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Keeping One's Friends Close: The Maintenance of Cooperation in Supposedly Fragmenting Alliances

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Keeping One's Friends Close:
The Maintenance of Cooperation in Supposedly Fragmenting Alliances

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Abstract

From the perspective of an outside observer, interactions between sovereign states within the international arena seem to mirror the often paradoxical interpersonal complexities of their populace and those who govern them. Why did the Russian Empire and Poland-Lithuania choose to maintain a cooperative relationship in the early 1700s despite a shared desire to take control of the Baltic for themselves (Masse 1980)? How can one decipher the simultaneous desire of Turkey to stay in good graces with its NATO partners while also foraging ahead in its siding with the authoritarians of the world (Bekdil 2018)? All of these questions play into understanding at a theoretical level why nations in alliances still choose to remain in their frameworks despite their own individual goals, to which some scholars attribute to the base desires of nations to either spread their influence or seek security. Others invoke the power of the frameworks themselves to prevent collapse, and there are also those who highlight states' subjective attitudes' roles in this maintenance. This study of alliances that analyzes cases ranging from contemporary to historical alliance structures presents a further addition to this debacle, utilizing a constructed model and close scrutiny to effectively determine that the stability of cooperation between alliances rests in the extent of their structural alignment, holding vast implications for contemporary arrangements and crises that have captured the public's attention in the process.

Introduction

Over the din of jets' engines and thunder of countless rotors from helicopters overhead, the screams of thousands of refugees become muffled. Some attempt to break through the perimeter held by a skeleton crew of soldiers, only to be vaporized in the flash of an improvised explosive device (Macias 2021). Some strenuously cling to the landing gear or sides of the rapidly accelerating aircraft in a vain attempt to flee, only to be ripped off by gale force winds and plummet hundreds of feet below to the tarmac. Yet in spite of all this, these brave souls persist. A few, fortunate enough to cram their ways into cargo holds with hundreds of others, are able to escape the chaos, setting out for their undoubtedly hardship-filled lives ahead (Harding and Doherty 2021; The *Guardian* 2021). Elsewhere, a different sort of catastrophe is playing out not for the snow-capped peaks of the Hindu Kush, but for the depths of the ocean, as long-standing relationships falter when a deal concerning submarines and the strategic interests of an enduring ally come into question (Vazquez 2021). Still, on the vast steppe of the Far East, two relationships, one of today and the other of recent memory, continue to construct a portrait of supposedly monolithic coalitions between allied powers potentially dissolving on the grounds of diverging strategic interests (Coox 1990; Frankopan 2018). All of this in turn implies that cooperation subsequently breaks down as well. However, though pure observation undoubtedly generates adherence to this seemingly neat conclusion, the significance of differing strategic objectives' impact on the overall attitude toward cooperation is something that can't be taken at face value due to a number of these alliances remaining steadfast. This in turn leads to the overarching question of *how the opposing strategic interests of nations truly impact cooperation within alliance frameworks*, to which I argue that *the greater the structural alignment between allies, the more stable their cooperation will be*. Interestingly enough, it appears as if my proposition is not only met through the means of painstaking analysis into this phenomena, but also creates avenues for future applications and study, yet in order for this to be proven, surveying my inquiry into such situations must be undertaken in its entirety.

Literature Review

While dramatic incidents like the previously described collapse of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and AUKUS trilateral security pact couldn't be any more different in terms of their content, the implications of the United States and its allies possessing differing strategic objectives while still attempting to collaborate with one another in these cases reflects the question central to this study that three schools of thought have attempted to answer concerning the nature of alliances within international relations. This being, how do opposing strategic interests of states impact cooperation within alliance frameworks? For the first school of thought, the Realist Umbrella, power dynamics between states are both the deciding factor and point of divergence within this somewhat broad framework. Reasoning behind this statement is that the classical assertion of Morgenthau ([1948] 2006), that alliances are a subset of the balance of power theory, becomes contested by the postulation that states seek alliances not for increasing their power but to ensure security according to Waltz (1959) and Walt (1987). Or, in the case of Great Powers, this manifests as precarious wagers solely for the purpose of coordinating defenses and not for achieving strategic objectives (Parent and Rosato 2015). This in turn implies that within this school, alliances are viewed merely as a means to an end, a temporary arrangement between states unless the most hazardous of climates develop, pointing to different strategic objectives having no true impact as states will have ended their agreement by then.

While the next school, that of Neoliberal Institutionalism, concurs with its realist counterparts that the world is often an anarchic place where power dynamics are at play, those in

its ranks indicate institutions' influence, like that of the world political economy (Keohane 1984) or frameworks of alliance networks and their guidelines (Sandler and Hartley 2001), can lead to cooperation or prevent states from acting out on their own strategic endgame. This is because it would hurt the global polity were deviations to occur. Though this also appears to nicely establish a conclusion for the question of how international alliances would restrain deviations in their overarching purpose, like a single state's own ambitions, the school somewhat splits here as well, for Copeland (2015) expresses the idea that overreliance upon these institutions on the part of states could see these frameworks becoming either a check or the spark for something worse when any forecast of the future reflects a change in fortune for any member. Thus, the school of Neoliberal Institutionalism's central idea surrounding alliances and how their member states react to internal strategic divisions could be established as one where institutions or some inherent trait that must be determined in the eyes of Copeland (2015) regulate their members as a form of prevention and cohesion, albeit not in a foolproof manner.

With regard to the third school of thought, that of the Constructivist Bloc, it isn't a true school or traditional theory *per se*, but an epistemological perception of how the more subjective elements of a state impacts its decisions when these foundations are present. Often times, members of the Constructivist Bloc school even attempt to rectify discrepancies between the other aforementioned schools by creating different combinations of them with constructivism (Barkin 2010), or bringing all schools together (Fedder 1968) to present the true functions of alliances. For example, by studying Great Powers of the industrial age and their supposed tendency to seek expansionism for the sake of security or some other end goal, Snyder's (1991) work based purely off of constructivism indicates that these foreign adventures, including the alliances made throughout the course of them, were instead the result of a broad public interest and plethora of justifications made in favor of them. In contrast to this, yet very similar, Barkin (2010) bridges realism and constructivism as a way of organizing power dynamics to include social constructs in the process of alliance building, which acts as a "bridge" to more realist tendencies in the Realist Umbrella. There is even a bit of dabbling in rationalism (Fearon 1995) to describe how incentives of the populace and states as a whole lead to the search for negotiated settlements. Unfortunately, while the Constructivist Bloc's relatively subjective nature makes it uncomplicated when attempting to form a common ground, this very same nature makes the reaction to states shirking their obligations within alliances very difficult to discern, somewhat discrediting the school entirely.

With all of this in mind, the Neoliberal Institutional school becomes the most compelling argument presented due to its acknowledgment of the Realist Umbrella's assertions, solution found in the form of institutions, and recognition that some variable may be missing with regard to making said institutions work, as Copeland (2015) implies, a variable, or variables, that could be outlined in understanding how differing objectives impact cooperation. On top of that, the missing variables could also potentially satiate the Constructivist Bloc school in the process as the school leaves the door open for one of their norms to potentially be wielded. Nevertheless, only the more thorough examination of these schools can tip the scales in favor of the aforementioned school.

The Realist Umbrella

In order to effectively delve into the various folds that make up the Realist Umbrella school and its perspective on the creation and sustaining of alliances, specifically in moments of strategic deviation, it is imperative to first touch upon its origins as well, namely within the confines of the aforementioned classical realism. Essentially, classical realism as perpetuated by

Morgenthau ([1948] 2006 51, 64, 179) claims that states' strategic desires, or interests, are viewed through lens of power, or any means that allow any entity to exert control over another. With regard to states, one will inevitably seek this power over another state, becoming a "great game" of violence with attempts of overthrowing the current distribution of power [*status quo*] being countered by everything possible to maintain it. Morgenthau ([1948] 2006, 185, 186, 193) stresses that the violent nature of these "great games" leads to states preserving the international community they belong to via the balance of power, during which one of two outcomes are arrived at, the first being an outright conflict, or fragile status quo as states and their respective blocs incrementally increase their power. As for the second, it is a form of competition where the power of one state is either balanced or outweighed by its competitor's power.

With regard to how alliances tie into this broader framework, the balance, or equilibrium, is found within the relations of states, with their choices being a self-induced increase in power and isolation from the international plain, adding the power of other nations in the form of an alliance or other form of relationship, and generally preventing an opposing state or its bloc of allies from gaining any more power, all of this depending on the expedience of each choice in any given scenario. Yet it is here where the testament of Morgenthau ([1948] 2006) initially comes into question by his successors, the neorealist crease of this umbrella.

Basically, instead of entirely plunging into the trap of power dynamics being the sole motivating factor behind nations entering into alliances, neorealists like Waltz (1959) and his successor, Walt (1987, 5), focus on threat levels to nations, making security the main instigator for alliances or an increase in military capabilities, to manifest as a result. But these allegations also inadvertently establish their own controversy with this assessment, specifically when Walt (1987, 5) furthers the discussion by declaring that *balancing*, or states' alliances with other states to face a prevailing threat, occurs more frequently than *bandwagoning*, or alliances with the source of danger, the threatening state. On one hand, this further deconstructs Morgenthau's ([1948] 2006) argument by eliminating the notion that only the power of a state via coercion can win others over to its side, yet on the other, the international system doesn't appear to participate in *balancing* as frequently as he concludes, as outlined by the various critiques of neorealism discussed by Parent and Rosato (2015). Fortunately, Parent and Rosato (2015) also argue how the problem lies not in the claim, but in the evidence, for while Walt (1987) establishes *balancing* and *bandwagoning*, he doesn't formulate their designation of *internal* versus *external balancing*. The former in this pair references a Great Power choosing to follow a "self-help" method to balance as they don't need to rely on others, and the latter referencing states, both Great Powers and other states, requiring the help of others. In terms of the Great Powers engaging in *external balancing*, Parent and Rosato (2015, 55, 57, 80) say this is unlikely to happen as frequently as *internal balancing*, due to it necessitating both the help of others and commitment required to maintain such alliances. In the rare cases it does occur though, it is largely for the purpose of further increasing a state's military capabilities (Parent and Rosato 2015, 55), tying back into Waltz (1959) and Walt's (1987) assertion of security being the main cause for alliances in the first place as well as Morgenthau's ([1948] 2006) three choices a state possesses when trying to maintain the balance of power. Furthermore, this also applies to the position of Christensen and Snyder (1997, 919), who assert in their own study concerning alliance structures in the multipolar world of mid-twentieth century that hardy defenses, a byproduct of internal balancing, would lead to supposed "allies" passing on the high costs of their foes' initial assaults to those within their bloc instead of forming a tight alliance.

Aside from this, Christensen and Snyder's (1997) assertions are unique, for while they undoubtedly make a strong argument that is at home under the Realist Umbrella, given their agreement with Parent and Rosato (2015, 55), they also argue for some constructivist tendencies, like domestic policies and ideology, bestowing upon them the mantle of the middle ground as they assert their adherence to realism. Yet they also include other aspects of the many theories on alliances as well. Finally, as for the work done by Morrow (1991), which creates a model of alliance choices based on asymmetry, it ties into this the neorealist fold by affirming Walt's (1987) idea of states' security rising and falling with their own capabilities, including how alliances are established by comparing the benefits of what a potential ally will bring to the costs of advancing their own strategic objectives by being a part of the agreement. This in turn not only acts as a callback to the idea of why states enter into balancing, particularly that of the internal variety (Walt 1987; Parent and Rosato 2015), but also appears to hammer the nail in the metaphorical coffin of determining the position of the Realist Umbrella when it comes to answering opposing strategic interests of states impact cooperation within alliance frameworks. This being, regardless of whether one is a classical realist (Morgenthau [1948] 2006) or a neorealist (Walt 1987; Parent and Rosato 2015; Christensen and Snyder 1997), states are unlikely to retain alliances in favor of their own interests: power for the classical realists, security for the neorealists, and to some extent, personal motivations for the middle ground, meaning that when two states enter into an alliance, they already possess an understanding that their strategic objectives will deviate somewhere, inevitably dissolving their framework when it comes to this point.

