the matter (Department of Defense, 2021, Interview with Andrew Clennell). Scott Morrison is relevant for this research not only because of his position as the PM spearheading the AUKUS pact but also because he has frequently defended AUKUS in the media. On September 26th, 2021, he had an interview with Margaret Brennan from the Face the Nation Sunday morning public affairs program, where he defended the Aukus pact, his reasoning behind the choice to discontinue the deal with France, and his perspective on the emerging threat from China (*Face the Nation 2021, YouTube*). These interviews are of relevance because they provide insight into the framing of the problem that AUKUS is supposed to solve, as well as the types of critiques he has been given over the deal, which is useful information for contextualizing the problem stream and the political stream for Australia.

Lastly, for the epistemic reports, we have found some epistemic reports, ranging from the Australian Institute of Strategic Policy to the Valadai Discussion Club's analysis of the Aukus pact's significance. To elaborate, the Australian Institute of Strategic Policy (ASPI), writes reports about what AUKUS is and is not involved in (Shoebridge 2021a). It also periodically releases updates to the public about AUKUS' progress and provides information on what ways the technological knowledge gained from AUKUS can be implemented in the Australian military program (Hellyer & Stevens, 2022). Written by Michael Shoebridge on December 8th, 2021, the papers by the ASPI help to understand the formation of the AUKUS policy as well as understanding the different narratives about AUKUS that exist, which are relevant for the political stream to explain the public's understanding of the AUKUS program. Shoebridge himself is the director of the ASPI's defense strategy and security policy, and the think tank itself was established and sponsored by the Australian government to advise her and other global leaders on strategic policy issues (ASPI, n.d, *About us*). For this reason, their reports are quite relevant on the matter as potential policy entrepreneurs as well. The Valadai Discussion Club is a Moscow-based think-tank but frequently uses international or Western scholars to write their reports. For example, their report on unpacking the trilateral AUKUS agreement on November 22nd, 2021 was written by Andrew Futter, who is a research professor at the University of Leicester (Futter, 2021; *About our Experts, Valadai club*). Moreover, the Valadai club hosted an expert discussion on the implications of AUKUS on November 11th, 2021, which also included dr. Babones, is an associate professor of Sociology and Policy at the University of Sydney (Futter, 2021). In other words, the think tank's reports and discussions draw on topical experts for insights to provide a fruitful discussion on the different reactions and implications of AUKUS based on different perspectives including Australia and Europe (Futter, 2021). For this reason, their reports can be of great help in understanding how the experts have examined the implications of participating in AUKUS,

which can be of influence to the politicians in the future decision-making process. These reports all analyze the consequences and perspectives surrounding the gains and losses of AUKUS, which provides us with further insight into the role of think tanks in shaping the problem/solution dynamic of the AUKUS report itself.

4.2.2 Data Collection for the UK

For the case of the UK, the sources of data consist of Media coverage reports, interview transcripts, and epistemic reports. However, the actors that are involved are a little different than in Australia. While the overview of the British newspaper does provide insight into the different political signatures, the three main news outlets this thesis will focus on for the media analysis are the Guardian, The Independent, Metro, and the Daily Mail. These four news outlets have been characterized as left-wing, mostly centrist, and very right-wing respectively (Allsides, 2022). One reason for choosing the Metro and Daily Mail newspaper in the case of the UK is because the Daily Mail has the highest circulation amongst the conservative newspapers in the UK, while Metro has the highest circulation among the relatively neutral newspapers in the UK (Tobbit & Majid 2022). The Guardian, although lower in terms of circulation in terms of newspapers, has high coverage of the Aukus case compared to other newspapers, making it relevant to include both as a source of information on the Aukus agreement and as a UK newspaper with a more leftist signature. Therefore, using these three news outlets will, similarly to the Australian case, aid in painting a better picture of the political stream's scenario for the UK case, as well as keep a focus on the more highly circulated newspapers which can be considered more influential. While it was possible to include more diverse amounts of newspapers in the UK case, the number of outlets has been centralized to a maximum of three, given the scope of the thesis as well as the need to analyze the other streams that rely less on newspaper sources.

For the transcripts of interviews, some actors of interest have been identified aside from Boris Johnson the Prime minister, as well as British foreign affairs secretary Dominic Raab, who has been said to have played a significant role in getting the Aukus policy on the agenda (Daily Telegraph 2018; Vandermeersch, 2021). During the Conservative party conference of 2021, Prime Minister Boris Johnson vividly defends the AUKUS military pact, praising its cooperative nature for a more globally involved Britain after the Brexit deal (Rev, 2021A). Moreover, the UK royal navy has also spoken about Aukus in interviews, as well as the prime minister on a separate occasion on france24 news defending the relationship with France (LaGrone, 2021).

Lastly, there are several academic reports found on the UK perspective on AUKUS. Firstly, The Diplomat, as well as other scholars from the Chatham House, and the International Institute for Strategic Studies have launched reports on the Aukus agreement's intent, causes, and consequences. By analyzing these reports using Kingdon's characteristics of the policy stream, the policy entrepreneurs, as well as the establishment of the solutions discourse, can be discussed. The core goal of the academic reports is to provide a clear perspective of the academic analyses of the pact and their potential framing of the solution.

4.2.3 Data Collection US

For the US case, the selection of the media coverage is a bit broader than in the other two cases, due to the country having a larger variety of newssources. However, the main newspapers that will be used for the US case will be the New York Times, NBC News, BBC, The Washington Post, and Fox News. To ensure the inclusion of both left-wing as well as right-wing coverage of the AUKUS pact from the American perspective, the media bias matrix from AllSides has aided in making a selection of newspapers for analysis, as well as their popularity in terms of circulation (Allsides, 2022, *Media Bias Matrix*). The level of circulation of the newspaper is considered an important criterion for inclusion in the discourse

analysis because of the politicized and polarized political environment in the United States, examining the newspapers with the most circulation gives this thesis the best possible insight into the American national mood, which is important for identifying the political stream. However, the role of circulation is of general importance across the different country cases.

With regard to the interview transcripts by US officials on AUKUS, there are few interviews available, ranging from again the joint press statement by president Biden to a debriefing of the Pentagon's official John Kirby on September 20th 2021 (Rev 2021,). Important to note here is that these transcripts all date to the period shortly after the announcement of the Aukus pact, meaning that the press releases around this time are mostly reflective, and therefore serve to provide additional insights mostly into the problem stream, as well as the policy stream.

