

Tác phẩm tham dự “Giải thưởng “Bài nghiên cứu về Biển Đông năm 2016” giành nghiên cứu sinh, sinh viên, học viên đang học tập trong các trường đại học, cao đẳng, viện nghiên cứu trong và ngoài nước có bài nghiên cứu về Biển Đông thuộc thể loại: chuyên đề nghiên cứu, khóa luận tốt nghiệp

Tác giả: Tống Khánh Linh (Linh Tong).

Research title

The Philippine Pivot to China – Implications for Vietnam in the South China Sea

December 30th 2016/ Length: 41 pages – 13944 words

By Linh Tong – BAIS 2017 – ADA University

Foreign Policy Analysis

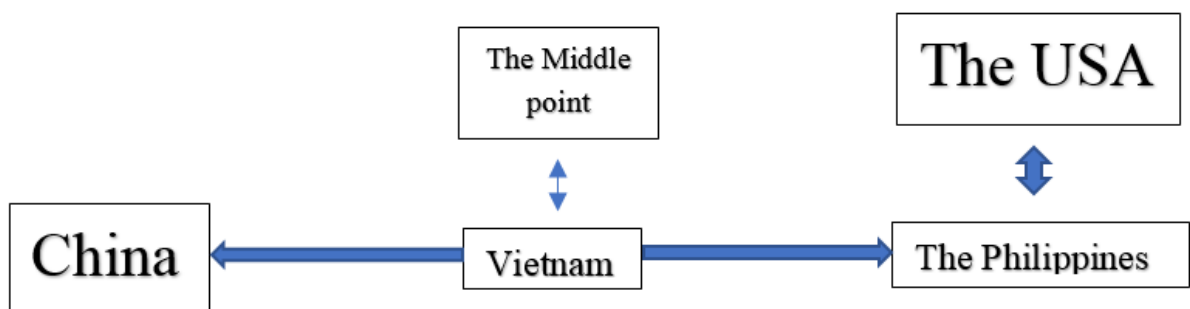
Instructed by Dr. Esmira Jafarova

Abstract

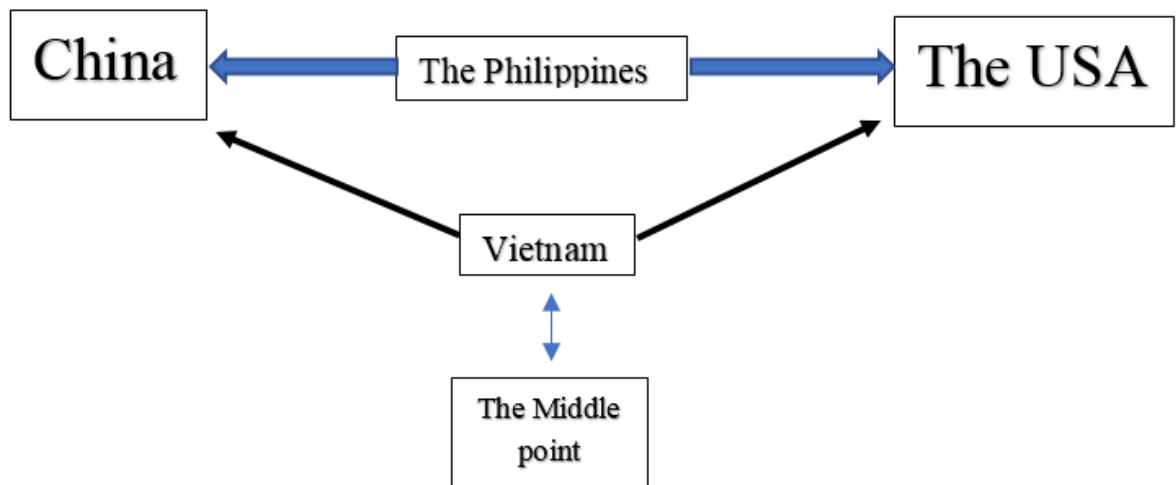
As opposed to the former Philippine president Benigno Aquino III, who sued China at the International Arbitration Court, President Duterte took a radically different standpoint by pivoting to China. Although the economic benefits are seen as immediate reasons for such a 180-degree alteration in Philippine foreign policy, it is still a daunting question as to why the Philippines pivoted to China and how President Duterte succeeded in implementing such a novel policy despite the fact that Filipino nationalism is on the rise as a consequence of the South China Sea Dispute. In order to comprehend the Philippine pivot to China, this research paper applies the 3-level analysis of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) discipline to examine how the international power structure, domestic politics, and individual personality of President Duterte simultaneously affected the formation of the Philippine pivot to China. This finding is important in understanding the balance of power in the South China Sea Dispute and the constraints on smaller states in dealing with bigger powers. The research will end with a discussion about how the position and decision of the Philippines are strategically important for Vietnam's interests in the South China Sea Dispute. In search for answer, the paper will employ official data of economic and military activities, as well as analyze the speeches of President Duterte to unearth the reasons for the Philippine pivot to China and the tactics Mr. Duterte employed to justify his foreign policy change by lending significance to domestic concerns, particularly with issues bordering around economics, law, and culture. It is obviously lucid from his discourse that President Duterte plays a huge role in the formation of the Philippine foreign policies, which is one of the core assumptions in this research.

Visualization of the conclusions

Scenario 1: The Philippines balances China



Scenario 2: The Philippines bandwagons with China



Key words: The Philippine pivot to China, Vietnamese foreign policy, the South China Sea Dispute, Sino-US relations, the Pivotal states, Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), Rodrigo Duterte.

Acronyms: FP is foreign policy; Foreign Policy analysis is FPA; IR stands for International Relations

Introduction

The South China Sea Dispute has been the center of global attention since 2012, when China started to behave aggressively against her neighbors - Vietnam and the Philippines in particular - resulting in series of territorial conflicts along the Western coast of the Pacific Ocean. In addition to the severe verbal attacks exchanged on media among the involved states, there is an alarming increase in military activities in the region.¹The United States has been an important player, performing a critical role as a guarantor, a source of balance, for the smaller states against China. Among all the disputes in the South China Sea, however, the most provocative gesture so far came from the Philippines, who dared to challenge the big power – China – by resorting to multilateral source of the International Arbitration Court in Hague to legitimize her rights over the disputed territory under the framework of UNCLOS (The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea).² Even though China flatly rejected the case at the outset and did not make any effort to defend

¹ Asia, *BBC*, November 17, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13748349>

²Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), *The South China Sea Arbitration (The Republic of Philippines v. The People's Republic of China)*, 2013-19 (The Netherlands, 2013-2016), <http://www.pcacases.com/web/view/7>.

herself in front of the PCA³, the case of the Philippines still received significant support and attention worldwide, successfully sketching the picture of China as the aggressor while the Philippines, and other smaller states as the victims. Undoubtedly, the Philippines vs China case made the name of the Philippines as a brave smaller state, and Benigno Aquino III as the hero of the nation.⁴ And yet, despite the recent victory announced in July 2016, the new president of the Philippines – Rodrigo Duterte suddenly showed his tolerance for Chinese infringement of the country's territory, warmly welcomed friendly economic cooperation with China, and agreed to “open” bilateral talks (as China had wished but was persistently rejected by the ex-president Aquino) over the South China Sea. Such a “100-degree turnaround” in the Philippine foreign policy was termed by experts as the Philippines’ pivot to China.⁵

The Philippine pivot to China has prodigious implications for the politics in the South China Sea Dispute since the once-close-ally of the US – the Philippines is now approaching China. If the Philippines as one of the major claimants in the South China Sea does not see itself as a victim under the Chinese aggressiveness, the Americans have no legitimate reasons to intervene as a guardian. From this perspective, by pivoting to China, the Philippines has seriously undermined American interests and influence in Asia-Pacific region. Also, should the Philippines submit to Chinese claims in the South China Sea, Vietnam will be exposed to a delicate position as the only claimant against China. For that reason, it is necessary to study the Philippine pivot to China and estimate how far the Philippines has pivoted or intends to pivot to China.

Seeing the Philippine pivot to China as a foreign policy decision, the research applies the 3-level analysis of Foreign Policy Analysis discipline to see how the interplay of international power structure, domestic politics, and individual personality of President Duterte affected the formation of the Philippine pivot to China. The major source for supporting data will be derived from official economic and military statistics as well as analysis of President Duterte’s discourses.

³ Ibid

⁴ Richard JavadHeydarian, “China vs. the Philippines: Will International Law Resolve South China Sea Disputes?” *Huffingtonpost*, July 9, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/richard-javad-heydarian/china-vs-the-philippines-_b_7766406.html

⁵ PrashanthParameswaran, “The limits of Duterte’s US-China rebalance,” *The Diplomat*, October 24, 2016, <http://thediplomat.com/2016/10/the-limits-of-dutertes-us-china-rebalance/>.

Why is it important?

The finding of this research is significant because it proves the importance of the Philippines as a representative of smaller states in international politics and contributes to the understanding of smaller states' behaviors in the South China Sea Dispute. One unfortunate reality of Political Science academia is the omnipresence and dominance of great powers in international relations. Politics of the South China Sea Dispute is not an exception. There is a large number of available academic sources, debates, and analysis about American and Chinese influences and performances regarding the South China Sea Dispute. However, little has been discussed about the smaller states despite their active involvement in South China Sea issues. While the factors of big powers are undeniable, the importance of smaller states cannot be underestimated. Without the presence of smaller states, the greater power of bigger states simply does not exist. As proposed in the age-old structural concept of "**Binary opposition**" first theorized by *Ferdinand de Saussure*, one object or phenomenon cannot be defined clearly without its theoretical opposite, just like "good" cannot be conceived without "evil", "strength" cannot be understood without "weakness", or "big" does not exist without "small". Accordingly, the application of binary oppositions to international relations would suggest that big powers do not exist without smaller states coexisting in the system. Moreover, the importance of the smaller states is not only restricted to their mere presence in the international apparatus. The smaller states also play an active role and exert independent impact over the world politics since the bigger nations always have to compete for influence over the smaller countries. The cooperation and alliance of the smaller states can make a difference to the balance of power, strengthen or weaken the bigger countries. The most vivid example in the world history dated back to the Cold War bipolar system, when the world politics was the battlefield for international influence between Communist bloc led by the Soviet Union and the Western bloc led by the United States. The smaller states did play a big role in defining the international structure at that time by allying with either the United States or the Soviet Union, or establishing their own independent group so-called the Non-Aligned Movement, which consisted of states not formally aligning or opposing to any major power. For the essence of the smaller states, understanding big powers' behaviors alone is not sufficient to comprehend international politics and find solutions to international conflicts. It is a must that academicians pay more attention to study and understand the behaviors of the smaller states in the international system.

Research question

In this paper, the interest is about the South China Sea Dispute. The argument is that the role of smaller states involving in the South China Sea Dispute is strategic in determining the political structure there. Taking the Philippines and her pivot to China as a case study, this paper aims to answer the research question: **“How does three-level analysis of foreign policy analysis discipline explain the Philippine pivot to China?”**

What is exactly the Philippine Pivot to China?