Finally, when observing the advantages and disadvantages of the Realist Umbrella school, while its acknowledgment of power dynamics' role within alliance structures, particularly in the case of Great Powers as well as its clear position on what happens when an alliance experiences strategic deviations are effective, it's evident that its ahistorical and revolving premises (Meibaur 2021), wielding of constructivist tendencies when having trouble in pushing the power driven argument (Copeland 2000, 2; Christensen and Snyder 1997), and above all its apparent explaining away of the answer being sought with something to concrete makes it a school of thought that won't be of any substance to answer the question.

Neoliberal Institutionalism

Institutions. This simple word possesses many connotations when taking into consideration that anything falling into this classification made by the school's adherents, ranging from alliance frameworks like NATO to the global economy, are essentially the binding force behind their arguments, each arguing their efficacy in one way or another. Yet underneath the surface, some discrepancies lurk within this school that in turn either hurt or help the main postulation of "orthodox" members of Neoliberal Institutionalism. Widely considered to be the driving factor behind this school of thought, Keohane (1984, 5, 6) essentially sets forth the idea that mutual interests between two states are a constant within a multipolar world absent of any hegemonic power, though due to unshackled interdependence being a source of misfortune and prosperity, these common desires will translate into cooperative frameworks. Such frameworks often take the form of alliances or agreements revolving around greater forces at play like the international economy. Interestingly enough, these cooperative frameworks aren't the endgame, but the beginning. What is meant by this is that within these cooperative institutions, Keohane (1984, 12, 13; 1995, 43) implies that members privy to the agreement can accomplish anything from achieving security through information exchanges to benefiting from the discourse it provides, particularly when it comes to how he defines said cooperation as a *mutual adjustment*.

Basically, within this line of thinking, the idea that states possess their own strategic objectives that often deviate from one another is also a given, and that through this discourse, members of a cooperative alliance framework can establish a strategy that seeks to meet both of their desired outcomes while also increasing the future's shadow in the process. This in turn prevents the outbreak of hostilities and forges a lasting bond as a result. Furthermore, it also becomes necessary to declare that while institutions are independent variables within this context, they are also dependent as well, entirely relying upon the actions of their members and how they are set up to be considered beneficial (Keohane 1995, 46). Therefore, from what can be drawn from these assertions on the matter of whether differing strategic objectives within alliance frameworks (institutions) have any impact, it's appears that though their goals may differ, beneficial aspects of these institutions, like the aforementioned discord, will work around potential discrepancies, preventing any deviation or adverse effects from occurring in the process. Overall, this make this school seem somewhat attractive when attempting to answer the overarching question being analyzed.

Meanwhile, other proponents of Neoliberal Institutionalism following (Keohane 1984) also arrived at similar conclusions, albeit in different ways. Take for example Sandler and Hartley (2001). In their analysis of alliances and members' joint contributions to their broader frameworks as well as allocative efficiency factors within agreements on defense that institutions have, they arrive at the conclusion that states will ensure cooperation in the event of failure to abide by their frameworks' guidelines by implementing a process of tit-for-tat that will punish these detractors for their straying away, or reward them for staying true to their agreements (Sandler and Hartley 2001, 875). However, when comparing this to Keohane's (1984) analysis, it's evident that while they wholeheartedly support his idea of institutions preventing any mischief or catastrophes in alliances through avenues of promoting cooperation, Sandler and Hartley (2001) are more enthralled by institutions' methods of punishing "deserters" rather than their preemptive measures during the initial formulation of such systems. Gulati and Gargiulo (1999) in their propositions on the establishment of interorganizational networks, also arrive at this point.

In contrast to these positions but very similar in their conclusions of institutions being a powerful check on the independent designs of member states, Niou and Ordeshook (1994, 169) seem to act as a bridge to the Realist Umbrella. This is because while they acknowledge states would undoubtedly enter into cooperative relationships, primarily for the purpose of economic distribution as Keohane (1984) asserts, their desire to pursue their personal strategic objectives makes adhering to such an agreement a struggle as their desire to either compete or block their fellow states' goals as a way of gaining more dominance persists (Niou and Ordeshook 1994, 186). On top of that, they (these states) may even place the option to join other collective alliances on the table, but as Keohane (1984, 6) mentions about the follies of interdependence, leaving such an agreement could disrupt the economy, framework, and other aspects of inter-state cooperative measures as a whole, fortunately tempting them to stay (Niou and Ordeshook 1994, 188). Aside from these slight deviations that, despite their differences, all arrive at the same faithfulness to institutions as a means of checking the "lesser pursuits" of member states within an alliance, other scholars defending the school of Neoliberal Institutionalism are more purist in their sentiments, from Gowa and Mansfield's (2004, 781) on how alliances reduce risks with an erratic economy, like in the realm of export production, to Oye's (1985) games that delve into how cooperation becomes necessary to realizing mutual benefits. With all this in mind, it

would appear as if the Neoliberal Institutional school has no true detractors within its ranks. But simply asserting this assumption would be dead wrong.

One figure who could be classified as a potential “detractor” of the “orthodoxy” just laid out would have to be Copeland (2000; 2015), for he places a major emphasis on the benefits of interdependence through cooperation that Keohane (1995, 43) outlines with regard to its glimpse at how institutions address security concerns and interorganizational trade, but more from the standpoint of its inflammatory capabilities, something he dubs the *trade-security dilemma*. Said dilemma essentially proposes that states are extremely concerned about the future’s shadow with regard to long-term projections of the market, supply of resources, and other economic factors that have an effect on their military capabilities, setting off a spiral of horrific and tragic events if left without reassurance from the institution itself, or policies enacted by its parameters like embargos or other means of coercion (Copeland 2015, 11). Sometimes though, these restrictions only serve to further the spiral, for if one state were to hit another with an embargo, followed by an escalation of more restrictions, its target will elect to respond with the use of force. This in turn connects to both Keohane (1984, 12) and the work done by Sandler and Hartley (2001), for it is revealed that not only some forces, like speculation, are more powerful than mutual agreements made in the present to curb diverging strategic interests within institutions, but also that the tit-for-tat method of restraining said interests can also have potential consequences for the global polity as a whole.

As a result, Copeland (2015) appears to be suggesting that while institutions are powerful tools in the process of creating and maintaining alliances, the “orthodox” position fails to grasp how they aren’t full proof, as made evident by glimpses toward the future creating problems. The establishment of another variable into the mixture also becomes potentially important (Copeland 2015, 428, 429) in order to depict how and why they aren’t the entirely dominant strategy states should undertake, at least without some caveats. Perhaps this ties into Copeland’s (2000) other discussions on how wars begin, particularly his theory of *dynamic differentials*, for in it, power dynamics, polarity, and trends of said dynamics are all brought together from the Realist Umbrella and melded with what appear to be the aspects of institutions in the theory he outlines as a member of this school: that alliances can prevent crises, but are highly selective. Could “selectiveness” be the hidden variable in determining if a nation will adhere to the institution or not? Sandler and Hartley (2001) seem to think so, but due to this ambiguous nature stemming from Copeland’s simultaneous challenge and proposal to amend the existing concept that the school champions, the lack of determining a true variable or variables could be what brings this school’s efficacy down, a major disadvantage of the theory. Yet at the same time, it could also prove to be advantageous as this open-ended facet could potentially be what’s tested through case studies or other formats to understand the answer to the question. But be that as it may, if anything can be garnered from the Neoliberal Institutional school, it’s that it seems to pose the idea that the institutions themselves are what prevent alliance frameworks from collapsing when divergent interests are present, though it is not always one hundred percent full proof, as Copeland (2015) stipulates. Therefore, this school appears to be perhaps the best option for answering the question, but before a decision is made, it becomes necessary to observe the final school of these three.

The Constructivist Bloc

As aforementioned, the bloc of ideas, theories, and mixtures of multiple perspectives from the two aforementioned schools of thought that I have decided to dub the school of the Constructivist Bloc primarily revolves around either pure adherence to the epistemological

description of the influence cultural, societal, and other motivations have on a state's foreign policy and alliances, or attempts to fill in the gaps between other schools even more so than they have potentially done themselves throughout the course of my explanation. With that being said, it proves extremely complex to formulate a coherent, or set, theory that this school has when it comes to the formation and maintenance of alliances with regard to the question. For example, while Fedder (1968) stipulates that there isn't much basis to label alliances as accomplishing a goal larger than the interests of a given state's populace, that it rests upon the psyche of their policymakers' decision-making processes, something which echoes Snyder's (1991) explanation of the thought processes behind nations who entered into foreign "adventures" or alliance structures as they became rapidly industrializing powers, or Farrell's (2002) belief in norms' influence on international security, he also deviates from them by what he labels as the defining norm. In his case it's the psychology of policymakers, in Snyder's (1991) it's the populace's sentiments, whether they be the common man or businessman with a stake in the venture, and in the case of Farrell (2002), it's simply an affirmation that these criterion are what impact states' decisions over other things like power dynamics or institutions. With this in mind, this group would pose an extremely subjective answer as to how nations engage within an alliance, if they're even in an alliance to begin with, but seems as if one could narrow it down to being something along the lines of: states would react to differing strategic objectives within the confines of their respective alliance frameworks by following norm "x, y, z" or a mixture of all three to make their decision.

Then there are those who stray away from pure constructivism, saying what appears to be a lot about very little, attempting to bridge this idea of applying subjective benchmarks to objective theories, like Risse-Kappen's (2017) ideal of bridging Neoliberal Institutionalism, constructivist, and liberalist tendencies together in his overarching examination of the theory of Liberalist Constructivism. This is for the purpose of determining that alliance frameworks like NATO are often built on the basis of collective norms and values, which is also something touched upon by those like (Morgenthau [1948] 2006) and (Walt 1987). Reasoning behind this is that he noticed how domestic orders, the specific norm he wielded in his study, affected alliance institutions more so than the economy, at least from his view (Risse-Kappen 2017, 86, 102). This also to some extent ties into Gibler and Wolford's (2006) own constructivist assessment of alliances, for they too focus on democracies in determining how the type of regime in any scenario coupled with the values of its people affects the longevity and nature of alliances, but there are also those like Barkin (2010), who attempts to argue the same thing, just implementing power dynamics and realism instead. As a result, this facet of the Constructivist Bloc school's main approach to the question is even more subjective than just the norm being changed as it also varies depending on the theory paired with constructivist principles. Regrettably, attempting to go through these documents that reflect constructivist ideals paired with another thought process essentially get to the main point surrounding the Constructivist Bloc school's advantages and disadvantages, namely that while it is undoubtedly the most flexible in terms of the variable(s) that would reflect the impact differing strategic decisions would have on an alliance framework, making it the most fluid school of thought in the process, this very same fluidity contributes to a lack of unity that makes discerning one set notion as the main stream of thought, aside from some generalized idea that Farrell (2002) perpetuates, implausible. It even becomes so convoluted that other very similar concepts, like Fearon's (1995) appeal to rationalism become lost in the chaos of the school. Thus, of all the schools analyzed, it can be easily determined that this one is the least effective in answering the question posed.

