

# NEGOTIATING HEGEMONY

*A Poststructuralist Analysis of Philippine Diplomatic Discourse on the U.S.  
Coalition of the Willing and the War on Terror (2001-2004)*

By

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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, Sarah Natividad, a candidate for the M.A. degree in International Relations, declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Drawing from Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's hegemony-centered theory of discourse, this thesis analyzes Philippine diplomatic speeches surrounding the country's participation in the coalition of the willing and the Iraq War. To establish the war on terror as a hegemonic project, a historical framework foregrounds the Philippine discourse analysis by examining the U.S. empire and imperialism as a power structure. This discussion underscores the discursive construction of the U.S. empire as a persisting and adaptive hegemonic project. Philippine diplomatic speeches discussing the coalition and war on terror are then placed under the poststructuralist analytical lens to identify prominent nodal points, constructions of identity, and hegemonic articulations. Ultimately, the analysis submits that Philippine diplomacy used discursive strategies as a means to negotiate the meaning of the coalition. Amid the struggles of power and identity shaping post-9/11 world politics, Philippine diplomatic discourse sought to negotiate the country's own amending clauses of meaning in the construction of a U.S.-defined hegemonic order and "Self."

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## INTRODUCTION

“Because when it comes to Empire, facts don’t matter.”

— *Arundathi Roy*<sup>1</sup>

“Western people are brought up to regard Oriental or colored peoples as inferior, but the mockery of it all is that Filipinos are taught to regard Americans as our equals... the terrible truth is America shatters the Filipinos’ dream of fraternity.”

— *Carlos Bulosan*<sup>2</sup>

Addressing the Philippine Congress in 2003, U.S. President George W. Bush Jr. described the Philippine-U.S. relationship as one between friends bonded by a deep kinship of values: “The United States and the Philippines are warm friends. We cherish that friendship and we will keep it strong. Our countries are joined by more than a market, even more than an alliance. This friendship is rooted in the deepest convictions we hold. We believe in free enterprise, disciplined by humanity and compassion.” (Bush Jr. 2003) This manifesto of solidarity, however, grafts a hegemonic interpretation over the persisting asymmetries of power that have more accurately characterized Philippine-U.S. relations. These purposeful discursive depictions of power are emblematic of the post-9/11 era of U.S. diplomacy, which focused foreign policy efforts on assembling the coalition of the willing in 2003: a U.S.-led multinational alliance that sought the partner states’ (including the Philippines’) support in overthrowing the regime of Saddam Hussein and confronting perceived threats related to weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. While scholarly attention has been given to the U.S. use of discursive strategies in this era, it is worth examining the Philippine position more closely.

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<sup>1</sup> Epigraph quoted from Roy’s “Instant-Mix Imperial Democracy (Buy One, Get One Free)” speech, delivered at the Riverside Church in New York City, 13 June 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Carlos Bulosan (1911-1956) was a Filipino American writer and activist most widely remembered for his seminal novel, “America Is in the Heart” (1946), which depicted Filipino migrant workers’ struggles of identity and racial discrimination in the United States.

This thesis aims to unpack the Philippines' position within this power structure by analyzing diplomatic discourse amid the coalition of the willing and the war on terror, starting from the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001 to the country's withdrawal from Iraq following the Angelo dela Cruz hostage crisis. By applying Ernest Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's poststructuralist framework for discourse analysis, this study reanimates and deconstructs Philippine diplomatic relations through the lens of hegemony. Thus, this study of Philippine diplomatic discourse seeks to answer the following research questions: **(1)** As a power structure, how have U.S. imperialism and empire constructed hegemony discursively in its power relationship with the Philippines throughout history? **(1)** How did Philippine diplomatic discourse from 2001-2003 normalize and justify pursuing the coalition of the willing in Iraq as a hegemonic project? **(2)** What do these official discourses communicate about the Philippines' and the U.S.' respective stakes in the coalition through their respective use of discursive strategies?

Drawing primarily from Laclau and Mouffe's poststructuralist discourse theory, Chapter 1 establishes the theoretical and methodological building blocks applied in this research and discourse analysis. In Chapter 2, the first research question is explored using a historical framework for understanding the U.S. empire as discursively constructed, particularly in terms of its notions of "exceptionalism." This framework illustrates the subjectivity and instability of imperial realities by exploring the variable fixation of meaning in nodal points from significant events in Philippine-U.S. history. In addition, this discussion makes a case for understanding the coalition of the willing and the war on terror as the extension of a continuously adapting hegemonic project of U.S. imperialism. Chapter 3 dedicates its focus to the Philippine perspective by analyzing a collection of primary source diplomatic speeches addressing global and domestic terrorism and the coalition of the willing. By analyzing speeches by Arroyo and representatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs, this exercise of discourse analysis dissects the politics of meaning contained in the construction of nodal points, mainly through the use of equivalence as a discursive strategy. In scrutinizing the Philippines' articulation of "terror," "development," "courage," and "sacrifice," the

discourse analysis illustrates the Philippines' particular position in advocating to conceive of a reality that would serve its interests within the bounds of a hegemonic project. In this exercise, this thesis argues that the Philippines aligned itself with the U.S. worldview—embodied by the coalition—while also deploying strategic discourse to negotiate its inclusive meanings into the dominant discourse on the war on terror.



## **CHAPTER 1**

### **POSTSTRUCTURALIST DISCOURSE THEORY: WHAT, WHY, AND HOW**

This chapter establishes the essential theoretical and methodological precedents for this study's specific exercise of poststructuralist discourse analysis. First, the literature review establishes the core assumptions structuring the thesis, assessing applicable precedents in existing research, and making a case for this research's advancement of existing knowledge in the academic fields of Philippine studies and international relations venturing non-Western positionalities. Where the literature review defines *what* discourse is (in this particular study), the conceptual framework and research design sections explain *how* discourse works to outline the hegemony-sensitive methodology used to deconstruct Philippine and U.S. discourse. Building upon the literature review's treatment of PDT, the conceptual framework offers definitions for the core discursive elements of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory. Finally, the overarching research design and methodology are established and justified while providing reflections on the study's limitations.

#### **1.1: Literature Review**

Definitions of discourse and methodological approaches to its analysis are diverse and widely debated in international relations. Drawing and distinguishing from existing discourse studies in IR, this literature review seeks to articulate the specific understanding of discourse and discourse analysis to be operationalized in the study of Philippine diplomatic communication. Conveying its theoretical assumptions in alignment with Laclau and Mouffe's PDT, the literature review further refines its research priorities. The core assumptions in concepts of hegemony, empire and imperialism, and diplomacy are made explicit by assessing existing precedents for and conceptualizations of these ideas in the body of IR discourse scholarship. Finally, a sketch of the relevant research in Philippine studies identifies the potential for this research's proposed contribution to existing academic interpretations of Philippine diplomacy and U.S. relations amid the war on terror.