The Philippines’ pivot to China describes an almost 180 degree of change in the Filipino foreign policy from the ex-president – Aquino’ close alliance with the US to the current president Duterte’s alienation from the US and rapprochement towards China. This interesting dynamic attracts a great deal of attention and analysis from experts all around the world. The majority focused on one single actor of President Rodrigo Duterte as a game changer and thus regarded the pivot as an unprecedented deviation from, rather than a rational continuation of the Gambit game⁶ in the Filipino foreign policy. Nevertheless, as will be shown in the literature review section, the Philippine pivot to China is not new in the history of the Philippines. This country has the tradition of hedging between China and the United States, cleverly pushing the two great powers to compete for influence over the Philippines. The effectiveness of such diplomatic Gambit is debatable, sometimes giving the Philippines gains, other times disadvantages. At the current stage, however, the Philippine pivot to China has given the Philippines an edge in negotiations with China and the USA. More in-depth analysis about the Philippine Pivot to China under the framework of “Pivotal States” and its implications for Vietnam will appear in the discussion section. By changing its position in the formula of power balance between China and the US, the Philippines also affects the political structure in the South China Sea and influences positions of other smaller states in the region, most notably Vietnam. It is, therefore, necessary to conduct a systemic analysis of the Philippines’s foreign policy so as to understand the broad picture of why the Philippines is pivoting to China, not only because of the new President himself, or the promises from China, but also because of all the

⁶ Renato Cruz De Castro, “Balancing gambits in twenty-first century Philippine Foreign Policy: Gains and possible demise?” *Southeast Asia Affairs*, (2011): 235-253.

constraints and interactions among 3 levels⁷ – the international level, national level, and individual level, that hand-in-hand trigger the Philippines's pivot to China.

Research hypotheses

According to the defined framework of 3-level analysis, the research proposes 3 hypotheses:

1. The international level influences the Philippine Pivot to China through the constraints shaped by the power structure as will be proved by the analysis of neo-realism, liberalism, and constructivism. At this level, the Philippines is looked at as a unitary actor making FP decisions based on calculations of power structure. Neo-realism dictates that the asymmetric relation between the Philippines and China would eventually result in Philippine bandwagoning behavior, making the Philippines pivot to China. Liberalism uses economic interdependence to explain why the Philippine confrontation and balance against China would not last and bandwagonging is a more sustainable strategy. And finally constructivism completes the pictures by focusing on Philippine- China and Philippine – US interactions as an explanation for the Philippine-China rapprochement. It is necessary to employ 3 theories at the same time because each theory has its own explanatory specialization and using only one would prevent the research from providing the comprehensive picture of what drives the Philippines to pivot to China. These theories do not at all contradict each other, rather they complement each other in explaining the Philippine pivot to China.
2. The national level focuses on explaining the formulation process of the Philippine pivot to China, featuring the bureaucratic politics model as an important constraint on the limited extent of the pivot, and identifying the government justifications for such a pivot.
3. The final level looks at President Duterte as the single most important actor in the Philippine foreign policy formation. Through Mr. Duterte's discourse, the impacts of rationality, psychological and cognitive biases, as well as emotions will be revealed.

⁷David Singer, "The Level of Analysis Problem in International Relations," *World Politics* 14, (1961): 77-92.

The research paper will end with the capture of the Philippine success in hedging between the United States and China in the South China Sea Dispute, giving important implications for Vietnam.

Scope of analysis

Since the application of theories is comprehensive, it is important to limit the scope of analysis to ensure the fluidity of the arguments. At the international level, I limit my focus of analysis on the interactions between the Philippines, China, and the USA. The role of Vietnam, another major claimant, will be mentioned only here and there to further clarify the position of the Philippines in the conflict and the politics of smaller states in the South China Sea Dispute. At the state level, due to the limited access to the information about the Philippines's internal politics, especially because the case under research is very up-to-date, and Mr. Duterte's presidency is only six months old, little has been revealed to public; only interpretation based on the Philippines' domestic political structure and culture in line with President's discourses will be made. And at the individual level, President Duterte will be the sole focus of analysis because he is the supreme decision maker in Filipino political system at the moment, which is one of the core assumptions of this research.

Basic assumptions

There are a few assumptions that need to be clarified before the research proceeds:

1. First of all, the Philippines, as well as Vietnam and other ASEAN countries, is regarded in this research as smaller states in comparison with the bigger powers of the United States and China. Even though all countries enjoy equal positions as independent sovereign states, this is an undeniable fact based on the statistics of geographical size, population, economic performance, political influence in the world, military power, among many others.
2. These smaller countries are assumed to understand very well their asymmetric relations with China, which turns out to put constraints on their FP decisions, and China as the regional power also understands very well its size-related advantages in the South China Sea Dispute.
3. The United States also understands its limitations because of geographical distance, slowing-down economic development, and contracting global influence.

These assumptions are useful for the analysis of international and individual levels.

4. Another assumption is that President Duterte dominates the FP decision-making in the Philippines, while he is not yet accustomed to international arena and national politics. This leaves ways for bureaucratic politics to intervene at the national level.
5. The final very critical assumption is that the Philippine FP decision makers try to maximize national interests of the Philippines. While corruption is a long-standing pattern in the history of the Philippine political system, the current research does not attempt to investigate this issue due to lack of information as well as its irrelevance to the ultimate goal of the research to prove that the Philippines as a smaller country can have substantive influence on the politics in the South China Sea Dispute by taking rational, well-calculated foreign policies.

Literature review

As expected, there are numerous sources about Chinese and American influences in the South China Sea Dispute but only a few articles addressing smaller nations, and even less discussing extensively about the Philippines. While there is also extensive literature about ASEAN roles in the South China Sea Dispute, ASEAN as a regional intergovernmental organization offers a distinct perspective to the South China Sea and thus lies outside the focus and scope of this research paper. Below are reviews of the most related articles.

The first article is *“The Essence of Hedging: Malaysia and Singapore’s response to a rising China”* written by **Kuik Cheng Chwee**.⁸ Even though the article does not concern the Philippines and the South China Sea Dispute per se, its arguments go along with the above-mentioned thesis of the research paper about the position of smaller powers visavis the bigger power - China. The author reasoned that the Southeast Asian countries are neither “balancing” against nor “bandwagoning” with China as Chinese capabilities rise to that of a great power. Rather, as the author argued, the smaller states are adopting “a middle position” – “hedging” in other words. Chwee defines hedging as *“a behavior in which a country seeks to offset risks by pursuing multiple policy options”*– including military cooperation with the West and economic partnership with China - *“under the situation of high-uncertainties and high-stakes”* – the rise of China in this case. The article applies the framework of Regime Legitimation and arrives at the conclusion that the foreign policies of Singapore and Malaysia are not influenced by the rise of China, but by *“a function of regime legitimation through which the ruling elite seek to capitalize on the*

⁸ Kuik Cheng-Chwee, “The Essence of Hedging: Malaysia and Singapore’ S Response to a Rising China,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 30, no. 2 (August 2008), doi:10.1355/cs30-2a.

dynamics of the rising power for the ultimate goal of justifying their own political authority at home”.

While the Regime Legitimation is a popular approach in FPA, the current research does not consider it the only theoretical framework for analysis of the Philippine pivot to China because it disregards the impacts of international structure on smaller states’ foreign policies. Though it is true, as argued by Chwee, that the ruling elites are responsible for making FP decisions, and that these elites care a lot for their own “political survival”, they cannot ignore the importance of the international power structure since any misbehavior in the international apparatus would threaten state survival, and eventually their own survival. One possible explanation for the author’s optimistic view of China as a “potential threat” rather than an “actual threat” is that the article was published in 2008 and mainly gave evidences dating back to the 1990s and early 2000s, when Chinese capabilities were far from that of a great power, especially in comparison with the United States. However, 8 years have passed. China in 2016 is no longer China in 2008. China has become a real threat to the regional security especially with her aggressive behaviors and militarization in the South China Sea Dispute since 2014.

Another useful article is “*Between balancing and bandwagoning: South Korea’s response to China*” by **David C. Kang** in 2009.⁹ In this article, similar arguments were made; reactions of South Korea towards the rise of China were seen as neither balancing nor bandwagoning. However, instead of using the term hedging, Kang proposed that South Korea was “accommodating” the rise of China out of material economic interests. Again, the rise of China was not perceived as threatening for the very same reasons. In addition, nevertheless, the fact that South Korea politics nowadays is preoccupied with the Nuclear threat from North Korea and instability resulted from the President Scandal also hinders South Korea from reacting to Chinese aggressive rise in the region.

Concerning the Philippines’ foreign policies, there are 4 articles addressing Sino-Philippine relations. Three out of these four articles, namely “*The US-Philippine Alliance: an evolving hedge against an emerging China challenge*” (2009),¹⁰ “*Weakness and Gambits*

⁹ David C. Kang, “Between Balancing and Bandwagoning: South Korea’s Response to China,” *Journal of East Asian Studies* 9, no. 01 (April 2009), doi:10.1017/s1598240800002794.

¹⁰ Renato Cruz De Castro, “The US-Philippine Alliance: An Evolving Hedge Against an Emerging China Challenge,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 31, no. 3 (2009), doi:10.1355/cs31-3b.

in *Philippine Foreign Policy in the twenty-first century*” (2010),¹¹ “*Balancing Gambits in twenty-first century Philippine Foreign policy: Gains and possible demise*” (2011),¹² were written by **Renato Cruz De Castro**. These articles revealed the Philippine awareness of the threatening rise of China and her enduring strategy of balancing China and the United States against each other. The anti-American sentiment is mentioned as a hindrance to the advancement in US-Philippine security cooperation. Another important aspect is the exposure of chronic problems in the Philippine domestic politics, ranging from terrorism, economic underdevelopment, threats to nationals abroad, to internal conflicts among different political groups. These internal issues are considered impediments to the country’s FP ambition. There is also large amount of materials addressing corruption issues in the Philippines and how corruption is connected to the Philippine FP. One typical example is “*The influence of Domestic Politics on Philippine Foreign Policy: The case of Philippines-China relations since 2004*” published in 2014 by **Aileen S.P. Baviera**.¹³ Through the careful examination of 3 cases “*the Philippines-China joint marine seismic undertaking in the South China Sea; China’s participation in the national broadband network project and a railway project; and Philippine reactions to China’s execution of three Filipino drug mules*”, Baviera argued that domestic politics, especially corruption, had direct influence on the FP of the Philippines.

