



Thesis Title:

**ANALYSIS OF AUSTRALIA'S STRATEGIC INTEREST AGAINST
CHINA FROM THE FALEPILI AGREEMENT IN 2023 WITH TUVALU:
PERSPECTIVE OF WALT'S BALANCE OF THREATS**

This Thesis is submitted to complete and fulfill the requirements for obtaining a Bachelor's degree in International Relations.

Nama: Sheila Viona Amelia

NIM: 2110412109



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITAS PEMBANGUNAN NASIONAL
VETERAN JAKARTA

2025

**ANALYSIS OF AUSTRALIA'S STRATEGIC INTEREST AGAINST CHINA FROM
THE FALEPILI AGREEMENT IN 2023 WITH TUVALU: PERSPECTIVE OF
WALT'S BALANCE OF THREATS**

Oleh:
Sheila Viona Amelia
2110412109

SKRIPSI

Untuk memenuhi salah satu syarat ujian
Guna memperoleh gelar Sarjana pada Program Studi Hubungan Internasional

Telah disetujui oleh Tim Pembimbing pada
Tanggal seperti tertera di bawah ini

Jakarta, 22 Juli 2025
Pembimbing Utama



M. Kamil Ghiffary A., M.Si.



Program Studi Hubungan Internasional;
Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik
Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jakarta
Tahun 2025

PERNYATAAN ORISINALITAS

Skripsi ini adalah hasil karya sendiri dan semua sumber yang dikutip maupun yang dirujuk telah saya nyatakan dengan benar:

Nama : Sheila Viona Amelia
NIM : 2110412109
Program Studi : Hubungan Internasional

Bilamana di kemudian hari ditemukan ketidaksesuaian dengan pernyataan ini maka, saya bersedia dituntut dan diproses sesuai dengan ketentuan yang berlaku.

Jakarta, 21 Juli 2025

Yang menyatakan,

A handwritten signature in black ink is written over a portion of a 10,000 Indonesian Rupiah banknote. The banknote is yellow and features the Garuda Pancasila emblem. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Sheila Viona Amelia'.

Sheila Viona Amelia

**PERNYATAAN PERSETUJUAN PUBLIKASI TUGAS AKHIR UNTUK
KEPENTINGAN AKADEMIS**

Sebagai civitas akademik Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jakarta, saya yang bertanda tangan di bawah ini:

Nama : Sheila Viona Amelia
NIM : 2110412109
Fakultas : Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik
Program Studi : S1 Hubungan Internasional

Demi pengembangan ilmu pengetahuan, menyetujui untuk memberikan kepada Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jakarta Hak Bebas Royalti Non eksklusif (*Non-exclusive Royalty Free Right*) atas karya ilmiah saya yang berjudul:

**ANALYSIS OF AUSTRALIA'S STRATEGIC INTEREST AGAINST
CHINA FROM THE FALEPILI AGREEMENT IN 2023 WITH TUVALU:
PERSPECTIVE OF WALT'S BALANCE OF THREATS**

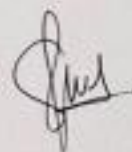
Beserta perangkat yang ada (jika diperlukan). Dengan Hak Bebas Royalti ini, Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jakarta berhak menyimpan, mengalih media/formatkan, mengelola dalam bentuk pangkalan data (*database*), merawat dan mempublikasikan Skripsi saya selama tetap mencantumkan nama saya sebagai penulis/pencipta dan sebagai pemilik Hak Cipta.