### ***1.1.1: Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis***

Jaques Derrida's famous assertion that "nothing exists outside the text" attests to the poststructuralist challenge of developing a definition for discourse-- or perhaps more fittingly, for what is not included in discourse (Derrida 1976, 158). The Essex School of discourse analysis, which emerged from the work of Ernest Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, Norman Fairclough, and Ruth Wodak, centers their approaches to discourse analysis around the notion that reality and meaning are constructed using language and discourse rather than having an objective existence. Growing out of structuralism and Marxism, Laclau and Mouffe's approach to discourse combines these two traditions by adopting Marxism's framework for social contestation and structuralism's theorization of meaning. The understanding of discourse operationalized in this paper follows the foundational definition established by Laclau and Mouffe as the terms through which a particular social reality is made intelligible and "thinkable." Doty effectively captures this orientation in defining discourse as a "structured, relational totality... (delineating) the terms of intelligibility whereby a particular 'reality' can be known and acted upon" (1996, 6). As the subject of this research lies in diplomatic communication, Philippine discourse is primarily analyzed in its manifestation as a specific group of texts. However, it also emphasizes the social practices in which those texts are inseparably enmeshed. In this sense, this research identifies its nexus of study in a combination of both small "d" discourse by analyzing specific instances of language uses in official speeches but situates these messages within big "D" discourse (Gee 2007, 34) by elucidating the historical power structures that animate relations between the U.S. and the Philippines.

While acknowledging both dimensions of discourse, this exercise of discourse analysis nonetheless aligns itself more closely with the macro approach embodied by Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory (PDT) than Fairclough's micro language-centered approach under critical discourse analysis (CDA). Jørgensen and Phillips usefully introduce a spectrum for understanding this distinction (2002). On a continuum of approaches for understanding social phenomena, historical materialism lies on the far right in positing that all phenomena are organized according to a logic

rooted in the tangible non-discursive world. On the far left of the spectrum, Laclau and Mouffe's PDT views social practice as fully discursive, wherein discourse is articulated in language and the material world, particularly in institutions. In this conceptualization, discourse transcends language by being "embodied in institutions and apparatuses, which weld together a historical bloc around several basic articulatory principles" (Laclau & Mouffe 1985, 67). Fairclough lies in the middle of this continuum, assuming a dialectical relationship between discursive and non-discursive elements. PDT's commitment to the totality of discourse maintains that all social phenomena can be analyzed using a core bundle of concepts; for Laclau and Mouffe specifically, these would include discourse, articulation, nodal points, etc.

More than Fairclough's dedication to linguistic analysis, this research proposes that Laclau and Mouffe's centering of the construction of political identities and struggle represents a more suitable lens for analyzing the historically and structurally rooted factors that continue to shape Philippine-U.S. relations. This determination was made considering this study's second main poststructuralist assumption: discourse is non-fixable and historically contingent. Despite composing a totality, discourses are overlapping, unstable, and perpetually unfinished; they represent structures "penetrated by contingency and temporality, marked by ruptures and breaches because the relation between differences can constantly change and meaning is organized differently" (Herschinger 2012, 71). Attempts to affix permanent meaning to discourse and its constructed identities are futile and only partially accomplished. In its discursive approach to analyzing Philippine-US history, this study demonstrates precisely this "impossibility of closure" innate in all discursive structures (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, 122). The meaning of "liberation," for instance, assumes drastically different horizons of possibility from its construction during the anti-colonial Philippine Insurrection to its weaponized pacification in U.S. discourse justifying the colonization of the Philippines. As such, the present study is not concerned with CDA's priority in analyzing individual sources to demonstrate how specific framings of "liberty" are rhetorically constructed and add to meanings in broader discourse. (Larsen 2004, 79) More precisely, its focus lies in PDA's

commitment to examining a range of texts to examine what utterances of “liberty” in various historical circumstances reveal about the broader discursive frameworks shaping social phenomena.

This distinction highlights PDT's notion of discourse as a site of contestation, in which meanings and identities strive for naturalization. A core assertion of this study is that the U.S.' maintenance of power as an empire is derived from its capacity to create a discursive reality upholding it. Whether such narratives endure and maintain authority over what is thinkable depends greatly on their success in obscuring discourse's historical variability. PDT operates on this sense of contingency, construing discourse as “an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a center” (Laclau & Mouffe 1985, 112). Alternatively, in Jørgensen and Phillips' apt summation: “Objectivity is the historical outcome of political processes and struggles; it is sedimented discourse” (2011). Indeed, this thesis argues that Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory is better suited to elucidate how the “play of practice” manifests in Philippine-U.S. relations. Including this notion among discourse analysis' major theoretical commitments, Milliken echoes conceptualizations by Ashley (1989) and Doty (1997, 357-9) in her assessment that discourse analysis should examine the indefinite and flexible interactivity between discourses, as well as how they are partially fixed to preserve their dominant meanings. PDT's more pronounced emphasis on the play of power is thus better poised to deconstruct the contingent categories of power discursively upholding political (as well as racial, cultural, and social) conceptions of “the Philippines” and “the United States” throughout history. Finally, the play of practice is crucial to this scholarship's focus on the Philippines as the non-Western “Other” relative to the U.S.' hegemonic “Self.” Methods emphasizing contingency carry an implicit critique of conventional IR theory as promoting structural accounts divorced from historical change. (Walker 1993, 115) By adopting PDT's radical contingency, future research can apply cosmopolitan methods to confront the enduring ‘problem of orientation’ that has defined the Eurocentric gap in critical IR theory literature (Saramago 2022, 9). This research positions itself in this lacuna by situating arguing against ‘presentist’ accounts of

history (Duzgun 2020, 287) that rely on assumptions of the ‘inevitability’ of Western dominance (Powel 2020, 962)

Hegemony’s treatment in IR, particularly in post-9/11 research, most often entailed its characterization in realist, U.S.-centered terms as a state’s position of influence, dominance, or authority within a world order’s balance of power. (Chomsky 2003; Yordán 2006; Hurst 2009) Waltz’s *Man, the State, and War*, for instance, largely relies on this idea of hegemony as state dominance in an anarchic system in analyzing international relations across its three images (Waltz, 1959) Global politics’ commonly-held account of hegemony and power as imprecise and “reducible” has overshadowed the potential for poststructuralist research to examine power relations through critical, discursively anchored frameworks for identifying hegemonic struggle. (Hauugard 2006, 76) In PDT, Laclau and Mouffe build upon Antonio Gramsci’s conceptualization of hegemony, which characterizes power and its contestation as dependent on *consent* as well as coercion. Gramscian political theory sees hegemonic power as encompassing complex interactions between political, economic, and cultural dynamics; it entails the capacity to shape subordinate groups’ beliefs, attitudes, and worldviews while exercising direct control through force. Laclau refines hegemony by construing it as a situation in which a particular demand or idea becomes a symbol representing a wide range of social demands in the ideal of a perfect society. (2005, 71) PDA, in other words, orients discourse as central to hegemony by acting as the mechanism creating a sense of certain representations as normal and, eventually, dominant. (Laclau & Mouffe 1985, 67)

Despite prevailing notions of hegemony in IR, several promising studies have nonetheless produced valuable insight into hegemonic practices in diverse applications of IR research. Research adopting Laclau and Mouffe’s PDT has facilitated analysis in global dimensions, from an assessment of subjective identity politics in U.S. foreign policy discourse (Solomon, 2014), to a discursive breakdown of conditions for leadership in East Asia (Nabers 2010, 933) and a strong case for understanding foreign intervention discourse in Africa as a site for clashing meanings of violence and crisis (Wodrig 2017). This research understands hegemony most closely in line with

Herschinger's definition of international hegemony as "determining a Self and corresponding Other," conceptualized in a dual process of first "antagonizing and homogenizing the interpretation of an Other" before creating "a coherent vision of the Self shared by agents jointly opposing the Other" (Herschinger 2012, 66). By applying PDT to Philippine-US diplomatic discourse, the thesis aims to illustrate how the coalition and the willing and the war on terror represent hegemonic projects through their discursive construction of categories of Self and Other. Moreover, this study contends that the Philippines occupies a unique position within this binary; it nuances poststructuralist notions of hegemony by paying closer attention to power relations for inclusion in the Self. Wrought from a revolutionary context, the Philippines' first interactions with the U.S. began from a counter-hegemonic position before becoming absorbed into the regime of dominant colonial discourse. In this study's more modern scope, it remains inaccurate to characterize Philippine diplomatic post-9/11 discourse as counter-hegemonic. Nonetheless, it is possible to distinguish its position as an actor attempting to negotiate the inclusion of its amending clauses of meaning into the hegemonic conceptions of Self embodied by ideals of a U.S.-led "free world" in the 21st century.

