The Rise of China's Structural Power in Southeast Asia: A Philippine Perspective

POLI 366 International Political Economy

December 2020

Introduction

Over recent years, China has risen to prominence on the world stage economically and politically as an emerging superpower to rival the USA (Wolf 2018, 1). This narrative is being driven by the perception of a globally withdrawing USA under Donald Trump (though how this situation may evolve with the election of Joe Biden remains to be seen) and China's increased participation in international affairs under Xi Jinping (Shambaugh 2018, 86). This phenomenon of increasing Chinese power and influence is particularly apparent in Southeast Asia. China's power plays in the region are of particular interest to the rest of the international community as part of the growing narrative of a building geopolitical power shift. The evolving and complex interstate relationship between China and the Philippines presents an interesting case study in which to examine the China's attempts to increase its structural power (i.e., its "ability to shape the security, financial, productive, and knowledge structures" [Guzzini 1993, 456]) in the region. By analyzing Chinese-Filipino interstate relations using Susan Strange's (1994) four structures of power (security, production, finance, and knowledge) framework, this paper argues that China's growing influence in Southeast Asia is a serious threat to American power regionally and globally.

The Security Structure of Power: Territorial Conflict in the South China Sea

To begin, the arguably most prominent and symbolic event of tense Philippine-Chinese bilateral relations is the ongoing territorial dispute between the two countries in the South China Sea. China's unfailing steadfastness in asserting a growing territorial claim in the South China Sea is an undebatable show of its attempt at projecting power through a security structure. The Philippines, naturally, protested this aggression, only one of many moves over the years that China had taken in the contested territory that dates back to the 1980s (Kreuzer 2016, 256). In 2015, tensions heightened when China built artificial islands in the South China Sea, complete with facilities that supported Chinese military dominance in the disputed areas (Kreuzer 2016, 239-240). In 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague ruled that Philippine territorial sovereignty had been violated by Chinese actions in what is (according to international maritime law), Philippine waters (Permanent Court of Arbitration 2016, 2). China, however, refused to participate in the proceedings and does not acknowledge their legitimacy (Permanent Court of Arbitration 2016, 1). In 2020, the Philippines pursued further legal action against China at the International Criminal Court, which included additional evidence of Chinese aggression in Philippine waters as recent as June 2019 (Lopez 2020). To this day, territorial conflict and sovereignty tensions between the two nations remain.

It should be noted that the Philippine is not the only nation disputing territory in the South China Sea. For example, dispute over the Spratly Islands have stemmed from the 1961 San Francisco peace agreement which failed to name who would possess the islands after Japan lost control of them post-WWII (Astarita 2008, 79). Six countries have laid claim to the islands: the Philippines, China, Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia, and Taiwan (Astarita 2008, 79). These sovereignty claims were not purely politically or security motivated. Rather, there is a distinct economic aspect to these claims; namely the area's rich energy resources valuable in feeding economic development (Astarita 2008, 79). Powers from outside the region, such as the USA, have also inserted themselves into the dispute through military action in the area (Astarita 2008, 79).

China's reaction to the different countries contesting its claimed territorial dominance in the region varies markedly. To Malaysia, for example, China has chosen restraint in comparison to its challenging treatment of the Philippines (Kreuzer 2016, 240). Arguably, the approach that China takes towards its opponents depends on how said opponents structure their comprehensive bilateral relationship with China (Kreuzer 2016, 240). Despite contesting Chinese claims to territorial domination in the South China Sea, Malaysia has taken a more respectful tone towards China's foreign policy overall. Most importantly, unlike Malaysia, the Philippines has historically been known as the USA's most important regional ally (Kreuzer 2016, 252). Despite the fact that the current President of the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte, seems to have taken a markedly warmer foreign policy approach to China, the Philippines military and foreign affairs establishments continually express support for a strong US military partnership as essential for maintaining the balance of power in Southeast Asia (Galang 2020). Also, in April 2019, Duterte signaled a building pivot away from his

China-friendly policies by publicly urging China to stay away from a Philippine-controlled island in the contested South China Sea area (Manantan 2019).