Demikian pernyataan ini saya buat dengan
sebenarnya:

Dibuat di : Jakarta,

Pada tanggal : 21 Juli 2025

Yang menyatakan,



Sheila Viona Amelia

SURAT PERSETUJUAN PUBLIKASI ILMIAH

Sebagai civitas akademik Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jakarta,
saya yang bertandatangan dibawah ini:

Nama : Sheila Viona Amelia

NIM : 2110412109

Fakultas : Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik

Program Studi : Hubungan Internasional

Judul Skripsi : ANALYSIS OF AUSTRALIA'S STRATEGIC
INTEREST AGAINST CHINA FROM THE FALEPILI AGREEMENT IN 2023
WITH TUVALU: PERSPECTIVE OF WALT'S BALANCE OF THREATS

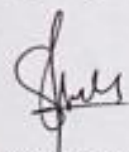
1. Memberikan hak saya bebas royalti kepada Perpustakaan UPNVJ atas Penelitian karya ilmiah saya demi pengembangan ilmu pengetahuan.
2. Memberikan hak menyimpan, mengalih mediakan atau mengalih formatkan, mengolah pangkalan data (database), mendistribusikan, serta menampilkan dalam bentuk softcopy untuk kepentingan akademis kepada perpustakaan UPNVJ, tanpa perlu meminta izin dari saya selama tetap mencantumkan nama saya sebagai Peneliti/pencipta.
3. Bersedia dan menjamin untuk menanggung secara pribadi tanpa melibatkan pihak perpustakaan UPNVJ dari semua bentuk tuntutan hukum yang timbul atas pelanggaran hak cipta dalam karya ilmiah ini.

Demikian pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sebenar-benarnya dan semoga digunakan sebagaimana mestinya.

Dibuat di : Jakarta,

Pada tanggal : 21 Juli 2025

Yang menyatakan,



Sheila Viona Amelia

PENGESAHAN TUGAS AKHIR

NAMA : Sheila Viona Amelia
NIM : 2110412109
PROGRAM STUDI : S1 Hubungan Internasional
JUDUL : "Analysis of Australia's Strategic Interest Against China From The Falepili Agreement In 2023 With Tuvalu: Perspective of Walt's Balance Of Threats"

Telah berhasil dipertahankan dihadapan Tim Penguji dan diterima sebagai bagian persyaratan yang diperlukan untuk memperoleh gelar sarjana pada Program Studi Hubungan Internasional, Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik, Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jakarta.

Pembimbing



M. Kamil Ghiffary A., M.Si

Penguji 1



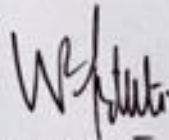
Afrimadona, P.hD

Penguji 2



Dini Putri Saraswati, S.HI., MA

Ketua Program Studi
Hubungan Internasional



Wiwiek Rukmi Dwi A., S.IP, M.Si.

Ditetapkan di : Jakarta
Tanggal Ujian : 7 Juli 2025

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menganalisis kepentingan strategis Australia terhadap Tiongkok dalam konteks penandatanganan Perjanjian Falepili dengan Tuvalu pada tahun 2023. Dalam dekade terakhir, kehadiran Tiongkok di kawasan Pasifik mengalami transformasi signifikan, dari sekadar mitra pembangunan ekonomi menjadi aktor geopolitik dengan kapabilitas militer dan diplomatik yang berkembang. Hal ini telah memicu kekhawatiran negara-negara Barat, khususnya Australia, terhadap pergeseran keseimbangan kekuatan di kawasan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan teori Balance of Threat dari Stephen M. Walt untuk menganalisis motivasi Australia dalam membentuk perjanjian ini sebagai bentuk strategi penyeimbangan terhadap meningkatnya pengaruh Tiongkok di kawasan Pasifik. Melalui metode kualitatif deskriptif dan data yang diperoleh dari studi pustaka, dokumen perjanjian, serta wawancara dengan pakar, ditemukan bahwa Falepili Agreement bukan hanya perjanjian berbasis kemanusiaan terkait perubahan iklim, tetapi juga instrumen strategis yang memungkinkan Australia menjaga pengaruh dan mengendalikan akses pertahanan terhadap Tuvalu. Keempat variabel dalam teori Walt kekuatan agregat, kedekatan geografis, kapabilitas ofensif, dan intensi agresif digunakan untuk membedah dinamika ancaman yang dirasakan Australia dari Tiongkok. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Falepili Agreement merefleksikan respons Australia terhadap persepsi ancaman yang semakin nyata dari ekspansi Tiongkok di Pasifik Selatan.