### ***1.1.2: PTD in IR: Empire and Diplomacy***

In line with post-structuralism's broad net for identifying discourse, the thesis posits that empires are structures of power that rely on discursive construction in their justification and endurance. The role of discourse in making empires thinkable is a key tenet of Said's theory of orientalism, a process in which binary categories between the Western imperial center and the Eastern periphery were essentialized: "The distinctive differences between races, civilizations, and languages were... radical and ineradicable" (1979, 233). While scholars have productively argued against conceiving empire in IR as merely an extension of the state (Nexon & Wright, 2007), Said's constructivist interpretation of imperialism continues to offer a framework ripe for further study. Barkawi partly attributes this to the discipline's fixation on state-centered orders, credibly arguing that this perspective has rendered the discipline ill-equipped to fully grapple with "the experiences

and histories of most of the peoples and places on the planet” (2010). Heeding this critique, a priority of this research is to develop a hegemony-centered mode for analyzing the influence of empire and imperialism in Philippine-U.S. relations. Roxanne Doty’s innovative analysis of the politics of representation in North-South Relations offers the most robust precedent in this regard (1996). Underscoring hegemonic practice as those seeking to overcome the non-fixity of discourse, Doty’s initial case study focuses on the colonial construction of the Philippines in discourse from the 1899 debates on the U.S.’ decision to annex the islands from Spanish rule. Chapter 2 of this paper takes Doty’s work as a jumping-off point to make a more comprehensive case for understanding the contingent and variable discursive pillars that have cemented the Philippine-U.S. power relationship throughout significant episodes in modern history. In its commitment to primary source analysis, this research also takes cues from the work of historians of U.S. imperialism who have deconstructed discursive categories such as “illegal alien” (Lew-Williams 2018, 7-10), “immigrant” (Fujita-Rony 2003), “national security,” and “sedition” (Jung, 13-14) in the spirit of poststructuralist theory, if not the letter.<sup>3</sup>

Still, if modern Philippine-US relations are largely characterized by the relations of independent states, one might ask why such dedication to integrating a hegemony-centered analysis of empire would be necessary at all. First, this thesis maintains that modern diplomacy does not exist in a presentist vacuum. Where diplomacy represents the “institutionalized communication among internationally recognized entities” (Bjola and Kornprobst, 2018, 6), PDT makes a case for understanding each constituent element of this definition as discursive. Whether honing in on constructive processes of institutionalization, contingent articulations in communication, or the politics of meaning in recognizing an entity as ‘international,’ it is possible in every case to tease out the hegemonic and discursive properties composing the field and practice of diplomacy. Second, the study conceptualizes empire in this paper as extending beyond a strict understanding of “effective

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<sup>3</sup> To quote Jung: “If reckoning with empire compels us to think radically, securing empire rests on butchering history with abandon to conceal its colonial traces. Rallying around euphemistic state violence speciously freed the U.S. empire from the bounds of history.” (2022: 13)

control over a subordinated society” (Doyle 1986, 19). Considering Philippine-U.S. relations from the colonial period to the present day, a comparative assessment of power asymmetries (in terms of labor migration dynamics, economic relations, and political dependence) arguably still demonstrates power asymmetries not yet disconnected from their material roots in the original imperial constitution of the Philippine-U.S. relationship.<sup>4</sup> Cappozzola’s persuasive depiction of U.S. imperialism’s persisting dependence on Filipino labor highlights the discursive materialization of the Philippines and the U.S.’ Self-Other dynamic beyond linguistic framings. Citing the U.S. Congress’s passage of the Military Bases Agreement (MBA) in 1971, Cappozzola details the reinforcement of power asymmetries as the Philippines was compelled to provide the U.S. with twenty-three military installations. Perceiving the hegemonic articulation of these military institutions, President Sergio Osmeña expressed his dismay at the “virtual nullification of Philippine independence” (Osmeña Sr. 1945). In line with the ethos of an exceptional empire, the still-relevant influence of U.S. military bases represents an enduring link to the Philippines’ past as a fledgling state struggling for independence.

### ***1.1.3: Philippine Studies***

To date, James Tyner’s 2005 study of the coalition of the willing is the most comprehensive review of this particular era of Philippine-U.S. relations. Written just two years after the formal start of the war in Iraq, Tyner’s 2005 book uses a Foucauldian conceptual framework for discourse analysis to examine the Arroyo administration’s rationalization for sending troops to Iraq. Locating Arroyo’s reasons in several factors, including the potential for labor exchange and the “mendicant” character of Philippine-U.S. relations (2005, 12). However, Tyner’s emphasis on Arroyo’s Catholic faith as a decisive factor in her government’s foreign policy decisions belies an incomplete understanding of the contingent historical, social, and economic context in which these policies were determined. In this sense, the thesis affirms Philippine Studies expert Patricio Abinales’ critique

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<sup>4</sup> For a prescient historical analysis on the institutional and discursive construction of the global migration flow of Filipina nurses, see “Empire of Care,” by Choy, 2003



of Tyner in not considering domestic religious discourse that used the language of faith to justify opposition to the war on terror (207: 366). This study differs from Tyner's in that it dwells less on the strategic or personal reasons the Philippines and its leadership entered the coalition. Instead, the application of PDT seeks to excavate the historical discursive precedents and strategies for generating consciousness of the coalition as a hegemonic project. Indeed, this research submits that the limitations in Tyner's framing of Philippine discourse further illustrate the benefits of using a hegemony-centered approach to analyzing the historically contingent dimensions of power relations essential to understanding the Philippine-U.S. dynamic in this period. The author of this thesis believes that its specific PDT orientation has the potential to provide an instructive perspective on this era of Philippine-U.S. diplomacy where the existing literature has revolved around geopolitical analysis of the coalition in its development (Banlaoi 2002; Caballero-Anthony 2003) or more linguistic breakdowns of presidential rhetoric (Lambino II, 2011).

## 1.2: Conceptual Framework

If discourse constructs a particular social reality, the work of hegemony-centered discourse analysis encompasses the deconstruction of this regime of possibility. As Jacob Torfing convincingly argues: "Whereas hegemony brings us from undecidability to decidability, deconstruction shows the contingent and constitutive character of decidable hegemonic articulations by revealing the undecidability of the decision" (1999, 103). Following this post-structuralist orientation, the following exercise of discourse analysis explores the articulation and negotiation of hegemony diplomatic speeches from the U.S. and the Philippines by identifying and examining several discursive strategies and outcomes outlined in Laclau and Mouffe's central text on discourse theory, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. As their approach does not establish a set of fixed steps for analyzing discourse, this analysis of U.S. and Philippine diplomacy follows the spirit of Laclau and Mouffe's theory by structuring its investigation around the discursive strategies and elements drawn from the theoretical text. Specifically, this research draws upon the above-defined key concepts of nodal points and equivalence logic in advancing its arguments.

