Journal of Liberty and International Affairs · Volume 12 · Number 1 · 2026 · eISSN 1857-9760
Published online by the Institute for Research and European Studies at www.e-jlia.com

Copyright © 2026 The author/s
This work is licensed under the CC BY 4.0 license
(*) Corresponding author
Peer review method: Double-blind
Review article
DOI: https://doi.org/10.47305/jlia.2026.2120
Received: 13.10.2025 • Accepted after revision: 18.04.2026 • Published: 26.04.2026
Pages: 171-191

Explaining the Formulation of the San Francisco System: A Comparative and Eclectic Analysis of U.S. Bilateral Alliances in East Asia

Thaha Albana Turmuzi[1], Geetha Govindasamy[2*], Jo Kyu Hyun[3]

[1]Universiti Malaya - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia ✉ s2118998@siswa.um.edu.my
[2]Universiti Malaya - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia ✉ geethag@um.edu.my
[3]Universiti Malaya - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia ✉ khjo@um.edu.my

Abstract
Although the U.S. hub-and-spokes system was created during the Cold War to contain communism, it has remained resilient for over seven decades. This article examines the formulation of the San Francisco System (SFS) in East Asia, rather than its implementation or effectiveness. Existing scholarship often selects cases to fit specific theories, limiting explanatory power. As a result, the five main theories of alliance formation do not fully explain why alliances emerged in East Asia's unique context. To address this gap, the article proposes analytical eclecticism instead of a single grand theory. It argues that alliance formation in asymmetric contexts is best understood as the interaction of multiple mechanisms rather than one dominant factor, offering a more comprehensive framework for analyzing the origins of the SFS and regional security architecture.

Keywords
U.S. Hub-and-Spokes System; San Francisco System; East Asia Alliances; International Affairs; Alliance Formation Theories; Asymmetric Contexts; Cold War Security Architecture

INTRODUCTION

The San Francisco System (SFS), originating with the signing of the peace treaty at the San Francisco Conference in September 1951, established a security arrangement for the United States (U.S.) and its allies under a bilateral framework consisting of Japan, South Korea, the Republic of China (ROC), the Philippines, Thailand, Australia, and New Zealand (Buszynski 2011; Calder 2004).

While the SFS is frequently described as a "second-best" solution following failed attempts to establish a more comprehensive multilateral defense framework, it has nevertheless demonstrated considerable resilience, posing a persistent puzzle for analyses of regional security dynamics. As Ikenberry (2004) observed, "the US-led regional order may be a historical accident, but it seems to work." The system's enduring nature, despite the collapse of the original Cold War threat environment, has generated ongoing debate regarding its formation. This observation remains highly relevant given shifting regional dynamics and an increased emphasis on minilateral security structures (Tow and Kasim 2019).

This article focuses on the formation of the SFS in East Asia rather than its subsequent implementation, sustainability, or effectiveness. The formation process refers to the strategic decisions undertaken by the U.S. between 1951 and 1962, culminating in the establishment of

bilateral alliances in East Asia rather than a multilateral collective security system. The selection of 1962 as a cut-off point is significant, as it coincides with the Thanat–Rusk Communiqué, symbolizing the consolidation of the hub-and-spokes structure. Employing a structured thematic review and a standardized comparative framework, the article evaluates five dominant theories concerning the formation of the SFS.

This article argues that these theories more fully explain the SFS when understood as sequentially interacting mechanisms rather than as competing standalone explanations. Accordingly, the formation of the SFS can be better understood through the progression of hierarchical structuring, ideational mediation, and the interaction between bargaining and reassurance mechanisms.

The article is organized as follows. The initial section outlines the methodological approach and presents the standardized comparative evaluative framework used to analyze competing explanations of SFS formation. Next, five prominent theories concerning the formation of the SFS are examined in terms of units of analysis, mechanisms, scope conditions, and cross-spoke reach. The discussion then engages with the contemporary literature on minilateral arrangements, serving as an analytical stress test for formation-centered explanations. It subsequently operationalizes an eclectic analytical scheme focused on mechanisms during the formation phase. The article concludes by synthesizing its contributions and outlining prospective avenues for future research on alliance formation.

METHODOLOGY

This article employs a thematic review approach. The objective is not to aggregate findings quantitatively, but rather to synthesize and conduct a comparative examination of mechanism-based interpretations of the formation of the SFS. It prioritizes analytical precision and a comprehensive understanding of causal relationships, while consistently adhering to the foundational principles of theory-driven inquiry within the discipline.

The literature review was conducted using Google Scholar, which indexes materials from Scopus and Web of Science. The review covers academic works published between 1980 and 2024, thereby incorporating both foundational studies on alliance formation and contemporary reinterpretations that respond to evolving regional security contexts. The search terms included "US hub-and-spokes system" (70 results), "San Francisco alliance system" (116 results), and "US bilateral alliances in Asia" (35 results), all searched using quotation marks to ensure precision. Selective use of citation-mapping tools, such as Connected Papers, was employed to ensure that key theoretical contributions were identified and not overlooked.

It should be acknowledged that the selection of works and scholars is necessarily limited. Of the many results retrieved in Google Scholar, only two books, one book chapter, one doctoral dissertation, two working papers, and two journal articles explicitly make theoretical contributions to explaining the formation of the SFS. Most of these works apply one of five theoretical perspectives to account for the alliance system.

The selection process followed purposive theoretical sampling. First, the authors reviewed article titles that were closely related to alliance politics. Next, abstracts were examined to assess the authors' arguments and objectives. On this basis, inclusion and exclusion criteria were developed by identifying whether a study engaged with the strategic rationale behind the

CC BY

formation of bilateral alliances. Research focused exclusively on alliance management, performance, or institutional adaptation, without engaging analytically with initial formation, was excluded. A limited number of contemporary studies, particularly on emerging minilateral arrangements, were included to demonstrate how formation-centered theories can be both applied and challenged in current academic debates.

Five prominent theoretical clusters were identified: (1) the dynamics of material power and asymmetry (power play), (2) the role of racialized norms and identities (constructivism), (3) the significance of regional norms and local agency (Asian-oriented perspectives), (4) reciprocity and cost–benefit calculations (social exchange), and (5) domestic signaling and credibility concerns (alliance audience effect). Each cluster was systematically categorized according to the dominant explanatory mechanism most effective in accounting for the formation of the SFS.