However, recent Philippine-American security relations have been rocky and evolving, with Duterte taking more of an appeasement approach to China compared to his predecessors. In February 2020, Duterte formally announced his intention to terminate the 1988 US-Philippine Visiting Forces Agreement, a cornerstone of the US-Philippine security partnership in Southeast Asia (Panda 2020). The termination announcement stems from disagreements between the two countries over controversial human rights issues in the Philippines (Galang 2020). In September 2020, a bill called the Philippine Human Rights Act was introduced in the US House of Representatives. The bill is aimed at blocking military funding to the Philippines due to a multitude of human rights violations under the Duterte regime, most notably under the controversial War on Drugs campaign (Aspinwall 2020). In sharp contrast, China (unlike the USA) was the first country to voice unconditional support for Duterte's War on Drugs (Camba 2017, 14). In November 2020, Duterte announced that he would be suspending the termination of the Visiting Forces Agreement until June 2021 (Galang 2020). Yet, this brief reprieve is arguably unlikely to last and US-Philippine relations are only more likely to tense with the election of Joe Biden, whose administration would almost certainly reprimand and sanction the Philippines for its human rights violations (Galang 2020).

Nevertheless, even if the USA and the Philippines managed to re-strengthen their security partnership, this is no assurance that this will be enough to stop the rising influence of China's military in the South China Sea. Some scholars such as Emmers (2010) argues that "[t]he absence of an external source of countervailing power in the South China Sea is not the result of an American strategic retreat from the area. Instead, it arises from a US unwillingness to get involved in the question of sovereign jurisdiction…" (124). Therefore, it is uncertain if the USA would actually support the Philippines if open conflict over the disputed territory were to occur (regardless of which president sits in the Oval Office), which is especially concerning because China has been known in the past to use military force to establish its position in the South China Sea (Emmers 2010, 124). Unless the Philippine government makes crucial human rights reforms, it may lose its substantial security support from the USA – and even that may not be enough. As the Philippine-American security alliance wavers, China's power in the military/security structure is clearly making headway in Southeast Asia.

The Productive Structure of Power: China's Belt and Road Initiative

Through the production structure perspective, China has also been successfully increasing its influence. In terms of Chinese-Philippine bilateral economic relations, a key ongoing development is China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The initiative aims to connect Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa through an array of land and sea-based infrastructural networks (Lin, Sidaway, and Woon 2019, 514).

Interestingly, it has been presented as an alternative to the USA's Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and other Western-led globalization projects (Lin, Sidaway, and Woon 2019, 514). The BRI has been China's leading foreign policy since 2013, with the initiative's investment valued at over US$1 trillion, encompassing roughly 67% of the global population and roughly a third of global economic output (Liu and Lim 2019, 216; Parameswaran 2017). China has already personally pledged US$160 billion to fund the BRI through the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the Silk Road Fund (Lin, Sidaway, and Woon 2019, 514).

The initiative is crucial for the future of Chinese foreign policy as an emerging global power, signaling a major shift in the country's long-standing low-profile strategy to international political economy (Yu 2017, 117). As a foreign policy tool, the BRI creates widespread economic and diplomatic ties with countries across Eurasia through its deployment of large-scale financing, trade networks, and human interchanges (De Castro 2019, 211). It also augments China's negotiating and coordinating relationships with existing regional organizations (De Castro 2019, 211). Furthermore, the BRI has a unique effect of assisting China in stabilizing its bilateral relations with the Philippines and other countries it has territorial disputes with in the South China Sea. Since inclusion in the BRI initiative was extended to the Duterte Administration in 2016, China has been relative successfully in making Philippine foreign policy inch away from American influence and alter its stance on the South China Sea (De Castro 2019, 212). President Duterte has been markedly warmer and more appeasing towards China compared to his predecessors (e.g., former President Aquino) in terms of the South China Sea, Chinese investments in Philippine infrastructure development, and trade (De Castro 2019, 212).

However, China's role in the BRI as primary creditor, compounded by the sheer scale of debts being accumulated has caused political controversy internationally (Lin, Sidaway and Woon 2019, 518). It has been noted that building on China's current position as Asia's economic leader and largest trading partner since 2009, the BRI will likely result in China becoming the dominant political economy power in Asia (Yu 2017, 120-121). Furthermore, some scholars view the BRI "as debt trap diplomacy.... [with] loans with high interest rates…given to 'democratically unelected' leaders in the global South in order to acquire geostrategic assets through debt-for-equity swaps" (Camba 2020, 974). This has caused some apprehension toward the BRI in terms of the *extent* of participation for certain countries like the Philippines (Yu 2017, 120-121).