### ***1.2.1: Articulation and Nodal Points***

Hegemonization in discourse occurs through a process of articulation. Defined as a practice of “establishing relations among elements, such that their identity is modified,” articulation encompasses the act of discoursing by creating new meaning through the fixation of identities (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 105). This process takes place in language and throughout the entire sphere of institutions and social relations, wherein articulated identities (meanings) are constantly negotiated in a terrain of contestation and resistance. (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 105) Through articulation, discourse and discursive formations can thus be understood as expanding hegemony into a “dominant horizon of social orientation and action.” (Torfing, 1999, p. 101). Rooted in discourse’s non-fixability, this position delineates discourse theory’s post-structuralist orientation, as it rejects the structuralist view of discourse as a fixed system of meaning.

The unfixity of discourse thus opens the possibility for *partial* fixations of meaning to act as a discourse’s central, organizing element around which other identities are constructed. Discourse theory identifies these partial fixations of meaning as nodal points. These discursive elements maintain their identity by “constructing a knot of definite meanings” (Torfing 1999, p. 98). Nodal points are most often abstract concepts, such as “justice” or “equality,” but can also appear as concrete processes or events (such as “climate change”), as well as objects or symbols. These unifying concepts facilitate consensus by acting as a connector for diverse perspectives among social groups. Much like hegemony, however, nodal points in a discursive field do not remain fixed but evolve and shift over time with the emergence of new ideas and events. Nodal points represent sites of negotiation and struggle in which competing groups attempt to affix their desired meanings to debated concepts and shape the hegemonic discourse.

### ***1.2.3: Equivalence***

Equivalence refers to a “logic of a simplification of political space,” in which different ideas or groups become associated based on shared interests or demands. (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p.130) In their framework for radical democracy, Laclau and Mouffe emphasize equivaln generating

solidarity and consensus among social groups with varying demands. According to Torfing, the logic of equivalence “collapses the differential character of social identity by means of expanding a signifying chain of equivalence.” (Torfing, 1999, p. 98) By articulating disparate interests as components of a shared political project, the logic of equivalence in discourse represents an essential strategy for facilitating the creation of a collective force for political action. Laclau and Mouffe argue that equivalence (alongside its particularizing counterpart, difference) is necessary to sustain inclusive and thriving democratic politics. However, equivalence frameworks can also be applied in international politics to explain relations between states. Drawing from the history of hegemony in U.S. foreign relations, the superpower’s approach to diplomacy during the Cold War can be interpreted as establishing hegemony through equivalence. U.S. foreign policy discourse packaged disparate causes for anti-communism and capitalism as the “American way,” symbolically binding them with national ideals such as individualism and freedom. Positioned as the defender of these corresponding values and causes, the U.S. logic of equivalence provided a template for different countries to identify and align with their hegemonic project.

### **1.3 Research Design and Methods**

Using concepts from Laclau and Mouffe’s theory of discourse, this thesis analyzes Philippine diplomatic communication to reveal Filipinos used discursive strategies to make the hegemonic project of the coalition of the willing (as part of the broader war on terror) thinkable and acceptable to national audiences. The following section establishes and justifies the research methods applied to this analysis before concluding with some reflections on the limitations of this study. Applying the core ideas and discursive elements defined in the previous sections, Chapter 2 serves to provide the necessary foregrounding for the Philippine discourse analysis by developing a historical framework that synthesizes the discursive conditions and commitments undergirding the U.S. empire as a power structure. Beyond the isolated authorship of the subject, PDT roots its analysis in the notion that structures of power shape discourse by containing the conditions and ideas that render it possible;

this framework acknowledges that power is not simply an external force exerted upon discourse but an inherent aspect of discursive practices. Accordingly, the historical framework applied in this research demonstrates how various nodal points have taken on a variety of meanings in the context of three significant episodes in the history of Philippine-U.S. relations. Using a combination of primary and secondary sources, this chapter traces the original construction of discursive framings in their historical context. By filling out and accounting for this “toolbox” of ideas in Philippine-U.S. discourse, it becomes possible to examine more precisely the contingent regimes of meaning in official communication on the coalition of the willing.

The discourse analysis conducted in the remainder of the thesis draws from 10 speeches by the Philippine president and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). Joint Philippine-U.S. statements from Arroyo’s 2003 state visit to Washington D.C. are also considered for their Philippine content. In narrowing the selection, a preliminary reading of presidential statements and diplomatic communications was conducted using more than 20 sources produced amid an enhanced period of Philippine-U.S. relations in promoting the coalition of the willing from 2001-2003. Aside from their primary references to the coalition of the willing and the war on terror, sources from this preliminary selection were included based on the initial criteria of being formulated and delivered with a diplomatic audience in mind. Each source is attributed to an actor, such as the President or Secretary of Foreign Affairs, speaking on behalf of the Philippine government to address a foreign audience. Of the initial 20 sources, a final sample size of five speeches was selected based on their thematically appropriate use of discursive strategies to articulate the dominantly identified themes that the author argues characterized Philippine discourse in this era. In this case, the researcher has selected speeches that demonstrate a range of meaning-crafting in the specific nodal points of “terror,” “courage,” “sacrifice,” and “development.”<sup>5</sup> Following this elaboration, the analysis shifts to interrogating the sources’ particular construction of categories of “Self” and “Other.” To discern these identities, the second and third readings of sources tagged instances in which the speakers

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<sup>5</sup> For information on the audience, date, location and occasion of all ten speeches, refer to the appendix included at the end of this thesis.

defined Philippine identity concerning hegemonic U.S. identity and the coalition and the oppositional, negative entities that emerge in contrast.

Where Laclau and Mouffe establish discourse's non-fixed and subjective character, this research likewise assumes an interpretivist, qualitative approach to discourse analysis. A qualitative approach provides the context and specificity necessary to unpack the “particular and unique” (Andersen, 1990) multiplicity of meanings constructed and contested within Philippine-U.S. diplomatic discourse. While other discourse theories in the post-structuralist milieu facilitate a similar level of interpretive analysis, Laclau and Mouffe’s framework provides the most well-tailored approach to analyzing the political dynamics and ideologies within diplomatic discourse. A Foucauldian research design, for instance, would only allow for a broader focus on the productive dynamic of knowledge and power in discourse. Laclau and Mouffe’s theoretical focus on hegemony critically facilitates a detailed analysis of how discourse behaves within the power structures that shape world politics. In addition, Laclau and Mouffe’s concept of articulation— in which disparate discursive elements are linked to create new identities— elucidates in finer nuance the politics of meaning in hegemonic projects by virtue of its focus on the elements that construct discourse.

While this research justifies its methods, it also acknowledges the limitations of its study. Because of the relatively condensed time scope of this research (three years), the available sources from written diplomatic discourse often employed similar rhetorical constructions, with passages from separate speeches appearing to echo each others’ construction. This practice suggests that the authors of these sources, whether ghostwritten or by the speakers themselves, may be consistent across the various speeches. Owing to this similarity, the smaller sample size was restricted to ten sources elaborating on the most illustrative range of themes. However, the next step in further research on this topic may be to benefit from Laclau and Mouffe’s generous understanding of what discourse encompasses— social practices, institutions, material practices, etc. This study acknowledges Laclau and Mouffe’s generous conceptualization of discourse but was ultimately limited in the availability of sources. Given the accessibility of these sources, future studies may

build on the groundwork established in this research and excavate additional meaning by revisiting post-9/11 Philippine diplomacy through a PDT lens.