A standardized comparative framework was then applied to enable systematic comparison across theories and to identify the conditions under which specific explanations demonstrate conditional strength rather than universal explanatory authority. Rather than treating theories as interchangeable, the framework emphasizes distinctions in terms of unit of analysis, causal mechanisms, scope conditions, and empirical reach across the spokes (see Table 1). This approach enables consistent evaluation of explanatory strength and helps identify instances in which apparent theoretical disagreements stem from differences in analytical level rather than genuine empirical contradictions.

Finally, the empirical reach dimension was assessed across key allies, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, Thailand, and the ANZUS partners, to evaluate cross-case consistency. Table 1 operationalizes each evaluative dimension and supports a structured comparative analysis across the selected theoretical approaches.

Table 1: Definitions of Standardized Evaluative Dimensions (Source: Authors' own depiction)

Evaluative Dimension	Definition	Application in This Study
Unit of Analysis	The primary level at which an explanation locates causation.	Each theory was coded according to the level at which its main causal story operates directly. Where multiple levels were referenced, the theory was coded by the level most central to explaining bilateral institutional design.
Core Causal Mechanisms	The process-link explains how specified conditions generate a bilateral institutional design.	Each theory's main mechanism was identified and recorded in process terms to maximize comparability (e.g., "constrains," "stratifies," "resists formalization," "bargains," "reassures"). Secondary mechanisms were noted only where they were essential to the theory's core claims.
Observable Implications	The process-link explains how specified conditions generate a bilateral institutional design.	For each theory, expected indicators for 1951–1962 were specified (e.g., treaty design features, diplomatic language, bargaining behavior, sequencing logic, or reassurance

CC BY

		claims). These implications were used to assess what types of evidence each theory predicts and typically relies on.
Scope Conditions	The historical and structural conditions under which a mechanism is most likely to operate effectively, and beyond which its explanatory leverage weakens.	For each theory, scope conditions were specified as boundary parameters to avoid overgeneralizing theories beyond their plausible domain.
Empirical Reach Across Spokes	The extent to which a theory can be applied consistently across the principal alliances.	Each theory was assessed for cross-case portability: whether it offers a coherent account across multiple spokes or is most persuasive in a limited subset of cases. This was used to identify uneven generalization and selective application.

ORIGINS OF THE FORMULATION OF THE U.S. HUB-AND-SPOKES SYSTEM

The Powerplay Logic

Drawing on the realist perspective (Christensen and Snyder 1990; Morrow 1991), Cha (2016) advanced the "powerplay" thesis to explain the emergence of the U.S. hub-and-spokes system. The powerplay theory argues that Washington established the SFS not solely for containment, but also to reduce the risk of "rogue" allies engaging in reckless actions that could entangle the U.S. in a broader and undesirable regional military conflict. Significantly, the powerplay maneuver enhances the great power's capabilities by generating "positional power" in addition to its material (hard) power.

In essence, the powerplay perspective holds that the U.S. did not simply seek to exercise direct control or prevent counterbalancing. Instead, it positioned itself as the pivotal node within a web of bilateral relationships, thereby accumulating power through a network of dyadic alliances that increasingly resembled an informal empire.

Cha (2016) further argues that multilateralism often advantages smaller states in their pursuit of influence relative to a dominant power. By contrast, bilateralism constitutes a more effective mechanism for major powers seeking to manage, discipline, and exercise control over weaker states. In this view, alliances function as instruments through which major powers manage uncertainty, reduce mistrust, establish normative frameworks, and sustain a quasi-hierarchical order aligned with hegemonic objectives. The explanatory strength of the powerplay thesis rests on its systemic level of analysis, its clearly specified mechanism of constraint derived from asymmetry, and its behavioral expectation that Washington would favor bilateral arrangements to preserve autonomy and mitigate escalation risks.

The argument is supported by empirical evidence illustrating Eisenhower's dissatisfaction with Syngman Rhee, including the release of prisoners of war during armistice negotiations (CIA 1953), disputes over command structures, and concerns over unilateral actions related to Korean unification (Hwang 1999). Similar tensions are evident in Eisenhower's interactions with Chiang Kai-shek, particularly his reluctance to escalate during the First Taiwan Strait Crisis and Chiang's persistent aspirations to retake mainland China (Taylor 2011).

CC BY

At the same time, the empirical reach of the theory is uneven. Its explanatory power is most convincing in a limited set of cases, particularly Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. At the same time, it is less fully developed in explaining outcomes in the Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (ANZUS) framework and Thailand.

Furthermore, it often minimizes Washington's exploration of multilateral avenues, even after bilateral agreements had been established. This includes considerations within the Eisenhower administration regarding collective defense initiatives (Office of the Historian 1954) as well as earlier interest in East Asian multilateralism during the Truman era (McIntyre 1995). These limitations suggest that powerplay operates as a fundamental mechanism of hierarchical constraint; however, it does not fully capture the institutional logic embedded in the broader alliance configuration.

The Constructivist Perspective

Constructivist perspectives contend that alliance formation extends beyond material incentives and must be understood through ideational frameworks, varying levels of trust, and historically embedded identity hierarchies. Hemmer and Katzenstein (2002) argue that American policymakers perceived European allies as civilizational equals. In contrast, their approach to Asian partners was shaped by racial and cultural assumptions that rendered multilateral institutionalization both less appropriate and more difficult to manage.

Hemmer and Katzenstein (2002) further note that race played a significant role in shaping U.S. security preferences. They cite a State Department memorandum on a proposed Pacific Pact to illustrate the extent of racialized assumptions, stating that "we do not take the Asians very seriously and in fact regard them as inferiors" (Hemmer and Katzenstein 2002, 598). Capie (2002) similarly argues that Washington viewed Britain, Australia, and New Zealand as culturally proximate partners, while regarding Asian allies as fundamentally different and less reliable. In this context, John Melby's characterization of Filipinos as requiring continued supervision because they were "only one generation out of the treetops" (Cullather 1994, 83) reflects broader elite discourses that framed "Asian" political capacity as less mature. More generally, elite portrayals of "Asian" cognition often emphasized emotion over rationality (Doty 1993), while Blum (1982) likewise observes that many prospective Asian allies were considered unreliable and untrustworthy.

Beyond these ideational claims, Katzenstein (1997b) argues that it was not in Washington's interest to construct institutional arrangements that would constrain American decision-making autonomy. At the same time, multilateralism was also unattractive to smaller allies, as it would have limited their bargaining leverage while increasing cooperation costs and reducing opportunities for free-riding. Interestingly, this argument, although grounded in constructivist reasoning, closely parallels the logic of Cha's powerplay thesis.

