

**NEW MEDIA AND POLITICAL MOBILIZATION
THE CASE OF ONLINE MEDIATION
OF MINORITY GROUPS IN THE PHILIPPINES**

CHERYLL RUTH REYES SORIANO

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

2012

**NEW MEDIA AND POLITICAL MOBILIZATION
THE CASE OF ONLINE MEDIATION OF MINORITY GROUPS
IN THE PHILIPPINES**

CHERYLL RUTH REYES SORIANO

(M.Development Studies (*with merit*), Institute of Social Studies -
Erasmus University)

(B. Political Science (*cum laude*), University of the Philippines)

**A THESIS SUBMITTED
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND NEW MEDIA
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE**

2012

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and it has been written by me in its entirety. I have duly acknowledged all the sources of information which have been used in the thesis. This thesis has also not been submitted for any degree in any university previously.

Cheryll Ruth R. Soriano

8 August 2012

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

They say that the completion of a dissertation marks a person's professional journey as an academic. I would say that in many ways, this project had also been a personal excursion: while it has made me aware of the intellectual debates about technology and minority groups' engagement with them, it more importantly re-shaped my understanding of the limits and possibilities of human struggle for social change.

I sincerely thank, first and foremost, my respondents from the different organizations representing minority groups in the Philippines: Tebtebba, Cordillera People's Alliance, Moro Islamic Liberation Front, Laddad, UP Babaylan, and Consortium of the Bangsamoro Civil Society. It had been a wonderful journey discovering how people who have been minoritized are finding ways to advance their conditions. One of the fundamental ethical questions in research is why the respondents should take time off their activities to participate in the study. I had stolen many hours of productive work for the interviews and many follow-up encounters and I thank you for your valuable time. I am also highly indebted to those who made contact with my respondents possible: Prof. Rudy Rodil, Millet Mendoza, Amor Pandaliday, and Aida Vidal.

I thank my Supervisor, TT Sreekumar, a true activist-intellectual, for his impressive grasp of the politics of technology and its intersections with civil society and new social movements. He was generous of his support, balanced with critical and fundamental questions about the philosophy of technology that in many ways challenged my earlier perspectives. Beyond his able mentorship and guidance of this work, I thank him for sharing his critical view of technology appropriation for development and social change and his practice of activism and scholarship that inspire me to continue writing about and practicing communication and social change activism. Thank you also for inspiring me to deepen my understanding of postcolonial theory and its intersections with

technology.

I am extremely grateful to my Examination Committee, Dr. Milagros Rivera, Profa Melissa Fitch, and Dr. Manjusha Nair. Your perceptive comments have been valuable in finalizing the dissertation and in thinking about possible extensions of the work. I am also deeply inspired by your appreciation of this work and moral support. Special thanks to Millie for being an ultimately supportive mentor, whose generous guidance has seen me through the completion of this thesis. Her dedication to writing for and about social change, and passion for continued knowledge and discovery, is a well of inspiration.

Many Professors, staff and colleagues at the Communications and New Media department of NUS have been helpful in the process of thinking through this research. I thank Dr. Ingrid Hoofd, Dr. Iccha Basnyat, Dr. Weiyu Zhang, Dr. Hichang Cho, and Prof. Mohan Dutta, for their intellectual and practical advice on how to go about this seemingly impossible undertaking. I am lucky to have had the chance to work with Dr. Sun Sun Lim, and I greatly appreciate the amazing support she has given throughout the candidature. Retna, Gayathri, Suriati, Sumi, Adeline, Rajam, Malathi, Yvonne, Jen, and Alsred have been consistently helpful staff, thank you for facilitating the many requests I've laid on your table over those four years.

In the preparation of this thesis, I've had valuable interactions with Professors from other departments of NUS. I am grateful to Dr. Leong-Wai-Teng of Sociology for agreeing to be in my Committee and for asking important questions about my methodological design, and later on, for that valuable advice on moving away from particularism. Thank you to Dr. Hadiz Vedi, for the valuable lessons from your Sociology of Power and Social Movements classes, including your candid analysis of Philippine politics. Dr. Maribeth Erb had been a wonderful Professor of qualitative research and data analysis. Your teaching about "challenging pre-conceived methodological norms" will stay with me for very long. Thank you for reviewing my data interpretation attempts, your

questions and advice made me try to do my best “to let the data speak”. Dr. Anne Raffin shared a wealth of references and fundamental questions in designing the research at its early stage. Prof. KC Ho, I may have had very little direct applications of survey methods in my thesis, but your foundational lessons of “conceptualization” and “meandering beyond the single case” have been helpful. I am indebted to Prof. Rey Iletto for introducing me to James Scott’s “hidden transcripts”. Dr. Kay Mohlman’s suggestions on thesis writing and structure have been valuable.

I thank the rest of my respondents, bloggers, journalists, and academics, for sharing their wealth of knowledge and experience, especially: Lourie Victor, Obet Verzola, Jamal Ashley Abbas, Amir Mawalil, Jun Macarambon, and members of the Computer Professionals Union, including those who have chosen to be anonymized.

The pack of vibrant graduate students and co-PhD strugglers provided great company in this endeavor. I thank Carol, Ganga, Marge, Gene, Jayeel, Ananya, and Farzana for generously sharing their PhD experiences and for all those many unwritten ‘arts of surviving the PhD’. Iris had been a dear friend whose help and company had been a source of comfort. Thank you to Cathy and Lizzey for your friendship and help during the early stages of writing. Anu, Jodie, Mary, Chengting, Rahayu, Ros, and Shobha, my co-strugglers in finding that proverbial “light at the end of the tunnel”, thank you for those exchanges, both academic and personal. Pinoy@NUS had been a source of support and of course, photos, shared food and laughter. Special thanks to Jayeel Cornelio and Glenda Wui for sharing their dissertations at a crucial time; and to Bubbles Asor and Manuel Sapitula for sharing their sociological brilliance.

Thank you to Al Alegre of the Foundation for Media Alternatives who allowed me to use his library during my fieldwork in the Philippines. My thanks also go to the librarians at the NUS Library, to the staff of Cordillera Studies Center and UP Islamic Studies Center, and to Mr. Jamal Ashley Abbas & Amor Pandaliday, for being walking

libraries on the Moro struggle.

I cannot close this acknowledgement without thanking the gift of exceptional mentors who have shaped my thinking and doing of things over the years: Vivian Puno, for teaching me the value of Completed Staff Work; Prof. Bas De Gaay Fortman, for teaching me the politics and practice of alternative development and human rights activism; Dr. Jun Borras, for the important lessons on rural development and politics, Dr. Boying Lallana for introducing me to the intersections between political science and technology; Dr. Erwin Alampay, for broad lessons on Philippine ICT and development; Dr. Lou Salvador, for believing in me as a junior researcher, and for inspiring me to become an ‘Asianist’; and Mr. Levi Verora, whose passion for academic teaching and social entrepreneurship in the Philippines is unmatched. You have all been a valuable source of knowledge and inspiration.