Lastly, in the case of the US, the analysis reports that have been written are only a few ranging from Biden's cabinet report on the nuclear aspects of the AUKUS deal to congress to the United states study center to a report from the conservative heritage foundation which aims at advising government, but also includes the United States Institute for Peace. The US institute for peace is of interest because they were one of the few institutes which offered critique on the Aukus agreement from the US perspective with a focus on nuclear proliferation. These various academic reports have aimed at analyzing the problem and solution that Aukus was supposed to present. Moreover, Institutes such as the International Institute of Defense from Estonia also uncovered more underlying factors related to Australia's need for support, pointing to the 2020 Defense Strategic Update. In short, the

information and insights these reports provide into the underlying analyses of the AUKUS agreement will provide more context to the US's version of the problem and policy stream, going beyond the narrative to counter the Chinese military presence

4.3 Data Analysis.

For this thesis, analyzing the different types of literary data, this thesis relies on discourse analysis across different country cases. Given the potentially different interpretations of the problem stream, policy stream, and political streams in the different countries involved, analyzing their circumstances and narrative requires a more interpretive approach to properly contextualize the circumstances under which Aukus has been created. However, analyzing all this data using discourse analysis also means that there is more room for interpretation and that the inferences made by the researcher are subject to scrutiny and further evaluation. In terms of focal points within this discourse analysis, the thesis aims specifically at analyzing the tone, usage of symbols & numbers, as well as buzzwords suggesting a particular narrative this thesis might expect to find from these Western countries about increasing naval presence in the Indo-Pacific. The main role of discourse analysis is centered however around the problem stream, where the concept of framing and analysis is more relevant than for the other two streams.

Chapter V: Sarabande: Discursive Analysis and Results.

5.1 Framing the Aukus Pact as a Window of opportunity

To quickly recap, the policy window is the opportunity for action for the presented initiatives when the three streams come to align for a short period of time (Kingdon, 2014, p.166). The respective streams of presented problems, solutions, and a potential change in the political climate to take action, merge which allows the policy window to open (Kingdon, 2014, p.167). To understand why AUKUS was framed as a window of opportunity, one must pay attention to the discussion of timing. For Australia, the AUKUS agreement came close to the moment where Australia had to go through another contract gate with the French Naval group regarding their attack class-submarine deal (Hatcher, 2022b). After this gate, Australia would not have been able to pursue its desire for nuclear-powered submarines, meaning that the policy window would be closed. From the perspective of the UK, the timing of a deal would be critical to project their new focus on the Indo-Pacific first, as the current President of the European Commission Ursula von Der Leyen was presenting the EU's strategy regarding the Indo-Pacific as a day later than the AUKUS agreement (Camroux, 2021). It could be said that the timing for any potential agreement with the US and Australia needed to be finalized before September, after which their attempt at projecting Global Britain would be more compromised by the presence of the European Union strategy. Lastly, for the US, the concept of timing can be connected to both the start of Biden's presidency as well as the withdrawal of the US from Afghanistan. After previous attempts at a US 'pivot to Asia' by the Obama and Trump administrations, some analysts have interpreted the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan as a shift in US politics to focus on the Indo-Pacific (Reisinezhad, 2021). In addition, the Biden administration had made itself clear they were looking into re-establishing partners alliances to re-establish the importance of alliances, subsequently diverting from his predecessor's America first policy (paraphrased from Macian, 2021). As a result, the different

interests were not only aligned but also presented with a different deadline which pushed the timeframe for an AUKUS policy window to the forefront after the G7 meeting between the respective countries in June (Hartcher, 2022b). In summary, the AUKUS agreement can be seen as a policy window of opportunity due to both the convergence of interests, limited time, and the role of the different streams converging. The following analysis of the streams focuses on the formulation of the problem, solution, and political climate for each country that allowed them to converge and open the window for a policy change, and examines the differences between them. Lastly, because AUKUS itself has been described as an opportunity for Britain to establish herself in a leading position (The White House, 2021b), and Prime Minister Morrison described the deal as the ‘forever partnership (Sky News Australia 2021), the deal has already been framed by the politicians involved as a window of opportunity rather than the definition based on the Kingdon model. Therefore, explaining the AUKUS agreement as a window of opportunity requires an understanding of the convergence of the different streams to avoid perpetuating the initial narratives presented.

5.2 Problem Stream: Causes or underlying ambitions?

5.2.2 Problem Stream in Australia

For Australia, the problem for which they needed enhanced security cooperation and in particular obtaining new submarines was, in essence, the same as back in 2016. Their desire for enhanced military power to maintain peace and stability in the Pacific region, as “that’s what Australia and our friends have always sought” (*Prime Minister press release 2021; Sky News Australia 2021,*). The specific terminology here, Australia and our friends are also re-used when introducing the pact also as a forever partnership with some of our oldest friends (*Prime Minister press release 2021, paragraph 2*). This terminology is not new, but has fit into Australia’s line of diplomacy even before the AUKUS pact has created (Fathi 2021). To elaborate, Australian diplomacy has leaned on a doctrine of ‘great and powerful friends and has until 1942 always made decisions in collaboration with London (Fathi 2021, *Friends in High places par.*). According to Prime Minister Morrison’s press release, the choice to change from diesel-based Attack class submarines to nuclear-powered submarines was not possible in 2016 but was specifically ‘the result of a change of needs’ (*Prime Minister Press release 2021; Sky News Australia, 2021, 6:33*). Although not directly mentioned in the press release, one of the problems for Australia before the AUKUS pact that has been repeated in various scholarly articles was China’s increased maritime policy (Shoebridge 2021; Bates 2021). However, an examination of Australia’s 2020 Defense Strategic Update shows that the drivers of the changing strategic environment for Australia have only accelerated since 2016 (Australian Department of Defense, 2020), one of which was the ‘roles of the United States and China and the relationship between them and the ‘pace of military modernization’ (Australian Department of Defense, 2016, CH. 2.6). Therefore, one of the driver’s behind Australia’s need for increased military capabilities was the increasing tensions in the relationship between the United States and China. This, according to the press release as well

as the strategic update, can imply that it is not just China's increased military presence in the Southeast Asian region that bears reasons for concern, but also the rivalry with the United States, a long-standing ally of Australia, which has increasingly deployed a rhetoric of being with the US or against the US, which stemmed back to president Bush's term in 2001 (Fathi, 2021). This can be considered an aggravating factor in choosing to frame the problem of choosing to cancel France's submarine program and switching it out for a US-based one instead (Fathi, 2021).

The other main concern with the Australian ministry of defense has been the lack of progress when it came to the development of the Future Submarine Program and France's Naval Group (Needham, 2021). Although Prime Minister Morrison had claimed that the cancellation of the program was not by any means because of the development between the Naval group or the future submarine program (Needham, 2021). However, reports such as the 2020 audit by the Australian National Auditory Office (ANAO) show that there were talks with the previous US Secretary of the Navy Donald Winter, who had advised the Australian government to look at alternative solutions to the current pact back in September 2018 (ANAO, 2020). Moreover, in January 2021, a confidential Australian panel was organized amongst the cabinet members of Prime Minister Morrison on how to proceed with the program, yet in the meantime, the preliminary design of the Naval Group's attack class submarines had only just been approved (Needham 2021). This suggests that overtly the deal with France was not considered a crisis or aggravating factor which required police intervention. However, behind the scenes, government sources have shown that the discussion on perceiving the current submarine program as 'failing' or 'problematic' have been persistent for some years (Hartcher, 2022b; Shoebridge, 2021). The failing deal with France has therefore been described by some officials as 'not surprising' (Shoebridge, 2021). By doing this, the need for a different solution than the deal with France has been framed as a rational choice of decision, while in reality this

description of the contractual problems with France has been influenced by some key factors, such as the pace of the development phase, the exaggerated cost, and risk assessment of the submarine deal, and the presence of US navy officials in inner talks by the Australian government (Hartcher, 2022b; Needham, 2021). It is worth mentioning however that the majority of this information has only come out after the deal was announced, and other political parties in Australia such as Labor have claimed that they have never been informed of these covert talks beforehand (Hartcher, 2022a).