The strength of the ideational-normative constructivist perspective lies in its distinctive explanation of why the U.S. favored separate bilateral arrangements, emphasizing racialized perceptions and differential trust toward non-white wartime allies. No other theoretical approach develops this line of reasoning as centrally. However, its explanatory leverage is more limited when applied to the functional design of the SFS, which in practice exhibits features comparable to collective arrangements. Under the hub-and-spokes system, allies were still

CC BY

expected to facilitate the defense of U.S. forces stationed on their territories, implying significant mutual security commitments. Moreover, this perspective places comparatively less emphasis on documented U.S. efforts under Truman (Eayrs 1952; Park 2015) and Eisenhower (Sakata 2008) to explore collective security arrangements in East Asia.

Finally, the obligations assumed by Washington within the hub-and-spokes system were not necessarily less demanding than those associated with formal collective defense frameworks. Indeed, the U.S. willingness to conclude bilateral defense treaties with multiple Asian allies suggests that racial or ideational factors alone cannot fully account for the resulting alliance architecture.

The Asian Norm Perspective

Challenging racialist explanations, Acharya (2009) argues that an Asia-specific norm emphasizing non-intervention has made Asian states reluctant to embrace collective security arrangements. In this view, the theoretical discourse on Asian regionalism often overlooks the importance of "local, national, or regional political contexts central to those writing on Asian regionalism" (Katzenstein 1997a, 6). This omission reflects a broader tendency in scholarship on Asian regionalism. By contrast, studies of European regionalism increasingly emphasize the development of collective identities and shared norms (Risse-Kappen 1996). In explaining the emergence of non-Western powers, Mahbubani (1995) similarly contends that Western policymakers frequently misunderstand East Asian regionalism due to the enduring psychological legacy of colonialism. This legacy contributed to a preference for inclusive rather than exclusive security arrangements such as NATO.

Building on this normative perspective, Acharya (2005) argues that the absence of a mutual defense framework in Asia can be explained by postwar normative dynamics that delegitimized collective defense as an instrument of great-power domination and interference, particularly during the decolonization period. In terms of sovereignty, Asian states have placed strong emphasis on non-interference (Acharya 2004). Additionally, Acharya (2012) argues that the failure to establish a US-led collective defense pact in Asia was also shaped by perceptions that most Asian states lacked either the legitimacy or the willingness to assume a regional leadership role. More broadly, Acharya (2003, 219) identifies a set of postwar norms characterized by resistance to formal multilateral security cooperation, acceptance of Westphalian sovereignty and territorial integrity, and a preference for less legalistic forms of regional cooperation.

This perspective on Asian norms provides an important regional counterweight and contributes to broader efforts to conceptualize "Global IR" beyond dominant Western theoretical frameworks (Acharya 2014). However, when applied to alliance design, this logic risks overstating the degree to which collective defense necessarily implies hierarchical domination relative to bilateral arrangements. In practice, a collective security organization would primarily add a shared obligation component, whereby U.S. allies would assist one another in the event of conflict. More importantly, institutionalized collective defense does not inherently equate to the extension of colonial control, particularly given that the United States did not impose collective membership on its Asian allies.

CC BY

Even in the case of NATO, the Vandenberg Resolution was designed to protect the United States from allied free-riding and to prioritize the principle of self-help (U.S. Senate 1948; Office of the Historian 1951b). Moreover, U.S. allies in Asia at times actively sought a more comprehensive defense commitment from Washington, including arrangements comparable to those within NATO (Mabon 1988).

The Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory offers a relational account of alliance formation that is explicitly attentive to network structure, treating both hubs and spokes as active participants in shaping an emerging alliance network (Izumikawa 2020). Drawing on the foundational works of Emerson (1976) and Baldwin (1978), this perspective argues that states are inherently unable to achieve full self-sufficiency and therefore must engage in exchange relations to secure essential resources, including security.

Within this analytical framework, a central consideration is the allocation of "reward resources." Because actors seek to maximize net benefits, exchange relations tend to intensify among those with greater resources while weakening among those with fewer resources (Emerson 1976). In cases of dissatisfaction, states may also resort to coercive strategies, including blackmail (Molm 1997, 2003). In the context of the SFS, the system emerged as an unintended consequence of these exchange dynamics, in which peripheral states pursued bilateral defense relationships with the hub, as such arrangements offered greater security benefits than purely horizontal cooperation among the spokes. Consequently, incentives for cooperation among spokes diminished as the hub expanded its bilateral commitments and increasingly addressed the security needs of each individual partner (Hafner-Burton et al. 2009).

Izumikawa (2020) examines cases involving Rhee and Chiang to explore the behavioral consequences of alliance dissatisfaction. In response to perceived unreliability, both leaders engaged in anti-communist collective initiatives, including the Asian People's Anti-Communist League (APACL) and United Free Asia, as attempts to reshape their external security environment. From this perspective, states are more likely to pursue alternative collective arrangements when the hub fails to ensure their survival. This logic aligns with Cha's (2000) concept of quasi-alliances, in which states sharing a common ally increase cooperation due to concerns over potential abandonment by the hub.

Accordingly, social exchange theory provides a clear causal logic for understanding the formation of the SFS. It is also the only framework that explicitly addresses the consequences of alliance dissatisfaction by examining how U.S. allies attempted to enhance their security through increased cooperation with one another, as reflected in various anti-communist and collective security initiatives pursued by Rhee and Chiang. However, the theory treats key domestic and decision-making variables largely implicitly, effectively operating as a "black box" approach that emphasizes external relational structures while downplaying internal political dynamics.

This limitation is particularly evident given that Izumikawa's own case analyses rely heavily on domestic considerations, including Yoshida's reluctance to contribute militarily to the Free World and Rhee's anti-Japanese sentiment, which led him to reject Dulles' proposal to include Japan in the APACL. If alliance dissatisfaction alone were sufficient to trigger collective

CC BY

defense behavior deemed essential for survival, it remains unclear why Rhee opposed compromise on Japan's participation.

The Alliance Audience Effect Theory

Henry (2022) presents the alliance audience effect theory, which emphasizes the importance of credibility, reassurance, and spillover effects across multiple bilateral alliances. Under this framework, decisions made within one alliance significantly influence how other allied states assess the reliability of their shared partner. Reliability, in this context, refers to the extent to which allies perceive the United States as aligned with their strategic interests and consistently committed to pursuing mutually agreed-upon objectives. Accordingly, the "alliance audience effect" captures the necessity for a common ally to manage multiple alliances simultaneously. Bilateral alliance politics are therefore not purely dyadic, as they are shaped by interdependence across the wider alliance network.