The 4th article is titled “*Sino-Philippines relations: Moving beyond South China Sea Dispute?*”¹⁴ The article was written by Hong Zhao, published in 2012. The author, a Chinese, contended that the South China Sea dispute “*has always been a negative factor in the development of China-Philippines relations*”. The conclusion is that the rise of China created high level of uncertainty for the Philippines, pushing the Philippines to surge military alliance with the US to contain China, which in the end hampered Sino-Philippines economic cooperation. Rather than offering a critical aspect to the analysis of Philippine foreign policies with regard to the South China Sea Dispute, the article focuses more on providing a Chinese perspective in the picture.

¹¹ Renato Cruz De Castro, “Weakness and Gambits in Philippine Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century,” *Pacific Affairs* 83, no. 4 (December 1, 2010), doi:10.5509/2010834697.

¹² Renato Cruz De Castro, “Weakness and Gambits in Philippine Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century,” *Pacific Affairs* 83, no. 4 (December 1, 2010), doi:10.5509/2010834697.

¹³ Aileen S. P. Baviera, “Domestic Interests and Foreign Policy in China and the Philippines: Implications for the South China Sea Disputes,” *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints* 62, no. 1 (2014), doi:10.1353/phs.2014.0005.

¹⁴ David C. Kang, “Between Balancing and Bandwagoning: South Korea’s Response to China,” *Journal of East Asian Studies* 9, no. 01 (April 2009), doi:10.1017/s1598240800002794.

Recent analysis about the Philippine foreign policies usually involves exploration of President Duterte's character. One such example is "*The Philippines: Duterte's willful start*" by **Strategic comments** in October 2016. In the article, the author explains how the personalities of President Duterte and his past experiences as the Mayor of Davao City affect the Philippine policy decisions, domestically and internationally. This portion of literature is useful for the current research's investigation of the individual level. However, the current research will not simply repeat what has been said, but make a unique contribution by applying discourse analysis, and taking factors of rationality, psychology, and emotions into consideration.

About the Philippines in general, there are many sources addressing the Sino-Philippines energy cooperation in the South China Sea, the Philippines' memories and remnants from colonial times, especially with relation to the United States, the Philippine democratic culture/ civil society, human rights issues.

Methodology

This research attempts to answer the questions as to why and how the Philippines pivots to China by applying the theoretical framework of **3-level analysis**¹⁵ in Foreign Policy Analysis discipline. FPA is a subfield of International Relations (IR), which perceives states as "black boxes" with foreign policies as final outcomes determined by the international structure. However, FPA manages to distinguish itself from IR by arguing that IR largely ignores domestic dynamics of states whereas FPA opens the "black boxes" to look inside the domestic factors and analyze foreign policies throughout the decision-making process. For the purpose of decoding foreign policies, FPA tries to understand the formation of foreign policies through the interaction of 3 levels – international, state, and individual. At the international level, despite the harsh criticism for its overlap with IR theories, FPA carefully considers the international structure because FPA believes this external power structure imposes certain constraints on the state behaviors – "*the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must*" – and exerts non-negligible impacts on the FP decision-makers during the decision-making process. Yet, unlike IR, FPA rejects the idea that international structure alone can determine the outcomes of foreign policies by taking into consideration the domestic factors of the states. The second level of analysis, as argued by Singer, is "the national state". The national level comprises of virtually

¹⁵ J. David Singer, "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations," *World Politics* 14, no. 01 (October 1961), doi:10.2307/2009557.

everything taking place within the national borders with multiple independent variables like culture, political structure, business, environment, geography, inter alia, simultaneously wielding influence on FP. The national level is so comprehensive that usually the individual level – decision-makers – is seen as part of the national level rather than a stand-alone level. Nevertheless, because there are many famous figures in the world history, such as George Bush junior, Hitler, Stalin, Mao Zedong, Xi Jinping, who possessed so strong characters that they became either the single-most important determinant of their national FP, or at least the dominant factor in FP formulation, the individual level comes to be considered separately. Especially in the case under concern, since the new president of the Philippines – Rodrigo Duterte – is recognized worldwide as having such similar strong character, the research takes into consideration the individual level as an independent variable, separated from the national level.

Under this framework, the Philippine pivot to China is seen as a FP outcome, and the research's task is to look into the formulation process of that policy, trying to answer the question why and how the Philippines decided to pivot to China. Accordingly, the outcome of Philippine pivot to China is the dependent variable that the research tries to explain while the international level, national level, and individual level are the 3 independent variables influencing that dependent variable.

Why not the two-level game¹⁶ model?

The 3-level analysis should not be mistaken with the two-level game model. The two-level game is a very dominant approach when it comes to foreign policy analysis. In the two-level game framework, there are two levels of international and domestic. While the individual level also exists in the form of a statesman playing the role of a chief negotiator, the individual's influence is limited to being only a bridge for negotiation and communication. As a result, the explanatory power of the two-level game model is limited to cases when clear-cut negotiations¹⁷ are involved. Therefore, this research does not apply the two-level game, but the 3-level analysis. The two-level game cannot account for the personalities and characteristics of the Head of state, which is unsuitable for the current case of the Philippines when President Duterte is an important player. Meanwhile, the 3-level analysis can explain how the Philippine pivot to China is formed under the

¹⁶ Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic politics: the logic of two-level games," *International Organizations*, (1998): 427-460.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 433.

simultaneous influences of the international power structure, the domestic concerns, and the Head of State's characteristics. Thus, the success of this research will also contribute to the theoretical application of foreign policy analysis since there has never been any empirical research analyzing foreign policy with the 3-level analysis model. Mostly the two-level analysis is employed.

Data – discourse analysis

In addition to concrete data of economic, military and trade statistics, news references and discourse analysis of President Duterte's speeches will be useful assets and proofs for the arguments made. Discourse analysis is associated with post-structuralism, which is a unique approach in Political Science for its commitment to the 'power of language' and contemporary political issues. For post-structuralists, agents aspire to endorse their political agenda via discursive practices. Language is not simply a medium tool for self-expression, but also a meaningful practice with influential 'political power'. In essence, foreign policy is perceived as "discursive language," through which the policy problems under concern are represented and justified. Discursive practice is a means of identity construction among states and international institutions. Therefore, the question to be asked is not "whether statements are true or not", but rather "which values, norms, identities are being created in language".¹⁸ Using discourse analysis as a tool, therefore, we can get better understanding of the Filipino foreign policy.

The discourse was taken from reports by Filipino media or international media because there is no direct access to the full exact speeches of Mr. Duterte. However, because the media recorded the exact statements of the President, the texts in media can be considered as "public texts" representing the state official foreign policies. Media in this case serves as the medium of communication between the government of the Philippines and the Filipino public, as well as the international community. Through media, the general public get to know what the President of the Philippines has been doing and talking about. As will be seen in the following analysis, the texts were extracted carefully so as to represent the formation process of the Filipino pivot to China through the period of 7 months, from May 2016 to November 2016. Because citing each and every speech of President Duterte is difficult and not effective in showing the major trends of transformation in the foreign policy, the discourse will be limited to the most noticeable and representative statements of

¹⁸Lene Hansen, "Discourse analysis, post-structuralism, and foreign policy," in *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, ed. Steve Smith et al., 94-106.

the President after he had been officially announced to be the New President-elect of the Philippines.

Analysis results

1. International level:

This section aims to address how the structural factors, be it realist power structure between the bigger and the smaller, the liberal structure of economic interdependence, international laws and institutions, or the constructivist structure based on interactions among involved actors, can shape the foreign policy decisions. The *structure-agency* interaction will be examined carefully to prove the impacts of international system on the Philippine FP output of pivoting to China.

Neorealism - Bandwagoning

The Philippines' pivot to China can be explained with **neorealism**, which says that the anarchical system depending on self-help causes states to compete with each other for survival, power, and security.¹⁹ In such an anarchical world, **Bandwagoning** was first coined by Quincy Wright²⁰ and later popularized by Kenneth Waltz²¹ to describe a strategy typically utilized by weaker states to avoid direct confrontation with a stronger rivalry by aligning with and submitting to the latter's sphere of influence. Meanwhile, **balancing** (internally and externally) means a state would prepare herself through improving her national "aggregate capabilities" and cooperating with other capable states to balance against the threats of the aggressive rising hegemon.²² Within the context of the South China Sea Dispute, the Philippines is considered as a weaker state by all means (population, economic capacity, military capacity, international status) in comparison with the China as a superpower. As a result of such an asymmetric relation, where the Philippines should be fully aware of her disadvantages in conflicts with the bigger power of China, the Philippines naturally wants to bandwagon with China, rather than cooperate with the US to balance China.

¹⁹William Wohlforth, "Realism and Foreign Policy," in *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, ed. Steve Smith et al., 35-53.

²⁰Quincy Wright, "The balance of power," in *A study of war* (Chicago: The university of Chicago Press, 1964), 136

²¹Kenneth Waltz, Chapter 6, in *Theory of International Politics* (McGraw-Hill, 1979), 126.

²²Wohlforth, 41.

The President of the Philippines did bear the Philippine disadvantages versus China in mind when he suggested re-opening talks with Chinese government after the peak of tension over the South China Sea Dispute. Proofs President Duterte's awareness of neo-realist structure in making this FP decision can be found in his speeches.

- "Philippines to fight China? It will be slaughter. So we talk, we cannot match," the president said²³
- "But for now Mr. Ambassador, I want to just talk to you in the moment, maybe **give us time to build our forces** also. **You have so much superiority**," Duterte said.²⁴

The President confessed in his speeches that the Philippines recognized Chinese military superiority and refused flatly the idea of confronting China. In other words, the President, through his public language, expressed the Philippine government's willingness to recognize the Chinese super power in Asia.

- "I said, with my **thrust of an independent foreign policy**, we will find ourselves mutually agreeing in so many things and **align our foreign policy towards the development of Asia, strengthening of ties among the countries in the region**, with **China leading the way** in the economic development," he added during Sino-Philippine bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Peru.²⁵

Such public willingness to align with China under Chinese leadership in Asia is the language expression of the Philippine bandwagoning strategy.

Undoubtedly, the proximity between the Philippines and China plays an important role in dictating the Filipino **bandwagoning behavior**. The Philippines used to balance against China under President Aquino but soon realized a far-away friend like the US will not be willing to intervene militarily against China to save the Philippines in case of armed conflict. Even after three years have passed since the tension reached the highest points in 2013, all the US has been doing is throwing verbal attacks against China, and conducting

²³ Patricia Lourdes Viray, "Duterte on China: It's talk or fight," *Philstar*, September 9th 2016, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/09/09/1622059/duterte-china-its-talk-or-fight>

²⁴ Patricia Lourdes Viray, "Duterte wants to set aside arbitral ruling," *Philstar*, August 29, 2016, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/08/29/1618421/duterte-wants-set-aside-arbitral-ruling-now>

²⁵ Alexis Romero, "Rody to align foreign policy with China-led Asian development," *Philstar*, November 21, 2016, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/11/21/1645937/rody-align-foreign-policy-china-led-asian-development>

some peaceful joint military patrols in the area.²⁶ The Philippine doubts about the US commitment is expressed in Mr. Duterte's question towards US Ambassador Philip Goldberg in June 2016:

- Duterte said he asked US Ambassador Philip Goldberg in a recent meeting, "**Are you with us or are you not with us?**" adding that Goldberg responded, "**Only if you are attacked**".²⁷

Furthermore, the cost of opposing China increasingly exceeds the benefits of bandwagoning with China. In fact, during the period of balancing under president Aquino, the Philippines had to spend, as publicly announced, \$7 million²⁸ of legal fees (much more could have been spent) just for preparing her case against China, while simultaneously losing the chance to earn generous direct investment from China for economic development; not to mention disruption in bilateral economic activities and rising military expenditure for arms race. Therefore, as the new President came and China offered attractive economic incentives, the Philippines decided to convert the strategy from balancing to bandwagoning with China.