In short, the problem stream for Australia does not limit itself to the increased expansionist foreign policy agenda of China, but rather consists of two main aggravating factors, the escalating threats previously warned of in the 2016 Defensive White Paper, the ongoing problems with the delivery of France's naval group and expanding costs, which required Australian politicians as well as policymakers to look for a potential alternative solution (Fathi 2021, Needham, 2021).

5.1.3 Problem Stream in the UK

For the problem stream in the UK, one of the things this thesis examined is the official documents such as the Integrated review of 2021 and the prime minister's press release on the AUKUS pact at his party conference between October 3rd to 6th 2021, which have detailed some of the ambitions the UK is trying to realize with this pact. Firstly. It is worth noting that in Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Integrated Review, the words '*build back better*', are echoed multiple times throughout his vision for the UK in 2030 (Integrated Review, 2021). In wake of the pandemic in 2020-2021, as well as the post-Brexit period, this motto as it were fits with the prime minister's vision of finding a new place for the UK as a leading superpower within the ever-changing modern world (Integrated Review, 2021, p.6-7). This desire for the UK to 'build back better' and to 'renew their commitment to

security'(Integrated Review 2021, p.14) also aligns with the concept of 'Global Britain'. This, according to the review, is best expressed through Britain's actions since 2019 by taking a more proactive stance toward security and deterrence, sustaining her openness as a free economy and society, and seeking multilateral solutions to Global Challenges (Integrated Review, 2021, p.14). The Prime Minister himself heralds AUKUS as a perfect example of what Global Britain is supposed to entail, stating that *"if you want a supreme example of global Britain in action, of something daring and brilliant that would simply not have happened if we had remained in the EU, I give you AUKUS – an idea so transparently right that Labour conference voted overwhelmingly against it. And I know that there has been a certain raucus squaukus from the anti-Aukus caucus. But Aukus is simply a recognition of the reality that the world is tilting on its economic axis, and our trade and relations with the Indo-pacific region are becoming ever more vital than ever before, (...)"* (Sanford, 2021a).

Although this speech was made to rally the conservative voters, the tone and description that the prime minister gives of the AUKUS are mostly to underline the projection of the AUKUS agreement as a poster child of the Global Britain aspirations. It presents a narrative of opportunities and economic change, rather than one of solving military concerns. Moreover, by stating that AUKUS is an acknowledgment of a real economic shift, he implies that AUKUS is a logical result flowing from global change and Post-Brexit possibilities. One example of this is where he states that despite the protests from the "anti-aukus caucus", it is an acknowledgment of the changing economic tides towards the Indo-pacific, which align with the integrated review's goal to become an important presence in the said region by 2030 (Integrated review 2021, p.6-7). Moreover, when asked about the Aukus pact concerning China, the Secretary of Defense Wallace denied it was in response to any other national power, nor that he went 'fishing' for the opportunity to build nuclear-powered submarines and instead stressed the primary role of aiding Australia in maintaining security in the region

(“UK, US and Australia form”, 2021,). This can be interpreted as a sense of duty to uphold security, but never for whom exactly that peace and stability are reserved. Lastly, Prime minister Johnson also stated the economic opportunities flowing from the AUKUS pact, not just the building of the submarines, stating the shared technology on cybersecurity will create many jobs for the British workforce (“UK, US and Australia form”, 2021,). A commonality found across these different sources is that the AUKUS pact is supposed to aid stability in the Indo-pacific region while also opening the doorway for the UK to increase her presence there, meaning that one of the underlying ‘problems’ to be solved according to Kingdon is how to realize and fulfill the promises of building back better as well as reclaiming her position as a leading superpower after the economic crises plaguing the country following Brexit and the Covid pandemic.

In essence, the main problem that the UK is trying to solve using the AUKUS pact as an opportunity and cover is the need to rebuild its economic position and maintain her flow of trade and interaction with the world following the Brexit deal. Despite this being a less pressing focusing event than for the other two countries, the need to put Global Britain in Action did pressure the UK to pursue any type of deal that would bring economic opportunity in the Southeast Asian region. One cannot make assumptions here but given the framing of the AUKUS pact as an economic opportunity as well as an opportunity to project the ‘Global Britain in action’ across the world image symbolically and practically, the problem that Australia is facing directly, the perceived security threat, does not seem to be the main cause for collaboration, which traditional alliance theories would have assumed.

5.1.4 Problem Stream in the US

In the case of the US, the problem that AUKUS is supposed to solve is, according to the official leader's statement, 'to help sustain peace and stability within the Indo-Pacific region' (*The White House, 2021a*). Following the remarks of President Morrison, to meet the current challenges of the 21st century, the US alliances were in need of an update to meet any threats of the 20th century (*The White House, 2021b*). Although the threat is not directly mentioned, the framing of the rise of an external threat to the regional stability of the Indo-Pacific is one of emphasizing insecurity. This is also present in Pentagon Press Secretary John Kirby's press release following the agreement on September 20th, who when asked about the AUKUS partnership told the press that the US still believes in maintaining the international norms and values, as well as improving integrated deterrence by helping Australia acquire nuclear submarines (Rev, 2021). It centers on the need for US presence around maintaining international norms that could enforce. The justification for providing security or stability is, following Stone's rhetoric, stemming from the emphasis on insecurity, which has been loosely conceptualized as 'the worry that something might happen' (Stone 2012, p.129-30). In other words, through the emphasis on providing increased security or stability, the impression is made that presently there is a force of insecurity in the Indo-Pacific, which needs to be either mitigated or contained. Moreover, in the speech attention is drawn to the sense of shared commonalities that the three countries possess. One example is the story that Biden tells regarding the faithfulness and shared history between the UK, US, and Australia as allies throughout various conflicts such as "the frigid winters in Korea, and the scorching heat of the Persian Gulf" (*The White House 2021b*). this type of storytelling implies a narrative of camaraderie and shared responsibility between the three powers, fighting together to counter a threat. This can be interpreted also as a form justifying the following point of sharing US nuclear technology and increased cooperation in the region based on a shared history and

therefore loyalty. The underlying problem that the US faces is discussed in the *Interim National Security Guidance*, which outlines the key areas of concern for national security and how to address them (Biden 2021). In the report, the president states that the US ‘cannot pretend the world can be returned to how it was four, or more years ago’ (Biden 2021,p.7), meaning that the gaze should be towards the future and the current situation at hand, which requires a contemporary approach. This refers to the underlying problem addressed throughout the report that the current events throughout the world, also referring to the Covid-19 pandemic as well as the rise of other global powers, that the US needs to rebuild its network and lead by example to face such challenges (Biden 2021, p.7-8). In other words, the underlying problems that Aukus addresses refers to the perceived instability in the Indo-Pacific region and the need to re-establish military cooperation in the region.