This thesis, the conduct of fieldwork, and conference presentations have been made possible from a series of generous research, fieldwork and travel grants from the National University of Singapore.

Finally, this dissertation is dedicated with utmost thanks to the generosity and understanding of my family. I’ve been away for too long in the course of my research endeavors and I’m sorry for missing the time that could have been spent together. They have not only let me pursue my passion for academic research, they also sustained me with encouragement and all out support. My heartfelt thanks to Ma, Kuya Ido, Ayo, Siony, and Chanel. Tony had been my partner and best friend during those four years of doubting whether I can actually get this project done. Thank you for your endless support and understanding. And of course, to my Dad, thank you, you are unable to read this work, but it is in important ways dedicated to you.

Cheryll Soriano
August, 2012

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 ONLINE POLITICAL MOBILIZATION FROM THE MARGINS

The Research Field.....	1
<i>Cultural activism and online new media</i>	3
Minority groups.....	10
<i>Philippine minorities</i>	13
<i>Philippine minorities and online media</i>	22
Theoretical approaches and research questions.....	24
<i>Culture-centered approach</i>	24
<i>Enabling and constraining structures: historical-dialectical</i> - <i>structural approach</i>	25
<i>Competing notions of agency</i>	31
<i>Hidden transcripts, infrapolitics, and the agency of subordinated groups</i> <i>From technological determinism to democratic rationalization of technology</i>	32
Methodology.....	35
<i>Units of analysis</i>	38
<i>Selecting candidate cases</i>	40
<i>Case study evidence</i>	43
<i>Case study validity and some notes on reflexivity</i>	50
Argument	53
Entering the conversation: significance and contribution	55
Thesis structure	57

2 DIALECTICS OF STRUCTURE AND AGENCY: MINORITIES AND ONLINE DISSENT

Dialectical tensions concerning minority-technology engagement	61
<i>Intersections of local culture, activism, and technology</i>	62
<i>Resistance versus co-optation</i>	63
<i>Globalizing the struggle, localizing the technology</i>	66
<i>Nations real and imagined</i>	69
<i>Unity and diversity</i>	71
<i>Politics of inclusion and exclusion</i>	73
Chapter summary	74

3 THE ARTS OF INDIGENOUS ONLINE DISSENT: NEGOTIATING TECHNOLOGY, INDIGENEITY, AND ACTIVISM IN THE CORDILLERA

Introduction	80
Indigenous struggle and activism in the Philippines	83
Case studies	86
<i>Cordillera Peoples Alliance</i>	87
<i>Tebtebba</i>	89

Locating the purposes of indigenous online activism: making claims in the name of indigeneity.....	91
<i>Building reputation and recognition</i>	91
<i>Asserting the struggle, constructing identity</i>	94
<i>Mobilizing campaigns and seeking local and international support</i>	98
“Use them, don’t let them use us”: Negotiating online mediations.....	99
<i>Negotiating commercialism</i>	100
<i>Negotiating content and medium</i>	100
<i>Whose voice gets heard online?</i>	102
<i>Managing organizational adoption of technology</i>	103
Chapter conclusion: Hidden transcripts and indigenous online activism	105

4 MULTIPLE TRANSCRIPTS AS POLITICAL STRATEGY: ONLINE MEDIA AND THE INFRAPOLITICS OF THE MORO LIBERATION MOVEMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES

Introduction	109
Infrapolitics and multiple subjectivities	110
Sources of data	113
The Moro people’s struggle for self-determination	113
Luwaran.com: Moro Islamic Liberation Front Online	116
Asserting a Moro Identity	117
Transcripts and narratives	119
Engagement and estrangement	121
Strategic uses of websites and Facebook	126
Seeking international support	131
Online divergent transcripts as infrapolitical	134
Chapter conclusion: Online political mobilization and infrapolitics of the Moros	136

5 CONSTRUCTING COLLECTIVITY IN DIVERSITY: QUEER ONLINE POLITICAL MOBILIZATION

Queer online activism	138
The double-edgedness of online media for LGBT activism.....	139
Queer formulations and political formations	142
Philippine LGBTs and the problem of difference	144
Case studies	145
<i>Ladlad online: Out of the closet and into politics</i>	145
<i>UP Babaylan and the LGBT youth</i>	148
Sources of Data	150
Online strategies: Construction of a community amidst diversity	151
<i>Carving out a space for belonging</i>	151
<i>LGBT Cocoons</i>	152
Queer online political mobilization and campaigning	155
<i>Common ground for political mobilization</i>	157
<i>Constructing identity in diversity</i>	159

Posting rules: Delineating the personal from the political?	163
Chapter conclusion: Queer online political mobilization and constructing collectivity.....	169

6 THE ARTS OF ONLINE POLITICAL MOBILIZATION FROM THE MARGINS

Minorities, the Internet, and modes of artful resistance.....	173
<i>Negotiating online media engagement: hidden transcripts of minority groups</i>	175
<i>Multiple transcripts as political strategy</i>	178
<i>Building a collective amidst diversity</i>	181
Alternative forms of political practice	186
<i>The technological as political: broadening the arena of politics</i>	186
<i>Expanding the realm of minority politics beyond the nation-state</i>	189
<i>Hidden transcripts and infrapolitics: broadening the scope of online political strategy</i>	191
<i>Disruption of structures</i>	192
Enabling and constraining structures and conditions	194
Chapter summary	211

7 CONCLUSION

Conclusion	213
Thesis contributions, limitations and future directions.....	215

BIBLIOGRAPHY 221

- Appendix A
- Appendix B
- Appendix C
- Appendix D

SUMMARY

The dissertation explores the engagement of online new media for political mobilization by movements of dissent from the margins based on case studies of five organizations representing ethnic (indigenous), ethno-religious (Moro Muslims), and sexual (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) minorities in the Philippines. Using Scott's notion of "hidden transcripts" and Feenberg's "democratic rationalization of technology", the thesis explores strategic approaches and historical, social, and political conditions embedded in the construction, negotiation, and transformation of minority online activist media. By distinguishing between the open, declared forms of resistance articulated online, as well as the backstage, undeclared forms of resistance which constitute minorities' negotiation of political mobilization amidst technological risks and possibilities, the thesis surfaces ways by which resistance to domination and hegemony can be exercised by groups of subordinated positions. Amidst enabling and constraining structures and dialectical tensions surrounding their online political mobilization, the agency of minority groups emanate from: (1) their negotiation of technological opportunities and risks to minority identity and struggle, which can be construed as subpolitical acts; and (2) their creative appropriation of technology, where they engage both covert and overt forms of resistance. Here, technology appears as a site for struggle, but also as a source of struggle and the case study chapters present stories of this complex engagement of online media by minority groups. New strategies of political discourse foregrounding hidden transcripts help minority groups to circumvent traditional barriers of political communication and alter the quality of debate between minorities, the state, the dominant group, and the international community and challenge national limits and boundaries.