In short, the logic of bandwagoning stipulates that the weaker state of the Philippines should align herself with China - the strong aggressor since the latter can use force to take whatever it want in the anarchical system, just as Thucydides' famous dictum says that "**the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.**"²⁹

Liberalism

Liberalism rejects the power politics as the inevitable outcome of states' relations and disregard security and power as states' sole priorities. In contrast with realism, liberalism strongly believe in the power of **international laws, international organizations, international cooperation**, possibility of positive sum game, and the roles of non-

²⁶ Lynn Kuok, "The U. S. FON program in the South China Sea: A lawful and necessary response to China's strategic ambiguity," in *East Asia Policy Paper 9* (Center for East Asia Policy Studies at Brookings, 2016), <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/The-US-FON-Program-in-the-South-China-Sea.pdf>.

²⁷ "Are you with us?': Philippines' Duterte seeks US assurance in South China Sea feud with Beijing," *South China Morning Post*, last modified June 22, 2016, <http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/diplomacy/article/1978988/are-you-us-philippines-duterte-seeks-us-assurance-feud-beijing>.

²⁸ Ellen T. Tordesillas, "How much did PH pay for foreign lawyers in case vs China?" *ABS-CBN*, July 21, 2016, <http://news.abs-cbn.com/focus/07/20/16/how-much-did-ph-pay-for-foreign-lawyers-in-case-vs-china>.

²⁹ Robert B. Strassler, "The Melian dialogue," in *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, eds. Richard Crawley, and Victor Davis Hanson (Simon and Schuster, 1998), 352.

governmental actors.³⁰ In the application of liberal logics to the case of the Philippines' pivot to China, the **pacifying effects of international laws, UNCLOS in this case, and commercial cooperation** are the most obvious.

First of all, UNCLOS framework has undoubtedly created a favorable condition for the Philippines to negotiate with China. That is the Philippines won the case she submitted to the International Arbitration Court in Hague against China; the final judgement of the Court were published in July 2016 in favor of the Philippines.³¹ Even though China persistently illustrated ignorance for the case, the attention and reaction from the international community was so serious that Chinese government cannot help but adjusting her behaviors. Though still maintaining tough declarations of her position of Chinese territorial integrity, China indeed temporarily stopped aggressive behaviors in the South China Sea against the Philippines; the Filipino fishermen are now able to conduct their fishing activities in the disputed areas, which were previously controlled by Chinese forces.³² The only actual fight was in the academic area³³, and social media³⁴. Right after the judgement of the Court, many Chinese experts published lavishly on different international journals and popular magazines to explain and defend their national positions against the omnipresent criticism of the US-educated English-speaking experts. China also threatened to “exit U.N. sea convention if South China Sea ruling disappoints”³⁵; but she did not unilaterally declare war to defend her rights. As can be seen, the ways of war have been liberalized, relying on academia and soft power, rather than the traditional hard power as dictated by realists.

Moreover, the win under UNCLOS gives the Philippines more leverage in negotiations with China. As a winner, the Philippines has the right to make the first move of re-opening

³⁰ Michael W. Doyle, “Liberalism and foreign policy,” in *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, ed. Steve Smith et al., 54-76.

³¹ PCA.

³² Alexis Romero, “Duterte says Pinoy fishermen may return to Panatag in a few days,” *Philstar.com*, October 23, 2016, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/10/23/1636570/duterte-says-pinoy-fishermen-may-return-panatag-few-days>

³³ Dingding Chen, “Both China and the US Want to Control the Narrative on the South China Sea,” *The Diplomat*, July 05, 2016, <http://thediplomat.com/2016/07/both-china-and-the-us-want-to-control-the-narrative-on-the-south-china-sea/>.

³⁴ Linh Tong, “The Social Media 'War' Over the South China Sea,” *The Diplomat*, July 16, 2016, <http://thediplomat.com/2016/07/the-social-media-war-over-the-south-china-sea/>.

³⁵ Politics, “Beijing indicates it may exit U.N. sea convention if South China Sea ruling disappoints,” *Japantimes*, June 21, 2016, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/06/21/national/politics-diplomacy/beijing-indicates-may-exit-u-n-sea-convention-south-china-sea-ruling-disappoints/#.WC4kGo997IX>.

bilateral talks with China, which is also desired by Chinese leaders for saving their face as the bigger power.³⁶ And that also offers the Philippines a better bargaining position between China and the US in comparison with the previous position of totally allying with the far-away US and disputing with the close neighboring China. Indeed, as President Duterte showed enthusiasm to warm up the bilateral relation, Chinese government has rewarded him and his country with a great deal of favorable economic packages worth \$13.5 billion.³⁷ Even before coming to power, the president already used the most positive wordings to welcome Chinese investment in the Philippines.

- “Build us a railway just like the one you built in Africa and let’s set aside disagreements for a while. Build us a rail for Mindanao, build us a railway from Manila to Bicol, I will be happy, let us not fight. Build us a railway because no nation on earth ever progressed without a railway.”³⁸

At the current look, that is a win-win situation for both sides.

Secondly, the **commercial peace theory** with the factual interdependence between Filipino and Chinese economies would perfectly explain the rapprochement between the Philippines and China. The commercial peace theory argues that free trade can pacify the intense zero-sum competition in international relations.³⁹

Even though China is a one-party authoritarian state in domestic affairs, Chinese foreign policy, especially in trade and economic areas, has been open-minded and liberal by nature. China cannot afford to risk her international economic influence by pushing the smaller states to submit to her wills with hard power. For China, trade and economic cooperation is more important and that is how China has risen to the level of world super power, not by realist hard power, but by soft power of economic cooperation. China manipulates perfectly her economic influence. By heavily investing in Africa, China shocked the world by her expanded sphere of influence. Even the headquarter building of the African Union was given as a gift by Chinese government. The same strategy applies in Southeast Asia; through economic power, China effectively blocks ASEAN’s unity in the South China Sea

³⁶ Francisco Tadad, “Can DU30 save China’s face?” Manilatimes, July 14, 2016, <http://www.manilatimes.net/can-du30-save-chinas-face/273797/>.

³⁷ Robin Harding, “China visit was just economics, Duterte tells Japan,” October 26, 2016, <https://www.ft.com/content/e8113902-9b5b-11e6-8f9b-70e3cabccfae>.

³⁸ Germelina Lacorte, “Duterte tells China: Build us a railway and let’s set aside differences for a while,” February 29, 2016, <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/137093/duterte-tells-china-build-us-a-railway-and-lets-set-aside-differences-for-a-while>

³⁹ Doyle.

Dispute, where China is the laws breaker, by pressuring economically on Cambodia, Laos. Through economic ties – the liberal means and liberal logics, China is step by step achieving her realist goals.

With respect for Sino-Philippines relation, liberalism can explain the pivot to China because China is the second largest trading partner of the Philippines and the largest trading partner of ASEAN. In comparison with the US, China is more important for the Philippines' economy and prosperity, especially when now China is offering cheap loans for the Philippines infrastructure projects and fighting drug campaign without any pre-conditions. The commercial peace theory also justifies that the short-term disputes will be only temporary while the long-term economic benefits and interests will eventually prevail the China-Philippines bilateral relation, when leads to the inevitable Filipino pivot to China.

The empirical evidence for the theory shows itself in Wang Fang's research⁴⁰ into the impacts of a series of political disputes between China and the Philippines on the two's bilateral trade relations. The conclusion is that even though territorial disputes did deteriorate trade between two countries, as the volume of trade commonly decreased significantly after conflicts, such negative impacts weakened over time as trade volume rebounded swiftly. In particular, trade in industrial equipment or industrial raw materials were found to be independent from the disputes' impact.

Therefore, it is understandable why the Philippines is pivoting to China according to liberalism. Liberal logics, as shown in above extracts, were deeply embedded in the discourse of the Philippine decision maker.

Constructivism - “Anarchy is what states make of it”

Constructivism challenges the realist and liberalist assumption about the predetermined anarchical nature of international relations, rejecting the idea that conflict and self-help are inevitable conducts of states' relations. Constructivism is unique for its belief in the possibility of change; it suggests that international relations can change among the three cultures of anarchy – enemy, rivalry, friend – by altering their practices. Instead of dictating the world order like liberalists and realists, constructivists offer solutions to achieve peace through changes in agents' identities, interests, and mutual understanding. What is at the heart of constructivism is that international structure can be constructed and

⁴⁰ Fang Wang, “South China Sea Territorial Disputes and Sino-Philippine trade,” *Economic and Political Studies*, (2015), <http://blog.chinadaily.com.cn/blog-1040969-30038.html>

de-constructed through states' interactions and behaviors towards each other.⁴¹ Therefore, constructivism explains perfectly the change from a US-ally Philippines of Aquino to China's friend of Duterte.

Under the leadership of Aquino III, China was viewed as a threat to national security due to Chinese aggressive attacks to Filipino territorial integrity and fishermen. This is a social fact constructed on the brute facts of Chinese aggressive rise, and asymmetric power between the two nations, which makes the Philippines feel like a victim attacked by China. With that perception about China, President Aquino constructed his foreign policy and brought China to the International Court. Moreover, series of joint-military actions between the Philippines and the USA also intensified the relation between China and the Philippines. Because of the negative meaning that President Aquino attached to China, the Philippines tried to partner with the US to balance China under the perceptions about China as an enemy.

However, with a change of president, the interactions altered and the atmosphere between two states changed subsequently. President Duterte looked at China with friendlier eyes.

- "I know the dynamics inside China. It has been explained to me very well but the **Chinese people this time might find a place in their hearts for Filipinos**. After all... **there's a Chinese blood in me so I hope that you treat us as brothers**, not your enemies and take note of the plight of our citizens," Duterte said.⁴²

To President Duterte, China is no longer a threat, but a promising donor, while the US has been degraded from being a reliable ally to an aggressor (for the criticism against Duterte's drug campaign).

- "I would have alliances on trade and commerce with China. Russia has agreed to talk about how they can help us here. China is ready to help us with this goddamned problem of drugs."⁴³

⁴¹Trine Flockhart, "Constructivism and Foreign Policy," in Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases, ed. Steve Smith et al., 78-92.

