AUSTRALIA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC: A POLICY OF HEGEMON?

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this thesis is my own except for the quotations and summaries which I have duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

The Australian Foreign Policy in the Pacific has endured the test of times. It has been developed and refined taking into consideration the new power configuration of the international environment after the Cold War. There are also a number of factors that influenced Australia's Foreign Policy formulation and projection. For its Foreign Policy to be effective Australia had to continuously realign its national goals in order to derive their maximum returns. Australia is considered a middle power in the region having sufficient economic and military strength over the other countries thus displaying hegemonic characteristics. These characteristics are important in maintaining and ensuring the regional peace and stability. This is achieved through the promotion of economic development, through trade, aid and investments. The Pacific region lacks the resources for development which Australia provides thereby creating a mutual relationship. However, given the boldness and strategic interest of the Australian Foreign Policy the Pacific Island Leaders are sometimes pushed into a difficult situation where they had to surrender some of their sovereignty to accommodate this interest. In the process they are exposed to a number of risks and had to build resilience to mitigate these risks. Australia maintains that in projecting its national interest in the region it is also acting for the common good of all by ensuring regional peace and security. It is because of the characteristics and behaviour of the Australian Policy has prompted this study. The research will examine Australia's influence in the Pacific, analyse the contributory factors, identify its impact and assess how the region responds to it. This research employed the qualitative analysis on primary and secondary data. The study finds that Australia's influence in the region is driven by its strategic interest. It fulfils this interest by ensuring that the use of aid, regional trade agreements and its foreign investment are tools to serve its purpose thus strengthening its position as the regional hegemon.
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