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
1.1 Summary of shortlisted minority groups	40
1.2 Case study organizations	43
1.3 Summary of research themes and case study evidence	44
2.1 Summary of issues of online mediation of minority groups	75
3.1 Case study indigenous organizations	86
6.1 Strategic online political mobilization from the margins	184
6.2 Enabling and constraining structures and conditions	209

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1.1 Levels of analysis.....	28
Figure 4.1. “Moro is a nation”. Snapshot from www.luwaran.com	122
Figure 4.2. “History of MILF leadership”. Banner snapshot from www.luwaran.com	125
Figure 4.3. “No to Terrorism” Banner snapshot from..... www.luwaran.com	127

Chapter 1

Online Political Mobilization from the Margins

...technology will not determine the effects. On the contrary, the new technology is itself a product of a particular social system, and will be developed as an apparently autonomous process of innovation only to the extent that we fail to identify and challenge its real agencies. But it is not only a question of identification and defence. There are contradictory factors, in the whole social development, which may make it possible to use some or all of the new technology for purposes quite different from those of the existing social order: certainly locally and perhaps more generally. The choices and uses actually made will in any case be part of a more general process of social development, social growth and social struggle.

(Williams, 2003, p. 140 [1974])

The Research Field

The dialectic between the disciplinary power of technology and the unanticipated ways that technologies can be re-appropriated and localized within cultural logics has been one of the central intellectual challenges concerning technology for the past several decades. How media changes the way we do things, and how human intention, culture, and judgment can change the future of media, has been a question raised by Williams almost 50 years ago, and remains central in the agenda of present and future media.

The recent expansion of the reach of the Internet to previously underrepresented sectors in Philippine society, and the accompanying emancipatory promises, inspires an examination of the place of online media in these movements, and in turn the role of these new actors, in shaping the future of media. The depiction of Philippine contentious politics and online political engagement in both traditional media and scholarly works have been largely focused on particular images of political activists, journalists, academics and politicians from Metropolitan Manila and other urban centres (Schock,

1999; Meyer, et.al, 2002; Hernandez, 1998). However, amidst all this online political activity emerges a new set of political actors, the minority groups, who have already taken up online spaces for the articulation of their respective claims.

Over the recent years, minority groups have developed online narratives, discursive spaces, and productions in websites, blogs, and social networking sites. Their online presentations contribute to narratives of their social reality and also serve as a space for generating debate, negotiation and disagreement from within the group and from other actors in society. These make reference to their historical oppressions, challenge the present, and imagine possible futures for them. Such online engagements seem to constitute alternative sites for political mobilization as they articulate claims on the state. In order to challenge political, economic, and social structures and express demands for transformation of such structures, their online performance weaves together spaces of culture with broader agendas of transformative politics. These productions bypass traditional distribution systems and therefore can serve as a promising vector for minority groups as they insert their own stories and struggles into national narratives (Nakamura, 2007; Ginsburg, 2008; Landzelius, 2006; Latufeku, 2006; Rodriguez, 2001; Dutta, 2011; Dutta and Pal, 2007; Arora, 2010; Couldry and Curran, 2003; Downing, 2001; Bakardjieva, 2003, 2004, 2005; Gross, 2003, 2007; Pullen, 2010; Siapera, 2005, 2006, 2010). This possibility for self-production of political expressions is particularly salient for minority groups who have long suffered as objects of others' image-making and issue-framing practices.

This political activism happening at the margins has been largely unnoticed and understudied, and yet minority groups' use of online media for political mobilization raises several important practical and theoretical issues and debates. The Internet's availability for geographically disadvantaged and relatively under and misrepresented minorities carries potentials for effecting change in conditions of minoritization, and yet

with these opportunities come threats and dilemmas. The pertinent question is how minority/subordinated – majority/dominant relationships can be redefined with this appropriation of technology for political mobilization and how these groups’ minoritized positions can be altered or reinforced with the use of online media. To what extent is minority groups’ engagement of online media for political mobilization capable of challenging the social hierarchies and structures which underlie both their struggle and context of media use? Can Internet use by these actors surface alternative forms of political practice and create new dimensions of understanding political action?

Cultural activism and online new media

It is first important to situate this dissertation amidst a growing area of interdisciplinary scholarship and research exploring various media productions that challenge dominant concentrations of power and media resources, and facilitate popular mobilization. I refer to studies that explore the conceptualization and practice of “cultural activism” (Ginsburg, 1997; Ginsburg, et.al, 2002), “alternative media” (Atton, 2002, 2004; Couldry & Curran, 2003), “radical media” (Downing, 2001), “citizens media” (Rodriguez, 2001), and “community media” (Rennie, 2006; Howley, 2010). The term *radical media* (Downing, 2001) was advanced to refer to the role of non-mainstream media in contesting established power blocks with a view to wider social emancipation. Downing (2001, p. ix) argues that radical media may also include minority ethnic media and religious media, “although the adjective radical may well not fit a considerable number of these ethnic, religious or community media”. In arguing for a shift to “citizens’ media”, Rodriguez (2001) developed the concept of radical media further by making an explicit link between forms of citizenship practice and empowerment (Couldry and Curran, 2003, p. 7). According to Rodriguez (2001, pp. 19-

20, 157) “citizens’ media accounts for the process of empowerment, conscientization, and fragmentation of power that result when men and women gain access to and reclaim their own media...As they disrupt established power relationships and cultural codes, citizens’ media participants gain power that is in turn reinvested in shaping their lives, future, and cultures.”

In comparison with “radical media” and “citizens’ media” formulations, *alternative media* is seen as a useful broad term to refer to a vast range of media production activities and can encompass all cultural forms of independent production, while involving no judgments about the politically radical nature nor empowering effects of the media analyzed (Couldry & Curran, 2003, p. 7; Atton, 2002, 2004). The concept of alternative media (Atton, 2002) describes a broad “range of media projects, interventions and networks that work against or seek to develop different forms of, the dominant, and expected (and broadly accepted) ways of ‘doing’ media” (Atton, 2004, ix). Finally, drawing on political theories of community and citizenship in extending the concept of alternative media, Rennie (2006) developed the concept *community media* to explore mediated symbolic processes of collective experience and cultural meaning. Studies on community media sought to better understand the place of communication and community in contemporary politics. Despite the conceptual difficulties associated with defining community media as a discrete object of study (Howley, 2010, p. 20; Carpentier, 2007; Carpentier, et.al, 2003), both community and citizens’ media facilitate the exploration of factors that enable and constrain challenges to media power within specific local conditions within the increasingly global frame of Internet-enhanced communicative spaces.