## **CHAPTER 2:** **HEGEMONIC DISCOURSE IN THE EMPIRE OF LIBERTY**

This chapter explores the discursive construction of the U.S. empire and imperialism through the lens of its relations with the Philippines from the islands' annexation in 1898 through the high points of the Philippines' involvement in the global war on terror from 2001-2003. Framing the discussion, a historical framework defines the particular discursive conditions defining the U.S. hegemonic construction as an exceptional empire. The subsequent sections explore how this discursive condition has played out in three defining episodes in Philippine-U.S. relations before ultimately making a case for understanding the coalition of the willing and the war on terror as contemporary iterations of a historically precedented and still-evolving hegemonic project of empire.

### **1.1 Historical Framework**

Throughout its history, the US has wielded discourse as an essential tool in cementing American hegemony internationally and articulating the acceptable ideological conditions for American empire as a power structure. Specifically, discourse reconciles the central paradox between the US as both a nation and an empire. On its face, this contradiction appears irreconcilable: the foundational American narrative of individuals forging a nation through anti-colonial revolution resounds dissonantly against the projects of colonial subjugation and imperialism that cemented US hegemony in the world order. Nonetheless, as historian Moon-Ho Jung underscores, nation-building is not incompatible with imperial expansion but bolstered by it, operating hand in hand as part of a more extensive process that continues to shape the country (Jung, 2022: 9). Similarly, Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper characterize the particular mode of American empire as performing “colonization without colonialism.” (Burbank & Cooper 2010, 322) From the “manifest destiny” shrouded over the US' settler colonial subjugation of Black and Indigenous people to the “benevolent assimilation” of the Philippines, the central contradiction of American empire has been repeatedly reformulated in discourse emphasizing its unique, “informal” character. According to

Jung: “The United States was accordingly an empire, but seemingly an exceptional empire, supposedly in search of markets, not territorial conquest.” (Jung 2022, 10) Leading up to the Iraq war, the U.S.’ diplomatic efforts thus represent the era’s latest attempt to discursively fulfill the built-in condition of the U.S. empire as a structure of power: to make an exceptional empire thinkable; to justify its mission.

Reckoning with the struggle for hegemony in the war on terror, discourse from both Philippine and US sides drew heavily from a toolbox of nodal points whose meanings reflect and refract significant events in a shared yet unequal history contained within the hegemonic structure of US empire. Through this historical framework, this chapter examines the origins and meanings of these nodal points in three episodes: the Philippine Insurrection and US colonialism (1898-1946), World War II, and the period of martial law under Ferdinand Marcos culminating in the People Power Revolution (1972-1986). In doing so, the discursive foundations for the U.S. as an “exceptional empire” provide deeper insight into the asymmetries of power encasing Philippine-U.S. relations amid the global war on terror.

## 1.2: “Liberty” in the Philippine Insurrection and American Colonialism

The Philippine-American War (1899-1902) marked the beginning of the United States’ imperial encounter in the Philippines. Seeking to extend its influence in the Pacific, the United States sought a foothold in the region to facilitate trade with China, matching the ambition of European empires. Spearheaded by the *Katipunan* secret society, a nascent Philippine nationalist movement fighting for independence from Spanish colonialism provided an opening for the United States’ intervention in the region, as the American military aided in defeating Spanish forces as part of its campaign in the Spanish-American war. In the Philippines’ national narrative, many of the most celebrated and mythologized national heroes are remembered for their role in this first war, particularly Jose Rizal, the elite “*ilustrado*” intellectual acknowledged as a national martyr for dying by firing squad amid the first few months of rebellion against Spain.



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However, this cooperation soured in 1898 when Philippine *insurrectos* mounted an insurgency against U.S. forces, as soldiers and leaders espoused an increasingly racialized view of Filipinos as "gooks," or more politely, "little brown brothers" inferior and incapable of self-governance (Kramer, 2006, p.193). As U.S. troops turned their arms against Filipinos, the president of the first government-mandated Philippine Commission turned to discourse to redress the nation-empire paradox: "The watchword of progress, the key to the future of the political development of the archipelago, is neither colonialism nor federalism, but nationalism. The destiny of the Philippine Islands is not to be a State or territory in the United States of America, but a daughter republic of ours — a new birth of liberty on the other side of the Pacific..." (Gould Schurman, 1902, p. 87) Indeed, the genesis of the Philippine-U.S. power relationship demonstrates discourse's critical role in naturalizing the new hegemonic sense of a benign empire— one driven to cement the values of progress and development in the world order.

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<sup>6</sup> The *Katipunan* were a Philippine revolutionary society whose primary goal was to secure the Philippines' independence from Spain.

<sup>7</sup> Meaning "erudite" or "learned," the term *ilustrado* refers to the educated class in the Philippines during the period of Spanish colonialism. *Ilustrados* like Rizal advocated for greater equity and representation under Spanish rule, if not an end to colonial governance.

U.S. discourse also performed the feat of articulating into possibility a vision of an exceptional, benevolent empire compatible with violence and repression. Historian Moon-Ho Jung astutely connects the language of “pacification” with the logic of counterinsurgency by tracing the origins of the U.S. security state to its suppression of revolutionary movements in the Pacific, starting with the Philippine Insurrection. He argues: “The United States was not killing people to subject them to colonial rule; it was engaging acts of ‘pacification’ to liberate them toward democracy.” (Jung, 2022, p. 13) Originating with the quelling of the “Philippine Insurrection,” the equivalence of notions of pacification with repression in the U.S.’ earliest framings of the Philippines laid the groundwork for the hegemonic malleability of the notion of “liberation” in discourse. Under U.S. tutelage, liberty was rearticulated in the social and political institutions of U.S. colonialism that upheld a reformulated imperial hegemony. The price of modernity and success in the new U.S.-style education system and the colonial civil service was shedding liberation’s revolutionary identity by remembering the Philippine-American war, rather than the Philippine Insurrection, on the colonial administration’s terms. (Ileto, 2017, p. 11)

### **2.3: “Brotherhood” in the Pacific War**

Memorials commemorating Philippine-U.S. participation in the Pacific War (Dec 7, 1941 – Sep 2, 1945) have evoked the imagery of brother from the beginning of the transnational event’s politics of memory. Manuel L. Roxas, the first post-war president of an independent Philippine republic, is quoted as affirming this characterization of the Philippine-U.S. war effort: “Filipinos and Americans are the truest friends... American and Filipino forces were 'brothers in arms' who 'have fought shoulder to shoulder...in the same ranks, in the same uniforms, under the same command.” (Immerwahr Considering the significance of the Philippines as a front in the Pacific War, this depiction would appear apt. Amid the brutal and oppressive Japanese occupation of the Philippines, the Filipino and U.S. forces fought pivotal battles in the Pacific theatre of war, including the Battle of Bataan (Jan 7, 1942 – Apr 9, 1942), which was a crucial collaboration between the United States and the Philippines in the fight against Japanese forces. In the enduring myth of

Filipino-American wartime brotherhood, troops across racial and cultural lines fought side by side, as the Bataan Peninsula emerged as a symbol of their resistance against the Japanese invasion. While the facts of this harrowing battleground feat are true, it remains necessary to examine this narrative through the lens of hegemonic condensation and erasure. Indeed, what the politics of memory eludes in this articulation of the wartime past is how this sense of brotherhood was deeply beholden to the hierarchical politics of race. In other words, the racialized identity of “little brown brother” had been rearticulated into more valiant terms. However, the disparities between Filipinos and their white American brothers persisted despite the destabilizing conditions of a “race war” driven by Japanese imperial ambition in Southeast Asia.