The ‘focusing event’, that Kingdon (1984) and Birkland (1998), is however less concrete. Biden’s (2021) report states that this process has become urgent because current US alliances, institutions, and agreements that used to reinforce the global order are presently challenged, which requires action (p.8-9). This means that the current perceived instability also challenges the current security of the US as a deterring power. In other words, the underlying problem that incentivized the US into establishing new partnerships and alliances is the decline of US dominance in the international order, leading to a perceived increased security concern which could only be addressed now through a drastic change in approach. This ties more directly into the reasons given during the three leader’s press releases, such as the destabilization of the Indo-Pacific region, requiring a policy solution that involved both US and UK increased military cooperation.

5.1.5 Comparing the findings- tailored focused events?

There are a few points of interest when it comes to the analysis of the problem stream for the AUKUS military pact. Firstly, due to the covert nature of the AUKUS military pact, the concept of framing did not extend itself to the media in the early phase of the AUKUS pact. To elaborate, the majority of the information surrounding the need for AUKUS came from government-released documents on either the AUKUS pact itself or the military vision of the country for the future. An example of this was the UK, where the ambitions and threats to be addressed for the future of the UK in 2030 had parallels to the government-issued release of the AUKUS agreement pact, such as the opportunity for a Global Britain in action (Integrated Review, 2021). In addition, some of the information about the UK's perspective on AUKUS was revealed through coverages of think tanks such as the Diplomat (Camroux, 2021), which aided in explaining the UK's goals beyond the official documents, one example being the desire to outshine the EU when it came to presenting their Southeast-Asian oriented approach (Camroux, 2021). In the case of Australia, the information regarding the need to create AUKUS mostly came through official documents such as the Defensive White Paper (2020) and the 2020 Strategic Defense Update. Interestingly, the 2016 strategic update signaled the increased security risk in the Indo-Pacific region without mentioning China directly and the 2020 update stated that the risks mentioned in the previous update have progressed more rapidly than previously anticipated (2020 strategic update p.x). Although this development might have triggered the need for more cooperation in the field of security, this alone was not enough to come to the AUKUS agreement. One could say that the 2021 review of the Future submarine program organized by Morrison's cabinet members along with the discussion of the preliminary draft review for the program sparked the focused event of the dual crisis because Australia was grappling with the failing submarine deal on one hand and the previously present crisis of increased disturbance or unrest in the Southeast Asian region. As

Prime Minister Morrison put it, “there was a change of needs”, implying that a new problem has been recognized that needed addressing (Sky News Australia, 2021, 6:33). In the case of the US, however, the focused event seemed to be less like a singular point in time, and more like a result of the culmination of actions taken by China in their eyes (Carr 2022, no.24). For example, although the main reason for this pact is supposed to increase stability and security in the region, the US strategic framework on the Indo-pacific reflects the US’ desire to re-establish its presence within the region at large (Carr 2022, no.24). The problem that needs a solution is therefore not just the increased presence of China in the Indo-pacific maritime region, but the lack of US presence, as well as the desire to forge cooperation in case of further escalation with China, pushed the US to establish new alliances. To summarize, the problem stream which influences domestic policymakers to engage in a military agreement might seem unilateral a first glance, but after examining other reports and reading the individual countries’ strategic frameworks and ambitions, the ‘focused event’ or crisis mentioned by Kingdon (2014) and Birkland (1998) at least in the case of AUKUS is more tailored to the ambitions of each respective country and more diverse than initially anticipated. However, it could be argued that the choice of Morrison to read out the list of 14 grievances China had with Australia in November 2020 to the leaders attending the G7 meeting in June (Hartcher, 2021b), pushed the subject of regional instability in the Indo-Pacific to the forefront as a problem which needs an active solution.

5.2 The Policy Stream: Key figures identified?

This section discusses the findings from various news sources as well as government officials’ statements to discuss the potential policy entrepreneurs for each of the respective countries which have advanced the policy solution of increased security cooperation and delivering nuclear submarines to Australia forward.

5.2.1 Policy Stream in Australia

In the case of Australia, there are a few key figures who have been instrumental in shaping the policy solution and policy window of opportunity which is AUKUS. The first two key figures that were incremental in getting the AUKUS solution moving forward in secrecy were Defense Secretary Moriarty and Chief of the General Defense Force, Angus Campbell. They had, under orders from Prime minister Morrison to prepare two separate groups, one working on the French project with the Naval group submarines, while the other group was exploring the possibility of nuclear-powered submarines with the US and the UK (Hartcher, 2022b). Both projects had no contact with each other because “(...) we had to be able to say to the French, these officials are dealing with you in good faith” (Hartcher, 2022b). This means that these two defense government officials have guided both policy solutions according to the wishes of Prime Minister Morrison while also steering the communication and progress between other partners and Australia. Although the policy stream refers more generally to the policy solutions that are generated by experts in response to the perceived policy problem (Kingdon 2014), the policy solutions have in the case of AUKUS been steered to the preferences of prime minister Morrison, and the main role of the policy entrepreneurs, in this case, is to facilitate moving the policy solution of the nuclear-powered submarines forward. Moreover, when being questioned by the Senate estimate committee in June 2021, Moriarty said he had been considering alternatives to the French but wouldn't refer to it as plan b, but rather as contingency planning (Hartcher, 2022b; Hurst, 2021). This was particularly telling since the contract with the French was nearing a threshold or 'gate', after which the deal with the French would be locked in (Hartcher, 2022b, *Prime Minister Press Release*). Although both mean the same thing, by referring to it as contingency planning Moriarty phrased the possibility as something in case of an incident or problem, rather than a direct alternative, which created less tension. The second key figure in moving the nuclear-submarine solution

closer to an agreement was Kurt Campbell, who was called Mr. Australia's man in Washington by the Lowy Institute for International Policy in Australia (Hartcher, 2022b). After the G7 meeting in June, where all three countries had agreed to work on the project, Morrison needed the commitment and discussion fast to convince president Biden of his four primary concerns regarding the deal, which ranged from gaging France's reaction to still abiding by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty rules (Hartcher, 2022b). Campbell decided it was a make-or-break moment, so he decided to request a meeting from all three countries in Washington, where in August at the pentagon more than a week was spent systematically working on a policy solution that would enable Australia to get nuclear-powered submarines while still meeting every concern Biden's US defense general had posed (Hartcher, 2022b.). This can be seen as the second policy entrepreneur because he went beyond his job as just a middleman between Australia and the US and arranged for policy experts to come in and collectively work on the AUKUS policy solution, which otherwise never would have made it past the discussion phase with the remaining time left for Australia to proceed or walk away from the French contract. Lastly, the role of Donald Winters, a former US Navy security, can also be viewed as a potential policy entrepreneur. His primary duty was to advise Prime Minister Morrison on shipbuilding, while he allegedly was asked by Morrison to engage with US personnel to further the implementation of AUKUS after the deal was already announced (Hurst, 2021). Despite denying the allegations, after the AUKUS agreement was announced, he remained Morrison's advisor to closely work on the project and work through the policy details (Hurst, 2021).