However, these conceptual formulations do not emphasize the differential conditions of people and groups from the margins of culture and society who have begun to engage online media for political mobilization. Thus, in light of these

conceptual formulations, this thesis engages the concept of “cultural activism” (Ginsburg, 1997) given its emphasis on analyzing the intersections and tensions between media and social practice within the circumstances of minorities. Faye Ginsburg (1997, pp.122-127; 2008, p. 139) calls *cultural activism*, the use of a wide range of media by minority groups in order to talk back to power structures that have erased or distorted their interests and realities. Grounded in anthropology, studies of cultural activism are concerned with the discursive and material operations of minority productions, which are viewed both as "cultural product and social process" (Ginsburg 1991, p. 93; Mahon, 2000; McClagan, 2002). These productions “shift the terms of debates circulating in the dominant public sphere, to attack stereotypes and perceived prejudices, and to construct, reconfigure, and communicate meanings associated with their racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, and national identities” (Ginsburg, 1991, p. 96).

Although the textual content and technological form of these productions are analyzed, the central focus is with meaning-making and social practice, encompassing the ways in which people use these forms and technologies to construct, articulate, and disseminate ideologies about identity, community, difference, nation, and politics, and with their impact on social relations, social formation, and social meanings. Following Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi (1994, xix), the underlying argument is that while media are part of political problems and “can be used by states to establish their definitions of the political, their versions of history, or part of the ideological state apparatus”, “media can at the same time be tools of popular mobilization, promote oppositional culture, and constitute forms of expression of popular movements” from the margins. Thus, when there appears to be none or limited space for political activity, the role of new media technologies in fostering the politicization of the “cultural” can be explored. This is an important alternative to some paradigms in media studies that have tended to focus on the film/video material, media institutions, or the technology itself,

rather than historical relationships, social relations, circulation, and consumption of work. Moreover, this conceptualization helps to see the emergence of new social and cultural possibilities on a continuum, from the activities of daily life out of which consciousness and intentionality are constructed, to more dramatic forms of expressive culture such as social protests (Mahon, 2000). Further, a focus on “cultural activists” also helps illuminate how particular social actors arrive at the decisions about their uses of the media, and how such media representations stand for collective bodies (Ginsburg, 1997, pp. 124-127).

Despite their important contributions, earlier studies (i.e. Salazar, 2004; Froehling, 1997; Smith, 2006) that analyzed the role of media for minority groups’ cultural activism have been criticized for their over-optimism. By studying their political significance when interacting with state and global systems or their ethnic affirmation processes, their attempts to define the political role of minorities immediately as “cultural activism” again present subjects as agents who, by appropriating media technologies, are able to automatically construct their cultural identities (Zamorano, 2009). Such over-optimism may detach minority use of the media from the historical, political, and economic processes in which they take place, as well as rendering invisible the internal and external power relations but also the internal struggles and meaning-making under which minority media are constructed, negotiated, and transformed. Moreover, an important concern pertains to the need to balance the “extremely innovative, intelligent, artful uses” of new media with the question of “who is their intended audience, and why have they selected that audience as one worth communicating to?” (Forte, n.d.). Here, the concern is how minority media productions transcend the local and nation-state boundaries and help to foster transnational networks of support aimed at achieving particular political goals.

Recent works on cultural activism have presented a stronger balance between the optimism about minority productions with the power circuits and socio-political problems in which minority media productions emerge (Ginsburg, et.al., 2002, Ginsburg, 2008; Latufeku, 2006; Landzelius, 2006; McLagan, 2002; Prins, 2002; Turner, 2002). Taking off from these studies, the use of the Internet by minority groups for “cultural activism” needs to be analyzed not only by the way minority groups articulate popular forms of political mobilization within these spaces, but the process of technology engagement in itself, as a possible site for resistance.

The Internet enables minority groups from the developing world to articulate their claims, express their identities and aspirations, mobilize, solicit broader support, and participate in the forms of *cultural activism*. Many anticipate that with this opening of the communicative environment to previously underrepresented groups and ideas, a more vibrant arena for representation, exchange, and reflection, especially in multicultural societies will follow (Papacharissi, 2002; Dahlberg, 2002, 2001; Dahlgren, 2001; Dahlberg & Siapera, 2007; Siapera, 2010). However, related to the debate on the communication agent’s true ability to resist power, domination and control (Bourdieu, 1977; Foucault, 1980), there are important concerns and lessons generated from previous minority media productions that are relevant in confronting their Internet activism. It has been argued that the narrative of equating technology as progress and social change is part of an ideological movement about development in Western societies and is subscribed to by entrepreneurs and corporations who produce the hardware and software (Hassan, 2008; Pieterse, 2005; Sreekumar, 2011; Lovink & Zehle, 2005; Castells, 2009). The Internet as a platform for counter-hegemonic expression is also contentious especially as it is seen to perpetuate the interests of dominant economic and political powers (Kellner, 1989; Castells, 2009, 2000; Lovink & Zehle, 2005; Dean, 2002, 2003). Internet technology is argued to spur

"technocapitalism" (Kellner, 1989; Kahn and Kellner, 2007a, 2007b; Dean, et.al, 2005; Dean, 2002, 2003) in the age of neoliberal globalization (Hassan, 2008; Flew, 2005; Pieterse, 2003; Hoofd, 2009; Castells, 2000) and that its network of Internet users manifests a capitalist society (Castells, 2000, p. 408; 2009; Dean 2002, 2003), which many activist and minority organizations are fighting against. Some also view media (in general) and cyberspace (in particular) as complicit in maintaining Western cultural hegemony (Sardar, 1996, 1999; Pieterse, 2003), which some civil society organizations in the Southeast Asian region see as hostile to development and democratization. Further, the question of whether the global character of online media can be used to articulate local minority agendas and allow the meaningful production of culture is tied to views that global technologies can challenge, distort, or undermine locality's production (Ginsburg, et.al., 2002; Landzelius, 2006, p. 293; Castells, 2009; Pieterse, 2003; Sreekumar, 2011). Structures and processes of social and political communication are embedded deeply within the wider structures and processes of given power and social formations. The underlying question is how, and under what conditions, can people of subordinated social positions emancipate themselves, through the use of Internet mediated technologies, from the limits that natures, structures, and social bonds placed upon them.

However, we still know little about these actors' everyday engagements online, especially in the realm of minority groups from developing Asia. What kind of life projects do they pursue online, and what forms do these online engagements take? What urges them to engage online spaces in their political mobilization strategies, and what benefits do they perceive or actually gain from it? How have colonial experiences, socio-political conditions, and globalization shaped the character of their online engagements, and how do religion, gender and ethnicity play out in their online experience? It is important to probe the role of the media in this process of self-

construction and symbolic practices in order to understand how minority groups balance the possibilities and limits of the medium to communicate their cause.