⁴² Patricia Lourdes Viray, "Duterte wants to set aside arbitral ruling," Philstar, August 29, 2016, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/08/29/1618421/duterte-wants-set-aside-arbitral-ruling-now>

⁴³ Gil C. Cabacungan, "Duterte seeks alliances with China and Russia," In The Philippine Daily Inquirer, September 28th 2016, <http://globalnation.inquirer.net/145595/duterte-seeks-alliances-with-china-and-russia>

The President talked nicely of Russia and China while saving his strongest criticism for the Philippine military ally – the USA.

- In a speech on Tuesday evening at the Navy headquarters, Duterte asked the Marines to give him time so “we can get out of this ambit” of the Americans “who have pushed us around, insulted us.” “They said they don’t like me,” Mr. Duterte said, “**Go out,**” he said. “**Remove all your deposits but do not impose on us anything. We are no longer a colony of the United States.** We cannot be controlled in how I run (my country).”⁴⁴

As can be seen from the language, the fact that the US and Western countries have been increasingly criticizing Mr. Duterte for his drug campaign has contributed to the **deconstruction of alliance** between two traditional allies. However, as soon as the new US president – Donald Trump – came into power and altered the tone of his language in communication with President Duterte, US-Philippine relation immediately saw a warm-up.

- “I appreciate the response that I got from President-elect Trump, and I would like to wish him success,” Mr. Duterte said.⁴⁵

And despite having claimed “a separation” from the US not long before, Mr. Duterte now showed willingness to maintain alliance with the US - “**We assured him of our ties with America.**”⁴⁶ Indeed, International relations are all about interactions; friendly interactions construct alliance whereas criticism provokes oppositions.

In a short summary of the constructivist point of view, the structure of power in the South China Sea has been altered through friendlier interactions between China and the Philippines, as well as deteriorating interactions between the US and the Philippines. The intense relation between China and Philippines just a few months ago has been replaced with promises of cooperation. Under President Duterte, the Philippines is re-considering her foreign policy towards China and the US, turning itself into an active player rather than a passive one replying on American sponsorship. The Philippines now has become a valuable bargaining chip between China and the US. This is an example of how even a smaller agent can influence the structure. Even though it is difficult to change the anarchy

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Felipe Villamor, “Rodrigo Duterte Says Donald Trump Endorses His Violent Antidrug Campaign,” The New York Times, December 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/03/world/asia/philippines-rodrigo-duterte-donald-trump.html?_r=0

⁴⁶ Ibid.

structure of coexistence between small powers and big powers, the Philippines at least changed its own perspective position, lending itself more independence and active role. This is a transformative change due to the **disruptive events** of new president and the international criticism against his talks in the international arena.

2. State level

Due to the limited information about the domestic affairs and internal dynamics of government's power distribution, it is difficult to draw substantive analysis at the state level. However, through the discourse of the President Duterte as the head of the state, it is possible to see the pivot to China not only as an outcome per se, but also as a gradual process of foreign policy formation. The pivot was originally just a suggestion for bilateral relationship amendment but later became a strategic indispensable foreign policy.

The formation process of the Philippine pivot to China

While analyzing Mr. Duterte's rhetoric, it is important to take into consideration **certain contexts**.⁴⁷ First of all is the date of July 12th 2016, when the PCA released the final judgement in favor of the Philippines. Before July 12th, no one knew whether the Court would stand for the Philippines or for China. Therefore, in the period prior to July 12th, the New President was not at all firm and decisive in his speech about the Filipino foreign policy towards the South China Sea. At the very early stage right after the election result was announced (in **May**), while confirming his willingness to open direct talks with China, Mr. Duterte used rather neutral statement like "Well, ties have never been cold. But I would rather be friendly with everybody,"⁴⁸ No criticism or favor for either China or the US was yet shown. However, after about one month, in another report of the South China Morning Post (in **June**), Mr. President's speech started to question the alliance with the USA, and propose more tangible steps in retrieving talks with China by suggesting sending Arthur Tugade – the state transport secretary to negotiate with China.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ "Philippines' Duterte offers hand of friendship to China," *South China Morning Post*, May 16, 2016, <http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/diplomacy/article/1946067/philippines-duterte-offers-hand-friendship-china>

⁴⁹ "Are you with us?': Philippines' Duterte seeks US assurance in South China Sea feud with Beijing," *South China Morning Post*, last modified June 22, 2016, <http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/diplomacy/article/1978988/are-you-us-philippines-duterte-seeks-us-assurance-feud-beijing>.

- The long-time mayor of Davao city, who starts his six-year term on June 30, said he would send his designated transport secretary, Arthur Tugade, to China “not to talk about war, not to talk about irritations there, but to talk about peace and how they can help us”⁵⁰

Also, Duterte started talking about an “**independent foreign policy for the Philippines**”

- “and will not be dependent on the United States.”⁵¹

Then came **July 12th** when the final judgment in favor of the Philippines was announced by the UN Arbitration Court. And the first remarks⁵² of the President right after the decision of the Court focused on condemning the possibility of war and proposing bilateral talks with China. The President also publicly requested the Former President Fidel Ramos to visit China as a special envoy to start the process.

- “War is not an option. So on the other side, peace will talk.”⁵³
- “I have to consult with many people, including former President Fidel Ramos. I would like to respectfully ask him to go to China to start bilateral talk.”⁵⁴

At this period, Mr. Duterte sounded as if he was well aware of the importance of the US-Philippines alliance, and that he also cared not to offend the USA, which contrasted with his later-on scandalous remarks criticizing the US as hypocrite. The reason is that the pivot to China has not yet been confirmed. Thus, before successful establishment of bandwagoning strategy, the President could not risk to announce the breakup of US-Philippine alliance.

- “But we do not also want to offend the United States. Why? Because we have also identified ourselves allied with Western power. So that’s an interest we should not forget. Our interests, and the interests of our ally.”⁵⁵

Then Former President Fidel Ramos was sent as a special envoy to China by Mr. Duterte. As reported by The Philippine Star⁵⁶ on **August 12th**, the former president revealed to public the willingness to cooperate from both sides. It seemed clear after the former

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵²“President Duterte Wants Peaceful Talk with China on West Philippine Sea "War is not an Option"#du30," YouTube video, posted by DU30, July 15, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRZpoWrcI9g>

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Patricia Lourdes Viray, “Fidel Ramos takes first steps to build trust with China,” *The Philippine Star*, August 12, 2016, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/08/12/1612752/fidel-ramos-takes-first-steps-build-trust-china>

president's visit that the Chinese side was ready for discussion and that there was no obstacle in the process of warming up the relation.

- "They reiterated that they are here in their personal capacity and were pleased with the discussions and looked forward to the beginning of a process of formal discussions which will be continued in Beijing and Manila and other possible venues," the statement read.⁵⁷

Both parties agreed that building trust is important to the long-term relationship between the Asian neighbors."⁵⁸

Only when positive signs had been concluded, the pivot to China started to take clear shape in Mr. President's speech as reported in The Philippine Star on **August 29th**.⁵⁹ The President, through his language, expressed the Philippine government's willingness to submit to the Chinese super power on the condition that China would allow Filipino fishermen to return to their traditional fishing areas in the South China Sea.

- "I know the dynamics inside China. It has been explained to me very well but the **Chinese people this time might find a place in their hearts for Filipinos. After all... there's a Chinese blood in me so I hope that you treat us (Filipino fishermen) as brothers**, not your enemies and take note of the plight of our citizens," Duterte said.⁶⁰

Afterwards, in **early September**, the decision to pivot to China was reiterated in Duterte's speech with the Filipino community in Jakarta (Indonesia).⁶¹ The language of the President appeared to be well constructed.

- "There is not even a decisive move in the South China Sea. We have only two options there - we talk or we fight,"⁶²

After the pivot to China had been firmly formulated to the public, Mr. Duterte announced the next serious moves of stopping the joint patrols with the US in the disputed area of the South China Sea, purchasing defense equipment from Russia and China, and requesting immediate leave of US army in Mindanao.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Patricia Lourdes Viray, "Duterte wants to set aside arbitral ruling," Philstar, August 29, 2016, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/08/29/1618421/duterte-wants-set-aside-arbitral-ruling-now>

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Patricia Lourdes Viray, "Duterte on China: It's talk or fight," Philstar, September 9th 2016, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/09/09/1622059/duterte-china-its-talk-or-fight>

⁶² Ibid.

- "We do not go into a patrol or join any other army from now because I do not want trouble," Duterte said. "I do not want to ride gung-ho style there with China or with America. I just want to patrol our territorial waters."⁶³
- "I would like to ask Defense Secretary Lorenzana to accompany the technical people. Go to Russia and China and see what's the best."⁶⁴
- "I could not speak then out of respect and I do not want a rift with America. But they have to go," the president said.⁶⁵

Since then, Mr. President never hesitated to criticize the US interference with the Philippine domestic politics. As reported by The Washington Times on October 20th, Duterte intensified his condemnation for the US.

- "In this venue, I announce my separation from the United States," Mr. Duterte told an audience of some 200 Chinese and Philippine business people in the Chinese capital. "Both in military, not maybe social, but economics also. America has lost," he said to applause.⁶⁶

As reported on 20th November, the policy of pivoting to China seems to take the full shape. The language recorded the promise of President Duterte in his cooperation with China.

- "**I have given you my word**, we will cooperate with you," Duterte told China President Xi Jinping during their bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Peru.⁶⁷

Justifications for the Pivot to China

The pivot to China is constrained by the public opinion because the South China Sea issue stimulates Filipino nationalism. Therefore, as a FP decision maker, Mr. President had to be careful in justifying the Pivot to China to mitigate opposition from citizens. Or else, the sudden pivot to China right after the glorious victory for the Philippines at the International

⁶³ Jim Gomez, "Duterte rejects joint patrols, eyes China weapons," *Philstar*, September 14, 2016, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/09/14/1623716/duterte-rejects-joint-patrols-eyes-china-weapons>

⁶⁴ Pia Ranada, "Duterte: PH to buy defense assets from Russia, China," *Rappler*, September 14, 2016, <http://www.rappler.com/nation/146155-duterte-defense-assets-russia-china>.

⁶⁵ Alexis Romero, "Duterte to US troops: Leave Mindanao," *Philstar*, September 12, 2016, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/09/12/1623038/duterte-us-troops-leave-mindanao>

⁶⁶ Guy Taylor, "Separation' talk perplexes U.S. officials as Philippines court China, Russia," *The Washington Times*, October 20th, 2016, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/oct/20/rodrigo-duterte-separation-talk-perplexes-us-as-ph/>

⁶⁷ Alexis Romero, "Rody to align foreign policy with China-led Asian development," *Philstar*, November 21, 2016, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/11/21/1645937/rody-align-foreign-policy-china-led-asian-development>

Arbitration Court would be heavily criticized as selling territory for economic benefits.⁶⁸ Through discourse analysis, readers can identify not only the policy formation process, but also the justification that Duterte made to convince the public of his pivot to China. The justification can be summarized as **praising China, allying with Russia, condemning the US, and accepting unfair reality.**

President Duterte portrayed China as a benevolent and friendly donor, a real friend of the Philippines in time of crisis despite the fact that there has been territorial conflict between the two countries. The president utilized the most positive wordings to welcome Chinese investment in the Philippines.