5.2.2 Policy Stream in the UK

In the case of the UK, the understanding of the policy stream goes beyond just identifying key figures in engaging conversations to facilitate the AUKUS agreement. It could be said that the Global Britain perspective that the current UK government is projecting has been influenced

significantly by key think tanks themselves (Vandermeersch 2021). To elaborate, the concept of the Global Britain strategy as well as the Indo-Pacific tilt itself did not come from government officials only. One publication from a think tank, the Policy Exchange, *A very British Tilt*, has already outlined the British approach for the region back then, and some of their recommendations have been echoed in the 2021 Integrated Review (Vandermeersch 2021). One example Vandermeersch (2021) gives is that the initiative to let the UK become a principal dialogue partner for ASEAN mentioned in the integrated Review (p.13; p.21), was also one of the key recommendations that the “*A very British Tilt*” policy document also stipulates (Policy Exchange Indo-Pacific Commission, 2020, p.10). Despite not being directly linked to the creation of the AUKUS pact itself, these publications seemed to have shaped the policy stream response in the case of the UK to a potential trilateral partnership.

Another key figure from the UK’s perspective in pushing the trilateral partnership and increased cooperation in the Indo-Pacific forward is the then UK-foreign secretary Dominic Raab. He was instrumental in organizing the G7 meeting in Cornwall, including countries such as the US, Italy, Canada, Germany, UK as well as guest nations (Hindustan times). Specifically, South Korea, India, and *Australia* were invited as guest nations (emphasis added). According to *The Telegraph*, details surrounding the Aukus meeting were further examined and discussed between Australia, the US, and the UK, which has been confirmed by the Australian News report of *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Hartcher, 2022b.). Despite receiving warnings that such discussions behind France’s back would result in damaged relations with both Beijing and Paris, secretary Raab continued to organize this meeting regardless (Hindustan times 2021). Later in June, secretary Raab also went on a 3 country tour of Southeast Asia with the intent to deepen the relationship between the UK and the region in pursuit of the increased maritime presence of Britain in the region (Vandermeersch 2021). His actions have facilitated the policy solutions to Global Britain precisely in the direction of a

meeting between the 3 nations, where the policy solution of further cooperation in the field of security and nuclear technology could be pursued. At the same time, by choosing Australia to be one of the guest nations, knowing they were initial discussions earlier on allowed for this policy solution to reach the next stage, which aligns with the duty of a policy entrepreneur to push the circumstances and policy solutions forward.

5.2.3 Policy Stream In the US

With regard to the US, their policy stream was more difficult to analyze due to the lack of specific policy solution input coming from the US side. However, one key individual who has been instrumental in advising the Biden administration on Indo-Pacific foreign policy is Kurt Campbell. With Bloomberg referring to him as “Biden’s Asia czar” (Burgess, 2021), he was considered one of Biden’s most important advisors on foreign policy in the Indo-Pacific. As mentioned prior, Campbell was also in close communication with president Morrison to get the agreement of obtaining the guarantee for the technology to build nuclear-powered submarines (Hartcher, 2022b). This also meant that his role in highlighting the Chinese threat and mitigating concerns over Australian commitment to the US was one of his primary concerns (Hartcher, 2022b). It could be speculated that his role as a policy entrepreneur covered the Australian efforts to set up consultations on the details of the policy solution as well as steering the US president’s perspective on alliance and collaboration with US allies to deter the Chinese threat (Hurst, 2021). Moreover, although his duty did include frequent trips

to Australia in April to discuss issues for AUS-US relations, various meetings included key Australian officials such as minister of foreign affairs, Marise Payne, and US secretary of State, Anthony Blinken (Hurst, 2021). Blinken later stated that “we have each other’s backs”, hinting at the increased interest in increased mutual security cooperation (Hurst, 2021). Lastly, he had an unreported meeting with one of Australia’s top-secret officials, Andrew Shearer, who was also instrumental in advising Morrison’s cabinet on how to position Australia vis à vis the increasing Chinese tensions (Hurst, 2021). Although both refused to comment on the nature of their meeting due to diplomatic sensitivity, these actions seem to fit the actions of the policy entrepreneur described in Kingdon, which has shaped the US’ stance towards increased security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.

5.2.4 Comparing the Findings: Going beyond only policy promotion

The examination of different key figures in setting the stage for the AUKUS agreement to reach a physical form required has shown that because of the very secretive nature of this agreement, identifying the key actors in promoting this specific policy solution was rather difficult. Interestingly, because military agreements involve multiple countries, often the paths of the respective proposed policy entrepreneurs have crossed at key moments defining the trajectory of the policy solution for their country. Examples of this were the meetings between US Asia advisor Campbell and the Australian intelligence officer Shearer, In addition, some policy entrepreneurs could be identified within the respective countries. One example of this was the role of the Australian Defense Chief Moriarty and General Angus Campbell, who had kept the domestic policy solutions separate to avoid alarming France while simultaneously pushing forward the nuclear-submarine potential policy solution (Hartcher, 2022b). Although the Kingdon model does give us insight into some of the key figures influencing the agreement, understanding the exact influence of different epistemic communities proposing

policy alternatives has been rather difficult because there was little information about alternative policies to Aukus available. For example, Kingdon mentions the policy stream is also where alternative solutions to a policy problem are presented, but in the case of AUKUS, most of the data did not specify any alternatives to this form of security cooperation outside pre-existing alliances like the QUAD and the ANZUS treaty (Fruehling, 2021; O'Brien, 2021). For this reason, it could be said that the policy stream in the case of international agreements is less covert and more difficult to specify due to lack of data, and deserves to be further examined in future research.

5.3 The Political Stream- From reception to support

The political stream, as mentioned in the theoretical framework, centers around the national mood, and the reaction of opposition parties as well as interest groups, and aims to contextualize the reception and support of the proposed policy change. In the case of the AUKUS agreement, the focus lies on establishing the national reception and political reception of the agreement. In the case of the UK and the US, the congress or senate still has to vote on permission to share highly classified intelligence with another country (Kerr & Nikitin, 2021). For this reason, contextualizing the political stream through the reactions and reception of the policy idea will aid in explaining how the window of opportunity, which is the AUKUS agreement, succeeded. However, examining public opinion through opinion polls is not enough to explain the politics stream, and therefore this subchapter relies on a 2 part analysis of both the public's stance towards the issue of military cooperation/US cooperation as well as the political reception to the response, which are both necessary in order to convert the problem stream and policy stream into creating a window of opportunity.