Conclusion

In conclusion, like the fairy tale of Goldilocks and the Three Bears, the three schools analyzed in this review all fall into categories as if they were the bowls of porridge tested by the hapless girl. On one hand the Realist Umbrella school, with its firm assertion that states within an alliance framework beginning to fracture, states will simply walk away, is too restrictive in its parameters, and on the other, the Constructivist Bloc school, with its dynamic interpretations of norms and combinations, is too loose. In contrast to these two positions, while possessing the potential issue of a “hidden” variable or variables, which can upset the balance of the theory perpetuated by the Neorealist Institutionalism school, the fact that there is visible room for debate as to how institutions play a role in maintaining alliances, even in the most dire times like the aforementioned collapse of Afghanistan and AUKUS pact points to it being what I would call the right balance between restrictive parameters and fluidity. This in turn means that it could be wielded to answer pressing issues that appear to fit this mold, like how Japan is willing to remain in a strong alliance with the United States, yet is deciding to focus more on its own military capabilities and self-sufficiency following the crisis in Afghanistan (Honrada 2021). Furthermore, with both the emphasis on institutions and the open-ended space for variables that Copeland (2015) describes, wielding this school in answering my question allows me to focus on the building blocks of the alliance itself in order to determine the defining variable, or variables, that impact cooperation, something that allows for my proclamation that *the greater the structural alignment between allies, the more stable their cooperation will be*, to possess a considerable weight in analyzing the overarching question. Thus, with a solid scholarly foundation in place, the final component critical to exploring the legitimacy proposed thesis is the creation of a practical model and research process for the purpose of testing my claim.

Methods and Data Collection

In the process of constructing a compelling model to answer the question of how opposing strategic interests of nations impact cooperation within alliance frameworks, the most logical starting point is an in-depth analysis of the general thesis statement and the variables it proposes for answering the question while slowly revealing the foundations of my model. Beginning with *structural alignment*, in this study, structural alignment is not the variable being tested in of itself, but an umbrella term referencing five elements that I postulate to be the foundational components, or building blocks, of the alliance framework in question. When observed or neglected by allied nations, these five elements, cultural alignment, ideological alignment, economic alignment, military alignment, and the alignment of strategic objectives, are what affect cooperation either for better or worse, making them the independent variables of my study, and unless specifically referencing one individual factor in my discussion, I will be utilizing the term to discuss all of them simultaneously. Furthermore, as structural alignment simply references the true variables in the study, the term itself doesn’t possess a definitive value, but those under its scope do.

Moving on to the specific elements of structural alignment themselves, the first component I deem significant when analyzing their effects on cooperation within alliances is *cultural alignment*, which describes how the societal norms, expectations, and ethno-linguistic background of two allies in question compare. Though this definition appears to be understandable in of itself, perhaps the best way to elaborate would be to analyze the alliance between two of the Allied Powers during the Second World War, the United States and Soviet Union, as a sort of sample case study for explaining my research methods and data collection processes. When looking at cultural alignment within this scenario, though both states possessed

a similar connection to Europe with regard to their ethno-linguistic background as well as a high level of diversity given their size, Russian culture has always been a hybrid of the *low-context* European culture that makes its desires known plainly and the *high-context* Eurasian culture that requires an implicit understanding of its nuances during discourse. This differs drastically from the single-minded adherence to a *low-context* culture that the United States adopted from its primarily Western European forefathers (Cohen [1991] 1997). As a result, when placing this into the circumstances of instances throughout the Second World War, like the Yalta or Potsdam Conferences, it's evident that these discrepancies in culture also had a hand in the eventual breakup of this alliance (Axelrod 2009, 52; Hastings 2011, 589). In terms of *ideological alignment*, the second component, it outlines the comparison or contrast between two states' worldviews, namely their political and economic philosophies. Of course, in the sample case study, ideological alignment between the United States and Soviet Union during the 1940s would be one of contrast, for on one hand, the United States was, and continues to be, a representative democracy and republic that embodied an almost religious devotion to individual freedoms and capitalist principles, whereas the Soviet Union was a one-party, totalitarian state that prioritized a highly centralized economy and collective body of citizens over the individual (Axelrod 2009, 25). Somewhat building off of ideological alignment in this collection of independent variables is *economic alignment*, for while it takes into account the systems states implements when choosing how to manage their economies, it also recognizes whether economic elements like a state's GDP are similar or different. Referring back to the sample, while the capitalist and socialist division between the United States and Soviet Union were already evident, the fact that the United States' GDP grew immensely throughout the course of the conflict to approximately \$135 billion in 1944 meant its Russian counterparts lagged behind considerably even with efforts like the Lend-Lease Act of 1941 on account of their state being on the frontlines of the war (Kennedy 1999, 473, 474; Hastings 2011, 137; Tassava).

As for the penultimate independent variable, *military alignment*, I posit that it specifies the correlation, or lack thereof, between two states' military capabilities as well as their ability to coordinate operations against an opponent. Surprisingly, when observing this facet in light of not only the previously mentioned elements of structural alignment but also the sample case study, military alignment was actually one point where the United States and Soviet Union were able to decently coincide with one another. This is because even though there were obvious lulls in communication sometimes, with the Western and Eastern Allies doing their own separate things, a degree of coordination like the opening of a second front with the D-Day landings existed. When coupled with the similar evolution in both armies' capabilities as the war progressed reflects each state as being heavily aligned in this regard (Hastings 2011, 379, 516, 547; Ryan 1966). This then implicitly ties into the final independent variable falling under the aforementioned mantle, the *alignment of strategic objectives*, which describes how the end goals of states in an alliance complement one another. Without a doubt, this variable is an imperative inclusion, for it is essentially what both the research question, and thesis to an extent, revolve around, how this one variable impacts cooperation, for when observing the sample case, the common objective shared by the United States and the Soviet Union to defeat the Axis Powers was the sole reason the framework held for five years. This in turn displays how potentially powerful this one independent variable can be if not measured properly (Hastings 2011, 193). Nevertheless, due to the ulterior motives of the Soviet Union in their conquest of Eastern Europe, it isn't a perfect connection, but is still the most aligned this alliance was (Axelrod 2009). Finally, as a sort of bonus in defining the variables that will be present in this study, the *stability*

of cooperation is, at least from my perspective, the consistency in which cooperation that occurs within an alliance framework is maintained, further extending to the stability of said framework as a whole. Obviously, in the sample case, the cooperation did produce a meaningful outcome for the United States and Soviet Union, but in the end, the alliance fragmented, which points to a main reason as to why observing all of these factors in tandem becomes all the more important. Be that as it may, defining these terms is only a minute portion of constructing my model, leaving an explanation of each variable's value as well as a defense of my choices to be presented before any figure can be established.

Putting these five independent variables into the context of the model being developed, they are well-suited for the *variation* necessary within the study due to the specific niche each aspect represents. Through the lens of the sample case, certain alliance structures may emphasize some variable over others, which will be accordingly reflected within the results presented. *Control* of these variables also manifests by explicitly placing these five elements as the focal points of research within the idea of structural alignment, for no room is left for additional independent variables to embed themselves within the study and disrupt the substantive purpose of this investigation. Similarly, in terms of the dependent variable, while there isn't necessarily variation, given that the independent variables are slated to be impacting one thing in particular, there is undoubtedly control due to the same reason. As for the development of the weighted values of the independent variables within the model, I propose weighing them on a scale of one to five, with one representing no alignment and five representing complete alignment (see Figures 1 and 1.1 in the sample models for more clarification). Reasoning behind this choice stems from the aforementioned notion that certain alliances between states may have more of an alignment in one variable than another, and by standardizing the values, those possessing a greater influence on the alliance will be able to make themselves known without distorting the others being analyzed. Take for example the comparison between the two variables of alignment of strategic objectives and cultural alignment between the United States and Soviet Union, the sample. Were the alignment of strategic objectives to be weighted with a maximum of ten on the scale of alignment and the cultural alignment still retaining the one to five scale I've proposed, this dramatic contrast would in theory reflect how the former transcended its counterpart, yet it would also damage the dependent variable's final outcome by drastically overemphasizing one over the others.

Lastly, when measuring the independent variables in the model, each state in the chosen case studies will be rated by this metric, with the United States and Soviet Union each having a maximum of five "alignment points" in each variable. With this in mind, my dependent variable, the stability of cooperation, will be valued with a total score of twenty-five, representing a stable alliance in which cooperation occurs frequently and produces meaningful outcomes, while its inverse, ten, being a very unstable alliance framework. Subsequently, each category on my proposed model will have a total of ten "cooperation points" as previously mentioned, and a minimum of two on the lower end of the spectrum. All variables involved in this study, both independent and dependent, will have their own unique classification term (see Figure 1.1, classification of variables' score), which require a brief exploration of what ideas each encapsulates. Beginning with the independent variables, a score of one, or *no alignment*, is quite self-explanatory as it indicates that there is no alignment whatsoever between the two states within the specific category based on the criteria I described within the definition. Similarly, a score of two, while slightly better, indicates that the alignment between the two states within any given category is present, but so weak that it does not hold any real weight in determining the

total stability of cooperation, identified as *superficial alignment* with this definition in mind and visible within the sample case study. *Intermediate alignment*, the median score is where there is undoubtedly alignment present within the relationship, but one that is neither weak, nor strong with regard to its influence, or lack thereof within the framework, is only further enhanced with an additional “alignment point” that establishes *good alignment*, or a near-perfect correlation between the two states’ observance of any given independent variable. In layman’s terms, this means that two states would be almost completely aligned in that category, as if one replaced the United States’ counterpart in the sample case study with a nation like the United Kingdom from the same period to analyze the two nations’ ideological alignment. Finally, *complete alignment* is exactly what it sounds like: states being indistinguishable with regard to their similarities in any particular category.

Meanwhile, the first of the total “cooperation points” values that display the final outcome of the dependent variable within my case studies, *Lack of Cooperation* (5-9), describes an alliance framework that has no cooperation whatsoever within its confines, and has likely collapsed in on itself or due to outside forces as a result. *Fragmenting Cooperation* (10-14) describes cooperation that is hanging on by a metaphorical thread, just as the alliance structure itself is, for the states involved are in agreement with one another due to the role of a crucial independent variable (or variables) changing the balance. States displaying this form of cooperation will still retain some form of relationship with one another, but it is solely because it is the only option or an alliance of convenience that will be discarded when necessary. Like *Intermediate Alignment*’s middle ground position, *Average Cooperation* (15-19) doesn’t denote strong or weak cooperation, instead serving as an indicator that there is some cooperation or relationship present, but one that’s not meaningful enough or nearly collapsing, a true middle ground position. Finally, in terms of the last two outcomes, *Steady Cooperation* (20-24) and *Robust Cooperation* (25), while the former is a near-perfect manifestation of two states’ cooperation, the latter is that perfect cooperation that helps holds the framework together completely as the Neoliberal Institutional school would assert, only collapsing in the face of nothing more than an act of God.

When stepping back and observing the variables as well as the values I plan on assigning them, I believe they truly allow an excellent study into the motivations behind retaining alliances despite their discrepancies to transpire. This is because they are not only diverse enough to reflect the numerous components of an alliance structure, but also narrow the parameters of both said independent variables, the stability of cooperation, and values themselves in the process, making the inquiry retain a degree of consistency regardless of what case study is being observed. Granted, the true values of all the variables involved in this study are still something that is being played with in the defense of a specific variable’s weight in the total stability of cooperation, but at this point in the research process, I believe that what has been presented represents a solid foundation that can be effectively represented in the model and methods for acquiring this data. It also allows me to assert the hypothesis explored throughout this research, this being that *the higher an independent variable is scored, the more resolute the stability of cooperation is, as displayed by the final “score.”* Therefore, with the presentation and minute defense of these variables and their values on display, it now becomes all the more crucial to discuss the complete model through the lens of the sample case previously posited within Figure 1.2, a complete example of what my case studies will look like in their final form.