Nevertheless, despite fears of economic over-dependence on China, the possible value of the BRI is still too strong to fully ignore. For Southeast Asian states like the Philippines, the appeal in the BRI is increased regional and global trade connectivity since three key corridors of the BRI are envisioned to pass through the region (Gong 2020, 77; Yu 2017, 118). In 2014, President Xi also presented the idea of the AIIB funding the China-ASEAN network, including a maritime silk road with ports (De Castro 2019, 206). On the part of the Philippines, the Duterte government is gunning for improved free trade relations and a significant share of the US$1 trillion that China is estimated to invest in infrastructure projects as part of developing trade routes following the historical Silk Road network that connected China to various states across Eurasia (De Castro 2019, 219).

The Philippines under the Duterte administration has decided to join the BRI, integrated into Duterte's "Build, Build, Build" infrastructure development program (Morley 2020). Duterte is seemingly lured in by the benefits the BRI presents, seeking Chinese financing for drug rehabilitation centers, and transportation construction (De Castro 2019, 207). China has pledged nearly US$10 billion to the Philippines in support of the "Build, Build, Build" program (Yuen 2019, 31-32). Alongside Indonesia and Malaysia, the Philippines has been noted as one of the top Southeast Asian nations benefitting from China's BRI infrastructure investment programs (Yu 2017, 120). To symbolize this new economic partnership, a bridge connecting the traditional Chinese enclave of Binondo in Manila and the historic Spanish walled city of Intramuros is being built, funded by the Chinese government (Morley 2020). The historical symbolism of this bridge as "reviv[ing] the glory of the [historic, Filipino] galleon trade" is in line with the overarching Chinese publicity strategy of capitalizing on ancient trade routes (i.e., the Silk Road) (Morley 2020; Lin, Sidaway and Woon 2019, 508). This 'rebuilding' of historic trade routes through the BRI will effectively strengthen China's considerable economic presence in Eurasia and simultaneously challenge the USA's influence simultaneously both regionally and globally (Parameswaran 2017).

The Financial Structure of Power: The Chinese Capital Export Regime in the Philippines

Through financial structures, China has also been making considerable headway in gaining influence, with Chinese capital penetrating Philippine markets in notable amounts. The Philippine-China interstate financial and monetary structures have been marked by two types of Sino-centric capital export: the flight of flexible capital through the POGOs (Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators) industry in the Philippines, and the capital flows officially backed by the Chinese-state. This capital export regime stems from a crisis of over accumulation in China, driven by the relative slowdown of the Chinese economy, depreciation of the yuan, the growing instability of the Chinese stock market, and declining returns on real estate (Camba 2020, 977). Whether privately driven or state-regulated, Chinese money has had an increasingly powerful effect on the Philippine finance structure and economy under the Duterte administration.

In term of the privately-owned, flexible capital, the main mechanism through which this money enters the Philippine economy is through POGOs. In China, online gaming and/or gambling are officially banned by the Chinese government. In the Philippines, however, is legal, and so waves of Chinese workers have been setting up online gaming operations (POGOS) in the country (Palatino 2020). POGOs have operated in the Philippines since 2003, but only came under government regulation in 2016 under the Duterte administration (Palatino 2020). Under the Duterte Administration, the industry has seen a marked rise, with responsibility for licensing given by the government to the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (Reed 2019). The corporation has reported that there are 56, mostly Chinese-owned POGO operators in the Philippines, employing more than 100,000 Chinese citizens (Reed 2019).

With this rise in POGOs has come controversy regarding the difficulty in taxing these corporations (who are often based offshore), undocumented workers (seen in the spike of Chinese 'tourists' in the Philippines, numbered at 1.3 million in in 2018), and increasingly expensive and unaffordable real estate prices driven by the increased demand created by POGOs (Reed 2019). The limited hiring of Filipino employees by POGOs, a negligible contribution to the domestic economy, and organized crime within the industry (i.e., trafficking of workers) are also causes for concern (Palatino 2020). All this promotes widespread perception among Filipinos that the Duterte administration is promoting POGOs while sacrificing other industries which are more valuable to the domestic economy (Palatino 2020).