5.3.1 Political Stream in Australia:

Firstly, the national mood in Australia needs to be discussed, because both US concerns as well as Australian institutes have highlighted the changing Australian stance when it comes to US support in the Indo-Pacific (Bates, 2021; Fraser, 2021). To elaborate, the public opinion of Australian citizens when it comes to global powers and military cooldown has been monitored by the Lowy Institute polls through a national Survey conducted through the Social Research Centre (Lowy Institute Poll 2021, *Methodology-2021*). The survey was conducted between March 15 and 29th, 2021, with 2222 respondents, obtained using mixed recruitment ranging from telephone polls to online surveys (Lowy Institute Poll, 2021, *Methodology*). Their survey covered themes from foreign policy to US-Australia-China relations and gave insight into the Australian public's perception of military cooperation with the US under ANZUS, attitudes to the US, and perceived threats to Australia's vital interests (Lowy Institute Poll 2021, *Relations with the US and China*). The institute's polls showed that in terms of confidence in pacific powers, the trust in the US has topped that of China (Lowy Institute Poll, 2021, *Trust in Global Powers*). Moreover, when asked about the importance of an AUS-US alliance, about 80% of the Australians responded that a US/Australia Alliance was either fairly important or very important to their security (Lowy Institute Poll 2021, *Importance of the US Alliance*). These observations show that on the Australian end, the public perspective regarding trust in China, and the importance of a good US-Australian alliance have been in favor of a tighter security cooperation agreement. However, when it comes to the deployment of security forces, Australians remain reluctant in participating in any form of military engagement despite alliances, with about 68% of Australians reporting that they'd only support Australia aiding US military intervention if it was commissioned by the UN (Lowy Institute Poll 2020, *Military Action Under ANZUS*). Although the public might have been generally positive towards security cooperation with the US, the deal itself was kept in the

dark from Australia's labor party as well as the general public until the announcement (Hartcher, 2022a). This meant that contextualizing the reaction of the opposition was only possible after the agreement was already made by the Morrison cabinet. However, some of Labor's politicians have spoken out criticizing the AUKUS agreement, claiming it presents a false narrative of China as a specific threat, despite China not having engaged in any direct military threats against Australia (Keating, 2022; O'Conner, 2021). Moreover, some view this policy move as a loss of sovereignty on Australia's part by entering into this military alliance with the US towards anglophone countries once again, rather than attempting to work with the Southeast Asian region (Keating, 2022). However, as the deal was largely kept secret from the opposition parties, the phase of convincing interest groups and opposition of this AUKUS policy seemed to be bypassed, which made the convergence of the political stream possibly easier to defend. However, the initial reaction from the opposition varied, with Australian labor leader Anthony Albanese stating it would support the deal as long as no commitments from Australia were necessary with regard to housing any form of nuclear weaponry under the Nuclear non-proliferation treaty (Hartcher, 2021b; Probyn, 2021). Furthermore, Albanese did react angrily at Morrison for not briefing him on the deal to seek bipartisan support first, which was one of the requirements the Biden administration had set for him (Galloway, 2022). Former Labor prime minister Keating however was less kind and slammed the deal for its apparent loss of sovereignty for Australia (Keating 2022).

When it comes to the news media approaching the AUKUS pact, it is worth noting that regarding the AUKUS pact itself, the newspapers mostly recounted the declaration in the initial coverage (Sydney Morning Herald 2021; the Australian). However, as more details started to emerge about the deal and the events up to the agreement, the Sydney Morning Herald took a more disapproving stance towards the event, referring to Morrison's actions as 'deceptive' (Hartcher, 2022b). This is interesting, however, given that according to critics, the

Sydney Morning Herald has aided in establishing the narrative of China as a threat through its coverage of recent events (Keating, 2022). One example of this is regarding the coverage of the Chinese threat written by some recurring authors such as Hartcher (2022b). This however might have been the result of echoing the government's objectives rather than the other around, because the Chinese security concerns were already established as early as 2020 (Department of Defense, 2020, Defensive White Paper).

5.3.2 Political Stream in the UK

Firstly, when it comes to public opinion regarding both the AUKUS deal as well as increased security cooperation with the US and Australia, there was little information to be found on public opinion regarding this deal. Unlike the US and Australia, the topic of increased integrated cooperation with other anglophone countries had been tested prior to the deal (Lowy Institute polls 2021; Smeltz et al., 2021; Bennett 2021). Although this was limiting in explaining the citizens' perspective towards Aukus, it also makes it difficult to perceive British citizens' perspective towards cooperation in the Indo-pacific in general. Nevertheless, the different reactions by British politicians can give insight into the level of endorsement of the political stream for the AUKUS pact moving forward. The reaction from the UK's Labour party was surprising, as the labor leader Keir Starmer had endorsed the agreement stating "*Britain must look after our most important relationships*" (Forrest, 2021). The members of Labour, however, including former leader Jeremy Corbyn, have voted for a motion condemning the AUKUS agreement stating it was a 'dangerous' pact that undermined world peace (Forrest, 2021). This split is surprising because PM Johnson's speech at the Tories

conference already speculated labor's opposition to the agreement stating that is exactly why the agreement was so great (Rev, 2021). Former prime minister Theresa May asked Johnson what this meant in terms of military commitment in the case of an invasion of Taiwan, to which the prime minister responded with a focus on the purpose of sending a signal that the UK will maintain international law (Forrest 2021; Sabbagh et al. 2021). Nigel Farage from the former Brexit party has mostly hailed the deal as the 'anglosphere coming together to solve 21st-century problems, and the deal would have never happened if it wasn't for the Brexit deal (Varga, 2021). Moreover, despite the negative reactions from both France and the European Union, PM Johnson was reported to at first have denied the damaged relations between the UK and France, claiming they were still "rock-solid"(Stewart, 2021; BBC news). Later, he responded to the French anger while being in Washington with "*Prenez un Grip et Donnez-moi un break²*"(Stewart, 2021). This reflected a certain level of dismissiveness to the French anger. To summarize, the British politicians themselves had a mixed reaction to the pact, with Labor opposing the agreement. While some of PM Johnson's ministers addressed the security concerns regarding China and regional stability, others stressed the opportunities derived from the agreement as a celebration of Global Britain coming to fruition (Therrien, 2021). This difference in the tone of the coverage was most visible in the articles of the Daily mail, telegraph, and news express. To give an example, the Daily mail addressed the voting of the labor members against the Aukus agreement specifically as a 'moment of embarrassment' for Keir Starmer while the Independent only covered the event of voting against the agreement itself (Maidment, 2021; Forrest, 2021). In essence, the UK political stream has mostly been characterized by its reaction to the opposition. However, unlike in the case of Australia, no mentions have been made of the UK politicians being specifically mad at not being informed about this deal. This could be because bipartisan support from the UK was not a hard

² Translates to *Give me a break and get a grip* in French, referring to the dismissive nature of the anger and essentially tells France to get over itself.

requirement for the US. However, as this is only speculation, it is difficult to say why some reactions did or did not occur. On the other hand, experts have made their perspective on the intention of increased security cooperation clear, which they welcomed mostly from the perspective of increased security (Policy Exchange, 2020; LaGrone, 2021), rather than through the economic opportunities which have been stressed by both Johnson and Liz Truss (Therrien, 2021).

5.3.3 Political Stream in the US

In the case of the political stream for the US, the source of information was once again different from the Australian and UK case. To elaborate, there was a lack of information regarding opposition reaction to the Aukus deal. The majority of the news media have focused instead on president Biden's reaction to the French outrage and his efforts to smooth over the relational problems between the US and France (Macias, 2021; Demarche, 2021). This could potentially also be because the majority of the US congress was again not aware that this deal was in the works. However, some guest essays in the New York Times did voice some particular concerns about the AUKUS agreement from an American perspective (Mount & Jackson, 2021) Their primary concerns regarded the time to realize the Aukus agreement and the respective diplomatic costs of the deal (Mount & Jackson, 2021). Moreover, they raised concerns about other countries looking to exploit the loophole in the nuclear non-proliferation treaty the way Australia has used it (Mount & Jackson, 2021). Various institutes however set to work analyzing the geopolitical implications of the AUKUS agreement. The Heritage Foundation for instance focused on the positive aspects of the Aukus agreements in terms of security (Sandler, 2021) while the Stanford University article addressed the security concerns in the New York Times guest essays, as well as the lacking progress in the Pivot to Asia rhetoric that president Biden aims to achieve (Mastro & Cooper, 2021).