Sample Models and Classification

Figure 1: Basic Layout of a Single Category within the Larger Model

Structural Factor	States Involved (Case Study)
Cultural Alignment	Number of “alignment points” allotted (scale of 1-5)
Ideological Alignment	Number of “alignment points” allotted (scale of 1-5)
Economic Alignment	Number of “alignment points” allotted (scale of 1-5)
Military Alignment	Number of “alignment points” allotted (scale of 1-5)
Alignment of Strategic Objectives	Number of “alignment points” allotted (scale of 1-5)
Predicted Outcome	Outcome predicted in initial stage
Actual Outcome	Total “cooperation points” and classification (scale of 5-25)

Figure 1.1: Classification of Variables’ Scores

Independent Variables

- 1: No Alignment
- 2: Superficial Alignment
- 3: Intermediate Alignment
- 4: Good Alignment
- 5: Complete Alignment

Dependent Variable (Total)

- 5-9: Lack of Cooperation
- 10-14: Fragmenting Cooperation
- 15-19: Average Cooperation
- 20-24: Steady Cooperation
- 25: Robust Cooperation

Figure 1.2: Modeled Sample Case Study (Single-Column)

Structural Factor	The United States and Soviet Union (1940s)
Cultural Alignment	2
Ideological Alignment	1
Economic Alignment	1
Military Alignment	3
Alignment of Strategic Objectives	4
Predicted Outcome	Fragmenting Cooperation
Actual Outcome	11 (Fragmenting Cooperation)

Methods and Data Collection (continued)

Based on the aforementioned Figure 1.2, the basic model that this overarching study will wield when attempting to answer the question of how opposing strategic objectives impact cooperation within alliance frameworks consists of a chart made up of five columns and eight rows as a way of representing four comparative case studies between two states within an alliance. Upon which, the first column denotes both the five independent variables that make up *structural alignment* as well as the two rows depicting my prediction surrounding the outcome of cooperation as well as the actual “alignment” and “cooperation” points that each nation, and the entire framework as a whole, has generated throughout the investigation into the details behind each factor in the relationship. In contrast to this, the next four rows denote each respective case study as well as their adherence to structural alignment, predicted outcomes, and final score. Once each pairing is placed into their respective columns, the method with which I will collect the needed data and reach a conclusion on each, including when taking the thesis and hypothesis into consideration consists of myself delving into a plethora of scholarly journals, texts, websites, and whatever else is needed to garner the information that will assist me in ruling the scores for each independent variable.

During this process, I will scrutinize said information and make an impartial judgement, thereby generating the values based on the variables’ score classification to determine the total alignment and cooperation points involved in a particular study. Obviously, this personal

allotment of points could prove quite contentious as it leaves the study open for bias or a “wrong” scoring to creep in, both from my perspective and from that of the sources I consult in the research process, but this can be easily countered by casting a wide net on the sources utilized, implying that it shouldn’t be a major problem when all is said and done. After the scoring has taken place and the total alignment and cooperation points have been calculated, the results will then consist of the presentation of a model corresponding to the case study in question, coupled with an explanation of how I arrived at the score for each when studying each variable. For example, as was described during my definitions of the variables, the *cultural alignment* between the United States and Soviet Union during their alliance against the Axis Powers was superficial at best given the partial overlap in their ethno-linguistic background and cultural nuances. This would then see this variable being allotted two “alignment points,” being placed into the overall hopeful figure of twenty-five total “cooperation points.” Similarly, with *ideological alignment* the ideologies of both the United States and Soviet Union being the complete antithesis to one another and the in-depth defense of why that was the case warrant the collective score of one “cooperation point.” This process will then continue on until each of the five independent variables has been accounted for on the chart and explained in great detail. As aforementioned, this scoring and defense translates into the total number of cooperation points, which in turn points to the stability of cooperation and subsequent defense or refutation of my hypothesis. However, it may prove somewhat contentious in the department of *reliability* since others generating results in each case study may differ slightly when others scrutinize each case and score based on their own premonitions. Nevertheless, this style of model is how I plan on displaying and defending the data collected within this study as seen with the sample case study. Though there may potentially be room for improvement, especially when it comes to determining the scores as objectively as possible, it like the variables and scoring implemented is a sturdy base with which to work with in answering all the questions and claims posed.

With a brief description of the model and how it played out in tandem with the sample case study and methods of assessing it in mind, the final rational step in setting up the how research will take place in my study is a description of my selected cases as well as a brief overview of what the sources in each will look like. In my study, I plan on testing four case studies, each having their intended place with regard to where they fall on the spectrum of their *stability of cooperation* based on the independent variables they emphasize, but this expectation may change with the results. Beginning with the first, this case seeks to get to the bottom of the “anti-Western” monolith of the Sino-Russian relationship, potentially portraying that while it could be considered to be aligned on military and ideological bases to an extent, differing strategic objectives and slight discrepancies in culture and economics may indeed prove that the lack of alignment within an alliance’s strategic objectives may destabilize cooperation and the alliance structure as a whole. With this in mind, works like Cooley (2012), Ginsburg (1995), Frankopan (2018), and even the Gazprom gas company’s (2021) discourse surrounding Russia and China’s clash in Central Asia as well as Lo (2008), Shambaugh (2021), and Hillman’s (2020) examination of the cultural and economic differences become critical in the data collection process, requiring a great deal of scrutiny as a result when attempting to describe how these factors may establish a firm example of *Fragmenting Cooperation*. In a similar light, the second case should demonstrate a *Stable Cooperation* result based on initial perceptions in this pre-analysis stage, as its two subjects, the United States and Japan since 1945 are renowned for their outward closeness in their alignment of strategic objectives, ideology, and economies, something backed up by works like Krasner’s (1986) explanation of the defense pact between the

two or MacEachron's (1982) acknowledgement of their "bilateral potential" for example. But be that as it may, there could actually be some disconnect between the two hidden beneath this veneer as Yamagishi (1998, 172) and Cohen ([1991] 1997, 56) highlight when discussing the culture clash between the two states in instances like the interactions between American servicemen and Okinawans or in the Japanese value of interpersonal relationships, a disconnect that could maybe paint the relationship as one of *Average Cooperation*.

At the two extreme ends of the spectrum in this initial establishment of the case studies being looked at, the first of which, the United States-Germany Alliance, may reflect the *Robust Cooperation* result if my hypothesis and thesis are correct, with the affirmations of Polyakova and Riecke (2017, 2) and Abenheim (2003) aligning nicely given their emphasis on Germany's increased interest in improving its military capabilities in the face of aggression from the East or terrorist threats, a major facet of alignment based on my independent variables. However, their relationship may also be not as clear cut. This is especially evident given Kefferpütz and Stern's (2021, 2) discussion on how surveys asking Americans and Germans about strategic objectives reveal that the latter may not see America as much of a partner anymore when it comes to strategic objectives in both NATO and bilateral agreements, which reflects a potential for the United States-Germany Alliance to digress into the *Stable Cooperation* classification based on cultural, strategic, and maybe perhaps ideological premises. Lastly, if there is one case that may entirely adhere to my slated classifications and independent variables at a glance in this initial phase, it's that of the folly of the various pacts between Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. Essentially, like the "axis" between Russia and China, this historical case study is often one that is characterized in a similar light, as the Axis Powers all become illustrated as one indistinct power bloc united in their hatred for the Allied Powers. However, through works like that of Coox (1990) whose analysis of the 1939 Nomonhan Incident (Battles of Khalkin Gol) indicates massive shifts in military and strategic alignment as well as Toland (1970), whose insights on the cultural, economic, and even ideological alignment between Nazi Germany and Japan all culminate to an alliance based on necessity due to the hostile state of the world toward these two states and the others representing worldwide Fascism. This in turn makes the case study of the Axis Powers a textbook example of the *Lack of Cooperation*. Throughout these preliminary descriptions of my four planned case studies, the countless references to some of the sources of information for inevitably determining the values reflect how I will conduct my analysis, something that also is brought up in the paragraph describing the model and methodology. On top of that, like the *variation* and *control* found within my variables, it is present within these four case studies as well, for on one hand each instance is different despite the presence of similar nations in each scenario, which also have different outcomes based on their independent variables as I've described, and on the other, with said independent variables in place, there won't be any room for these scholars or additional factors to infiltrate the metrics outlined. Like all of the other facets of my research design, there may be problems with these case studies, including comprehensively researching each scenario given the time constraints, their actual relation to my proposed model, hypothesis, and thesis, and the durability of the variation and control I've attempted to implement. But in spite of these issues, this broader survey of some of my sources reflects an exceptional starting point for my research, the results of the study don't need to necessarily match up with my argument as I am simply attempting to see my argument's validity, and I have confidence in the strength of my variables', meaning that I expect a comprehensive and illuminating analysis regardless of what happens. These are my proposed methodology and data collection for this process.

In conclusion, the methodology and data collection within this prospectus circulates around five independent variables falling under the mantle of *structural alignment* and one dependent variable, *stability of cooperation*, that when all placed into a chart that serves as the model allow for the development of a comparative study between two states that sees these variables interact. In order to procure the data plugged into said model, countless scholarly works and texts on my four case studies, Russia and China, the United States and Germany, the United States and Japan, and Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, will be scoured in order to develop the most objective scores possible in each category, with the final tally of the “cooperation score” referring to whether successful cooperation is affected by slight deviations in *structural alignment*. Everything in the end, from the variables to the case studies, are extremely *varied* and *controlled*, but despite this assurance from myself, there is always room for improvement, like in the actual values of the scoring or cracks that “biased” positions or scores can creep into to disrupt the study as a whole. Of course, there are issues outside of my control, like the time for a completely through research of my case studies, but at this point, I believe that this research design is effective in answering my question, thesis, and hypothesis, something I’ve asserted before. That is the conclusion to this prospectus.

Analysis and Assessment

Following a rigorous assessment of each case’s relationship with the proposed independent and dependent variables, leading to the formulation of the final “cooperation point” tally that determined the stability of cooperation within their respective alliance frameworks, this case analysis suggests that *the stability of cooperation does indeed rely heavily upon the degree of structural alignment between allies*. However, given that the metrics in this study were independently established, delving into each case, their respective outcomes, and the overall contribution said results give in addressing the central thesis and hypothesis becomes all the more important to determine why the fallout of contemporary incidents like the AUKUS Trilateral Security Pact or issues of the past played out the way they did as well. Furthermore, discussing why the developed results point to the thesis being answered substantively also makes this analysis imperative to the overarching study.