A wide range of studies examining online resistance focus on transnational organizations and Western - based civil society organizations (e.g. Bennet, 2003; Hill & Hughes, 1998; Jha, 2005; Kenix, 2007; Lebert, 2003; Scott & Street, 2001; Zhou, 2006; Van Aeist & Walgrave, 2002; Jensen, et.al., 2007). Research into non-Western corners of the Internet and minority groups is still relatively scant and recent (Hemer & Tufte, 2005, p. 15; Ho, et.al., 2002; Arora, 2010)¹. Minority groups are often understood in the context of diaspora and migrant communities in Europe, particularly because a significant scholarship and theorization of minorities and the media have originated from this region (Georgiou, 2005, 2007; Bailey and Harindranath, 2006; Siapera, 2007, 2010; Silverstone 2005; Leung, 2005). Minority online engagement as theorized in the context of migrant and diaspora communities in Western countries engages a wholly different set of conditions and context of minoritization that influence their uses of the media.

At the same time, most studies on online struggles highlight Internet use by well-organized movements and civil society organizations for overt forms of political mobilization, such as building networks and strengthening organizational capacity (e.g. Garrido & Halavais, 2003, and Froehling, 1997 on the *Zapatistas* in Mexico; Lebert, 2003 on *Amnesty International*, Dutta & Pal, 2007 on the *Narmada Bachao Andolan*). There is limited attention given to intention, purpose, and content, the manner by which the object of resistance and self is expressed and debated, the roots, dynamics, politics, and nature of such forms of opposition, the blurry division between opposition and

¹A few examples of studies on Third world civil society or minority groups and ICT use include Garrido and Halavais (2003) on the *Zapatistas*, Ubayasari (2004) on Sri Lanka's Tamil struggle, and Tai (2004) on Chinese activism, while works on online communities and identity formation of diasporas from the Third world include Franklin (2001, 2005) on Tongan women, and Noelle-Ignacio (2000) on Filipino women, Longboan (2010) on indigenous diaspora, and Oo (2003) on Burmese communities.

accommodation, and the implications these have for broader collective action. There is also room for examining the experiential dimension and perception of these actors about their online-based struggles. Moreover, while more recently a number of studies have been done to analyze whether the Internet mirrors or alters societal imbalances (Kolko, et.al., 2000; Nakamura, 2002; Siapera, 2007; Silver, 2000; Franklin, 2001, 2005, Dean, 2002). Few studies systematically problematize the interaction between structure and activist agency, and on what forms agency might take within a technological discourse. On the other hand, as information and communication technologies (ICTs), especially in the developing world, are often seen simplistically as agents that can "give a voice to the voiceless", the emergent experiential dimension delimited by ICTs remains under-theorized.

This dissertation seeks to shift the focus on minority use of the media away from representation issues, or distant analysis of their online productions. By engaging social theory to deepen the analysis of the relationships between past and current struggles as well as minorities' meaning-making of their engagement of online media for political mobilization, the thesis seeks to present a richer context and understanding of what constitutes agency in the context of minority internet activism, as well as make arguments about the role of technology in such practices.

Minority Groups

Who are minorities and what constitutes their minoritization? This section aims to clarify what is meant by "minority groups" and contextualizes this study through a discussion of what constitutes minoritization in the Philippine context.

A minority group is "a group of people who, because of physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from others in the society in which they live for

differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination” (Wirth, 1945, p. 347). A minority group is not a statistical concept that accounts for less in number count or representation. Instead, its existence in society “implies a corresponding dominant group enjoying higher social status and greater privileges” (Ibid.). A minority group can be distinguished from the dominant group by physical or cultural marks and given their difference from the dominant group, “they may be debarred from certain opportunities-economic, social and political” (p. 348). Minoritization can emanate from race, ethnicity, religion, gender², or physical characteristics and the members of minority groups are usually held in lower esteem and may even be objects of contempt, hatred, ridicule, and violence. Membership in a minority is involuntary, and they are treated as members of a category irrespective of individual merits (Ibid.). However, when the sentiments of a disadvantaged group are articulated, when they clamour for emancipation and equality, a minority can become a political force to be reckoned with. This thesis focuses on minoritization based on cultural (and not physical) characteristics because these minorities have a history of political struggle and are active in political mobilization activities.

Across Asia and in the Philippines specifically, minority groups have been overlooked by government policies and have also been affected by ongoing processes of economic and social change and development initiatives (Clarke, 2001, p. 419; He & Kymlicka, 2002; Brown and Ganguly, 1997). By virtue of their remote locations or their discriminated identities, they are marginalized from markets and government services and have limited access to mainstream media to articulate their causes. Commonly, they are underrepresented politically at local, regional and national levels and often stereotyped as backward and inferior others.

² See Hacker (1951) on women as a minority group.

The perception of pervasive discrimination of minorities in society would seem to influence an endorsement of minority rights and recognition of minority claims. However, recognition of minority claims has also been contested on the basis of concerns for democracy, unity and stability of the country. Recognition of cultural diversity and group rights is believed to lead to new problems, increase the possibility of conflict, and weaken social cohesion and the unity of the state (Kymlicka, 1995; He & Kymlicka, 2002)³.

A “minority group” as a sociological category has been used in a variety of studies, although its conceptualization has also been contested. Other sociologists prefer to use the term “oppressed groups” than minority groups (See Meyers, 1984, p. 12). For example, Meyer argues that the term *oppressed groups* better captures the process of domination in economic, cultural, political, and social arenas than Wirth’s conceptualization of a minority group. Using the term *oppressed groups*, however, would seem to neutralize the cultural identity and characteristics of a particular minority group, which this thesis engages. For example, the working class is oppressed, migrant workers are oppressed, and even some consider call center workers to be working under “oppressive conditions”. Wirth’s (1945) conceptualization of a minority group will be used in this dissertation precisely for its emphasis that it is not purely a numerical concept, and minoritization occurs in terms of asserting a cultural orientation different from a dominant national framework, which becomes a basis of its marginalization or subordination. The term “minority” can also accommodate the fact that minorities oscillate across varied aspirations and conditions of minoritization (Kymlicka, 1995, 2002; He & Kymlicka, 2005), which is important in this study. For example, some members of a minority group may in actuality experience less marginalized positions or

³ In their critical studies of “neo-racism” in Europe, Balibar (1991) and Taguieff (1993) argue that cultural differences are typically perceived as a threat to the cohesion and unity of the society. Fear for the unity and stability of the country is also a common and central argument used to oppose multiculturalism (Verkuyten and Yildiz, 2006; He & Kymlicka, 2005; Kymlicka, 1995).

discrimination than others of the same grouping. Some members of a minority group may not feel oppressed at all. Some minorities of the same grouping may aspire for full assimilation, while others seek secession. This differentiation within minority groups provides a rich backdrop for the analysis of their uses of online media for political mobilization. Wirth's definition of minority groups emphasizes a condition of oppression and marginalization vis-a-vis a dominant group, which better captures the conditions of the groups studied in this thesis.