While Doty’s research draws its insights from colonial politics during the Philippine Insurrection, her assessment of the role of race in discourse holds true for Filipinos’ complex positionality in the racial politics of WWII. According to Doty, “‘race’ functioned as a nodal point around which identities were fixed, “knowledge” was produced, and subjects were positioned vis-a-vis one another... The racialized categories produced through representational practices enabled the construction of self and other, American manhood and its racial other, and the formation of a Western bond.” (Doty 1996, 42) In the discourse of wartime propaganda, Filipinos’ efforts to fight alongside their American brothers were often muted in media that sought, despite its progressive overtures for military integration, to strictly delimit any contestation of possible modes for belonging and patriotism available to Filipinos and other segregated racial minorities. Carlos P. Romulo, an eminent Filipino journalist, saw his compatriots’ sacrifice in Bataan as an opportunity to demonstrate Filipinos’ American valor. A tireless advocate, Romulo campaigned for the recognition of what he saw as his “Filamerican” countrymen’s sacrifice for the U.S.-erected institution of democracy in the Philippines: “They were the product, as I was the product, of Philippine public schools imbued with American idealism... Clean-cut, clean-thinking, and well-cared for— they were the flower of our youth. These were the boys who would prove their faith in democracy by dying in Bataan.” (Romulo 1942, 27) However, the soldiers whom Romulo saw as the pride of the

Philippines received starkly different treatment in the genre of “Bataan films” that flourished in Hollywood. The genre’s title film, “Bataan” depicted an ethnically mixed fighting force that echoed Romulo’s account of Filamerican solidarity but relegated Filipinos largely to the background. The sole speaking Filipino soldier in the cast was not a reflection of Romulo’s “clean-cut, clean-thinking boys,” but a comic side character, depicted as speaking broken English and partaking in little of the heroic action. (Garnett 1943) From this discursive articulation of unequal Filipino brotherhood, race would continue to serve as a non-fixed nodal point in the malleable politics of memory surrounding the Philippines’ participation in World War II, highlighting the ongoing complexities and debates surrounding the interpretation and remembrance of the war’s impact on Filipino identity and history.

## **2.4: “Democracy” in People Power**

For four days in February 1986, the Philippine people rallied together to topple a dictatorship. Both vaunted and contested in Philippine lore, the narrative of those days follows as such: Diverse masses of Filipinos, suffering under President Ferdinand Marcos’ martial law, sought to restore justice and democracy to their country. To rectify oppression, people from all sections of Philippine society— the priest, the soldier, the landowner, and the ordinary citizen — united to peacefully overthrow Marcos in a shared celebration of democracy and nationhood. With their efforts, a new leader and a new order eclipsed the tyranny of what came before. These events make up what many Filipinos remember as the “miracle” of the world’s first people power revolution (Gonzaga 2009, 110). Also called the “EDSA Revolution” after the demonstrations’ main site (Epifanio de los Santos Avenue), the developments in the Philippines became a point of international inspiration for other fledgling democracies. The meaning of “People Power” transcended the Philippines and took on a discursive life of its own by appearing in commentary for democratic struggles across the world (Palatino 2011).

In this era of Philippine-U.S. relations, the doomed friendship between Marcos and U.S. President Ronald Reagan mirrored the contestation for the content of “democracy” as a nodal point

in diplomatic discourse. Carried out in 1972, Marcos' declaration of martial law represents the culmination of the regime's gradual curtailing of civil liberties and suppression of political opposition. Yet, the brutality incurred in Marcos' attempt to secure a dynastic claim to the presidency was depicted in a far different light in U.S. discourse as an embattled superpower's staunch Cold War ally in the Pacific. In the era's hegemonic understanding, the Philippines' democracy in name alone was compatible, in practice, with the conjugal dictatorship that violently suppressed its associated rights. Throughout this period of Philippine-U.S. relations, President Ronald Reagan maintained a famously close diplomatic bond with Marcos, often extolling his valor as a leader by aligning him with the democratic traits central to the U.S. Cold War ideology.

Even so, Reagan's discursive attempts to plant Marcos in the frontlines of the U.S.-led "free world" could not escape scrutiny in international civil society and media. Amid global calls for democratization, particularly in Central Europe, the Philippines' hegemonic impositions on democracy became evident. While Reagan and the US government initially provided political and economic support to Marcos, public sentiment in the US began to shift, and pressure mounted for a more democratic and rights-based approach. The People Power Revolution (1986) thus embodies a radical hegemonic struggle dovetailing with Laclau and Mouffe's theorization. As a cross-cutting demographic of protestors rallied to overthrow the Marcos regime, the movement's central rallying cry of "democracy" unraveled a site of discursive conflict out of the government's hegemonic articulation of the ideal. From clergy members to the military and Filipinos of all classes, public discourse fixated on reinjecting counter-hegemonic meaning into notions of governance, democracy, and political legitimacy. To quote a popular pamphlet for the movement, "Let us... be clear on the nature of political power. The power wielded by those who govern is not intrinsic to them. The power and authority that the 'rulers' wield come from the people, the society they govern. No ruler has power beyond that which the people allow and consent the 'ruler' to use over them" (Zunes, Kurtz, and Asher 1999).

President Bush cemented this prevailing sense of democracy as a nodal point in Philippine-U.S. discourse by evoking the memory of People Power in an exchange of toasts with Arroyo during her 2003 state visit: “Seventeen years ago, the Filipino people restored their nation’s democratic tradition and inspired lovers of freedom across the globe... The Philippines is building its prosperity on the foundation of markets, and building its future on a foundation of democracy. These commitments are opening new opportunities for the Filipino people, and setting a hopeful example for other nations traveling the road to freedom.” People Power thus remains a potent tool in the Philippines and the U.S.’ shared discursive toolbox— with the caveat that its revolutionary identity forged in the overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship was used, in this instance, to bolster the hegemonic project of establishing the democracies acceptable to U.S. power amid the war in Iraq.

## **2.5: Selling the Coalition of the Willing**

This memory-laden use of history epitomized a dedicated diplomatic campaign to mobilize international support for the coalition of the willing after 9/11. In the aftermath of the New York terrorist attacks, the U.S. and the Philippines launched a period of heightened diplomatic activity, its zenith marked by reciprocal state visits by Presidents Bush and Arroyo. In its interactions with the Philippines, the U.S. attempted to mobilize its discursive arsenal to overcome the historical comparisons that had served as a stark, recurring critique for its intervention in Iraq. How, after all, could the U.S. make its actions in Iraq thinkable without provoking negative comparisons with its imperialist pacification of the Philippines? Bush answered this question in his 2003 address to the Philippine Congress, which was initially quoted in the introduction of this thesis. Addressing a packed room of Filipino legislators, Bush wove a celebratory account of Philippine history that extolled the democratic, positively American achievements and sacrifices of Filipinos in a de-fanged rendering of the past: “America is proud of its part in the great story of the Filipino people. Together our soldiers liberated the Philippines from colonial rule. Together we rescued the islands from invasion and occupation” (Bush Jr. 2003). For Filipinos on the outset of joining the coalition of the willing, Bush drove home the lesson that the surviving state owed its existence to a joint

Philippine-U.S. struggle to overcome tyranny. As a country on the path to development and progress, why should the Philippines withhold its effort to intervene and offer Iraq the same vital opportunity?