Figure 2: Complete Model

Structural Factor	Russian Federation and People’s Republic of China	United States and Japan (post-1945)	United States and Germany (post-1945)	German Reich and Imperial Japan (1940s)
Cultural Alignment	2	3	4	1
Ideological Alignment	4	4	4	3
Economic Alignment	2	4	4	1
Military Alignment	3	3	4	2
Alignment of Strategic Objectives	2	4	4	1
Predicted Outcome (Stability of Cooperation)	Fragmenting Cooperation	Steady Cooperation	Robust Cooperation	Lack of Cooperation
Actual Outcome (Stability of Cooperation)	13 (Fragmenting Cooperation)	18 (Average Cooperation)	20 (Steady Cooperation)	8 (Lack of Cooperation)

The Sino-Russian Relationship

Beginning with a sort of introduction to the first case study, that of the Sino-Russian relationship, the outcome determined by the developed “scorings,” or metrics, surprisingly did establish a firm example of the *Fragmenting Cooperation* classification with 13 “cooperation points,” or where cooperation between two powers is in the process of decay as merely a few facets of agreement are what hold the entire framework together. This in turn makes any structural alignment more akin to a temporary agreement, or alliance of convenience, in which the two powers in this case, the Russian Federation and People’s Republic of China (PRC), won’t hesitate to discard their relationship when necessary. Yet coming to this conclusion was not an easy task, for despite effectively matching up with my predicted result described in my methodology, this relationship is much more structurally aligned than initially thought. Take for example the first of the independent variables *cultural alignment*, which after careful consideration received an overall score of two “cooperation points.” While the PRC is in its purest form a *high context culture*, in which an implicit understanding of nuances within ideas posed during dialogue, such as lying to save face, is required, the Russian Federation as a “bridge” between Europe and Asia has co-opted these very same tendencies from their Mongol overlords, pairing them with the native western *low-context culture* that communicates directly in dealings with others and creating its own unique category of cultural classification (Cohen [1991] 1997, 31, 32). This relative closeness in the two states’ cultural nuances effectively transfers into the next sizeable correlation, it being how each state as extremely diverse nations wielded these nuances as well as military force to offset numerous ethno-linguistic groups so one, East Slavic Russians and Han Chinese, could assume the mantle of the dominant ruling class within sprawling expanses of territory. In particular, ruling through difference has been a major method of accomplishing this goal of centralization, and whether it be the Poles (1863) and Chechens (1994-2009) or Uighurs and Cantonese of Hong Kong (Present), each state has had to embark on such crackdowns throughout their extensive legacies (Kivelson and Suny 2017, 62, 205, 373; Shambaugh 2021, 121, 300). Finally, the last of the major similarities between the two states within the realm of cultural alignment is how each suffered vastly under communist regimes, be it through famine and political upheaval as Mao Zedong’s Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution displayed, or more subtle incidents like economic stagnation shortly before the Soviet Union’s demise (Kivelson and Suny 2017, 344; Shambaugh 2021, 60, 73).

But be that as it may, these similarities don’t account for the plethora of irrefutable differences between the two states’ ethno-linguistic background, coupled with different attitudes toward philosophical norms, with Russia’s Orthodox Christianity being widely considered more of a cultural defining trait (Mitrofanova 2016, 106) as opposed to the permeation of Confucian, Taoist, and other native philosophies that China champions in everyday life (Eastman 1988, 15). On top of that, even some cultural similarities become challenged in this light, for on one hand, while Russia and the PRC may share some similar expectations and values through the *high-context culture* avenue, the very same way in which this exchange occurred, the Mongol Invasions, led to Russia developing what Bobo (2008, 18) describes as “the notion of a ‘yellow peril’,” an everlasting feeling of shame and dread toward East Asians that leads Russians to view their counterpart as somewhat threatening to this day. On the other, Russian expansion into the Far East during the Age of Imperialism has led to the Chinese also developing a sense of uneasiness toward those who helped contribute to opening their metaphorical door (Cohen [1991] 1997, 121). All of this in turn continued well into recent memory with the split between the PRC and Soviet Union, Russia’s predecessor, during the 1960s, which also led to brief spats of armed conflict and feelings of popular distain toward each state’s respective populations

(Shambaugh 2021, 68). Therefore, even with some similarities between the two cultures that save the final score from being one “cooperation point,” like their comparable cultural nuances and legacy of conquests, these minute connections’ pairing with irrefutable differences in worldview, ethnicity, and historical perceptions warrant my aforementioned scoring, one of *superficial alignment*.

Moving on to *ideological alignment*, it is here where the number of “alignment points” allotted from my analysis were the highest in this case study, ending up with a total score of four “cooperation points. Reasoning behind this decision begins in the realm of a domestic ideological outlook because even though the Russian Federation is a semi-presidential system with a president and prime minister, also mirroring a federal state (as its name suggests) through elements like a written constitution, multiple parties, and autonomous republics (akin to states in some retrospect), recent trends reflect a turn toward autocratic, oligarchical, or authoritarian tendencies (Danilenko 1994, 453, 457; Oliker et al. 2009, 20). Of course, the Chinese political ideology surrounding internal matters has no qualms with this shift in its Russian counterpart, for it primarily circulates around a communist government with a singular ruling party, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which has persisted since the state’s inception in 1949 and effectively made it an authoritarian state as well (Shambaugh 2021, 12, 35, 295). With regard to their greater worldviews, both Russia and the PRC have taken staunchly anti-Western stances in the face of what they see as encroachment or attempts at domination, with Russian actions in its annexation of Crimea in 2014 (Plokhly 2015, 343) or push for organizations like the Eurasian Economic Union (Frankopan 2018, 175) being paired with the overwhelming economic influence of China’s Belt and Road Initiative (Frankopan 2018, 64). In terms of economic influences, the more economic angle of these bedfellows’ *ideological alignment* is identical, for both states are mixed economies in which private and public enterprises are combined. For Russia, this resulted from the rapid reforms of the 1990s, during which President Boris Yeltsen and his subordinates auctioned off industries to the highest bidder, which contributed to the greater ideological issue of oligarchies running the state in the process, whereas China’s mixed economy stems from the reforms under Deng Xiaoping in the 1970s and 1980s (Shambaugh 2021, 131; Sixsmith 2014, 504). Nevertheless, in spite of these overwhelming similarities that can’t be challenged as they were in the *cultural alignment* variable, one major detriment to the two state’s complete ideological alignment rears its head once again in the form of the power of historical memory, as the numerous clashes between the two states and their predecessors changed the ways in which the aforementioned domestic ideologies have taken root, hurting their complete alignment in the process (Perdue 1996, 759, 767). As a result, while not perfectly aligned, the overwhelming alignment viewed within the context of this relationship’s ideological bases warrants the classification of the second-best allotment of cooperation points for the row, this being eight total points. Furthermore, from this initial delve into all five of the variables for this specific case study, one can view a sort of interconnected nature between many of the variables and how this leads to the overall stability of cooperation visible within the final score.

Perhaps the best example of this comes from the third of these independent variables, *economic alignment*, since it relies heavily upon *ideological alignment*’s notion of Russia and China sharing a usage of mixed economies to reveal how said usage contributed to both states’ placement in the top twenty world economies, with Russia and China having a GDP of \$1.483 trillion USD and \$14.723 trillion USD respectively in 2020 (World Bank 2022). Unfortunately, sharing similar economic models and boasting considerable GDPs aren’t as critical when taking a step back and viewing the broader picture because when viewing other economic data, it’s

clear a great disconnect is present. This is especially present within statistics Focus Economics (2022) perpetuates concerning 2019 economic data between the two states, for Russia's economy growing by 1.3% in opposition to the overwhelming 6.1% growth of China, China's \$2,499 billion USD in exports dwarfing Russia's \$418 billion, and China's industrial production growth of 5.7% surpassing Russia's 2.3% reflects two powers on equal footing in the present, but one bound to change for the worse as Hillman (2020) also asserts upon his analysis of similar data. Overall, this notion is what tips the scales of *economic alignment's* final scoring, for Russia's constant state of stagnation versus China's constant growth makes this relationship truly unbalanced, which shared economic systems or GDP can't accommodate (Hillman 2020). Hence, my final scoring for this variable being two "cooperation points."

With regard to the penultimate independent variable, *military alignment*, some light shines back through the brief darkness brought upon by the dismal results I've determined *economic alignment* in this case study to be, for its total score of six "cooperation points" helps keep the relationship from falling into the clutches of the *Lack of Cooperation* classification, but like *cultural alignment*, is a variable that doesn't truly have a major impact on the relationship, something that must be discussed. Essentially, Global Firepower (2022), an analytical display of the numerous modern military powers, reveals two fighting forces that possess similar combat capabilities, but potentially unequipped to coordinate successful offensive operations against any perceived opponent their relationship may face. Through the lens of numbers alone, both Russia and China balance one another out with everything from total military personnel, of which China appears on top with 3,134,000 troops in opposition to Russia's 1,350,000, to tanks, where Russia boasts the larger number of 12,420 while China only has 5,250, but despite these numbers appearing impressive on paper, appearances can be deceiving (Global Firepower 2022). Starting with the simple problem of military technologies and development, the Red Army's equipment, while battle-tested in regional conflicts from the Caucasus to Afghanistan, is largely outdated relics from the Cold War, with Oliker and Charlick-Paley (2002, 71) backing up this revelation in their declaration that "Russian tanks are highly vulnerable to foreign antitank capabilities, which are developing more quickly than are Russian defensive systems" (Sixsmith 2014, 452, 522). This in turn reveals how despite its numbers, the Red Army's effectiveness is blunted by the rapid technological advancement of the West. Similarly, contemporary People's Liberation Army (PLA) military equipment, for all of its numerical advantages, is largely untested and may be of poor quality, an unfortunate truth for the Chinese, whose production has largely been based off of old Soviet designs or work arounds for much of their history, especially in the aircraft department (Jencks 1980). Nevertheless, from Russia's regional conflicts and China's rapid modernization, it's clear that these setbacks aren't to be trifled with still, but aside from these logistical and technological issues, the real reason behind *military alignment's* final score of three "cooperation points" lies in the second aspect of the variable, whether these two forces are able to coordinate their operations. To be sure, Russia and China, often engage in joint exercises to coordinate their capabilities, but this state of readiness is hurt by actual coordination in their respective endeavors being largely absent (Lendon 2021). On top of that, though there has never been a need to mobilize the full might of Russian and Chinese forces against the likes of NATO, incidents like Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine reflect how such a scenario may play out, with one party (in this case China) taking a back seat while the other receives the ire and potential retaliation from its geopolitical rivals (Hale 2022).

Lastly, the final nail in the coffin as to why this relationship was determined to be one of the *Fragmenting Cooperation* classification following my analysis of numerous pieces of source

material largely rests in the final independent variable, the *alignment of strategic objectives*. This largely stems from the fact that though each state wishes to work with one another to counter the United States in their separate quests to become a dominant power, these quests involve attaining regional hegemony first, constantly leading to each state becoming involved within their slated spheres of influence. Ultimately, it could be declared that this is yet another reason as to why each member is unlikely to support each other in their pursuits. The biggest of these areas of contention lies within the “border lands” between Russia and China, Central Asia, for from the perspective of Russia, the region is its traditional stomping ground going as far back as the 1860s (Kivelson and Suny 2017, 62, 66). Even with this caveat for two nations heavily invested in historical tradition, China also stakes its claim there as well, and the two states have often come to rhetorical blows or battles for influence to exert their dominance. Some examples of this include Russia and China’s back and forth over Mongolia as each attempt to corrupt this last bastion of democracy in Central Asia to make it look favorably upon them as well as Chinese claims to parts of the Russian Far East (Siberia), though rhetoric surrounding the latter has been lessened in light of this relationship (Dierkes 2016; Ginsburg 1995; Shambaugh 2021, 29). However, more pertinent to these discrepancies lies within the aforementioned Belt and Road Initiative, a major strategic element of Chinese foreign policy, but a detriment for Russia on the grounds of encroachment into what it sees as its spheres of influence as well as for nations who signed on to the initiative, only to be greatly hampered by the crippling debt in which it has been trapped (Frankopan 2018, 89). In terms of the former, Chinese programs within Central Asia have led to Russia steadily losing its sway to China and other competitors, with Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan diverting substantial portions of their natural gas and petroleum resources to China instead of Russia, and Uzbekistan for some time leaving Moscow’s grasp in favor of more appealing deals with the United States and China (Cooley 62, 71; Gazprom 2021; Weitz 2012). With this in mind, the divergence in strategic objectives outweighs any impact Russia and China’s mutual distain for Western forces have on their alignment within this category, constituting two “cooperation points.”