Aside from undocumented workers (usually Chinese tourists who overstay on their visas), there have also been 335,800 working visas given to Chinese citizens between 2016 and 2018, with over 50% of them for online gaming jobs (Venzon 2019). Cases of bribing immigration officials in order to obtain work visas have been found (Venzon 2019; Camba 2020, 989). According to the Philippine Department of Labor and Employment in 2018, only 45,000 foreigners (29,000 of which were Chinese) had officially been granted alien employment permit (AEPs), however, there are an alleged 400,000 foreign workers (mostly Chinese) employed by the POGOs industry (Mendoza and Banaag 2018). Additionally, AEPs are only supposed to be issued to foreign workers if there are no local workers capable of fulfilling the job in question, which does not seem to be the case (Mendoza and Banaag 2018). This has created concern among local Filipinos regarding loss of long-term jobs to Chinese nationals (Venzon 2019).

Furthermore, the Anti-Laundering Council has reported several suspicious financial transactions linked to POGOS from 2017 to 2019 (Palatino 2020). In recent years, Chinese President Xi has increasingly cracked down on the private wealth accumulated by potential political opponents (Camba 2020, 977). Due to this, many private Chinese citizens have been moving their capital out of the country quietly, and one of their destinations is the Philippines, through POGOs. From 2016 to 2019, capital inflows from China into the Philippines reached a staggering US$319 million while Hong Kong inflows were valued at US$969.51 million (Camba 2020, 986). To put these numbers into context, the amount of FDI (foreign direct investment) flows from China and Hong Kong under the Duterte administration have surpassed the inflows during the two previous governments (the Aquino and Arroyo administrations) *combined* (Camba 2020, 986). Philippine corporations with Chinese investors have surged dramatically compared to firms with American Japanese, and Singaporean investors (Camba 2020, 985). The *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas* (BSP), or the Central Bank of the Philippines also reported that in 2018, China and Hong Kong were in the top five of equity capital investors in the Philippines (Camba 2020, 986). Overall, the rise of the POGOs industry in the Philippines has becoming increasingly controversial due to the suspect ways in which these corporations operate, and also because they seemingly are booming due to favor and privilege provided by the Durterte administration (Palatino 2020).

In terms of state-backed capital flows into the Philippines, tourism is a crucial sector. By August 2017, China was the third largest source for tourists in the Philippines, growing a sizeable 33.4% since the election of the Duterte government (Camba 2017, 15). This surge in Chinese tourists was accompanied by an increase in negotiations for multiple agreements between Philippine and Chinese companies to profit from this phenomenon (Camba 2017, 15). In addition to tourism, there has also been a substantial increase in Chinese investment into the Philippine real estate, retail, and services sectors (Camba 2017, 15). Aside from capital inflows from nominally private Chinese companies, there has also been notable Chinese government projects in the Philippines, usually overlapping with the BRI as mentioned earlier in this paper. A prime example is the Kaliwa Dam project, which will be funded by a US$235.9 million from the Export-Import Bank of China (Camba 2020, 980). Under the terms of the contract, the Philippines is responsible for constructing the auxiliary infrastructure, but the main project construction is reliant on Chinese labor, suppliers, and technology (Camba 2020, 981).

Ultimately, the way in which the dramatic increase of Chinese capital inflow into the Philippines is altering domestic financial structures and the local economy is cause of increasing concern to many Filipinos. Both private, flexible capital, and state-backed capital is creating far-reaching and probably long-term ripples within the Philippine financial institutions. Because China's FDI does not have principles like good governance as prerequisites, there is concern of "the risk of colluding with corrupt officials and of handing more benefits to Chinese companies rather than to Filipino businesses" (Torrecampo 2019). As more Chinese capital comes into the Philippines, both Chinese investors and the Chinese state are gaining increasing influence over access to jobs, money, and resources in the country. The Duterte administration seems to encourage this, compounding the increasing reliance the Philippine economy is having on Chinese financing as also seen with the BRI.