Kata Kunci: *Falepili Agreement, Australia, Tiongkok, Balance of Threat, Kepentingan Strategis*

ABSTRACT

This research analyzes Australia's strategic interests toward China through the lens of the Falepili Agreement signed with Tuvalu in 2023. Over the past decade, China's presence in the Pacific has transformed significantly from an economic development partner to an assertive geopolitical actor with expanding military and diplomatic capacities. This evolution has raised concerns among Western nations, particularly Australia, about a potential shift in the regional balance of power. The study applies Stephen M. Walt's Balance of Threat theory to examine Australia's motivation for signing the Falepili Agreement as a strategic balancing response to China's growing influence in the Pacific. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive method supported by literature review, treaty documents, and expert interviews, this thesis finds that the Falepili Agreement is not merely a humanitarian pact on climate change, but a strategic instrument that allows Australia to safeguard its influence and restrict Tuvalu's security alignments with external powers. The four variables of Walt's theory aggregate power, geographical proximity, offensive capability, and perceived intent are used to dissect Australia's threat perception. The findings suggest that the Falepili Agreement is a reflection of Australia's broader geostrategic response to China's encroachment in the South Pacific.

Keywords: *Falepili Agreement, Australia, China, Balance of Threat, Strategic Interest*

PREFACE

This thesis is written as a requirement to obtain a bachelor's degree in International Relations at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, UPN Veteran Jakarta. This thesis is titled, "**ANALYSIS OF CHINESE PRESENCE IN THE PACIFIC AS MOTIVATION FOR THE FALEPILI AGREEMENT BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND TUVALU IN 2023**", in which the author examines how the increasing influence of the People's Republic of China in Pacific Islands region serves as a strategic stimulus for Australia to establish the Falepili Agreement with Tuvalu.

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the continuous support, guidance, and encouragement from various parties. Therefore, the author would like to extend sincere gratitude to the following individuals:

1. The author would first like to express sincere gratitude to Allah SWT, for all the blessings and grace granted throughout this challenging thesis writing journey, particularly in balancing in the full-time work with academic obligations. By His will, everything went smoothly, and every obstacle could be overcome.
2. **Adnan Dalimunthe and Rosa Firgolina**, the author would also like to extend heartfelt thanks to her beloved parents, whose unwavering support, boundless love, and tireless prayers have been the cornerstone of her strength throughout this journey. Their constant encouragement, selfless sacrifices, and heartfelt belief in the author's potential have not only guided her through every challenging step of the thesis writing process, but have also shaped her into the person she is today. Without their unconditional love and enduring presence, the completion of this thesis would not have been possible.
3. **Muhammad Hilal Azmi**, the author's dearest companion and source of unwavering strength, thank you for always being present during the most challenging moments, offering not only constant emotional support but also a safe haven in which the author could find solace. Your presence has been a calming force amidst chaos, a shoulder to cry on when the weight of it all

became too much to bear, and a person who never failed to remind the author of her worth and capability, even when she doubted herself. His affection has been the quiet fuel behind each paragraph, and your care, the invisible hand that helped guide the author to the finish line.