Overall, the final outcome of the Sino-Russian Relationship, the first case to be assessed, reflected the overarching thesis of *the greater the structural alignment between allies, the more stable their cooperation will be* quite nicely as the final stability of cooperation, displayed by the “cooperation points” developed throughout this independently created measurement being low in a similar light to the independent variables that determined it. This in turn led to the predicted classification during my methods section of this case study being an alliance framework resulting in *Fragmenting Cooperation*, or 13 “cooperation points” to align perfectly. Furthermore, it also meets the criteria of my hypothesis as the higher an independent variable was scored, like within Russia and China’s *ideological alignment*, the more resolute their stability of cooperation was, for if the score was lower, the final classification would have been entirely different. However, given that this is only the results for the first of four cases, a final judgment concerning the thesis and hypothesis can’t be quite rendered just yet as it will be viewed in the conclusion, but for the time being these assertions made based on my literature review and methods sections ring true. With regard to the classification itself, perhaps the Sino-Russian relationship is indicative of *Fragmenting Cooperation* as a whole as was described in its definition, being an alliance hanging by a thread waiting to snap at any moment, but be that as it may, in order to gain a larger picture of whether my thesis and hypothesis were defended, exploring the next case study and how it not only defies my prediction to some extent, but also might say something about alliance frameworks as a whole grows considerably important.

The United States-Japanese Alliance

As was previously mentioned in my methods section, the predicted outcome or final classification for the stability of cooperation within the confines of the United States-Japanese Alliance, *Steady Cooperation*, was a near-perfect manifestation of what a cooperative alliance framework should look like due to the duration and strong ties that this alliance has demonstrated since it began in the mid-twentieth century. However, upon placing my compiled data into the table above, the actual outcome which I also took into account during my prediction, *Average Cooperation* with an overall score of 18 “cooperation points,” was what manifested, making it imperative to see why that was the case. From the start, *cultural alignment* within this case study was understood to be the variable that could produce the lowest amount of “cooperation points,” and when putting this in play, this was indeed the result with the variable being allotted three “cooperation points.” Reasoning behind this development stems from the fact that in Spindler and Spindler (1983, 58) as well as Cohen’s ([1991] 1997, 29, 33) eyes, the United States of America is the pinnacle of a *low-context culture* where “freedom, self-expression, and personal enterprise and achievement as supreme values,” a major contrast from the entirely *high-context* and communal culture of the Japanese people (Cohen [1991] 1997, 32; Hendry 2012, 23, 24). However, that’s not to say these undertones are completely incompatible, for in the years after 1945, the focal point of this case study, the Japanese have also borrowed many aspects of these American philosophies, though not without them clashing with the native perspectives as Tamamoto (1994) and Caudill and Scarr (1962, 54) assert. There is also the culture clash between American servicemen and Japanese civilians on the island of Okinawa, a facet of this relationship that greatly reflects the disconnect between the two countries, but is one that is largely mitigated by painstaking work by the two parties (Cohen [1991] 1997, 65) Ethno-linguistically, both states are vastly different, with the United States being primarily Indo-European in heritage, but also possesses a diverse collection of minorities ranging from African Americans to East Asians who also call the state their home. In contrast to this, Japan is largely one homogenous East Asian culture, save for small numbers of Korean immigrants and Ainu indigenous peoples, the latter being largely nonexistent today (Gordon 2014, 18). They also differ philosophically, with America primarily being Christian, and the Japanese a mixture of Shinto, Buddhism, and irreligion (Gordon). As a result, with these differences in heritage and culture prevent this variable from scoring a perfect five, but aren’t critically detrimental as they were in the first case study, hence the final score of six being the optimal choice.

The next variable, *Ideological Alignment*, is more self-explanatory as to why it received a total score of four “cooperation points” since the United States and Japan were both established with some democratic principles and similar economic philosophies in mind, albeit principles that manifest differently. On one hand, the United States is a representative democracy and federal republic that idealizes individual freedoms and free-market capitalism, yet on the other, Japan’s adherence to capitalist principles appears in the form of free-market collective capitalism, a capitalist state with some socialist elements due to the interdependent nature of companies making any self-correcting roles the market could play non-existent (Axelrod 2009, 25; Gordon 2014, 289, 290; Shapiro 2019). Furthermore, Japan’s government is a constitutional monarchy where the Emperor serves as the head of state and prime minister chosen by the parliament, or Diet, serves as head of government. That’s not to say there aren’t democratic processes at play as seats in the bicameral Diet are decided by voters, who then play the aforementioned role of selecting the prime minister (Buck 1974, 540, 546, 547). Finally, outside of domestic politics, the United States and Japan are ideologically different, with the United

States paradoxically viewing itself both as isolated from the world due to its geographic location and a “Shining City on a Hill,” a nation whose model and principle every state in the world should adhere to perfectly (Pillar 2016, 28, 47). In contrast to this, Japan, haunted by the devastation of the Second World War, adopted a worldview of being amiable with all wishing to interact with it (Cohen [1991] 1997). When taking all of this into account, the final score of four “cooperation points” makes sense, for though there are obvious discrepancies in complete alignment for this category, like how capitalism, governance, or attitudes toward the world manifest, the aforementioned duration of this alliance coupled with the relatively minor effects of these diversions depict alignment transpiring even if two states aren’t perfectly identical in what they espouse philosophically. Nevertheless, complete alignment would be hurt by these slight differences, hence the second best score of eight being allotted in this category.

Taking into account the economic philosophies described in the exploration of the United States and Japan’s *ideological alignment*, *economic alignment* also receives an overall score of four “cooperation points” due to the differences in how the two states view their underlying capitalist beliefs. Yet when looking at their respective GDPs from 2020, \$20.953 Trillion USD and \$5.058 Trillion USD, both undoubtedly are on an equal footing and truly deserve their spots as the first and third biggest economies in the world (World Bank 2022). On top of that, diving deeper into economic data suggests that the two aren’t that far apart in terms of their growth, or lack thereof, as the United States experienced a 0.0% growth in exports in 2019, while Japan actually declined at a rate of -1.6%. Of course, given the differences in size between the two, the United States rate of 2.3% economic growth surpassed Japan’s .07%, making the two states once again not completely identical or competitive, what a total score of five would indicate, but still close enough to warrant the next best score of four “cooperation points” with four of each being allotted to each state. Moving on to *military alignment*, there is clearly a major offset in capabilities when pairing the world’s most well-equipped and professional military force against any of its fellow contenders in the top five global militaries, whether it be in total military personnel (1,832,000 for the United States and 309,000 for Japan) or naval assets (484 for the United States and 155 for Japan) (Global Firepower 2022). Again, the size difference between the two nations plays into this difference, but when taking into consideration the Japanese military’s professional qualities and frequency in which it coordinates exercises with the United States, even dynamically changing its own doctrine at times, this leads to the question of why I finally decided on allotting these states three “cooperation points” when assessing this variable’s effect on the overarching dependent variable (Goldman 2013, 120, 121). Basically, in spite of its well-trained troops and position within the world’s top five fighting forces, the Japanese military’s technology is often behind the rapid advancements of the United States military and limited by its constitution, with one example being restrictions on aircraft carriers forcing the building of the very similar “helicopter destroyers” to become a mainstay in their naval forces as Buck. (1974, 42) discusses. This description of constitutional restrictions is perhaps the major reason as to why the final score remains at a three instead of four because with knowledge of the Japanese propensity for self-defense over offensive operations in mind, their state is unlikely to coordinate offensively or be on par with the United States militarily, instead engaging in these training exercises for defensive purposes (Buck 1974). But be that as it may, there could be some transformation in this mentality as the collapse of Afghanistan has sparked a push to increase its military capabilities in the event the United States is unable to come to its aid, though this ongoing nature removes its complete importance to this study (Honrada 2021). Therefore,

military alignment between the United States and Japan is more accurately identified as the average score of three “cooperation points” than any other metric.

Finally, when observing the *alignment of strategic objectives*, I determined it possessed a final score of four total “cooperation points.” This is because though there are often issues surrounding American military bases on Okinawa beginning as far back as shortly after the Second World War (Mendel 1959) or disagreements with international trade, the relationship is something that remains critical overall, especially within the realm of defense with increasing threats, like that from China concerning the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands (Gordon 2014, 349; Krasner 1986, 794). They have also shared strategic objectives throughout their long relationship, with one example of this being MacEachron’s (1982, 404) description of Japan’s constant support of United States’ Cold War endeavors from Iran to Poland. Therefore, it’s this idea of the relationship as a whole transcending any petty qualms being the central reason as to why four points were determined to be the correct score in this alliance. As for the final outcome of the United States-Japanese Alliance, a classification of *Average Cooperation* as opposed to the predicted *Steady Cooperation*, it once again fulfills the prospects of my central thesis and hypothesis, that the stability of cooperation results from increased structural alignment, and that *the higher an independent variable is scored, the more resolute the stability of cooperation is, as displayed by the final “score.”* On top of that, the interconnected nature between cultural, ideological, and economic alignment also seems to be visible within this case study as well, especially between the latter two in this series. But the biggest development surrounding my thesis that this case study portrays is how perhaps it is easier for states to be less aligned than perfectly aligned within alliance frameworks, since the United States and Japan were initially predicted to be *Steady* as opposed to *Average*. This harkens back to Keohane’s (1984) ideas that the institution itself acts as a force to bring two different powers into concert with one another. This is because no matter how perfect a variable seems on the surface, like Japan and the United States’ strategic objectives or Russia and China’s *military alignment*, there is always room for discrepancies to manifest, bringing down the score in the process. However, when observing relationships like the one between the United States and Japan in reality, this final point could be overstated, which is why a potentially closer relationship, that between Germany and the United States becomes the next logical case study to look at.

The United States-German Alliance

Given that the United States’ positions within the realms of culture, ideology, economy, and military capabilities largely remain the same from the exploration in the prior case study, these will not be explored in-depth once again, merely touched upon in their relation to the second “player” in this alliance framework, the Federal Republic of Germany. In my methods section, I predicted that because of the more close nature of the cultures alongside their heightened adherence to U.S. doctrine, given the ever-present threats of Russia and terrorism, that Germany would fall into the perfect classification of *Robust Cooperation*, a perfect alignment within the framework of Neoliberal Institutionalism and my assertions. Interestingly, the United States-German Alliance fell into the next classification, *Steady Cooperation*, or a near-perfect manifestation that just misses the mark, making it necessary to understand why this is the case. Starting with *cultural alignment* once again, both the United States and Germany are *low-context cultures* primarily centered on an Indo-European ethno-linguistic background, though sometimes the language barrier gets in the way of implicit understandings during communication between the two states (Cohen [1991] 1997; Rings 1992, 16; Tinsley Jr. and Woloshin 1974). They also possess a shared Christian origin and substantial minority

populations, and like the United States, Germany's importation of labor from locations like Africa and Turkey has led to similar crises concerning race (Jarausch 2006, 250, 251). However, unlike the United States, German culture, has been profoundly affected by earth-shaking events in rapid succession, including a massive shift from a totalitarian dictatorship to a Federal Republic on its western half that would later become the standard, and the loss of its eastern territories to communist occupation. Fortunately, the dominant culture in the end of this split, that of the western half, would be restructured further in its culture (and institutions) following American occupation in 1945, slightly negating this major difference's effects upon intercultural relations as a whole (Jarausch 2006, 49, 106, 133, 193). As a result, the two are nearly identical, but because one can't tell just how critical things like the language barrier or Germany's hallowed past are completely within the confines of this study, *cultural alignment* receives a score of four "cooperation points."