The Knowledge Structure of Power: Huawei's 5G Network and Disinformation

Finally, the way in which China's power in Philippine-Chinese bilateral relations is increasing through growing influence in the knowledge/technology structure is also apparent. Two crucial examples of this have caused increasing concern among Filipinos in recent years: the development of Huawei's G5 network in the country, and China's "Operation Navel Gazing" disinformation campaign. Both of these developments are shaping the knowledge structure in the Philippines in profound ways, impacting the communications infrastructure and the spread of information nationwide.

On the surface, the installation of Huawei's G5 network in the Philippines may seem like the country is finally catching up its technology infrastructure with the developing world. However, such a project carries deeper implications. Despite security concerns raised by the USA and several other states regarding Huawei's G5 technology, the Philippine government has elected to push forward with this project (Torrecampo 2019). One of the Philippines' leading telecommunication corporations, Globe, will be partnering with Huawei on developing G5 technology in the country (Torrecampo 2019). There is widespread concern that allowing China (through its private associates like Huawei) to so deeply participate in crucial industries and infrastructures will be giving China economic leverage in case open conflict erupts between China and the Philippines (Torrecampo 2019). This theme of over-dependence concerns echoes those already seen in two power structures discussed in this paper (i.e., production through the BRI and finance through POGOs and other Chinese capital inflows).

With the Huawei G5 Philippine project, there is also concerns over the security risks, as Huawei has been accused by other nations of helping the Chinese government spy on private citizens (Heydarian 2019). Hacking, sabotage, and disinformation are other concerns (Heydarian 2019). China's motives in helping the Philippines acquire this technology, like it has in other matters discussed earlier (e.g., infrastructure building) has raised suspicion and controversy (Torrecampo 2019). These concerns could jeopardize the Philippines' intelligence infrastructure with the USA, putting further strain on security relations already tense over conflict in the South China Sea discussed earlier (Heydarian 2019). In addition to an economic and technological/knowledge debt owed to China, there is the added layer of the way in which China's support of Philippine media and communications network development is driven by China's goal of influencing the international narrative on China (Torrecampo 2019).

Concern of China's ability to influence public narrative in the Philippines is also seen in China's "Operation Naval Gazing" disinformation campaign. On September 22, 2020, Facebook announced that it had found and stopped a Chinese disinformation program that had used false accounts to trick users into consuming Chinese propaganda (Winger 2020). This program especially targeted the Philippines, actively interfering in Philippine politics by advocating for politicians known to be supportive of Chinese interests, like President Duterte (Winger 2020). Furthermore, the network pushed content that promoted Chinese naval operations and ownership of contested territory in the South China Sea, while disparaging the US-Philippine alliance (Winger 2020).

As a demographic, Filipinos are particularly vulnerable to these types of disinformation attacks due to a number of factors. Firstly, as the historically prominent American ally in the region, the Philippines is a prime target for China to try and convert from pro-American to Pro-Chinese opinion (Winger 2020). Secondly, due to a poor national communications infrastructure, Facebook is the key mode of communication and source of information for the majority of Filipinos. This is due to the fact that it is easily accessible as a smartphone app and comes with a "Free Facebook" plan, where mobile subscribers on local carriers do not need to use up expensive data plans in order to use the app (Winger 2020). Thirdly, there is strong distrust towards mainstream journalism in the Philippines, in part cultivated by the government itself (Balod and Hameleers 2019, 5). Death threats against journalists and crackdowns on non-partisan publications (e.g., Rappler) are unfortunately common (Balod and Hameleers 2019, 5).

Finally, the prominence that social media like Facebook plays in Philippine elections must not be understated. A 2020 report on disinformation in Southeast Asian elections published by the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence noted that the Philippines ranks first in the world for Internet consumption, with the average Filipino spending 10 hours a day online (Ong and Tapsell 2020, 5). Furthermore, there has been widespread adoption of social media campaigning by Filipino politicians across all parties (Ong and Tapsell 2020, 10). The NATO report also made a troubling assertion that Filipino digital strategists admitted to taking funding from Chinese business tycoons to support the election campaigns of Filipino politicians whom they wished to conduct business with (Ong and Tapsell, 2020, 6-7). Overall, these cases of Chinese disinformation campaigns in the Philippines are very concerning, as they will surely not be the last. Coupled with China's growing involvement in the country's communication network through the Huawei G5 project, it is clear that China's increasing influence on the knowledge structure in the Philippines is cause for apprehension and must be monitored vigilantly.