- “I would have alliances on trade and commerce with China. Russia has agreed to talk about how they can help us here. China is ready to help us with this goddamned problem of drugs.”⁶⁹

The conversation between Duterte and Putin revealed the president’s adoption of the Philippine historical alliance with the Communist bloc – China and Soviet Union - to escape the influence from the US. The Philippines seeks to strengthen ties with Russia.

- “I have been looking for this moment to meet you Mr. President not only because you represent a great country but (because of) your leadership too,” the president said. “We’ve been longing to be part of Europe especially in commerce and trade around the world,” he added.⁷⁰

However, Duterte saved his strongest criticism for the Philippine national ally – the USA. He accused the US of being “double standard”, not keeping up promises, bullying smaller nations like the Philippines, and interfering with his domestic politics.

- “What kind of double standard is that?” he said.⁷¹
- “Of late, I see a lot of these western nations bullying small nations. And not only that, they are into so much hypocrisy... They seem to start a war but are afraid to go to war. That is what's wrong with America and the others,” Duterte told Putin during their

⁶⁸ DJ Yap, “Don’t sell out to Chinese, opposition solons warn Duterte,” *The Philippine Daily Inquirer*, October 2016, <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/147046/dont-sell-out-to-chinese-opposition-solons-warn-duterte>

⁶⁹ Gil C. Cabacungan, “Duterte seeks alliances with China and Russia,” In *The Philippine Daily Inquiry*, September 28, 2016, <http://globalnation.inquirer.net/145595/duterte-seeks-alliances-with-china-and-russia>

⁷⁰ Alexis Romero, “Rody slams ‘bully’ West: Meets ‘idol’ Putin, Xi,” *Philstar*, November 21, 2016, <http://m.philstar.com/headlines/show/514bf8f44bfd57ac2ab9c55277fc01e8>

⁷¹ Ibid.

bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit.⁷²

The President also used realist rhetoric to talk to the public. He pointed out that international tribunal cannot solve conflict because there is no mechanism to enforce the Court's decision and therefore states will abide only their national interests. The rhetoric sounded like the President was trying to put himself in the enemy's shoes and sympathize with that enemy (China in this case).

- "I have a similar position as China's. **I don't believe in solving the conflict through an international tribunal. China has said it will not abide by whatever that tribunal's decision will be. That's the same case with me, especially if the ruling will be against the Philippines.**"⁷³

He was also skillful in showing himself as willing to fight side by side with the citizens, that he is truly the Mayor of the Philippines. By doing so, he tried to convince the public that he was genuinely trying to bring about the best for the people and nation of the Philippines.

- "If worse comes to worst, **I will not waste the lives of Filipino soldiers, I will go to the boundary line, myself**; maybe have someone take me there, and I will go there on my own with a jet ski, bringing along with me a flag and a pole and once I disembark, I will plant the flag on the runway and tell the Chinese authorities, '**Kill me.**' **Huwagnaang sundalo (Don't kill the soldiers).**"⁷⁴

Because the Philippine pivot to China is a contemporary issue, discourse analysis is undoubtedly the most useful tool at hand. As can be seen from the above analysis, discourse reveals a great deal about the dynamics of the Philippine foreign policy formation and the leader's justification for his choice to pivot to China. Through the speeches, the Philippines have constructed her relations with China, Russia, and the USA.

Bureaucratic Politics Model

Bureaucratic Politics is another important determinant in FP decision making, especially with a moderately important issue like the South China Sea Dispute in peaceful time after the decision of the International Arbitration Court in favor of the Philippines. According to bureaucratic politics model (BPM) proposed by Graham Allison, the foreign policy

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Robles.

⁷⁴ Robles.

decisions of a nation are best described as outcomes of "politicking" and "negotiation" among bureaucratic organizations and political actors. In BPM, foreign policy can be influenced by "outputs" - information and foreign policy alternatives presented to the government by bureaucracies.⁷⁵ By reading President Duterte's discourse, it is possible to identify the how the "outputs" influenced the Philippines' pivot to China. First of all, the pivot to China was not a decision constructed solely by Mr. Duterte's strong character. Mr. President announced to the public that **“I have to consult with many people, including former President Fidel Ramos. I would like to respectfully ask him to go to China to start bilateral talk.”**⁷⁶ Furthermore, once Mr. Duterte wanted to declare the cut of military ties with the US as a final stage completing his pivot to China, his statements were later corrected by the Philippine Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana. The Defense Secretary claimed that the US-Philippine defense cooperation was still moving forward and that **President Duterte had made the statements without consulting the Defense cabinet.** Mr. Lorenzana also revealed that in early November 2016, Duterte indicated that he would need more information and suggestions from the cabinet to make implement the final decision.⁷⁷ Undoubtedly, in the formation and implementation of the Philippine pivot to China, Mr. Duterte cannot single-handedly make all the decisions, he also needed opinions from different political leaders, like the former president Fidel Ramos, and consensus from different groups, like the Defense Cabinet. Without support from these actors, it would be impossible for event this powerful president to impose the decision to completely pivot to China. There is a limit to which extent the Philippines could pivot, and that is maintaining military alliance with the US while proceeding to align with China.

3. Individual level - Mr. Duterte

Currently, President Duterte is the most influential actor in the Philippine politics. He is even regarded as the most powerful leader since Marcos, the notorious dictator in the history of the Philippines.⁷⁸ As a result, it is indispensable to look at the individual level of President Duterte so as to gain more understanding into what drove the pivot to China. In

⁷⁵ Graham Allison and Philip Zalikow, "The Cuban Missile Crisis: First Cut," In *Essence of Decision*, New York: Longman, (1999), 77-129.

⁷⁶ President Duterte Wants Peaceful Talk with China on West Philippine Sea "War is not an Option"#du30," YouTube video, posted by DU30, July 15, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRZpoWrcl9g>

⁷⁷ Prashanth Parameswaran, "The Limits of Duterte's US-China Rebalance," *The Diplomat*, October 24, 2016, <http://thediplomat.com/2016/10/the-limits-of-dutertes-us-china-rebalance/>

⁷⁸ Gil C. Cabacungan, "Most powerful PH leader since Marcos," *The Philippine Daily Inquirer*, June 9, 2016, <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/789789/most-powerful-ph-leader-since-marcos>

this section, the Rational actor model, Psychology and cognitive biases, and emotions will be taken into account to explain why Mr. Duterte decided to pivot to China.

Rational actor model

The rational actor model helps us understand how the rational thinking of President Duterte played a role in determining the pivot to China. According to the rational model theory, an actor can identify a set of potential alternatives to solve a problem and make the final decision based on his or her preferences by comparing the expected utility that he or she attaches to each alternative. The final decision for a rational actor is the alternative that can maximize the expected utility.⁷⁹

In this specific case, President illustrated his rational thinking in his discourse: "There is not even a decisive move in the South China Sea. We have only two options there - we talk or we fight."⁸⁰ As can be seen from the statement, there are only two options for the Philippines's foreign policy with China: one is to bandwagon with China and the other is to continue Aquino's path to ally with the US to balance China, according to Mr. Duterte's rational thinking. As a rational actor, Mr. Duterte indeed had made a wise choice. By calculations in economic, geographical, and political terms, the first choice obviously offers more utilities to the Philippines while the second choice would only come at the Philippine cost once a war would break out: "Philippines to fight China? It will be slaughter. So we talk, we cannot match."⁸¹ Therefore, it is understandable why the President Duterte accepted to open bilateral talks with China for the attractiveness from favorable trade deals and loans. And it turned out that his rational decision in the end satisfied his political goal when "\$13.5 billion in deals"⁸² was signed during Duterte's trip to China. The aim of this section is not to judge either whether Mr. Duterte was a real rational actor or whether his choice was the best rational decision, but to claim that Mr. Duterte did act as a rational actor when calculating the alternatives.

⁷⁹ Janice, 131.

⁸⁰ Viray.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² "Philippines to sign \$13.5B in deals with China," Philstar, October 20, 2016, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/10/20/1635602/philippines-sign-13.5b-deals-china>.

Psychological and cognitive biases

However, Mr. Duterte is not a perfect rational actor; nobody is. Therefore, this section moves on to discuss how the cognitive psychology influenced the rational decision making process through simplification, poor estimation, and loss-aversion.⁸³

Leaders regularly intend to simplify complexities. Unfortunately, while doing so, leaders subconsciously ignore the variation of the contexts and of the problems they confront. They usually project the path for the future based on lessons learned from the past without carefully considering the nuances between the past and the future.⁸⁴ In the case of President Duterte's pivot to China, the path of simplicity is identifiable in the President's claim of himself as "the Mayor of the Philippines." So far, he has been conducting himself as a president in the same way as he had managed successfully the Mayorship of Davao city for the last 22 years. He continued to pursue his "can do" spirit since "can do" had always been his reputation as the Davao city's mayor. He also did not pay much attention to wording his statements (he named president Obama "son of the whore" and Pope "son of the bitch") in international affairs as he is used to the managing style in the local government of Davao city, where he was the head of the family and took full control of local politics. His brutal war on drug is yet another direct application of his past famous victory in reviving security in the Davao city - one of the most criminals-plagued cities in the Philippines. As a result, he believes he can manage the country of the Philippines in the same way as he had managed Davao city. Having limited exposure to international affairs, President Duterte does not care much about geopolitics between the US and China, or saying nice words to the Western authorities. The most important thing for him, as the Mayor of the Philippines, is that China can offer his country with many favorable economic packages while the West repeatedly criticized him with their traditional double-standard. As a result, he preferred pivot to China.⁸⁵

He also can be considered a **poor estimator** since he viewed no talk to China would equal war, meaning bloodshed for the Filipinos. On one hand, this is a subjective default because of his background. With little experience in international arena, he must have missed to understand the nature of Chinese power based on economic cooperation, which would have

⁸³ Janice, 133.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ "The Philippines: Duterte's wilful start," *Strategic Comments*, no. 22 (2016):8, v-vii, DOI: 10.1080/13567888.2016.1251788

suffered had China decided to declare war on the Philippines to claim her territory in the South China Sea. On the other hand, the nature of the world politics is so dynamic and complicated that President Duterte would not be able to estimate exactly whether China was ready to declare war or not. As a result of such poor estimation, President Duterte believed there were only two options in dealing with China: "talk or fight"; and he chose the former as it brought about more expected utility as mentioned above.