The core premise of the alliance audience effect theory is that policymakers are persistently concerned with credibility. There is a prevailing belief that failing to follow through on threats or withdrawing support from one ally may inadvertently empower adversaries or weaken the integrity of broader alliance relationships. Schelling and Slaughter (2020, 124–25) note that "We lost thirty thousand dead in Korea to save face … and it was undoubtedly worth it." Similarly, Tucker and Glaser (2011) argue that "US inconstancy could convince American allies and friends to rely less on Washington, undertake an arms race, and/or bandwagon with China." In this sense, U.S. Cold War strategy was frequently shaped by the expectation that any perceived abandonment or inconsistency toward one ally could reverberate across the SFS network, encouraging other allies to hedge, disengage, or adopt neutrality.

Consistent with this logic, American wartime allies in Asia expressed concern over Japanese rearmament following the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty and therefore sought U.S. security assurances as a quid pro quo for accepting the treaty framework (Office of the Historian 1951a). From this perspective, the alliance audience effect significantly influenced the timing and sequencing of alliance formation within the SFS, as the United States sought to signal credible commitments and reduce the risk of allied discontent. Henry's theory thus offers a direct theoretical challenge to Cha's powerplay thesis by emphasizing reassurance and credibility management rather than hierarchical control as the primary driver of alliance structure.

The strength of this perspective lies in its ability to explain sequencing dynamics and commitment calibration across multiple spokes, clarifying why reassurance concerns can shape both treaty timing and alliance design. At the same time, it encounters an analytical tension between its emphasis on credibility and the relatively qualified and often conditional nature of U.S. bilateral defense commitments in Asia, where domestic constitutional constraints frequently mediate obligations (Mack 1986; Kim 2011; Lum 2012). If credibility is central, then the comparatively weaker and less automatic stipulations in these agreements are difficult to reconcile, especially when contrasted with more explicit collective defense commitments such as NATO's Article V.

Ultimately, the endurance of the SFS despite these ambiguities suggests that alliance audience effects provide important explanatory leverage, particularly regarding signaling and reassurance, but they do not fully account for the structural preference for a bilateral framework.

CC BY

COMPARATIVE THEORETICAL ASSESSMENT

This section explains the context in which five theories account for the formulation of bilateral arrangements under the SFS system, in accordance with the framework outlined in Table 1.

In terms of unit of analysis, the powerplay thesis operates primarily at the systemic and hierarchical levels, interpreting alliance design through American strategic asymmetry and the institutional advantages of bilateral control. By contrast, constructivist and Asia-centric normative frameworks emphasize ideational and regional dynamics, highlighting racialized hierarchies, civilizational distinctions, sovereignty norms, and questions of political legitimacy associated with alternative institutional forms. Social exchange theory and the alliance audience effect theory, in turn, shift the focus to relational dynamics within alliances. They emphasize bargaining, dependence, and dissatisfaction in the former case, and reassurance, credibility spillovers, and commitment calibration in the latter. Accordingly, the five theories differ in their unit of analysis, as each illuminates distinct dimensions of a shared design outcome.

Moreover, the five theories generate distinct causal mechanisms to explain the selection of bilateralism as the principal security architecture. The powerplay thesis provides strong evidence of an American preference for bilateralism as a means of preserving autonomy and avoiding entrapment by allies. Constructivist accounts anticipate observable discursive and policy expressions of differential trust and civilizational hierarchy, suggesting that multilateral institutionalization in Asia was less viable than in Europe. Asia-centric normative approaches expect resistance to formal collective defense structures, grounded in sovereignty norms and non-interference principles. Social exchange theory posits that actors engage in bargaining and leverage-seeking behavior, particularly in response to dissatisfaction, in order to reshape their security environment. Meanwhile, the alliance audience effect theory argues that treaty timing and commitment language are calibrated to manage credibility and reassurance across multiple allied audiences. Taken together, these implications are not mutually exclusive; rather, they reflect distinct mechanisms operating under different scope conditions during the formulation period.

The comparative framework is particularly useful for clarifying scope conditions, where the explanatory limits of each theory become most apparent. The powerplay thesis is strongest in contexts characterized by pronounced U.S. asymmetry and a Cold War strategic environment defined by uncertainty. However, its explanatory power declines where allied bargaining agency is more pronounced or where institutional outcomes cannot be attributed primarily to unilateral design. Constructivist and Asia-centric frameworks provide compelling accounts of how ideational ordering, legitimacy concerns, and regional normative resistance shape the viability of alliance structures, but they are less effective in explaining variation among individual spokes during treaty negotiation and sequencing. Social exchange theory is most persuasive in cases such as South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan, where dependence, dissatisfaction, and reciprocal concessions are particularly salient. However, its consistency weakens in the cases of the Philippines and Thailand, where additional mechanisms are required for full explanation. The alliance audience effect theory offers important insights into timing, reassurance, and sequencing across bilateral alliances, but it does not fully explain why a bilateral framework emerged as the dominant structure of the system.

CC BY

The issue, therefore, is not that any single theory lacks empirical validity, but rather that its explanatory claims often extend beyond the contexts in which they are most strongly supported. Each theory demonstrates its greatest analytical strength in specific subsets of cases, yet is frequently presented as if it accounts for the system in its entirety. A standardized comparative framework helps make this limitation visible by requiring that each explanation be assessed against uniform cross-case criteria.

The overall evaluation suggests that the main theoretical perspectives should be understood as conditionally complementary rather than mutually exclusive. Each captures a key dimension of the hub-and-spokes system's design, whether hierarchical structure, ideational mediation, relational bargaining, or reassurance dynamics. Nevertheless, no single one accounts for the full institutional outcome across all spokes. This patterned finding provides the basis for the article's turn toward analytical eclecticism: not as a simple theoretical aggregation, but as a systematic effort to identify mechanisms and clarify their interaction within historically constrained conditions during the formation phase.

THE EMERGENCE OF MINILATERAL ARRANGEMENTS IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

Overall, prevailing academic debates do not undermine the five theories presented in this article; rather, they highlight their uneven applicability beyond the core context of SFS formation. Contemporary scholarly discussions of the SFS, particularly in relation to minilateral arrangements such as the QUAD and trilateral formats among the U.S.–Japan–South Korea, U.S.–Japan–Australia, and U.S.–Japan–Philippines, reveal analytical complexities that resist resolution within any single theoretical framework. Instead of adhering rigidly to one explanatory model, much of the current literature simultaneously engages with questions of hierarchy, allied agency, and signalling, thereby combining multiple causal logics.