Philippine minorities

Moving from the abstract to the concrete, this section shall discuss minoritization in the Philippine context. Although the Philippines is a democratic polity with a vibrant and dynamic civil society sector, such clamour for the recognition of various identity forms persists. This makes it an interesting case for examining acts of contention by minority groups. The Muslim struggle in the Philippines, for example, is considered as one of the longest struggles of ethno-religious minorities globally (Alim, 1995; Jubair, 2007). Indigenous groups are also active in their struggle for self-determination and fight against government and business' encroachment of their ancestral lands. Finally, sexual minorities are beginning to enter the political and policy-making arenas in furtherance of their fight against discrimination and queer rights as human rights.

With respect to the treatment of minorities, the Philippines may be judged as a relative bright spot in Southeast Asia. For ethnic (indigenous people) and ethno-religious (Muslim) minorities, the nation has passed some of the region's most progressive legislation, and minority peoples have won significant economic, political and cultural concessions from government (Eder and McKenna, 2004). However, it is

important to locate such state response and political openings side by side the long history of unmet grievances and atrocities continually experienced by minorities.

For example, the provision of autonomous regions in Muslim Mindanao and the Cordillera region in the 1987 Constitution sought to respect the “common and distinctive historical and cultural heritage, economic and social structures, and other relevant characteristics” (Rood, 1989) of these ethnic minorities, and a significant departure from centrism and national integration that marked earlier Constitutions. The reasons Philippine ethnic minorities have made such gains include a history of armed rebellion against the state, and the extraordinarily large number of non-government organizations working on behalf of ethnic minority concerns (Eder & McKenna, 2004, p. 56). But the grant of these regional autonomies to territorially distinct minorities came as a compromise to avert a threatening alternative of secession.

After years of lobbying, the Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act⁴ was passed in 1997 to protect the rights of indigenous peoples to their ancestral domain, and to preserve their culture and institutions. However, indigenous communities continue to suffer from the illegal encroachment of business such as mining or logging activities in ancestral lands. Members of indigenous activist community also condemn the “sudden disappearances” of some of its members (CPA members, Personal interview, May 2010), while retaining in their memories the deaths of some of its past indigenous leaders in the fight against large-scale dam and mining projects.

Alongside the failure of the autonomous government in Muslim Mindanao for giving true and meaningful autonomy to the Muslims, an armed group of Muslim rebels have formed the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and has pursued earlier clamours for secession. Similar to the deaths of past indigenous leaders, the violent mass killings of Moro intellectuals in history, dubbed as ‘Jabidah Massacre’, has

⁴ Republic Act No. 8371 (1997), entitled *An Act to Recognize, Protect and Promote the Rights of Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples*.

catalysed modern Moro insurgencies. The armed conflict and sporadic clashes between the Moro rebels and the military has caused thousands of deaths, millions of displacements, and deep wounds between the warring parties. However, this conflict is also placed side by side some form of reprieve, as the government continues to engage the Moro rebels in peace negotiations, which is overseen by the International Monitoring Team, the United States, and other international actors.

For sexual minorities, on the other hand, the Supreme Court's decision to allow the first national lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender/ transsexual (LGBT) political party in the country, and purportedly in Asia, to run for the 2010 nationwide elections, marked a significant opening for the LGBT community in the political arena, a considerable achievement in this predominantly Catholic country. In Asia, the Philippines also hosted the first Gay Pride Parade in 1994, which inspired similar Pride Parades in other parts of the region such as Colombo, Hongkong, Taiwan, Delhi, and Singapore (www.Fridae.com). Concurrently, however, LGBT hate crimes and violent deaths have been documented to show that the LGBT community continue to receive not only verbal but physical abuse in this seemingly 'queer-friendly country'.

These show that despite some gains and forms of response from the state, the overt and covert forms of control and repression as well as the sensitive relations between the state and minorities serve as significant grounds for problematizing the condition of minorities in Philippine society. The post-Martial Law era of the 1980s has created a space for political activism in the Philippines and tolerance towards expression of dissent (Schock, 1999, p. 362; Abinales and Amoroso, 2005). At the same time, the reclaiming of democracy in 1986 has been expected to trickle down benefits and broaden participation for all. However, the continuing ability of national elites to use economic and political power to pursue their own interests and the apparent inability of the state to match policy with deeds to address minorities' grievances ensue. Moreover,

despite the popularity of ‘People Power Revolutions’ that created openings of popular mobilizations and space for dissent, these revolutions are represented by the social majority, and do not necessarily represent particular grievances of minorities.

Although the problems faced by minorities differ in various ways, they also exhibit similarities. The indigenous peoples and Muslim minority share problems of scarce land, population pressure, and the reluctance of central government to devolve authority, a similar situation of minorities found throughout Southeast Asia and beyond. The Philippine government has continually emphasized legislation that will further integrate ethnic minorities into the state (Eder and Mc Kenna, 2004, p. 57). Although indigenous people, Muslims, and the rest of the Filipinos inhabit the same state and can be said to be linked together through various attachments and inter-marriages, a profound cultural gulf created by the historical, political, and economic circumstances surrounds them.

The problem shared by ethnic, Muslim, and sexual minorities concerns the treatment of their cultural and religious practices which are devalued for their difference from majority norms and values, their continued discrimination, misrepresentation, and “othering” as backward, terrorist or roguish, sinners, nuisance, or as “immorals”. Other important common sources of difference with the dominant culture of these three groupings are religious and colonial history. Although many indigenous people converted to Christianity through efforts during the American period to “civilize the natives” (Fianza, 2004; Fry, 2006; Goh, 2005), many indigenous communities continue to practice their rituals and spiritual beliefs that include animism and other practices that would be seen by the Christian, modern society as “uncivilized”. Philippine Muslims, on the other hand, have a more direct grievance rooted from their forced annexation to the Christian-dominated Philippine Republic during the American colonial period, despite having successfully resisted Christianity and retained its Islamic political and religious traditions (Jubair, 2007; Quimpo, 2001; Soriano, 2006; MILF Leader, Personal

Communication, May, 2010). Finally, the Philippine LGBT community, although largely diverse in itself, have had several clashes with the Catholic church over Catholic teachings and values that run counter to their practices and beliefs, the most fundamental of which is having sexual relations with the same sex or gender, an act which is considered sinful and source of immorality by the Catholic church (www.cbcp.org). Given the prominent role played by the Catholic church as “mobilizational infrastructure” (Hedman, 2001, pp. 933-4) of past anti-regime oppositions such as the People Power Revolution, the relationship of these minorities vis a vis this dominant religion, as well as with the dominant activist sphere, becomes an important consideration.