Another explanation for his choice to pivot to China is that he was loss-averse. **Loss aversion** theory dictates that leaders are risk-averse when things are functioning well and risk-acceptant when something important is lost.⁸⁶ Accordingly, as the Philippines just barely won the case against China, gaining international reputation as a brave small state opposing to the bigger state, President Duterte did not want to risk losing anything more by continuing to engage in confrontation with China. He wanted to maintain the upper-handed position for the benefits of the Philippines in negotiation with China.

Impacts of emotions

As Jonathan Cohen had claimed: "Emotions influence our decisions," emotions are believed by experts to have the capacity to cause our positive or negative response. Anger, for example, can prompt revenge action.⁸⁷ In the case of President Duterte, his anger at the US criticism about his war on drugs, in combination with his childhood experience of being molested by an American priest, had stimulated him to throw insults at President Obama as "son of the whore" and the US system as "hypocrite."⁸⁸ As a result, he re-oriented the foreign policy of the Philippines to drift away from the US and pivot to China. He started to emphasize in his discourse the image of the US as the colonizer and double-standard maker.

The anger at the US has an interesting effect in drawing president Duterte closer to China and Russia. He saved all the nice words for China and Russia, praising these two countries as great friends. As for Russia, Mr. Duterte publicly confessed his admiration to Mr. Putin- his idol. Meanwhile, the Chinese affiliation must have resulted from his Chinese blood (since his grandfather was also a Chinese) and his appreciation of the Chinese construction

⁸⁶ Janice, 139

⁸⁷ Janice, 139-143.

⁸⁸ "The Philippines: Duterte's wilful start," *Strategic Comments*, no. 22 (2016):8, v-vii, DOI: 10.1080/13567888.2016.1251788

of big rehabilitation center for drug users in the Philippines.⁸⁹ Because of those emotions, Duterte developed such anti-American policy and expressively pivoted to China and Russia.

Wrap up the 3-level analysis of the Philippine pivot to China

The South China Sea Dispute is one of the hot spots for conflicts in East Asia. Close observation and thorough understanding of any foreign policy decision of the actors involved are critically important since any decision like the Philippine pivot to China carries great implications for the entire Asian-Pacific region. As can be seen, a comprehensive assessment at all three levels of the Philippine pivot to China offers meaningful explanations as to why the Philippines decided to do so. The media and scholar analysis so far focused solely on the role of the president Duterte as the most influential leader of the country, and liberalism as the most useful structural theory explaining the Philippine interests in economic cooperation with China. However, there is lack of systematic analysis of how discourse, constructivism, post-structuralism, rational actor model, the role of emotions, and especially the impacts of bureaucratic politics as well as other domestic constraints influenced the decision to pivot to China. By looking closer at the picture, through different layers, we can understand the pivot to China not simply as an outcome of geopolitics, but also a dynamic of negotiations and interactions of different factors in the Philippine politics. Furthermore, as revealed in the following discussion section, the Philippine pivot to China has important implications for the power structure in the South China Sea, affecting also the position of other smaller states in the region, most notably Vietnam. Even though smaller states might have limited influence in bilateral relations, smaller states with clear awareness of their disadvantages and understanding of power balance in the international structure can benefit from the situation by playing great powers against each other.

Discussion – the Pivotal states – implications for Vietnam

More than just a literary description of one foreign policy of the Philippines, the concept of the Philippine pivot to China in this research is perceived from a theoretical framework so-called “*the Pivotal states*”. As the aim of the research is prove the importance of smaller states in the international system, this discussion part will synthesize the findings from the above analysis of the Philippine pivot to China to emphasize how the Philippines had

⁸⁹ Taylor.

managed to impact the balance of power between China and the US in the South China Dispute, as well as influence the position of Vietnam – another major claimant – in the whole matrix.

The Pivotal States is a formula for US foreign policies with developing countries in the post-Cold War period, proposed by Robert Chase, Emily Hill, and Paul Kennedy in their article published on the highly credited Foreign Affairs magazine.⁹⁰ The theory contends that because spreading the US foreign aid throughout the developing world would be infective and inefficient, the US should focus its foreign policies on a limited number of strategic countries – the pivotal states. After a lengthy discussion about the advantages for the US to centralize on the pivotal states, the authors arrived at the sophisticated question of how to identify these countries. According to the suggested measures, namely “*population growth, environment, ethnic conflict, human rights, and economics*”, nine countries were classified as the pivotal states: **Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt, South Africa, Brazil, Algeria, and Mexico**. Indonesia was selected to be the strategic state for Southeast Asia because of its large population, strategic geographical location, trade importance, and leadership in ASEAN.

However, the classification was made under the context of the initial period of post-Cold War era, when the US official enemy – the Soviet Union was defeated. Consequently, the bipolar system collapsed into the unipolar system, in which the US became the world’s single hegemon, with prosperous economic development and formidable military power. Without an enemy, the US, as recommended by the authors, should concentrate on delivering its support to strategic countries to maintain the global stability. Taking into consideration this priority of the US, the authors defined **the key characteristic of a pivotal state** as “**its capacity to affect regional and international stability**”. That means the regional importance of a pivotal state is so critical that its downfall could bring about transnational turmoil comprising of “migration, communal violence, pollution, disease”, inter alia. Therefore, the US should focus on stability of such a state to ensure the prosperity of the region for American interests and benefits. Accordingly, Indonesia was the best fit for American “Pivotal states” strategy.

⁹⁰ Robert Chase, Emily Hill, and Paul Kennedy, “Pivotal States and U.S. Strategy,” *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 1 (1996), accessed December 23, 2016, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/algeria/1996-01-01/pivotal-states-and-us-strategy>.

However, as accurately predicted by the scholars and experts, the unipolar system and US primacy did not last long. September 11th 2001 with unprecedented attacks to the World Trade Center in New York City killing almost 3000 people and injuring more than 6000 others can be seen as the mark of the US decline as this country declared War on Terror and lavishly spent its resources on the intractable conflicts in the Middle East. From 2001 to 2010, while the US was drowning itself in the Middle East terror and violence, China had a peaceful space to quietly develop in Asia-Pacific. It was only until 2012 that Obama administration officially declared the “Pivot to Asia” when China had already become the second largest economy in the world and managed to invigorate its military to pursue aggressive territorial claims in East Asian sea.

The recent Brexit and US gradual withdraws from the Middle East are clear indications of the US attention shift from Middle-Eastern Europe to Asia-Pacific. Because of the US insufficient commitment to East-Asia sea disputes, the US is getting suspicions from its allies, most notably Japan and the Philippines. The loss of Japanese faith in the US is evidently demonstrated in its rocketing defense budget. On December 22nd 2016, Japanese Cabinet officially permitted a “record-high ¥97.45 trillion budget” for 2017.⁹¹ Russo-Japan rapprochement is another indication since Prime Minister Abe appeared to show unusual patience and enthusiasm in requesting for partnership and cooperation from President Putin despite the on-going territorial disputes.⁹² Undoubtedly, Japan is attempting to become less dependent on the US for its security concerns. As for the South China Sea area, the Philippines already decided to pivot to China by temporarily “forgetting” the heated dispute and welcoming Chinese investments projects.

From this perspective, as the US foreign policy is concentrating on Asia-Pacific, the international politics once again becomes the bi-polar competition between China and the US. These two countries are racing in military, economic, and political influence worldwide. Many may argue that the current world is multi-polar, with Russia, India, the EU, Japan, inter alia. However, it is obvious that the two most formidable polars are China and the US. While Russia has a powerful military power, its economy is underdeveloped. Russia influence is very much limited to the Near Abroad rather than a global scope as it used to be under the Soviet time. No other countries can compete with the US in terms of

⁹¹ <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/12/22/business/cabinet-oks-record-high-%C2%A597-45-trillion-budget-social-security-defense-outlays-swell/#.WFzYM1V97IU>

⁹² <http://thediplomat.com/2016/12/how-putin-outplayed-abe-in-japan/>

spreading economic influence like China is doing in Africa and across Europe-Asia with its One-belt-One-Road initiative. And while Chinese military might not be as advanced as Russian military, the gap is much more subtle than the Sino-Russian gap in economic development.

The bi-polar also reveals itself from the US perspectives, especially in Trump as the new president. Trump publicly announced his disdain for China during his campaign for election. Trump also made a provocative gesture towards China by making a friendly call to Tsai Ying Wen – Taiwanese president, announcing the plan to reinvigorate American economy, encouraging Apple and other companies to remove their manufacturing factories from China, and recently appointing Peter Navarro – the author of the controversial book *“Death by China and Crouching Tiger: What China’s Militarism Means for the World”* as head of the newly-created White House National Trade Council.

Under such assumption, now the US needs to back its allies, not against Soviet Communism, but against the rising claim for hegemony of China, Chinese disrespect for international laws and acquisition of sea areas and territory. From that perspective, the most important pivotal state for the USA in the South China Sea at the current moment is the Philippines since Indonesia is simply a non-claimant in the South China Sea. The Philippines is positioned so strategically between the US and China, that any change in the position of the Philippines would completely change the balance in the South China Sea. The Philippines continues to play her “hedging gambits” between China and the US to maximize her own benefits. Previously, the Philippines successfully sued China at the PCA but now the country is receiving huge investment from China while maintaining military cooperation with the US. Whether the Philippines pivots to China or to the US, it changes the structure of the game. Therefore, in the South China Sea Dispute, the Philippines at the moment is the single most important pivotal state that both the US and China aspires to attract its loyal alliance.

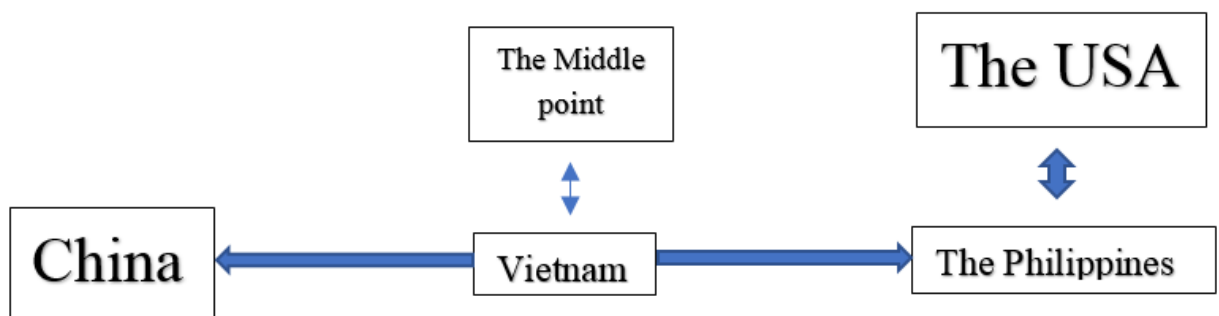
The case of the Philippines reveals that the country is well aware of its disadvantage as a smaller state in the international system and the reality that the US would not come for her defense against China. Therefore, the Philippines chose neither to completely cooperate with the US to balance China, nor to wholeheartedly bandwagon with China. The Philippines, as a smaller state, always watches out for the dynamics in the international system and adjusts her strategy accordingly. As a result, the Philippines made a rational

choice not to proceed with the emotional nationalism to confront China but to consciously choose a right moment to bandwagon with China with great economic benefits.