Given the perceived ambiguity of U.S. global commitments under an "America First" orientation, a substantial body of research suggests that minilateral frameworks reduce dependence on U.S. bilateral dominance by fostering direct cooperation among American allies (Charalampaki 2022; Cooper 2023; Howe 2023, 2025; Koga 2022; Panda and Ohn 2024). On the one hand, contemporary minilateralism challenges interpretations of enduring hub control associated with the powerplay thesis. On the other hand, these arrangements remain embedded within a broader alliance system still anchored in U.S. strategic leadership (Hornat 2023; Laksmana 2022; Lee 2024; He 2025; Ye 2025; Biba 2026), complicating their interpretation as either clear evidence of hierarchical decline or simple extensions of unilateral hub authority.

The analysis of allied agencies within emerging minilateral cooperation adds another layer of complexity. A growing number of studies emphasize the role of secondary states in pursuing minilateral cooperation to enhance security outcomes (O'Neil and West 2020; Kim and Raswant 2023; Kucukdegirmenci 2023; Ha 2022). This perspective aligns with social exchange theory and the alliance audience effect theory, both of which emphasize bargaining dynamics, leverage-seeking behavior, and preference formation within alliance structures.

However, it remains unclear whether such behavior reflects dissatisfaction with existing bilateral arrangements or instead indicates strategic adaptation to evolving U.S. policy priorities, particularly during the Biden administration (Wilkins 2023, 2025; Koga 2024; Campbell 2024; Berkofsky 2025; Castro 2025). The observed empirical pattern can also be interpreted through

CC BY

the alliance audience effect logic, whereby horizontal cooperation serves reassurance and signalling functions within an interdependent alliance network, rather than simply constituting a form of balancing behavior (Taniguchi 2024; Thu 2020).

From the perspective of Asia-oriented normative frameworks, minilateral arrangements cannot be reduced to a rejection of hierarchical structures; rather, they operate within a context that continues to recognize U.S. strategic primacy. Accordingly, they should be understood as cooperative adaptations within an existing hierarchical order rather than as normative repudiations of hierarchy itself. This suggests that principles of regional autonomy and sovereignty remain significant without displacing the structural dominance of the United States. While racialized and ideational factors may have shaped the initial postwar alliance architecture, their direct explanatory leverage is more limited in contemporary discussions of multilateralism. This distinction does not weaken constructivist explanations of alliance formation; rather, it clarifies their historical scope and domain of applicability.

Consequently, minilateral arrangements should be understood as analytical stress tests. They illuminate which mechanisms remain robust under shifting geopolitical conditions and which are more closely tied to the historically specific context of the original hub-and-spokes architecture.

TOWARDS OPERATIONALIZING ANALYTICAL ECLECTICISM

The comparative assessment and standardized framework outlined above reveal that the primary explanations for the formation of the hub-and-spokes system vary in explanatory capacity across cases and differ in their tendency to extend generalizations beyond the specific contexts in which each theory demonstrates its strongest validity. Katzenstein and Sil (2008) articulate analytical eclecticism as a methodological approach that enables scholars to selectively integrate empirical observations, causal logics, and interpretations from diverse theoretical traditions. Similarly, Sil and Katzenstein (2010) emphasize that analytical eclecticism is pragmatic, open-ended, and capable of accommodating a broader understanding of causal mechanisms across varied contexts. Drawing on Hirschman's (1970) insights, Sil and Katzenstein (2010) further argue that social scientists should not rely exclusively on a single paradigm while neglecting others, as doing so risks analytical distortion and explanatory blind spots.

In explaining the formation of the SFS, analytical eclecticism functions as a testable framework for specifying how mechanisms derived from different theoretical traditions interact. As discussed above, the SFS emerged from a series of bilateral agreements concluded in diverse strategic, political, and diplomatic contexts. Analytical eclecticism allows for the sequencing of mechanisms, the identification of conditions under which each mechanism is most effective, and the specification of the types of evidence required to substantiate their interaction in the development of the hub-and-spokes system. Accordingly, the formation process can be conceptualized as a sequence of mechanisms operating between 1951 and 1962.

The evident asymmetry of American power, combined with a rapidly evolving Cold War strategic environment and persistent uncertainty, significantly constrained the range of institutional design options available to policymakers. Under these conditions, a bilateral alliance architecture offered Washington greater flexibility while reducing the risk of allied coordination

CC BY

that could limit American autonomy. Hierarchical asymmetry, therefore, defined the initial structural parameters shaping institutional choice.

However, structural asymmetry alone did not determine alliance configuration. The second stage involved processes of ideational and normative mediation. In parts of the region, alliance formation was shaped not only by considerations of legitimacy and sovereignty but also by racialized perceptions and varying assumptions about political trust, institutional appropriateness, and regional order. The interaction of these factors influenced the justification and institutionalization of hierarchy, helping to explain why bilateralism in Asia took a distinct form compared to alliance structures in other regions.

The third stage involves relational bargaining and reassurance dynamics. Bilateral alliances were established through negotiated exchanges characterized by leverage-seeking behavior and reciprocal concessions between the hub and the spokes. In addition, commitments made within one alliance generated signaling effects that reverberated across the broader alliance network. In this sense, bargaining dynamics and audience effects went beyond institutional design; they shaped the timing of treaties, the calibration of commitments, and the management of abandonment concerns within an interdependent alliance system. These mechanisms both reinforced and differentiated the bilateral architecture already shaped by hierarchical constraints and ideational-normative mediation.

This sequential configuration generates clear empirical expectations. If the eclectic account is valid, historical evidence should show that policymakers initially constrained institutional options in accordance with strategic and hierarchical considerations. It should also indicate that alliance design and diplomatic framing reflected ideational and normative mediation, including, where relevant, racialized assumptions. Finally, treaty negotiations and commitment signaling should reveal calibrated bargaining processes and reassurance dynamics operating across multiple allied relationships. Where these stages are absent, reversed, or weakly connected, the explanatory power of the eclectic model is correspondingly diminished, suggesting the need to incorporate additional mechanisms or case-specific variables.

CONCLUSION

This article has assessed the formation of the SFS by analysing five prevailing theoretical approaches within a standardized comparative framework. It finds that no single framework can comprehensively explain the logic underpinning the bilateral security architecture established between 1951 and 1962. Rather, each perspective demonstrates conditional explanatory strength, bounded by specific scope conditions.