The question of minority rights is becoming more important with the rapid international interconnectedness made possible by the Internet. In this increasingly connected and globalized world, social movements assume a heavily interconnected character where membership and support transcend national boundaries and discontented minorities often look for help and solidarity from groups of similar struggles situated on the other side of state borders.

Indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples are sometimes called Tribal Filipinos or Indigenous Cultural Communities, and according to Clarke (2001, p. 415), they are “autochthonous, or descendants of the earliest known inhabitants of a territory”. They are peoples whose traditional lands have been overrun by settlers, and who have been forcibly, or through treaties, incorporated into states. While other minority groups aspire of a status like nation-states with similar economic and social institutions, indigenous peoples typically seek the ability to maintain traditional ways of life and beliefs while participating on their own terms in the modern world (He and Kymlicka, 2005, p. 348; Kymlicka, 2002). The Filipino term for indigenous is *katutubo*, which means native or original to a place.

There are 114 indigenous and ethno-linguistic groups in the Philippines and central to their struggles is the assertion of ethnicity, defence of ancestral domain and their space against the established order (Tauli-Corpuz, et.al., 2009). There is disagreement over the total number of indigenous people in the Philippines, but 1995 estimates include 4.5-7.5 million people (Macdonald, 1995), 8-12 million (Leonen, 1995), and roughly 18 million, or 20 percent of the country's total population (Asian Development Bank, 2002)⁵. Some indigenous communities in the Philippines can be considered as pluralist and assimilationist minorities and have successfully achieved equal status in terms of education and economic positions. A pluralistic minority seeks acceptance for its differences on the part of the dominant group, with the "conception that variant cultures can flourish peacefully side by side in the same society" (Wirth, 1945 p. 354). The goal of a pluralistic minority is achieved when it has succeeded in the fullest measure of equality in economic and political arenas and the right to exercise its cultural practices. Assimilationist minorities, on the other hand, "crave(s) the fullest opportunity for participation in the life of the larger society with a view to uncoerced incorporation in society...and works towards complete acceptance by the dominant group and merger with the larger society" (Wirth, 1945, p. 358). Ethnic minorities in the Philippines are heterogeneous and diverse in terms of their aspirations for acculturation. Further, equality in terms of cultural expression is contentious because while various ethnic groups would seem well integrated in Philippine society, indigenous practices and rituals are still generally exoticized by the dominant majority media (Fry, 2006; Longboan, 2010; Victor, 2008). Contemporary popular media has long depicted indigenous peoples as rooted in a place, cut off from and yet simultaneously suffering from a modernity that encroaches in their territories and ways of life. Philippine history

⁵ According to indigenous leaders, however, these statistics are doubtful because previous census did not comprehensively cover indigenous communities in the upland, and it has been only through recent lobbying with the National Statistics Office that proper census of indigenous communities will be undertaken (De Chavez, Personal interview, April-May, 2010).

has also not been kind to indigenous peoples because it characterized them as ‘uncivilized’ [Mindoro Provincial Board, 1919], and ‘backward people’ [US Senate, 63rd Congress], with ‘barbarous practices’ [US President McKinley’s Instruction to the Philippine Commission, 1900] and a ‘low order of intelligence’ (Kapunan, 2001; Eligio, 2010).

Ethno-religious minority (Philippine Muslims or Moros). There are an estimated 3.5 million Muslims or about 5 per cent of the population of Christian-dominated Philippines, and they are geographically concentrated in the Mindanao Island and Sulu archipelago located in the South of the Philippines. A Muslim indigenous to the Philippines is called “*Moro*”, a term which historically contains a derogatory connotation and originates from the word ‘moors’, familiar Spanish enemies from Morocco and Mauritania (Eder & McKenna, 2004; Jubair, 1999). The American colonizers continued to use the term Moro, despite the fact that it has become an epithet among Christian Filipinos denoting pirates and savages. In the 1960s, however, the Muslim revolutionary organizations have used the term to define a collective identity for their struggle, one that defined their citizenship to an imagined nation, the *Bangsamoro*. The term ‘Bangsamoro’ comes from the words “bangsa” (nation) and “Moro” Muslim identity, and has since then signified the Moro’s clamour for an independent state. Decades of impasse in entitlement debates and superficial power sharing have minoritized the Moros from the region, Mindanao, which they previously dominated and ruled (Quimpo, 2001; Soriano, 2006). The Moro struggle emanates from the following claims: (a) having had a fully-functioning Moro government (Sultanate), a political entity recognized across neighbouring Asian countries and in trade activities prior to Spanish occupation, and which cultivated sentiments associated with freedom, power and glory; (b) having successfully resisted Christianity during Spanish colonization; (c) documented historical appeals and violent resistance against Moro

communities' annexation to the Philippines during American colonization; and, (d) a Moro identity distinct from the rest of the Filipinos (Tan, 1993; Mc Kenna, 1998; Soriano; 2006; MILF Leader, Personal communication, May 2010). Moros share a religious culture with neighbouring countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia, and also retain certain elements of an indigenous pre-Islamic culture and pre-colonial lowland culture that are similar to those found elsewhere in Southeast Asia but not among Christian Filipinos (Eder & McKenna, 2004, p. 60). However, Muslims in the Philippines are also heterogeneous and move from different types of minoritization. The Moro struggle, which in a sense may be considered a struggle for ancestral domain and self-determination of indigenous Muslim tribes, has oscillated from complete secession or independence from the Philippine state (separatism) to presently, a demand for sub-statehood (implying membership to the Philippine state) and recognition of the right over their ancestral domain, a claim very similar to the framing of demands of indigenous groups (Coronel-Ferrer, 2011; MILF Leader, Personal communication, May, 2010). And yet, some Muslims have already fully assimilated in Philippine society, by virtue of migration to other islands and intermarriages. Some have also fully embraced membership to the Philippine nation by voting, changing of names, and taking up important local or national government positions.