Moving on to *ideological alignment*, both states are federal republics in their basic building blocks, but like the Japanese government's differences, also possess different structures and economic outlooks. Reasoning behind this is that while the United States is once again the pinnacle of a representative democracy and federal republic, the Federal Republic of Germany is a parliamentary republic with a semi-presidential system, meaning that there is a president and head of government who are both chosen by the members of parliament, a legislative body elected by the people. Both states also possess judiciary branches within their domestic governing structures (ideologies) as well, though establishing this within the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) was quite difficult for some time (Gunlicks 1994; Jarausch 2006, 147, 148). Finally, in terms of their economic outlook, while the United States completely believes in the power of free market capitalism, Germany is a social market economy, which mixes a capitalist economic system with social policies (Jarausch, 87, 89; Naszádos 2019). With regard to their foreign policy outlook, while America continues to perpetuate the aforementioned idea of being the "Shining City on a Hill," Germany is more interconnected with adversaries and allies alike, not having the luxury or power to possess such an absolute ideology (Pillar 2016, 34, 35, 37). All of this in turn is what developed the final score for this variable being a total of four as well. With regard to *economic alignment*, knowledge of Germany's social market economy alongside its total GDP being less than the United States during the 2020 fiscal year at \$3.846 Trillion USD (as opposed to \$20.953 Trillion USD) means that their economies aren't completely aligned (World Bank 2022). Yet observing these in a bubble doesn't provide the whole picture, like in the case study of the United States and Japan, for Germany and the United States, both being in the top ten world economies and having similar economic data, like how the United States' 2019 economic growth of 2.3% overshooting Germany's 0.6% economic growth is offset by Germany's exports that year experiencing a 1.0% growth in contrast to the United States 0.0% (Focus Economics 2022). What this implies is that the disparity in size is what affects both states from being entirely aligned, but because they fall into the same categories on numerous metrics (GDP, similar disparities in growth or decline, etc.), this variable is also allotted a score of four "cooperation points" that will be added into the total score.

Military Alignment between the United States and Germany is actually quite an interesting variable to explore, for it compares to the United States in a way akin to Japan, having a small (199,000 total military personnel, 266 tanks, and 80 naval assets among other capabilities) professional fighting force that often joins U.S. forces in joint offensive or defensive training exercises as a member of NATO, but is more geared toward counter terror operations as a whole (Global Firepower 2022; Jarausch 2006, 233 Noetzel and Schreer 2008, 213, 215).

However, as was discreetly mentioned, Germany's military has no qualms about being wielded offensively as it was in Kosovo, and unlike Japan, is always at the forefront of military technologies, boasting armored vehicles akin to the United States like the Leopard 2 main battle tank (MBT) (Global Firepower 2022; Jarausch 2006, 233). As a result, though numerically smaller than the Japanese military previously compared to the United States in terms of alignment, Germany gains an edge in score for the mentality behind its military as well as its constant update of systems, though being in the world's top twenty militaries also helps. This in turn leads to my overall allotment of four "cooperation points" here as well, since the size and capabilities, not said technology, mentality, or even willingness to cooperate with the United States is what makes the relationship just short of the perfect rating of ten total points as well. Lastly, I've also elected to give a total eight points to the alliance framework's *alignment of strategic objectives* when observing this relationship. This is because though I've mentioned before that Kefferpütz and Stern (2021, 2, 4) described how the German people no longer view Americans as partners on key issues anymore, especially China, witnessed when the European commission rapidly entered into a settlement with the PRC in spite of President Joseph Biden's offer for further collaboration, the threats of Russia and terrorism remain constant, and simply casting off these bonds would be a dangerous move in such an uncertain world (Abenheim 2003, 76; Polyakova and Riecke 2017). Even in trade, Polyakova and Riecke (2017, 5) declared that "the United States is Germany's largest trade partner, comprising 10 percent of Germany's exports or \$125 billion in goods and services." Overall, this reflects how this relationship, like that of Japan and the United States, may have its hurdles, but each state in this agreement can't thrive without the other, warranting why a minute knock to the individual state's total "alignment points" of five and total "cooperation points" of twenty-five makes four the logical choice, rounding out the alliance framework as a whole with the final score of twenty "cooperation points," or *Steady Cooperation*.

Reflecting upon the final outcome of the United States-German Alliance, once again, fills the prospects of my thesis and hypothesis, for this alliance framework receiving a total score of twenty "cooperation points," a higher score than the previous two alliance frameworks possessed, implies that this specific relationship is more stable in its cooperation due to the higher level of alignment described. It also shows how the individual scores of the independent variables display the resoluteness of cooperation through the final score. Harkening back to the development made through the United States-Japanese alliance concerning the difficulty of attaining perfect alignment becomes all the more clear as this alliance, the most aligned of my case studies, can't even achieve that threshold, barely making it into the next best classification due to the slight discrepancies outlined above. As a result, on top of providing suitable answers to my research question, this new point may bring up fresh questions of *is it possible for states in an alliance framework to be perfectly aligned? Or do states in an alliance need to be completely aligned*, though this isn't part of this work's research. It also appears to continue the trend of different independent variables influencing one another greatly, for like with the Japanese and United States, Germany and the American alignment surrounding strategic objectives and military capabilities seem to play off one another to an extent. With all of this said and done, the near-perfect relationship that characterizes the United States-German Alliance answers questions surrounding the successful side of my proposed spectrum and previous discussions on an almost failing arrangement in the form of the Sino-Russian relationship now must pave the way for the pinnacle of failure and seal to my study in determining the thesis: the alliance between two members of the 1940 Tripartite Pact, Nazi Germany (The German Reich) and Imperial Japan.

The Nazi German-Imperial Japanese Alliance

Like the three previous case studies before it, I possessed a prior notion that the final outcome for the stability of cooperation between the German Reich and Empire of Japan from 1940-1945, that it would be the pinnacle of the classification outline the least amount of cooperation, none or *Lack of Cooperation*. In this projection, I turned out to be correct, as I was with the Sino-Russian relationship, another framework on the lower end of my metrics, but the question of why that is the case remains, opening the doors for yet another analysis of why these results were the case. Starting where the past three case studies have, with *cultural alignment*, to say the German Reich and Imperial Japanese had abysmal alignment in this realm would be an understatement due to the final “cooperation points” for this variable boasting a grand total of one “cooperation point.” Reasoning behind this conclusion goes far beyond the cultural differences of Germany being entirely a *low-context culture* and Japan a nation of the *high-context* variety, for while both states viewed one another as allies in the fight against those who would stop them from achieving their interests, their shared emphasis on their “Aryan” background (coupled with pseudo-religious values) and Japanese ethno-linguistic identities witnessed each state placing themselves on the top position of a racial hierarchy that subordinated groups like Jews, Slavs, and the Chinese below them (Bock 1983, 409; Chang 1997, 30; Kennedy 1999, 383). This was then spread to the populace via the means of popular plays for propagandist purposes in Germany (Pinthus 1940, 488) or in the school system itself as in Japan (Chang 1997, 30), but because of this racial distain that later extended to one another, the Germans seeing the Japanese as subordinate, and the Japanese viewing their Nazi allies as barbarians (Bess 2006, 29; Gordon 2014, 18). Aside from this, Japan’s heavy emphasis on resurgence of *Bushido* as a part of its traditional philosophies led to the communal tendencies of the nation to become darkened by the strains of ultranationalist fervor, creating a fanatical devotion to the nation and emperor (Hendry 2012, 23, 23; Toland 1970, 4, 498). That’s not to say the Germans of the period also didn’t have this communal-minded fanaticism of “Führer and fatherland” in mind due to the fanaticism witnessed toward the end of the Second World War at the Battle of Berlin (Ryan 1966), but not even this similarity could overcome the factor of an alliance divided by culture and the underlying distain toward the very existence of the other’s populace, hence why a total score of two is the only option that could display their alignment in this variable’s row.

Fortunately enough for the Axis, or unfortunately for the rest of the world, I determined *Ideological Alignment* to fair somewhat better for the alliance than *cultural alignment* as during this period, domestic policies for the German Reich and Imperial Japan revolved around mixed economies where markets were combined with either central planning (Germany), or with official government guidance and private investments (Japan) (Kennedy 1999). This then became paired with their government structures’ similarity in the form of Nazi Germany’s totalitarian state with an emphasis on social conservatism, and Japan’s officially parliamentary system with a semi-constitutional monarchy that essentially became a military dictatorship under the likes of Hideki Tojo (Kennedy 1999; Toland 1970, 61). As for their global outlook, I’ve somewhat touched upon this already within the confines of *cultural alignment* as their cultural anthropology, a veiled phrase for racial theories, dictated a lot of Germany’s foreign policy in the pursuit of *Lebensraum* in the East, a land populated by subhumans, while Japan’s desire lay in the rapid acquisition of territories and natural resources from inferior people who viewed them as such following the First World War (Kennedy 1999, 94, 531; Pinthus 1940, 407). But be that as it may, the underlying distain for one another, coupled with the facts that their domestic

ideologies were somewhat different, and that ideology alone doesn't constitute an alliance, I chose to score this variable with a total of three "cooperation points" due to these similarities bringing them into this Axis in the first place. Economically (*economic alignment*), these two similar enough ideological systems harken a return to disaster, for though Germany boasted a GDP of \$38 Billion Reichsmarks in 1939 (roughly \$384 Billion USD in 1990), and Japan a GDP of ¥16,506 Million in the early 1930s, the duration of their alliance saw these numbers spiral downward astronomically as the conflict they intentionally started progressed (Fukao, Ma, and Yuan 2007; Hastings 2011, 571; Willmott and Cross 2012, 18; Zuljan 2018). Unfortunately, other economic data for the two states is quite difficult to find, a constraint on my ruling, but what is also known is that neither side of this pact really engaged in trade with their counterpart, though it was obviously impossible with a conflict occurring and was unlikely to occur given the hidden distain I mentioned earlier (Toland 1970, 73). This in turn led me to give the two states a total score of one "cooperation point" for their efforts.

Like a dying fish flopping on the shore, the trend of the Nazi German-Imperial Japanese Alliance's score rises once again to some extent with *military alignment*, gaining a total score of two "cooperation points." Basically, this drastic shift from a terrible score of two points stems solely from these two nations' early war successes in Poland and France for Germany and China and the Pacific Territories for Japan because aside from this effectiveness when their opponents were unprepared or underpowered, (Poland and the Philippines come to mind), their capabilities and coordination of offensive operations was just as abysmal as their *cultural alignment* (Kennedy 1999, 425, 527). Take for example the German *Wehrmacht*, the standard army. Even with its 13,600,000 soldiers, including 900,000 Waffen SS paramilitaries and 60,000 Volksturm militiamen, and technological advances like the much lauded Tiger I tank, the aforementioned economic constraints led to these "wonder weapons" being more of a curse than a blessing, leading to last ditch efforts to hold off the Allied tides by the very end in Berlin (Hastings 2011, 430; Overmans 2004). In the case of the Japanese, technological stagnation, not advancement, was its major downfall. This is because the combination of an economy worse than the Germans and generals championing the old ways of warfare saw the 6,095,000 soldiers who served in all of its branches until the end of the conflict armed with weapons like the Type 99 Arisaka, an antiquated weapon they struggled to manufacture as materials to make it declined and the United States advanced by leaps and bounds (Lüdeke, 20). Furthermore, when it came to coordinating offensives, there was none whatsoever as the Japanese, terrified by the might of the Soviet Union following their Border Clashes at Nomonhan/Khalkin Gol, refused to engage with the German's priority of Eastern Europe, even signing a Pact of Neutrality with the Soviet Union until it was broken with the 1945 Russian invasion of Manchukuo (Coox 1990, 1078; Toland 1970, 94). This in turn led to a major lack of coordinated offensives against a nation between Germany and Japan as well as no true shared intelligence amongst the two, something also affected by their war aims (Hastings 2011, 137, 395).