4. **M. Kamil Ghiffary A., M.Si**, the author's academic supervisor, who has played a significant role in guiding this research. His invaluable insights, constructive critiques, and unwavering support event during moments of demotivation, have made a profound impact. The author is deeply grateful for his patience, understanding, and the thoughtful advice that has made this thesis journey lighter. May he and his family always be surrounded by blessings and abundant sustenance.
5. **FOMONGITIS** (Alya Rona Pertiwi, Faradilla Aysha, Rahma Atridayana, Tasya Amini, Asih Atikah, Steffani Putri Diandra, Muhammad Hilal Azmi, M. Erza Pradana, Fathan Muhammad Litty, Rangga Aji Wardana, Kassadiwa Dhafin Ezzo, and Harits Putra Permana), The author also wished to thank her group of goofy friends for the four years of shared memories both joyful and challenging. Thank you for being reliable informants during the author's busy non-academic life, and for bringing laughter that colored her university experience.
6. **Sally Miranda Angelina and Cindy Jessica Felicia**, the author's relatives, thank you for material support throughout her studies. May your kindness be rewarded with abundant fortune.
7. **Tobi and Nobu**, the author's beloved cats, thank you for your comforting presence, positive energy, and silent companionship during difficult moments, especially throughout the thesis writing process. May you always be healthy and live long lives.
8. **Kosan Rengas 31 and Alya Rona Pertiwi**, thank you for being a warm home for the past two years, providing the author with a safe space throughout her academic journey.
9. **Afrimadona, PhD and Dini Putri Saraswati, S.HI., MA.** as the thesis examiners, the author expresses sincere gratitude for the valuable input provided during the thesis proposal seminar and final defense.

10. **Beni Sukadis and Fitria Bintang Timur**, thank you for your willingness to serve as research informants and for providing insightful information that significantly contributed to the completion of this thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENT

PERNYATAAN ORISINALITAS	ii
PERNYATAAN PERSETUJUAN PUBLIKASI TUGA AKHIR UNTUK KEPENTINGAN AKADEMIS	iii
SURAT PERSETUJUAN PUBLIKASI ILMIAH	iv
PENGESAHAN TUGAS AKHIR	v
ABSTRAK	vi
ABSTRACT	vii
PREFACE	viii
TABLE OF CONTENT	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Research Background	1
1.2. Research Problem	11
1.3. Research Objective	12
1.4. Research Limitation	12
1.5 Contributions	13
1.6 Writing Structure.....	14
CHAPTER 2 THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	16
2.1. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework.....	16
2.1.1. Neorealist	16
2.1.2. Stephen Walt's Balance of Threat	21
2.2. Conceptual Framework.....	32
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODS	33
3.1 Research Object	33
3.2 Research Type	34

3.3 Data Collection Techniques	35
3.3.1. Interview	36
3.3.2. Literature Review	36
3.3.4 Data Source	37
3.4 Data Analysis Technique.....	39
3.5 Timeline Table	41
CHAPTER 4 BETWEEN SOVEREIGNTY AND STRATEGY: INTERPRETING THE FALEPILI AGREEMENT IN CONTEMPORARY PACIFIC GEOPOLITICS	43
4.1 The Political and Security Constellation in the Pacific Region.....	47
4.2 Australia’s Strategic Motivations in the Falepili Agreement: Between Regional Solidarity and Balancing Politics	58
4.2.1 The Falepili and Bilateral Agreement.....	64
4.2.2 Climate Diplomacy and Statehood Preservation in the Australia Tuvalu Treaty.....	67
4.2.3 Bilateral Climate Mobility: A New Model for Pacific Island Resilience	70
4.2.4 Security Cooperation and Its Sovereignty Implications	71
4.3 Australia’s Balancing Strategy in the Falepili Treaty: A Balance of Threat Perspective.....	73
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION	86
5.1 Conclusion	86
5.2 Suggestions	87
BIBLIOGRAPHY	89
RIWAYAT HIDUP	96

List of Figures

Figure 4. 1 Graph showing Lowy Institute Pacific Aid Map China’s Total Aid to The Pacific by Year (2015-2022)	51
Figure 4. 2 Graph showing the distribution of China’s foreign aid to Pacific Island countries during the period 2015-2022.	53
Figure 4. 3 Picture showing Tuvalu Prime Minister Teo speaks after a swearing in ceremony in Funafuti, the capital of the south Pacific nation of Tuvalu, on Feb. 28, 2024. Source: Voa News	63
Figure 4. 4 Picture showing Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port Project, where China took over the concession for 99 years with outstanding debts. Source: European University Institute.....	80