Regarding public opinion in the US, the primary source of information that was available on the topic of security cooperation and alliances was the 2021 Emerson college national survey on Global Strategic Partnerships commissioned by the Association of Marshall Scholars (Emerson College Polling, 2021). They had a sample of 1001, and they conducted the survey between September 28th and October 1st, 2021 (Emerson College Polling, 2021, *Methodology*). Their questions were also compared to the results of previous polling in 2020 and 2019 to indicate change. They examined American public opinion on a variety of questions related to international cooperation including the impact of the deal that allows Australia to deploy nuclear-powered submarines on global security (Emerson College Polling, 2021, p.11). The polling showed that a majority of the respondents (60%), believe the AUKUS agreement will have a positive impact on global security, and 52% of the respondents identified the UK as the most important ally to the US (Emerson College Polling 2021, p.6; p.11). When it comes to the US public opinion on their relationship with China, the 2021 Chicago Council survey showed that US citizens viewed China more as a competitor rather than an ally (Wolff, 2021; Smeltz et al., 2021A). This was reflected through US citizens viewing the US as declining in economic power compared to China since 2019 (Smeltz et al., 2021A, figure 7). Moreover, the US' concerns regarding Chinese competition have been increasing rapidly between 2019-2021, with 46% of Americans viewing the US as stronger than China in terms of military power, compared to 58% in 2019 (Smeltz et al., 2021A, figure C). At the same time, public opinion polls do indicate that when it comes to foreign policy tools, 45% of the respondents believe diplomatic tools like alliances and agreements should be used more (Smeltz et al., 2021, figure 15). These different polls indicate the US public views the rise of China as growing concern of competition and believes In the increased use of diplomatic tools such as alliances. This is in line with Biden's aim to

establish new alliances and restore the US 'leadership position at the start of this term in 2020 (Macias, 2021)

5.3.4 Comparing the Findings: A Positive national mood?

When it comes to the political stream, different factors can normally affect it according to Kingdon (2014), including national mood and reaction from the opposition in order to establish whether a policy solution is in the interest of enough participants. However, the examination of the political stream shows that the role of opposition and the national mood was not equally present in each of the three cases. Firstly, public opinion surveys were used in the US and Australia to gauge public perception on topics including China's relationship with the respective countries and the interest in increased cooperation on security. The UK however, did not have any of these surveys, and therefore this thesis could not make any strong claims regarding the national mood of the UK around the time AUKUS was announced. Regardless, the results did show that public opinion in both Australia and the US was open to increasing cooperation. However, these results cannot be generalized carelessly to explain the entire political stream, as national mood cannot be reduced to public opinion polls only, and merely serves as an additional indicator (Norguist, 2014). Secondly, the reaction of opposition in the case of the AUKUS agreement is slightly different between the UK and Australia. For example, both opposition leaders in the UK and Australia had given their initial support for the agreement, with opposition leader Albanese having given his support for the agreement as long as no breaches to the Nuclear Proliferation treaty were made (Probyn, 2021). In the UK however, opposition leader Keir Starmer's decision was questioned and defied by his own colleagues during a party conference, with their members voting against the agreement (Forrest, 2021). This slight difference in reaction is not conclusive by any means, but it does show the difference in, the willingness of the opposition to accept or reject the policy solution. Interestingly, in the US there were no clear reactions to

be found from the opposition, which made gaging the political stream in the US more difficult. To summarize, despite the different countries lacking some elements of the political stream in one way or another, all three countries seemed to have an increasing concern about China and its role within the Indo-Pacific region which has led to public support for increasing military cooperation.

Chapter VI: Gigue- Discussion and Limitations

6.1 Revisiting the Research Question: Converging the streams

The purpose of this thesis was to explore the possibility of using a public administration theoretical model to explain the creation of military alliances. By using Kingdon's multiple stream framework of policy change, this thesis attempted to dissect the participating countries' domestic factors separately to examine the differences and similarities among them. Each of the different streams revealed a different type of correlation to the interest of changing a current policy or absent policy into a policy window. This thesis argues that the Kingdon model can help in understanding the domestic factors driving military agreements, but that the streams in practice slightly differ in both their application as well as their source of information initially anticipated. The problem stream showed that the presence of a 'focused event', which was introduced by Birkland (1998) adding to Kingdon's initial model, was often a crisis that was revealed to both the public and the policymakers at once, which caused the policy problem to become on the agenda. Although it could be argued that the moment Australia approached the UK for help on the submarines was a significant event that

started the exploration of the policy solution of delivering nuclear-powered submarines to Australia, this lacked the sense of urgency described by Kingdon necessary to formulate the problem. Instead, one could argue that the problem stream in the case of a multi-national agreement involved multiple tailored focused events for each partner, with Australia specifically framing China's actions as a need for a different type of submarine power to deter this increased threat (Sky News Australia, 2021). The case of the UK showed an apparent lack of crisis to focus its efforts on other than the attempt to recover after the economic downfall following Brexit without an EU deal and the COVID-19 pandemic. However, these factors were already present before the British were approached with the deal by the Australians, which marks these circumstances more as passive problems rather than a triggering event or crisis specifically. Lastly, although the tensions between the US and China were already present during the Trump Administration, it was president Biden's primary focus on rebuilding alliances and diplomacy of the US on the global stage (Biden, 2021). This made the US' framed problem more complex than only aiding a potential ally, as it recognized the underlying relative decline in power compared to China on the world stage. In short, the problem stream did bring out various underlying factors necessary in understanding the policy window that is the AUKUS agreement pact, but reveals that the concept of a focused event is less present in the creation of a military agreement between different countries.

The examination of the policy stream showed the presence of key actors that facilitated the negotiation and cooperation between the government officials in secret, so as to not alert France (Hartcher, 2022b). Although the actions of these various officials have aided the policy solution of providing nuclear-powered submarines to Australia, it can be questioned whether sometimes the key individuals were policy entrepreneurs acting in their own interests or not. For example, the Australian general Moriarty who was in charge of strictly separating the progress of the French deal and the option of nuclear submarines did his job mostly

because of the direct orders from Prime minister Morrison to investigate the option (Hartcher, 2022b). More importantly, because these officials were tasked to investigate this nuclear submarine agreement from the outset, the element of different policy solution generation was rather absent. This is slightly different however from the principle of Kingdon's policy stream where different policy solutions are supposed to compete with each other to find the appropriate one. Nevertheless, the different key figures that were responsible for moving the policy solution forward were necessary to achieve a tangible policy window which is the AUKUS pact itself. Lastly, the examination of the political stream showed that there was public support in the area of military cooperation among the participating countries before the announcement. the reaction of the opposition and interest groups showed that in both Australia and UK as well as Southeast Asian countries, there was some pushback against the agreement, viewing it as destabilizing the region (Forrest, 2021; Choong & Storey, 2021). However, due to the agreement mostly being constructed without the knowledge of the opposition, the process of convincing domestic opposition to vote in favor of the deal was temporarily bypassed. Regional responses from neighboring countries in Southeast Asia were also taken into consideration, with countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia cautioning against a potential escalation of an arms race (Choong & Storey 2021). The Australian Institute for Strategic Policy had also advised Australia not to take the regional responses lightly and to address them accordingly, as Canberra's strategic update in 2020 marked the importance of doing cooperative regional exercises as critical to Australia's ability to project power within the region (Patton, 2021). Such advice was implemented following the proposal of foreign affairs minister Payne to schedule an in-depth talk with her Malaysian colleagues to clarify the deal (Hani, 2021).