Accordingly, the article advocates an eclectic approach rather than an overarching grand theory. It identifies the interaction of hierarchical asymmetry, ideational and normative mediation, and relational bargaining and reassurance dynamics in the formation of the SFS. The significance of this sequencing logic lies not only in its ability to reconcile existing interpretations of the SFS but also in demonstrating that alliance formation in asymmetric contexts often depends on the structured interplay of multiple mechanisms rather than a single dominant factor. By clarifying this sequence and its implications, the analysis moves beyond simplistic paradigmatic comparisons toward a more nuanced, middle-range explanation.

CC BY

This study contributes at two levels. First, it provides a structured synthesis of five dominant analytical lenses (powerplay, constructivism, Asian norms, social exchange, and alliance audience effects), while clearly identifying both the explanatory strengths and limitations of each, rather than treating them as interchangeable. In doing so, it links abstract theoretical claims to key historical reference points in early Cold War alliance formation, including bilateral treaty choices, regional threat perceptions, and the broader postwar strategic context, thereby clarifying why the hub-and-spokes design remains a persistent puzzle in regional security scholarship.

From a methodological perspective, the article makes a meta-theoretical contribution by showing how selective case usage can weaken the falsifiability of alliance theories, particularly when explanatory claims are extended beyond the contexts in which they are most persuasive. To address this issue, the article develops a standardized evaluative matrix consisting of unit of analysis, expected mechanisms, observable implications, scope conditions, and empirical reach across spokes. This framework clarifies where specific explanations are most effective, where they lose traction, and what forms of evidence would be required to assess an eclectic account.

As a theory-focused review, the article does not directly adjudicate archival evidence across all alliance cases. Its contribution lies in clarifying mechanism-based explanations, specifying their scope conditions, and providing a more consistent comparative basis for evaluating competing accounts of alliance formation. Consequently, it serves as a reference point for future archival and comparative research on the SFS. The proposed framework can be further assessed by examining whether strategic hierarchy initially constrained institutional options, whether ideational and normative mediation shaped the justification of bilateralism, and whether bargaining and reassurance dynamics subsequently influenced treaty timing and commitment language across alliances. The article's contribution lies not only in specifying mechanism-based explanations and their scope conditions, but also in identifying the types of evidence required to evaluate competing narratives of SFS formation.

The recent emergence of minilateral arrangements in regional politics does not undermine the theories examined in this study. Rather, these developments function as analytical stress tests, highlighting the continued relevance of hierarchical arrangements and the context-dependent applicability of formation-centered explanations amid shifting geopolitical conditions. They reinforce the importance of distinguishing between foundational design mechanisms and subsequent adaptation processes.

Future research on alliance architecture should therefore prioritize the interaction of mechanisms, the specificity of historical context, and clearly defined conditional parameters, rather than seeking monocausal explanations grounded in a single theoretical tradition. Approaches that embrace analytical complexity while preserving theoretical distinctions are better suited to capturing the multifaceted nature of institutional formation in environments characterized by strategic asymmetry.

CC BY

CRediT AUTHOR STATEMENT

Thaha Albana Turmuzi: conceptualization, formal analysis, data curation, investigation, methodology, resources, writing – original draft, visualization, validation. **Geetha Govindasamy:** conceptualization, supervision, formal analysis, methodology, writing – original draft, writing – review and editing, validation, project administration. **Jo Kyu Hyun:** supervision, writing – review and editing.

All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the article.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:
Not applicable.

Funding:
Not applicable.

AI Declaration:
During the preparation of this work, the authors used Grammarly to improve language and grammar and enhance readability. After using this tool, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

Statement of Human Rights:
This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any of the authors.

Statement on the Welfare of Animals:
This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed Consent:
Not applicable.

Disclosure statement:
No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author/s.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Neutrality Statement on Jurisdictional Claims and Institutional Affiliations:

The publisher and the journal remain neutral regarding jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Language Quality and Author Responsibility Policy:

The publisher and the journal use AI-assistive tools to enhance the language quality of accepted articles. These tools help refine grammar, clarity, and readability while preserving the integrity of the original text. However, authors retain full responsibility for the accuracy and content of their work.

Disclaimer on External Links:

The publisher and the journal cannot be held responsible for the content of external websites or any broken or missing links within the article. Authors are solely responsible for ensuring the accuracy and functionality of all hyperlinks at the time of submission.

REFERENCES

1. Acharya, Amitav. 2003. "Regional Institutions and Asian Security Order: Norms, Power, and Prospects for Peaceful Change." In *Asian Security Order: Instrumental and Normative Features*, edited by Muthiah Alagappa, 210–40. Stanford University Press.
2. Acharya, Amitav. 2004. "How Ideas Spread: Whose Norms Matter? Norm Localisation and Institutional Change in Asian Regionalism." *International Organization* 58 (2): 239–75.
3. Acharya, Amitav. 2005. "'Why Is There No NATO in Asia?' The Normative Origins of Asian Multilateralism." Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University.
4. Acharya, Amitav. 2009. *Whose Ideas Matter? Agency and Power in Asian Regionalism*. Cornell University Press.
5. Acharya, Amitav. 2012. "Foundations of Collective Action in Asia: Theory and Practice of Regional Cooperation." Asian Development Bank Institute.
6. Acharya, Amitav. 2014. "Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds: A New Agenda for International Studies." *International Studies Quarterly* 58 (4): 647–59.
7. Atanassova-Cornelis, Elena. 2020. "Alignment Cooperation and Regional Security Architecture in the Indo-Pacific." *The International Spectator* 55 (1): 18–33. https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2020.1712132.
8. Baldwin, David A. 1978. "Power and Social Exchange." *American Political Science Review* 72 (4): 1229–42. https://doi.org/10.2307/1954536.
9. Berkofsky, Axel. 2025. "US Alliances and Security Ties in Asia: Probably a Rough Ride Ahead." In *Friends and Foes in the Indo-Pacific: Multilateralism Out Minilateralism In?*, edited by Axel Berkofsky and Guido Alberto Casanova, 13–30. Ledizioni-Ledipublishing.
10. Biba, Sebastian. 2026. "'Is It Good or Is It Bad?': Minilateralism and Its Effects on the Indo-Pacific Security Architecture." *The Pacific Review* 2026: 1–30. https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2026.2614596.
11. Blum, Robert M. 1982. *Drawing the Line: The Origin of the American Containment Policy in East Asia*. W.W. Norton and Company.
12. Buszynski, Leszek. 2011. "The San Francisco System: Contemporary Meaning and Challenges." *Asian Perspective* 35 (3): 315–35.
13. Calder, Kent E. 2004. "Securing Security Through Prosperity: The San Francisco System in Comparative Perspective." *The Pacific Review* 17 (1): 135–57.
14. Campbell, Piper. 2024. "Washington Reinvents Its Approach to Southeast Asia." *East Asia Forum*.
15. Capie, David H. 2002. "Power, Identity and Multilateralism: Rethinking Institutional Dynamics in the Pacific, 1945–2000." PhD diss., York University.
16. Castro, Renato Cruz De. 2025. "Japan-US-Philippines: A Formal Security Agreement or a Security Network for a Taiwan Contingency?" In *Friends and Foes in the Indo-Pacific: Multilateralism Out Minilateralism In?*, edited by Axel Berkofsky and Guido Alberto Casanova, 31–46. Ledizioni-Ledipublishing.
17. Cha, Victor D. 2000. "Abandonment, Entrapment, and Neoclassical Realism in Asia: The United States, Japan, and Korea." *International Studies Quarterly* 44 (2): 261–91.
18. Cha, Victor D. 2016. *Powerplay: The Origins of the American Alliance System in Asia*. Princeton University Press.