### **CHAPTER 3**

## **PHILIPPINE DIPLOMATIC DISCOURSE: BETWEEN TERROR OPPORTUNITY**

In a history of operating within a hegemonic structure, Filipinos have nonetheless strived to articulate their demands and assert their underlying meanings. Amid the Philippine Insurrection's brutal suppression, Doty notes that "Filipinos did in fact exercise agency, as demonstrated in their demands for independence and their willingness to risk and lose lives to fight for that goal." Rather, she contends that "the regime of truth" erected by colonial discourse limited this exercise of agency. This clash embodies the hegemonic struggle central to Laclau & Mouffe's discourse theory. However, the dimensions and conditions shaping the Philippines' position within hegemony have evolved in its history as a politically independent state. Amid the war on terror, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Philippine diplomats navigated their limitations as a non-dominant member of the coalition of the willing by embarking on a discursive campaign to put the Philippines at the center of the war on terror, pledging allegiance to the dominant understanding of the coalition while making a case for its particular national interests within it. This chapter explores the discursive means by which the Philippines curated its added meanings to the war on terror by highlighting the nodal points in ten chosen diplomatic sources and expounding on the construction of identities within them.

The U.S.' use of discourse has been parsed by critics and academics alike; the circumstances surrounding the Iraq war are likewise well-known. However, understanding the stakes of Philippine participation in the coalition requires a deeper understanding of the country's domestic conditions. While not always mentioned explicitly, Philippine diplomatic discourse from this era is broadly framed by the country's domestic struggle with terrorism. Leading up to the Iraq war, the Philippine government had long faced multifaceted and complex confrontations with domestic terrorist groups, particularly in the southern provinces of Mindanao. In the early 2000s, various extremist groups, most notably the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), engaged in armed clashes and territorial disputes. Both groups engaged in acts of violence, including



bombings, kidnappings, and attacks on civilian and military targets, prompting the government's alarm at potential threats to national security (Stanford University 2018). Known for its links to global terrorist networks, the ASG's mission was establishing an Islamic state in the southern Philippines. Additionally, the MILF, a separatist group fighting for self-determination in Mindanao, engaged in armed conflict with government forces, contributing to the overall security challenges in the country. It is also important to note the colonial context in discussing the origins of Muslim separatist groups; systemic inequalities and anguish among Muslim Filipinos trace back to Spanish colonization, during which the Christian government favored non-Muslims. (Suansing 2022)

While the global war on terror, led by the United States, gained publicity and momentum following the 9/11 attacks, the war in Iraq was not necessarily popular among Filipinos. Public opinion in the Philippines largely opposed invading Iraq, viewing it as a unilateral action by the U.S. that lacked sufficient justification. Filipinos publicly expressed skepticism regarding the necessity of military intervention in Iraq. Moreover, Filipinos pointed to the country's urgent domestic security concerns, referencing extremist threats to peace, particularly in the Mindanao insurgency. In addition, the Arroyo administration faced criticism for entering the coalition amid poverty and economic vulnerability in the Philippines. (Caballero-Anthony 2003, 215)

### 3.1 Nodal Points

#### *3.1.1: "Terror" and "Development"*

Philippine diplomatic speeches addressing U.S. audiences often employed the discursive framing of putting the country on the frontlines of the war on terror. Aside from her repeated reminders that she was "the first Asian leader to assure President Bush that [her] government stood behind American efforts to eradicate terrorism," (Macapagal-Arroyo 2001c) Arroyo outlines the Philippines' undersigning of the U.S. cause in clear terms. In one of her earliest statements outlining the Philippines' position in the war on terror, Arroyo emphasized: "We are part of the coalition of the willing in terms of political and moral support for actions to rid Iraq of weapons of mass destruction. We are part of a long-standing security alliance as well as the global coalition against

terrorism.” (Macapagal-Arroyo 2003b) This relationship, Arroyo argued, was critical to the Philippines’ interests in national security and ideological alignment. Manila’s staunch support for the coalition can thus be seen as an outgrowth of its need for support in combatting domestic terror and an avenue to reinvigorate Philippine-U.S. relations.

Across all ten chosen sources, the discursive strategy most emblematic of post-9/11 Philippine diplomacy lies in the equivalence of terror and poverty. Arroyo’s addresses, for instance, often took advantage of the opportunity to outline the broader stakes of the war on terror as the Philippines understood it: “We have put a face on terrorists, and now we must put a face on the poor. We will eliminate terrorism and we must eliminate poverty.” (Macapagal-Arroyo 2002) The elaboration of this equivalence distinguishes the Philippines as a non-dominant co-signer of U.S. hegemony by using a particular articulation to qualify an understanding of the ends and root causes of the global war on terror. Terror, in this sense, emerges as a nodal point because of how the central danger in the Philippines’ diplomatic worldview is constructed. The equivalence of terror and poverty is explicit in a variety of instances. However, Arroyo’s remarks during a state dinner toast with Bush add specificity to the Philippines’ view of terrorism’s steep cost:

“As we work to restore peace, there is still the parallel battle to be waged against poverty and rebuilding in the Philippines. In the southwestern part of the Philippines, we have been fighting terrorism and its ally, poverty. Terrorism is a drain on our economy, our people, our focus. Ridding Southwestern Philippines and the world of organized terrorism will free up human capital, human resources, and government initiatives and help us return to greater investment in our people and toward the alleviation of poverty.”(Macapagal-Arroyo 2001b)

In this discursive construction, Philippine diplomacy depicts the evil outcome of terrorism as a state held hostage from creating better living conditions for its people. Besieged by terrorism, the Philippines’ major casualty is construed as the loss of its national potential for prosperity and progress. In addition to matching the U.S.’ hegemonic notion of terrorism as an attack on freedom and values, Philippine diplomatic discourse adds to its meaning by equating terrorism to an attack on development.

In addition to matching the U.S.’ hegemonic notion of terrorism as an attack on freedom and values, Philippine diplomatic discourse adds to its meaning by equating terrorism to an attack on

development. Secretary of Foreign Affairs Blas Ople's remarks at the first First International Conference on Anti-Terrorism and Tourism Recovery framed the stunting of the Philippine tourism industry as "a specific front in the broad and multi-faceted campaign versus terrorism." In Ople's view, terrorism's negative impact on Philippine tourism equated not only to an attack on "the fundamental human freedom of movement and travel," but on estimations of the Philippines as a developing country capable of ranking among the world's viable tourism destinations— a measure of status in a globalizing economy. Fighting terrorism, Ople contended, would be:

"...of little value if we cannot bring assurances to the members of the world community that they can once again leave their homes and venture overseas to experience other cultures and spend their well-earned leisure time in countries such as ours. To the global public, there is a stamp of approval as to the state of a nation's affairs that is better understood than its attractiveness as a tourist destination." (Ople 2002)

The Philippines' efforts to earn this "stamp of approval" translates as a bid to for inclusion in the hegemonic tier of states in the world order— one wherein tourist currency served as a validator of the requisite level of development for membership. Where terrorism sows fear and doubt, the Philippines' national interest was thus to avoid and redress falling victim to the resultant shrinking of the world caused by the binary association of terrorism as originating in the domain of the non-Western, developing world. Where Ople deems it essential to emphasize that "the Philippines is not a more dangerous place for foreigners than the countries that have produced travel advisories inimical to the interests of this region," he ultimately articulates an argument to include the Philippines in the identity of a hegemonic "Self," rather than its shadow "Other."