Conclusion

To conclude, it is clear from the through the several case studies discussed above (e.g., South China Sea territorial conflict, the BRI, the rise of the POGOs industry, and disinformation campaign) that China is effectively using a variety of foreign policy that influences security, productive, knowledge, and financial structures of power. Through its actions in Southeast Asia, as exemplified in the case study of Chinese-Philippine bilateral relations, it is apparent that China is showcasing its increasing power to the world. The Philippines, a long-standing US ally, has been swayed over to a more pro-China stance – a rather radical foreign policy shift for the country. In this, the Duterte Administration has been seen to sacrifice certain issues deeply important to many Filipinos (e.g., territory in the South China Sea) in favor of appeasing China and reaping other benefits (e.g., BRI funding). An increase in Chinese regional and global influence is concerning to those in the international community who value the global promotion of democracy, human rights, and good governance, since China (unlike Western states) does not consider such things prerequisites for providing foreign/financial/development aid (Torrecampo 2019). The implications of growing Chinese structural power found within Chinese-

Philippine bilateral relations spread far beyond the Philippines because this one case study is only symbolic of a larger regional and global trend. In both Southeast Asia and on the world stage, it is clear that the USA is no longer the uncontested power; China is here to stay.

References

Aspinwall, Nick. 2020. "US Bill Aims to End Aid to Philippines Military and Police." *The Diplomat*. https://thediplomat.com/2020/09/us-bill-aims-to-end-aid-to-philippines-military-and-police/ (December 2, 2020).

Astarita, Claudia. 2008. "China's Role in the Evolution of Southeast Asian Regional Organizations." *China Perspectives* 3(75): 78–86. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24054195 (December 2, 2020).

Balod, Hon Sophia S. and Michael Hameleers. 2019. "Fighting for Truth? the Role Perceptions of Filipino Journalists in an Era of Mis- and Disinformation." *Journalism (London, England)*: 146488491986510.

Camba, Alvin. 2020. "The Sino-centric Capital Export Regime: State-backed and Flexible Capital in the Philippines." *Development and Change* 51 (4): 970-997.

Camba, Alvin. 2017. "Inter-State Relations and state Capacity: The Rise and Fall of Chinese Foreign Direct Investment in the Philippines." *Palgrave Communications* 3 (1): 1-19.

De Castro, Renato Cruz. 2019. "China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Duterte Administration's Appeasement Policy: Examining the Connection Between the Two National Strategies." *East Asia* 36(3): 205–27.

Emmers, Ralf. 2017. "The Changing Power Distribution in the South China Sea: Implications for Conflict Management and Avoidance." *Political Science* 62(2): 118–31.

Galang, Mico. 2020. "How Will the Biden Presidency Impact US-Philippines Security Relations?" *The Diplomat*. https://thediplomat.com/2020/11/how-will-the-biden-presidency-impact-us-philippines-security-relations/ (December 2, 2020).

Gong, Xue. 2020. "China's Belt and Road Initiative Financing in Southeast Asia." *Southeast Asian Affairs* 2020(1): 77–95. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/754741 (December 2, 2020).

Guzzini, Stefano. 1993. "Structural Power: The Limits of Neorealist Analysis." *International Organization* 47 (3): 443.

Heydarian, Richard Javad. 2019. “Ignoring the US, Philippines Goes with Huawei.” *Asia Times*. https://asiatimes.com/2019/07/ignoring-the-us-philippines-goes-with-huawei/ (December 2, 2020).

Kreuzer, Peter. 2016. “A Comparison of Malaysian and Philippine Responses to China in the South China Sea.” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 9(3): 239–76.

Lin, Shaun, James D. Sidaway, and Chih Yuan Woon. 2019. “Reordering China, Respacing the World: Belt and Road Initiative (一带一路) as an Emergent Geopolitical Culture.” *The Professional Geographer* 71(3): 507–22.

Liu, Hong, and Guanie Lim. 2018. “The Political Economy of a Rising China in Southeast Asia: Malaysia’s Response to the Belt and Road Initiative.” *Journal of Contemporary China* 28(116): 216–31.