19. Charalampaki, Effie. 2022. "Minilateralism for Multilateralism: What Role for the EU in the Instrumentalization of the Japan-Australia Strategic Partnership." *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series* 3 (2): 103–16. https://doi.org/10.12681/hapscpbs.33789.
20. Christensen, Thomas J., and Jack Snyder. 1990. "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity." *International Organization* 44 (2): 137–68.
21. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). 1953. "The Release of North Korean Prisoners of War." https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP91T01172R000200310032-2.pdf.
22. Cooper, Zack. 2023. *The Era of Coalitions: The Shifting Nature of Alignments in Asia*. ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute.
23. Cornut, Jérémie. 2015. "Analytic Eclecticism in Practice: A Method for Combining International Relations Theories." *International Studies Perspectives* 16 (1): 50–66.
24. Cullather, Nick. 1994. *Illusions of Influence: The Political Economy of United States-Philippines Relations, 1942–1960*. Stanford University Press.
25. Doty, Roxanne Lynn. 1993. "Foreign Policy as Social Construction: A Post-Positivist Analysis of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy in the Philippines." *International Studies Quarterly* 37 (3): 297–320.
26. Eayrs, James. 1952. "A Pacific Pact: 'Step in the Right Direction'?" *International Journal* 7 (4): 293–302. https://doi.org/10.2307/40197932.
27. Emerson, Richard M. 1976. "Social Exchange Theory." *Annual Review of Sociology* 2: 335–62. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.so.02.080176.002003.
28. Ha, Hoang Thi. 2022. "Understanding the Institutional Challenge of Indo-Pacific Minilaterals to ASEAN." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 44 (1): 1–30. https://doi.org/10.1355/cs44-1a.
29. Hafner-Burton, Emilie M., Miles Kahler, and Alexander H. Montgomery. 2009. "Network Analysis for International Relations." *International Organization* 63 (3): 559–92. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818309090195.
30. Hara, Kimie. 2015. "The San Francisco System and Its Legacies in the Asia-Pacific." In *The San Francisco System and Its Legacies*. Routledge.
31. Harbin, Kenneth Stanley. 1990. "The Expanding Sino-Thai Military Relationship: Implications for U.S. Policy in Thailand." PhD diss., Naval Postgraduate School.
32. He, Kai. 2025. "Rethinking East Asian Peace: The Perils of Over-Deterrence and Minilateralism." *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 79 (2): 295–305. https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2025.2459314.
33. Hemmer, Christopher, and Peter J. Katzenstein. 2002. "Why Is There No NATO in Asia? Collective Identity, Regionalism, and the Origins of Multilateralism." *International Organization* 56 (3): 575–607.
34. Henry, Ian D. 2022. *Reliability and Alliance Interdependence: The United States and Its Allies in Asia, 1949–1969*. Cornell University Press.
35. Hirschman, Alberto O. 1970. "The Search for Paradigms as a Hindrance to Understanding." *World Politics* 22 (3): 341–58.
36. Hornat, Jan. 2023. "Beyond the Hub and Spokes: The Networking Logic and the Operationalization of US Indo-Pacific Strategy." *Asian Affairs* 54 (4): 647–69. https://doi.org/10.1080/03068374.2023.2275902.

CC BY

37. Howe, Brendan M. 2023. "East Asian Security Cooperation Shortcomings and Opportunities for Second-Tier Actors in the Region." *The Journal of East Asian Affairs* 36 (1): 39–75.
38. Howe, Brendan M. 2025. "Prospects for International Peace and Security Cooperation in East Asia and Korea's Role." *Korea-Europe Review* 7: 1–14.
39. Hwang, In Soo. 1999. "The United States–Republic of Korea Security Relationship, 1953–1960: Great Power and Small State." PhD diss., University College London.
40. Ikenberry, G. John. 2004. "American Hegemony and East Asian Order." *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 58 (3): 365–79.
41. Izumikawa, Yasuhiro. 2020. "Network Connections and the Emergence of the Hub-and-Spokes Alliance System in East Asia." *International Security* 45 (2): 7–50. https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00389.
42. Katzenstein, Peter J. 1997a. "Introduction: Asian Regionalism in Comparative Perspective." In *Network Power Japan and Asia*, edited by Peter J. Katzenstein and Takashi Shiraishi. Cornell University Press.
43. Katzenstein, Peter J. 1997b. "The Cultural Foundation of Murakami's Polymorphic Liberalism." In *A Vision of a New Liberalism?*, edited by Kozo Yamamura, 23–40. Stanford University Press.
44. Katzenstein, Peter J., and Rudra Sil. 2008. "Rethinking Asian Security: A Case for Analytical Eclecticism." In *Rethinking Japanese Security*, edited by Peter J. Katzenstein, 263–. Routledge.
45. Kim, Jiye, and Arpit Raswant. 2023. "Australian Perspective on Engaging with South Korea in the Indo-Pacific." *Asian Politics & Policy* 15 (1): 48–62. https://doi.org/10.1111/aspp.12672.
46. Kim, Tongfi. 2011. "Why Alliances Entangle but Seldom Entrap States." *Security Studies* 20 (3): 350–77.
47. Koga, Kei. 2022. "A New Strategic Minilateralism in the Indo-Pacific." *Asia Policy* 17 (4): 27–34.
48. Koga, Kei. 2024. "Strategic Dynamism: 50th Anniversary of Relations and New Security Ties." *Comparative Connections* 26 (1): 191–200.
49. Kucukdegirmenci, Oktay. 2023. "The Evolution of Japan's Policy of Regional Security Multilateralism in East Asia in the Post-Cold War Era." *The Journal of East Asian Affairs* 36 (1): 79–112.
50. Laksmana, Evan A. 2022. "Fit for Purpose: Can Southeast Asian Minilateralism Deter?" *Asia Policy* 17 (4): 35–42. https://doi.org/10.1353/asp.2022.0064.
51. Lee, Chyungly. 2024. "A New Trend of Defense Cooperation under the US Indo-Pacific Strategy: Deterrence by Networks of Combined Military Exercises." In *Dynamics in the Indo-Pacific*, edited by Klaus Heinrich Raditio and Shofwan Al Banna Choiruzzad, 26–36. The Habibie Center.
52. Lum, Thomas. 2012. *The Republic of the Philippines and U.S. Interests*. Congressional Research Service.
53. Lyon, Peter. 1968. "Substitutes for SEATO?" *International Journal* 24 (1): 35–46. https://doi.org/10.1177/002070206902400103.