All of this in turn plays into not only the aforementioned final score of *military alignment*, two "cooperation points" toward the final score displaying the stability of cooperation, but the final score of the *alignment of strategic objectives* variable, one "cooperation point." From the lack of military coordination seen on the Eastern Front, where DiNardo (1996, 724) reaffirms that "Germany and Japan were unable to formulate a common plan of action against the Soviet Union," to how this was the result of Japan focusing exclusively on East Asia and the Pacific versus Germany's Eurasian goals, the only redeeming quality of this variable was their common goal to defeat the Allied Powers, giving it one additional point in the

process. But the lack of the shared vision seen by the diversions in strategy and lack of coordination in the overarching goals made this goal unattainable despite early success, hence the final score of one “cooperation point” for this variable in the end.

With regard to the final outcome of the Nazi German-Imperial Japanese of eight “cooperation points,” a classification of *Lack of Cooperation*, it like all the other case studies adheres nicely to the thesis and hypothesis as well as the idea that it is potentially easier for states within an alliance to be more unaligned than completely aligned within their respective framework. However, in observing this specific case, it builds upon the ideas of Neoliberal Institutionalism like Keohane (1984) once again, yet instead of reflecting how the institutions themselves somewhat maintain the alliance frameworks, even in the face of lower scores as the United States-Japanese Alliance and Sino-Russian relationship divulge, reveals that there comes a point where both the institutions and structural alignment fail, leaving only a place for the alliance itself to fall apart catastrophically. For the Germans and Japanese during the 1940s, it was the lack of alignment leading to their defeat which ended the alliance, but for others still together like the French and members of AUKUS, or other states in alliances, it helps revealing what can go wrong. Thus, with the conclusion of this exploration and analysis of my case studies that truly assisted in defending my thesis and hypothesis, while also revealing fascinating outcomes or phenomena in the process, moving into an overall glimpse into the complete study and its further implications is the final logical step to round out said study.

Conclusion

In conclusion, whether it be France making amends with its longtime allies who established the AUKUS pact following weeks of diplomatic animosity between the two camps, or Russian troops wreaking havoc on the Ukrainian populace as their Chinese bedfellows watch silently from the sidelines, our contemporary period is one in which the question *how do opposing strategic interests of nations truly impact cooperation within alliance frameworks?* remains increasingly relevant as the phenomenon of states still choose to remain united despite their individual, and often very enticing, strategic objectives persists in the geopolitical arena. Scholars have offered three distinct, yet somewhat similar, arguments surrounding why this paradoxical phenomena takes place. Some focus on how states are generally unlikely to retain their alliances or any form of cooperation given the importance to their own interests above all else, a near carbon copy of what is glimpsed on the surface of inter-state relations in a world without order (Morgenthau [1948] 2006; Walt 1987; Parent and Rosato 2015). Others stress the importance of the alliance itself as an institution, posing that member states can establish strategies that meet their own individual goals simultaneously, working around the uncertainty of potential discrepancies before they can even reveal themselves in the process (Keohane 1984; Niou and Ordeshook 1994). Nevertheless, this position isn't full proof, as some of this position assert (Copeland 2015). Finally, there are those whose devotion to the subjective nature of state's own attitudes claim that a state may react to a split in states' ambitions depending on the particular norm they found pertinent (Fedder 1968; Snyder 1991). As a result, by following the path of determining which of these schools of thought would best answer how opposing strategic interests of nations impact cooperation within alliance frameworks, I posited that within said frameworks, *the greater the structural alignment between allies, the more stable their cooperation will be*, opening the metaphorical floodgates for the construction of my research methods that would provide an answer to both the question and study as a whole.

In shaping my research methods, I established a simple model consisting of a chart with five columns and eight rows, upon which the first column denoted the five independent variables

I identified as falling under the umbrella term from my thesis, structural alignment, those being: *cultural alignment*, *ideological alignment*, *economic alignment*, *military alignment*, and the *alignment of strategic objectives*. The remaining columns measured each case study's adherence to complete structural alignment as well as the *stability of cooperation*, both with regard to my initial prediction and final result. Each state's appropriate levels of alignment within the five independent variables was then measured on a scale from one to five, with one representing no alignment and five representing complete alignment until all these scores had been calculated, leaving the final two rows to present the amount of "cooperation points" for the states involved. It was here where the dependent variable, the stability of cooperation came into play once again, for after analyzing the numbers I generated through the means of delving into a plethora of scholarly journals, texts, websites, and any other source needed to acquire my data, I was able to determine the stability of cooperation through five classifications: *Lack of Cooperation*, *Fragmenting Cooperation*, *Average Cooperation*, *Steady Cooperation*, and *Robust Cooperation*. On top of that, this process also led to the development of a suitable hypothesis, this being *the higher an independent variable is scored, the more resolute the stability of cooperation is, as displayed by the final "score,"* indicating that the independent variable's total "alignment points," no matter how minute or massive they might be, would impact the stability of cooperation's score as well, reflected by the final "cooperation score's" numerical value (See the study's main model). Of course, with this type of independent study, there is much room for criticism, including how my self-generation of data would leave the study open to personal bias, how the time constraints of this project would affect my sources, which it did to some extent as completely delving into the Axis Powers' economic alignment proved quite contentious in terms of uncovering information and the truths behind it, and the durability of *variation* and *control* of my variables and case studies, but nevertheless, my study was actually quite compelling and I took great measures to ensure its objective nature. With that I set about exploring my four case studies: the Sino-Russian relationship, The United States-Japanese Alliance, The United States-German Alliance, and the Nazi German-Imperial Japanese Alliance.

Following extensive research and assessments of each case study, *my analysis did find that the greater the structural alignment within a specific case, the more stable the two partners' cooperation was*, also reaffirming my hypothesis in the process. This is because in any given case, the higher a specific amount of "alignment points" were, the higher the "cooperation points" indicating the stability of cooperation were as well, sometimes "rescuing" an alliance framework by making its cooperation more stable when any lower score would've bore witness to a different outcome. For example, within the context of the Sino-Russian relationship, I anticipated it to be a prominent depiction of the *Fragmenting Cooperation* classification, or where an alliance is virtually holding on by a thread and could break apart at any moment, yet a majority of the scores, from *cultural alignment* (a score of two "cooperation points") to *military alignment* (a score of three "cooperation points"), were quite low, making it quite possible that this relationship wouldn't adhere to my prediction. Fortunately, the overwhelming similarities between the ideological outlook of the Russian Federation and People's Republic of China, like their domestic authoritarianism or negative views of the West, led the score to rise just that much higher to where the relationship did sit firmly into this classification. Yet throughout my four case studies, further revelations or questions manifested as I made my study, not only displaying trends particular to my study, but also what implications it has going further.

Take for example my second and third case studies, those of the United States and Japan and United States and Germany, my initial calculations that the former would end up as a prime

example of *Steady Cooperation* and the latter *Robust Cooperation* were dashed against the rocks of reality once all was said and done. Reasoning behind this statement stems from the fact that after placing all of the generated scores into the respective models, I ended up getting final results much lower, with the U.S. and Japan receiving a final classification of *Average Cooperation* and the U.S., and Germany receiving a final classification of *Steady Cooperation* instead. But the question is why? Essentially, from the results of these two more cooperative alliances and their two counterparts reflecting the opposite, it was much easier for states within an alliance to be less aligned within their frameworks than completely aligned because no matter how connected the United States and Germany were ethno-linguistically or strategically, there was always room for discrepancies to exist, which in turn brought down the score in the process. On the other side of the spectrum, determining disasters like the relationship between the German Reich and Empire of Japan was actually quite simple because the alignment was so poor in all regards that there was no way in which it could be redeemed as other, “more diverse” rulings were in many retrospects. With this in mind, these sort of undermined case studies of the “positive” variety also held implications toward the power of the frameworks themselves that could be analyzed later, for as aforementioned, the Neoliberal Institutional school I wielded to construct my thesis comes into play as structural alignment reinforces the common connections between states seeking to interact with one another positively, ensuring that relationships between states like the United States and Japan inherently survive. They also have implications for future studies of this topic in another route as it led me to question throughout the course of my analysis whether *states in an alliance framework can be perfectly aligned, is it necessary for states to be completely aligned when in an alliance with one another*, which, in terms of the latter is quite self-explanatory as this study reflects a number of states still choosing to remain allied despite their differences. Aside from this revelation, others also manifested as I delved into assessment of my case studies, including how truly interconnected each facet of structural alignment is, witnessed in cases like the Sino-Russian relationship’s results stemming from the close nature of their respective *cultural, ideological, and economic* alignment scores, or how strategic interests in the economies of the United States and Germany pair with their already successful *economic alignment* to make both scores relatively good on the metrics I devised. There was also the final revelation drawn from the previously mentioned catastrophe that was the Axis Powers, for in light of what I uncovered with regard to the power of institutions (alliance frameworks) themselves, it seems as if there comes a point when not even this factor can save the relationship from certain destruction.

Finally, with regard to an evaluation of the thesis, variables, and hypothesis, I believe that each part of this vast study adhered greatly to their purpose. The thesis, supported greatly by the analysis of my cases studies, indeed reflected that structural alignment plays an integral role within alliance frameworks’ maintenance of cooperation, for when observing the highest classification, the United States and Germany, and the lowest classification, the German Reich and Imperial Japan, it’s evident that the former largely attained its position of an alliance boasting *Steady Cooperation* due to the strong alignment visible within each variables’ “alignment and cooperation points.” As for the German Reich and Imperial Japan’s showing of *Lack of Cooperation*, this was attributed to their “alignment points” and subsequent “cooperation points” being extremely low. This also reinforces my hypothesis as the scoring was what depicted the independent variables’ relationship to the dependent variable. In terms of the variables themselves, I believe a degree of *variation and control* was achieved in analyzing them, for though I needed to extensively divulge how I acquired the scores on each table, each

was varied enough to be distinct in its role and no additional variables were added in this process. The same could be said for the case studies, for though some results differed vastly from their original prediction, each result was still varied from one another. As for control, no additional unneeded tidbits of information was included, and even with its considerable length, only divulges what is necessary. Finally, when it comes to my research question, these results definitely provide some kind of answer with regard to how differing strategic objectives impact alliance frameworks, namely that while they can have some effect on the alliance's efficacy, reflected by the final scores on cooperation within my case studies, they can also be offset by the other independent variables, implying that their influence is satiated by other factors behind the framework itself. Overall, in my endeavors, this study surprisingly proved itself to be quite fruitful, and given that it simultaneously unlocks the doors for further studies in this field while also shedding light on the reasons behind why many countless tragedies and political intrigue of recent memory transpired in that specific way, a sort of framework that can be applied to future cases currently unknowable is established, revealing why the future implications of this study as a whole speak volumes. That is the conclusion to this study.

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