In many instances of sources analyzed, the Philippines positions itself as a student of development, deferring to the precedent and assistance of developed countries as it pursues its national growth trajectory. However, particular articulations hint at the Philippines' delicate position as a non-dominant member of a hegemonic order. Arroyo's remarks at the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London hint at a more profound contradiction rooted in historical contingency: "I can speak only for the Philippines when I say that we pride ourselves on our national self-reliance and our regional Asian unity in addressing our problems. But we also recognize that we have much

to learn and gain from our developed brothers and sisters.” (Macapagal-Arroyo 2002) Given the Philippines’ experience as a subject of multiple imperialisms, this statement is striking for what it omits in its interpretation of history. Despite its suggestion of independence, the mention of self-reliance not only echoes the U.S.’ self-help ideals but belies how this stratified league’s “developed brothers and sisters” have arguably stymied the Philippines’ attainment of complete and sustainable independence, mainly through its dependence on overseas remittances for economic survival.

### ***3.1.2: “Courage” and “Sacrifice”***

Despite generally endorsing a benign take on Philippine-U.S. history, diplomatic discourse has nonetheless produced articulations that portray the U.S.’ indebtedness to Filipino sacrifice. Arroyo’s speaking engagements during her state visit to Washington D.C. made subtle overtures to the Philippines’ economic enmeshment with invocations of shared history:

“For the Philippines, our friendship takes into account the three million of our men and women who lived in and contribute to the development of the economy of the United States. It also takes into account the young soldiers of World War the Second, now senior veterans, who fought side by side with American soldiers in defense of democracy.” (Macapagal-Arroyo 2003a)

Arroyo’s relatively rare depiction of the U.S. debt of history to the Philippines reads as a significant attempt to bolster her country’s bargaining power in a dynamic overwhelmingly defined by asymmetries of power. In the hegemonic stratification of U.S.-led coalition states, the Philippines subscribes to the idealized world order of development central to its discourse. At the same time, these qualifications make thinkable the Philippines’ significant sacrifice and contribution to the dominance of U.S. development, both in its material prosperity and its ideals. Here, Arroyo indirectly calls to attention the circumstances underlying the Philippines’ protracted struggle to transcend its identity as a “developing” country. Intertextually, this framing invites discerning listeners of the speech to question which historical factors (such as unequal labor arrangements) may have led these three million Filipinos to enrich the U.S. in place of the Philippines.

## CONCLUSION

On 7 July 2004, Filipino truck driver Angelo dela Cruz, a native of Pampanga, was working in Iraq when Iraqi resistance fighters abducted him on one of his routes. His hostage-taking would prove decisive in tipping the scales of meaning in articulating whose interests the Philippines was willing to prioritize as the only moral course of action. Dela Cruz's thirteen-day-long hostage-taking sparked public outrage that catalyzed the Philippines' ultimate withdrawal from the coalition in 2004 with the formal recall of its contingent in Iraq— far sooner than when its staunch diplomatic overtures suggested. Reflecting on the Philippines' decision in the de la Cruz hostage crisis, Senator Francis Pangilinan hinted at the discourses subsumed within the hegemonic collisions between states: “The sacrifice Overseas Filipino Workers make because the country has failed to provide them with adequate means to take care of their families imposes a special responsibility on the government. The government may not always be there for them. But when it is within its means for them to act for their welfare, there is a heightened sense that the government owes them everything it can do” (Pangilinan, 2004).

In its fixation on Philippine diplomatic discourse, this study focuses on the official discourse contained in Philippine diplomatic communication. It uses the lens of poststructuralism to illustrate how a non-dominant state can nonetheless amend the identities and meanings prioritized by a hegemonic project. The Philippines' evocations of contributing its total capacity to “win the battles against poverty; the struggles for democracy, independence, and freedom” (Macapagal-Arroyo 2001a) demonstrates the limited but apparent opening to negotiate the clauses of hegemony through diplomatic interaction. Even so, the Arroyo administration's change of course amid the Dela Cruz hostage crisis underscores what Laclau and Mouffe hold as central to their theory— politics entails the clash and interplay of hegemonic and non-hegemonic discourse. Indeed, the public furor surrounding the Angelo Dela Cruz hostage crisis underscores the need to examine the counter-hegemonic side of power and politics. The widespread outcry and emotional responses

from the Filipino public revealed deeper societal tensions, frustrations, and aspirations that were not fully captured within the official discourse. Elucidating counter-hegemonic perspectives opens the possibility for a nuanced understanding of post-9/11 politics' variable complexity by holding to the light the narratives Pangilinan described, embodied by the diverse voices and narratives that shape and contest dominant power structures. This research has told diplomacy's side of the story; its future chapters ultimately lie in the interrogation of the other side of the power-politics spectrum.

**Appendix: List of Philippine Diplomatic Speeches (2001-2004)**

Source no.	Speech Title / Occasion	Author	Date	Location	Audience
1	“PGMA's Speech during the Memorial Mass for the Victims of the September 11, 2001 Tragedy”	Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo	18/11/2001	Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception Washington, D.C.	From Pres. Arroyo's 2003 state visit; U.S. government officials, U.S. Catholic clergy, Filipino-American community
2	“Speech of President Arroyo during a Lecture at the International Institute for Strategic Studies”	Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo	28/01/2002	IISS, Arundel House, London, United Kingdom	Diplomatic corps, public audience
3	“Speech of H.E. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, President of the Philippines During the Commemoration of Araw ng Kagitingan”	Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo	09/04/2002	Dambana ng Kagitingan, Mt. Samat Shrine, Pilar, Bataan	Diplomatic corps in the Philippines during national “Day of Valor” for to commemorate the fall of Bataan during WW2
4	“Remarks by H.E. Blas Ople at the General Assembly Fifty-seventh session, 13th plenary session”	Secretary of Foreign Affairs Blas Ople	17/09/2002	United Nations Headquarters New York	United Nations General Assembly, diplomatic corps
5	“‘THIS EVIL MUST NOT DEFEAT US’: Remarks by the Hon. Blas Ople during the Closing Ceremony of the First International Conference on Anti-Terrorism and Tourism”	Secretary of Foreign Affairs Blas Ople	09/11/2002	Makati Shangri-la Hotel, Philippines	
6	“PGMA's Statement on the military strike initiated by the United States and its coalition partners against Iraq”	Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo	20/03/2003	Published statement	Online and in publication
7	“Remarks by President Bush and President Arroyo in An Exchange of Toasts”	Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo	19/05/2003	State Dining Room, White House, Washington D.C.	Pres. George W. Bush Jr. & Laura Bush, diplomatic corps
8	“PGMA's Speech during the Annual Luncheon with Foreign Correspondents of the Philippines (FOCAP)”	Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo	24/10/2003	Dusit Hotel Manila, Makati, Philippines	Foreign correspondents association, diplomatic corps, Philippine

<b>9</b>	“PGMA's Remarks during a State Dinner in Honor of H.E. President George W. Bush and Laura Bush of the United States of America”	Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo	18/10/2003	Malacanang Presidential Palace, Philippines	From Pres. George W. Bush Jr.'s reciprocal state visit to Manila; Laura Bush, former Pres. Corazon Aquino Jr., Philippine cabinet and government
<b>10</b>	“Remarks of the Hon. Delia Domingo-Albert, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines for the First Anniversary of the U.S. Philippines Friendship	Secretary of Foreign Affairs Delia Domingo Albert	24/03/2004	Washington, D.C.	U.S. legislators of the Philippine-U.S. Friendship Caucus



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