Implications for Vietnam

If the Philippines can be considered as rationally pragmatic by pivoting to China, Vietnam since the beginning also made a rational choice of not joining the Philippines in suing China at the International Arbitration Court. Vietnam is well aware of her position in the international system and the dangers that would involve had Vietnam dared to join the Philippines in confronting China in the Court case. Vietnam has extremely limited FP options since Vietnam borders China and has the past war with the United States. Therefore, no matter how much Vietnam dislikes Chinese infringement into her territory, the decision makers in Vietnam always need to keep a cool head to prevent breakout of war as long as China has not pressed Vietnam against the wall. Nationalism in this case is a dangerous factor as it showed in Vietnamese rally against the Chinese factories. Vietnam has less choices than the Philippines and her position depends on the Philippines position between balancing and bandwagoning.

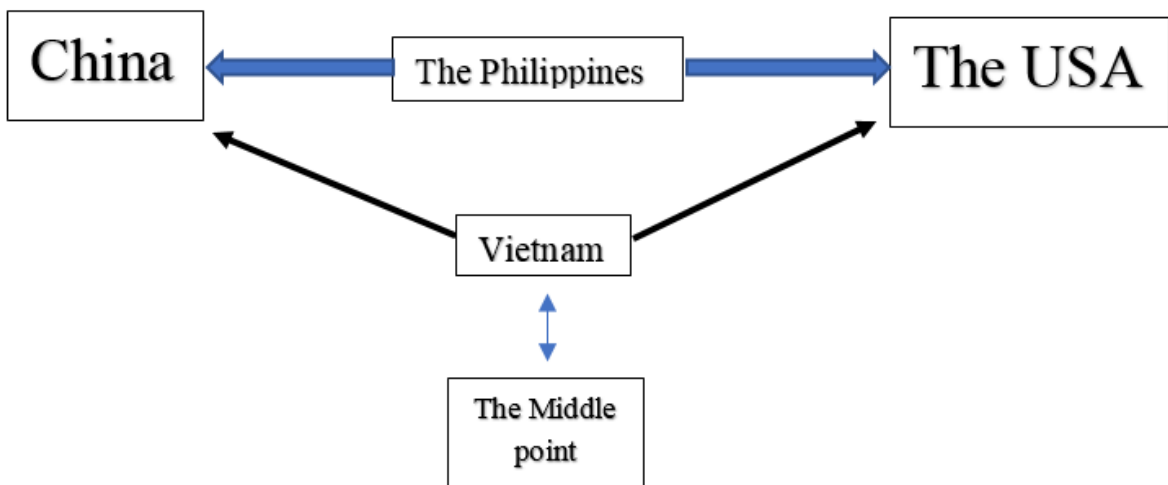
As **the Philippines approaches the balancing pole**, as she did under President Aquino by closely allying with the US and suing China at the Court, Vietnam got in a better position vis-à-vis China since Vietnam had space to criticize Chinese illegal action of installing the Haiyang 981 drilling without directly provoking China. The visualization of such a scenario can be seen in the graph below.



In this case, Vietnam was in a more strategic position between two alliances. Thus, Vietnam would feel more comfortable criticizing China since the Philippines already play

the role of provocateur and Vietnam could support such provocation without directly confronting China.

On the other hand, as the Philippines **approaches the bandwagoning** pole, as she is doing now under the leadership of President Duterte, Vietnam is put in a more delicate position vis-à-vis China. As the Philippines becomes Chinese “friend”, Vietnam would turn out to be the only opponent against China should Vietnam wish to oppose to any Chinese aggression.



Due to the constraints from geographical proximity with China and historical war memories with the US, the Middle point is the maximum point Vietnam can reach. As long as China stops threatening Vietnamese sovereignty as China did in the case of Haiyang 981, Vietnam cannot move beyond that maximum Middle point to get closer to the US in a foreseeable future. Therefore, the fact that Vietnamese government tried to maintain a calm relationship with China and even made efforts to warm up bilateral relationships as the tension decreased was a well-calculated decision to guard Vietnam against any adverse changes in the structure of the South China Sea politics as the Philippines has more freedom to move around. Nevertheless, even though Vietnam is a smaller state and Vietnamese leaders are well-aware of the disadvantages of direct confrontation with China, Vietnam will not hesitate to stand up to protect Vietnamese sovereignty as she always did in the history should Chinese aggressiveness exceeds bearable limits.

References

Scholarly articles

1. Allison, Graham and Philip Zalikow. "The Cuban Missile Crisis: First Cut." In *Essence of Decision*. New York: Longman, Second edition, 1999. Chps. 1, 2, pp. 13-54, pp. 77-129.
2. Castro, Renato Cruz De. "The US-Philippine Alliance: An Evolving Hedge Against an Emerging China Challenge." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 31, no. 3 (2009): 399. doi:10.1355/cs31-3b.
3. Brighi, Elisabetta and Christopher Hill. "Implementation and Behavior." In *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, edited by Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield, and Tim Dunne. Chp.8 pp. 147-166.
4. Castro, Renato Cruz De. "The US-Philippine Alliance: An Evolving Hedge Against an Emerging China Challenge." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 31, no. 3 (2009): 399. doi:10.1355/cs31-3b.
5. Carlsnaes, Walter. "Actors, Structures and Foreign Policy Analysis." In *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, edited by Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield, and Tim Dunne. Chp.6, pp. 113-128.
6. Chase, Robert, Emily Hill, and Paul Kennedy. "Pivotal States and U.S. Strategy." *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 1 (1996): 33–51. Accessed December 23, 2016. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/algeria/1996-01-01/pivotal-states-and-us-strategy>.
7. Cheng-Chwee, Kuik. "The Essence of Hedging: Malaysia and Singapore' S Response to a Rising China." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 30, no. 2 (August 2008): 159–85. doi:10.1355/cs30-2a.
8. David Singer, J. "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations." *World Politics* 14, no. 01 (October 1961): 77–92. doi:10.2307/2009557.
9. De Castro, Renato Cruz. "Weakness and Gambits in Philippine Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century." *Pacific Affairs* 83, no. 4 (December 1, 2010): 697–717. doi:10.5509/2010834697.
10. De Castro, Renato Cruz. "Weakness and Gambits in Philippine Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century." *Pacific Affairs* 83, no. 4 (December 1, 2010): 697–717. doi:10.5509/2010834697.
11. Doyle, Michael W. "Liberalism and foreign policy." In *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*. Edited by 54-76. Edited by Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield, and Tim Dunne. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
12. Gross Stein, Janice. "Foreign Policy Decision-Making: Rational, Psychological, and Neurological Models." In *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, edited by Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield, and Tim Dunne. Chp.7, pp. 130-146

13. Hansen, Lene. "Discourse analysis, post-structuralism, and foreign policy." In *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*. Edited by Steve Smith et al. 94-106.
14. Kang, David C. "Between Balancing and Bandwagoning: South Korea's Response to China." *Journal of East Asian Studies* 9, no. 01 (April 2009): 1–28. doi:10.1017/s1598240800002794.
15. Kuok, Lynn. "The U. S. FON program in the South China Sea: A lawful and necessary response to China's strategic ambiguity." In *East Asia Policy Paper* 9 (Center for East Asia Policy Studies at Brookings, 2016). <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/The-US-FON-Program-in-the-South-China-Sea.pdf>.
16. Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA). *The South China Sea Arbitration (The Republic of Philippines v. The People's Republic of China)*. 2013-19. The Netherlands, 2013-2016. <http://www.pcacases.com/web/view/7>.
17. Singer, J. David 1961. *The Level of Analysis Problem in International Relations* 14, no.1, (1961): 77-92.
18. Strassler, Robert B. "The Melian dialogue." in *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, 352. Edited by Richard Crawley, and Victor Davis Hanson. Simon and Schuster, 1998.
19. "The Philippines: Duterte's wilful start," *Strategic Comments*, no. 22 (2016):8, v-vii, DOI: 10.1080/13567888.2016.1251788
20. Wohlforth, C. William. "Realism and Foreign Policy." In *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, edited by Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield, and Tim Dunne. Chp. 2, pp. 35-53
21. Zhao, Hong. "Sino-Philippines Relations: Moving Beyond South China Sea Dispute." *The Journal of East Asian Affairs* 26, no. 2 (2012): 57–76. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23595518>.

Online News

1. Asia. BBC, November 17, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13748349>.
2. Chen, Dingding. "Both China and the US Want to Control the Narrative on the South China Sea." *The Diplomat*. July 05, 2016. <http://thediplomat.com/2016/07/both-china-and-the-us-want-to-control-the-narrative-on-the-south-china-sea/>.
3. Harding, Robin. "China visit was just economics, Duterte tells Japan." October 26, 2016. <https://www.ft.com/content/e8113902-9b5b-11e6-8f9b-70e3cabccfae>.
4. Heydarian, Richard. "China vs. the Philippines: Will International Law Resolve South China Sea Disputes?" *Huffingtonpost*. July 9, 2016. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/richard-javad-heydarian/china-vs-the-philippines-_b_7766406.html.

5. Romero, Alexis. "Duterte says Pinoy fishermen may return to Panatag in a few days." Philstar.com, October 23, 2016.<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/10/23/1636570/duterte-says-pinoy-fishermen-may-return-panatag-few-days>.
6. Robles, Raissa. "Dear Mayor Duterte, please disclose what you told Chinese officials." ABS.CBNnews. May 8, 2016.<http://news.abs-cbn.com/blogs/opinions/05/08/16/opinion-dear-mayor-duterte-pls-disclose-what-you-told-chinese-officials>.
7. Parameswaran, Prashanth. "The limits of Duterte's US-China rebalance." The Diplomat. October 24, 2016. <http://thediplomat.com/2016/10/the-limits-of-dutertes-us-china-rebalance/>.
8. Politics. "Beijing indicates it may exit U.N. sea convention if South China Sea ruling disappoints." Japantimes. June 21, 2016.<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/06/21/national/politics-diplomacy/beijing-indicates-may-exit-u-n-sea-convention-south-china-sea-ruling-disappoints/#.WC4kGo997IX>.
9. Tadad, Francisco. "Can DU30 save China's face?" Manilatimes. July 14, 2016.<http://www.manilatimes.net/can-du30-save-chinas-face/273797/>.
10. Tong, Linh. "The Social Media 'War' Over the South China Sea." The Diplomat. July 16, 2016.<http://thediplomat.com/2016/07/the-social-media-war-over-the-south-china-sea/>.
11. Tordesillas, Ellen T. "How much did PH pay for foreign lawyers in case vs China?" ABS-CBN. July 21, 2016. <http://news.abs-cbn.com/focus/07/20/16/how-much-did-ph-pay-for-foreign-lawyers-in-case-vs-china>.