In response to the research question, this thesis believes that the role of domestic actors has affected the conclusion of the AUKUS agreement through examining the underlying

ambitions of the participating countries in combination with the tailored focused events such as the ‘deteriorating strategic environment’ of Australia (Defensive White paper 2020) and the withdrawal of the US from Afghanistan, which allegedly would’ve allowed the US to focus on their shift towards the Southeast Asian region (Reisinezchad, 2021). The efforts of key individuals such as the US’ Asia advisor Campbell on military cooperation with Australia and the advice of former US navy general Donald Winters on Morrison’s shipbuilding and naval fleet have allowed for the policy window that is the AUKUS agreement to be opened. Moreover, actions from the UK such as inviting Australia and India to the G7 meeting in Cornwall to allow the countries’ to converge and negotiate the outline of the agreement would have been overlooked if the primary cause behind the AUKUS agreement was solely to outbalance a growing threat (Walt, 2021). Moreover, the examination of regional and domestic support was taken into account, showing consideration of how this policy change will affect not only the participating countries but the Southeast Asian region as a unit. For future research, it would be interesting to see more case analyses of military alliance through a model of policy change, which can re-assess the importance of domestic factors in alliance formation. In practice, this deeper understanding of the domestic actors shaping international policy may also provide further insight into how domestic factors can drive international policy change.

6.2. Unexpected Variables & moving forward

Initially, this thesis believed the media coverage of the AUKUS agreement to be of great insight when discussing the presence of a potential narrative when it comes to the problem formation necessary to reach the policy solution. However, the coverage of the media seemed only to echo the assumptions and narratives presented in earlier government reports on the matter (Australian Department of Defense, 2020; Hartcher, 2022b). The majority of the initial coverage was created after the announcement was already made, and either focused on

the rage of France over the deal or the reasons for the initial announcement. The reasons for the Aukus agreement were only uncovered or explained in minimal detail after the agreement was already made, rather than influencing the policymakers on the perceived problem prior to the policy window. Therefore, no decisive claims could be made about the role of the media specifically in facilitating the AUKUS agreement, as the deal was kept secret from the public. This is important because future research into the role of media influence on military alliances needs to keep in mind that most major international agreements are developed in secret, and therefore can only be examined limitedly. Moreover, not all media sources covered the Aukus case equally. As a result, the distribution of using different politically oriented articles was skewed and could not be fully realized, as some news outlets did not even significantly cover the Aukus case. This must be taken into account in future discourse analysis by reducing the number of involved newspapers or doing a preliminary check with the respective news outlets in order to avoid such results in the future.

6.3 Noteworthy limitations of this thesis

There are a few weaknesses to this thesis that deserves to be addressed properly. These concerns will be addressed in order of background knowledge concerns, methodological concerns, and bias concerns. Firstly, as mentioned earlier in this thesis, there has been a scarce amount of analysis done on the AUKUS pact due to it still being in development to this day. This means that the analysis of the pact using the Kingdon model cannot provide any claims, but rather mainly insights and inferences into the dynamics which aided in constructing the AUKUS pact. Secondly, while the Kingdon model does focus on the role of policy entrepreneurs, it is only a part of the model and not the focal point, as the model was intended to be used to explain the role of agenda-setting as well as the policy process itself related to timing (Kingdon, 2014). In addition, the data did not completely cover all of the streams equally. This was most noticeable in the lack of coverage regarding US opposition to the

Aukus agreement and the absence of a UK public opinion poll regarding security and foreign policy. Therefore, the amount of inferences that can be made about the political stream and subsequently comparing them is limited. Therefore, it would be important to re-assess this theoretical model on new military agreements to test whether the political and policy stream also suffers from the potential lack of available data across other cases.

Thirdly, due to the interpretive nature of the discourse analysis chosen for this thesis, there is a small risk of confirmation bias with regard to assessing influence or a narrative being present across newspapers. However, by trying to use newspapers across the political board, this can be potentially mitigated. This however only has limited impact on the analysis of the Kingdon model.

Chapter VII: Finale – Conclusion

In conclusion, this attempted to explain the role of the domestic factors in facilitating the Aukus military pact through a public administration model of policy change. In order to do so, this thesis used Kingdon's Multiple Streams Framework to break down the different domestic factors of each participating country, the US, UK, and Australia. The examination of the problem stream showed the usage of more tailored crises for each country, with the focus on preserving peace and stability as the blanket motive covering all three countries. However, the difference between the motivations for each country showed a role for the policymakers and politicians in framing the core policy problem needing a solution. In the case of the US, this was the need for pushback against China specifically, while Australia was more concerned with its failing French submarine program (Hartcher 2021B). Secondly, the examination of the policy stream showed that the main purpose of the policy advisors and policy entrepreneurs was to advance a specific policy solution forward that is an international partnership or agreement, rather than generating various policy solutions. Moreover, due to

the secrecy involved in this particular agreement, no definitive statements could be made about the role of the policy entrepreneurs outside what could be learned from their actions reported by later media coverage. To put it differently, their role in facilitating the exchange of information, meetings, and cooperation between various agencies and consultancies in order to quell any remaining concerns amongst the participating countries can be seen as an important domestic factor in itself, which remained hidden mostly due to the secrecy surrounding this particular deal. Lastly, the political stream showed that the role of media was relatively limited in this case due to the majority of this deal being constructed outside the public's eyesight. However, the opposition reaction was critical as expected but was in the case of the US missing. Similarly, the national mood could partially be probed in the US and Australia through public opinion polls but was missing in the UK, making any definitive statements difficult to generalize. Overall, the public perception in the US and Australia was favorable to enhanced military cooperation, further aiding the convergence of the three respective streams.

To briefly answer the research question, this thesis showed that the role of the policy entrepreneurs in facilitating information exchange and secrecy, a favorable national mood, and a clear effort in contextualizing the policy problem in the three countries all played a relatively influential domestic role in facilitating the Aukus agreement. However, due to the interpretive nature of the role of assessing domestic factors, this thesis recommends re-examining this methodology by either re-applying this model to future developments in the future of the Aukus agreement or to a different new military partnership. This will re-assess the effect of domestic factors on facilitating international military alliances or partnerships, which in the case of the Aukus agreement were more intricate than one might believe initially.

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³ Updated 2022, but interactable chart showing the political orientation of news media and when clicked upon, shows their individual biases

⁴ Although the different advices in this paper refer to different authors, the main citation reflects the group of authors while the in-text reference will refer to the respective author

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