54. Mabon, David W. 1988. "Elusive Agreements: The Pacific Pact Proposals of 1949–1951." *Pacific Historical Review* 57 (2): 147–77. https://doi.org/10.2307/4492264.
55. Mack, Andrew. 1986. "Crisis in the Other Alliance: ANZUS in the 1980s." *World Policy Journal* 3 (3): 447–72.
56. Mahbubani, Kishore. 1995. "The Pacific Way." *Foreign Affairs* 74 (1): 100–111.
57. McIntyre, W. David. 1995. *Background to the ANZUS Pact: Policymakers, Strategy and Diplomacy, 1945–55*. Palgrave Macmillan.
58. Molm, Linda D. 1997. *Coercive Power in Social Exchange*. Cambridge University Press.
59. Molm, Linda D. 2003. "Theories of Social Exchange and Exchange Networks." In *Handbook of Social Theory*, edited by George Ritzer and Barry Smart. SAGE Publications.
60. Morrow, James D. 1991. "Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances." *American Journal of Political Science* 35 (4): 904–33.
61. Office of the Historian. 1951a. "Mr. John Foster Dulles… March 2, 1951." https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1951v06p1/d517.
62. Office of the Historian. 1951b. "The Consultant to the Secretary (Dulles)… August 9, 1951." https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1951v06p1/d102.
63. Office of the Historian. 1954. "Memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff… April 9, 1954." https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v12p1/d150.
64. O'Neil, Andrew, and Lucy West. 2020. "The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue and Indo-Pacific Minilateralism: Resurrection without Renewal?" In *Minilateralism in the Indo-Pacific*, edited by Bhubhindar Singh and Sarah Teo, 27–41. Routledge.
65. Panda, Jagannath, and Daewon Ohn. 2024. "Minilateralism and the New Indo-Pacific Order." *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 78 (6): 767–81. https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2024.2410411.
66. Park, Junghyun. 2015. "Frustrated Alignment: The Pacific Pact Proposals from 1949 to 1954 and South Korea–Taiwan Relations." *International Journal of Asian Studies* 12 (2): 217–37.
67. Prasirtsuk, Kitti. 2017. "An Ally at the Crossroads: Thailand in the US Alliance System." In *Global Allies*, edited by Michael Wesley, 115–32. ANU Press.
68. Risse-Kappen, Thomas. 1996. "Collective Identity in a Democratic Community: The Case of NATO." In *The Culture of National Security*, edited by Peter J. Katzenstein. Columbia University Press.
69. Sakata, Yasuyo. 2008. "The Western Pacific Collective Security Concept and Korea in the Eisenhower Years." *The Journal of Kanda University of International Studies* 20: 67–96.
70. Schelling, Thomas C., and Anne-Marie Slaughter. 2020. *Arms and Influence*. Yale University Press.
71. Sil, Rudra, and Peter J. Katzenstein. 2010. "Analytic Eclecticism in the Study of World Politics." *Perspectives on Politics* 8 (2): 411–31.
72. Singh, Bhubhindar, and Sarah Teo. 2020. "Introduction: Minilateralism in the Indo-Pacific." In *Minilateralism in the Indo-Pacific*, edited by Bhubhindar Singh and Sarah Teo, 1–12. Routledge.
73. Snyder, Glenn H. 1984. "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics." *World Politics* 36 (4): 461–95.
74. Snyder, Glenn H. 1997. *Alliance Politics*. Cornell University Press.

75. Taniguchi, Miyoko. 2024. *Japan, the Philippines, and the United States: A New Era of Partnership*. East-West Center.
76. Taylor, Jay. 2011. *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-Shek and the Struggle for Modern China*. Harvard University Press.
77. Thu, Huong Le. 2020. "The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue and ASEAN Centrality." In *Minilateralism in the Indo-Pacific*, edited by Bhubhindar Singh and Sarah Teo, 88–102. Routledge.
78. Tow, William T. 2020. "Minilateralism and US Security Policy in the Indo-Pacific." In *Minilateralism in the Indo-Pacific*, edited by Bhubhindar Singh and Sarah Teo, 13–27. Routledge.
79. Tow, William T., and Md Zaidul Anwar Hj Md Kasim. 2019. "Why Has the San Francisco System Survived?" *Asian Politics & Policy* 12 (1): 8–26.
80. Tucker, Nancy Bernkopf, and Bonnie Glaser. 2011. "Should the United States Abandon Taiwan?" *The Washington Quarterly* 34 (4): 32–.
81. United States Senate. 1948. "Vandenberg Resolution." https://www.nato.int/ebookshop/video/declassified/doc_files/Vandenberg%20resolution.pdf.
82. Wilkins, Thomas S. 2023. *The "Minilateral Moment" and the Regional Security Architecture in the Indo-Pacific*. National Institute for Defense Studies.
83. Wilkins, Thomas S. 2025. *Strategic Minilateralism and the Regional Security Architecture of the Indo-Pacific*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-96-4791-0.
84. Ye, Xiaodi. 2025. "Hybrid Minilateralism: Explaining the Logic of the United States' Containment of China in Indo-Pacific." *The Pacific Review* 38 (6): 990–1019. https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2025.2467670.