Lopez, Melissa Luz. 2020. “Carpio Joins Team Suing Xi Jinping for Crimes against Humanity in the South China Sea.” *CNN Philippines*. https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/9/16/Antonio-Carpio-ICC-crimes-against-humanity-Xi-Jinping.htmlfbclid=IwAR0z6gRG617lyAYTw0sIZX3M8VHLH9KpjKER4kWGxIuzn55vb5aLVR8JA00 (December 2, 2020).

Manantan, Mark. 2019. “It’s Time for a New Philippine Strategy Toward China.” *The Diplomat*. https://thediplomat.com/2019/04/its-time-for-a-new-philippine-strategy-toward-china/ (December 2, 2020).

Mendoza, Ronald U., and Miann S. Banaag. 2018. “Is the Philippines’ Pro-China Policy Working?” *The Diplomat*. https://thediplomat.com/2018/11/is-the-philippines-pro-china-policy-working/ (December 2, 2020).

Morley, Ian. 2020. “Manila: From Galleons to the Belt and Road.” *The Diplomat*. https://thediplomat.com/2020/06/manila-from-galleons-to-the-belt-and-road/ (December 2, 2020).

Ong, Jonathan Corpus and Ross Tapsell. 2020. *Mitigating Disinformation in Southeast Asian Elections: Lessons from Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand*. NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence. CEEOL Open Access eBooks.

Palatino, Mong. 2020. The Diplomat *China’s Clandestine Gamble in the Philippines*. The Diplomat. https://thediplomat.com/2020/06/chinas-clandestine-gamble-in-the-philippines/ (December 2, 2020).

Panda, Ankit. 2016. “International Court Issues Unanimous Award in Philippines v. China Case on South China Sea.” *The Diplomat*. https://thediplomat.com/2016/07/international-court-issues-unanimous-award-in-philippines-v-china-case-on-south-china-sea/ (December 1, 2020).

Parameswaran, Prashanth. 2017. “The Real Trouble With China’s Belt and Road.” *The Diplomat*. https://thediplomat.com/2017/05/the-real-trouble-with-chinas-belt-and-road/ (June 13, 2019).

Permanent Court of Arbitration. 2016. “PCA Press Release: The South China Sea Arbitration (The Republic of the Philippines v. The People’s Republic of China) | PCA-CPA.” Pca-cpa.org. https://pca-cpa.org/en/news/pca-press-release-the-south-china-sea-arbitration-the-republic-of-the-philippines-v-the-peoples-republic-of-china/.

Reed, John. 2019. "Manila’s Online Gambling Boom Highlights Pivot to China." *FT.Com* (Aug 05). https://ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/login?url=https://www-proquest com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/docview/2268458727?accountid=14656.

Shambaugh, David. 2004. “China Engages Asia: Reshaping the Regional Order.” *International Security* 29(3): 64–99. https://www.jstor.org/stable/4137556 (October 26, 2020).

Strange, Susan. 1994. “Wake up, Krasner! The World Has Changed.” *Review of International Political Economy* 1(2): 209–219. https://www.jstor.org/stable/4177099?seq=1 (October 26, 2020).

Torrecampo, Rej Cortez. 2019. “It’s Time to Rethink Philippine Policies on China.” *The Diplomat*. https://thediplomat.com/2019/04/its-time-to-rethink-philippine-policies-on-china/ (December 2, 2020).

Venzon, Cliff. 2019. “Duterte Under the Gun Over Chinese Influx into Philippines.” *Financial Times*. https://www.ft.com/content/5f796164-3be1-11e8-b9f9-de94fa33a81e

Winger, Gregory. 2020. “China’s Disinformation Campaign in the Philippines.” *The Diplomat*. https://thediplomat.com/2020/10/chinas-disinformation-campaign-in-the-philippines/ (December 1, 2020).

Wolf, Martin. 2018. “US-China Rivalry Will Shape the 21st Century.” *Financial Times*. https://www.ft.com/content/5f796164-3be1-11e8-b9f9-de94fa33a81e (December 1, 2020).

Yu, Hong. 2017. “China’s Belt and Road Initiative and Its Implications for Southeast Asia.” *Asia Policy* 24: 117–122. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26403210 (December 2, 2020)

Yuen, Kong Tuan. 2019. “The Belt and Road Initiative in Southeast Asia and Responses from ASEAN Countries.” *China: An International Journal* 17(4): 24–33. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/742818 (December 2, 2020).