Queer or sexual minorities A third group of minorities are the sexual minorities, covering lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgenders / transsexuals, and *queer*⁶ (LGBTq). There is folk wisdom that the Philippines is one of the most queer-friendly countries in Asia, raising the question of whether queers can still be considered 'minorities'. This

⁶ Queer is a theoretical term denoting the disassembling of common beliefs about gender and sexuality, as well as the rejection of all categorizations and binaries (including homosexual and heterosexual) as limited and labelled by dominant power structures. The term is derived from 'Queer Theory' (Jagose, 1998), which argues against the integration of individual self-understanding and reflection into broader forms of identification. Queer, therefore is distinguished from past gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender politics because it dismisses such terms, gay or lesbians, as categories that contain subjects and automatically erase those who do not perfectly match (Butler, 1991; Kirsch, 2000, p. 35). Others have argued that defining 'queer' can be construed as antithetical to its purpose, because such notion of definition or closure implies finality (Hirsch, 2000, p. 127; Eagleton, 1997, p. 66-68). Queer Theory is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

myth that LGBTs are accepted in Philippine society despite still being the objects of ridicule marks the prejudice that they confront daily (Austria, 2004; Benedito, Personal communication, October 2011). Popularly labelled “third sex” by local media, they remain stereotyped as “screaming fags”, “shallow commentators”, “comedy bar entertainers”, “hairstylists” and “*parloristas*”, despite the achievements of many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer artists and professionals from various walks of life. Sexual minorities have for decades fought for fullest acceptance in politics and society, but until present remain discriminated against in various forms.

This violence against LGBTs is not only verbal but physical. In a report published by the Philippine LGBT Crime Watch, 103 suspected anti-LGBT hate crime deaths since 1996 have been tallied, including 28 cases during the first half of 2011 (Philippine LGBT Crime Watch, 2011). In some instances, these victims’ dignities were further maligned as their sexual organs were mutilated or plugged into their body openings, seemingly an attempt to send a message that they are not humans with sacred bodies (Umbac, Published interview, 2011). While a degree of passive tolerance towards the LGBT community exists in the Philippines, this tolerance and leniency do not equate to equal protections by the law (B. Benedito, Ladlad Chairperson, Personal interview, October 2011).

Marginalization happens not only through explicit ridicule or physical violence but in ways where heterosexual normativity⁷ has seeped into societal values to the extent that it constitutes the process of self-loathing by queers. As they grow up in societies where any form of sexuality beyond heteronormativity is loathed and mocked, a person growing up in this society whose sexuality does not fall within such norm begins to loathe himself or herself and adopts a negative view of being queer (Hodges

⁷ Heterosexual normativity or “heteronormativity” is defined by Danby (2007, p. 30) as “the linked assumptions that a normal adult (a) belongs to and enacts one of two major genders; (b) forms, as an adult, a romantic, sexual, and reproductive bond with an adult who belongs to and enacts the other gender; and (c) by doing this forms a household and starts a family; so that (d) a standard household or family may be understood to be built around a heterosexual couple of this kind.”

and Hutter, 1974). Heteronormativity also results in discourses and policies that marginalize and erase the concerns of those who do not fit into heterosexual norms (Olson, 2009, p.4). Tolerance is high for those who conform to stereotypes and “regulate their own sexualities” and this could mean never coming out of the closet and shying away from public movements against discrimination.

Philippine minorities and online media

Any situated study of new media must address the question of how prevalent technology actually is within the society in question. Although Internet penetration in the Philippines as of December 2011 remains at approximately 29.2% of the population (or 29.7 million)⁸ and still biased in more urban areas, indigenous, Muslim, and queer groups and individuals have begun to gain substantial online presence in websites, blogs, and other social media. For example, a Moro youth leader voices out in his blog:

Going digital provides an accessible way to express the sentiments of the Moro people. There is an emergence of Moro owned or developed websites now. This is precisely a good way to inform the general public about the plight of our people as well as correct our maligned history which has suffered a great deal of a kind of atrocity under the hands of Filipino and Western historians... (Macarambon, M., 2008, wyezemoro blog, <http://blog.wyezemoro.com/>)

Indigenous and queer groups also abound in cyberspace, using it as an arena to organize activities, express dissent against state or societal prejudices, and articulate their demand for recognition of their claims.

⁸ From the International Telecommunications Union and Internet World Stats <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm#asia>. AC Nielsen’s 2011 Southeast Asia Digital Consumer Report estimates that 33% of Filipinos have access to the Internet. Available from <http://www.sg.nielsen.com/site/NewsReleaseJuly112011.shtml>

The penetration of the call center industry into Philippine provinces and beyond the capital Metro Manila has created the demand and fast tracked the establishment of Internet and telecommunications services in some geographically remote areas (De Chavez, R., Bolinget, W., and Anongos, A., Personal communication, April and May, 2011)⁹. This is accompanied by a national community telecenter program implemented by government which made available internet kiosks in different parts of the country, as well as the rise in local enterprises such as internet cafes, which brought access to the Internet in smaller towns at a per access cost of about P20 (US\$0.4) per hour (Lallana & Soriano, 2010). Telecommunication companies, which penetrated the low income groups through low cost promotions and unlimited calls and short messaging service (sms) offers in the beginning of the 1990s, are now offering the same “sachet” schemes (*tingi or in small increments*) to market prepaid internet promotions as well. These modes of internet access have reached minority, non-government, and other activist organizations in remote areas although many communities in the Philippines, subsisting on less than a dollar per day, remain without resources and skills to access the Internet.

Moreover, international and local organizations working on information and communication technology for development (ICTD) or E-inclusion are already embarking on projects to assist minority communities in using new media technologies. These initiatives of bringing technology to previously unreached or underserved communities are being done with the hope and belief that technology will lead to “more ways of cultural preservation and expression”, “empowerment”, “productivity” and “opportunity”.

In terms of surveillance or filtering, the OpenNet Initiative reported that “there is no evidence of national filtering” of the Internet in the Philippines (OpenNet Initiative, 2009). This provides a space for the self-production of political expression

⁹ Based on personal interviews with non-government organization (NGO) leaders and IT managers in the Cordillera region, one of the geographically remote areas in the Philippines where several indigenous communities are based.

and articulation of grievances online through a variety of available platforms, particularly salient for minorities who have had limited control of mainstream media forms in the past. However, these same technologies they can also be used by the military to monitor the so-called enemies of the state, and use information for counter-intelligence operation (Magno, 2009).

Theoretical approaches and research questions

Culture-centred approach

The relationship between Internet use and the communication of Third world¹⁰ minority groups' struggles surface practical and theoretical questions linked to broader debates on agency and structure. Of interest to communication scholars are opportunities for engaging with actors from the margins, make their voices audible and heard, and in turn, "open up spaces for possibilities of transforming structures and processes that work to continually create the margins" (Dutta, 2011, p. 2). The culture-centred approach proposes a shift in the theorizing for communication and social change by foregrounding the agency of subordinated sectors in participating in the processes of social change and structural formation (Dutta, 2011, p. 4). Thus, while this approach engages with the questions of structures and how these constitute the margins, it also gives emphasis on how the margins in turn challenge the structures through a wide range of communicative practices. In essence, the culture-centred approach, while recognizing the role of structures in marginalization, also highlights the possibilities for resistance and challenging of these structures arising from the subordinated groups.

¹⁰ Throughout the thesis, I use the term "Third World" to refer to the geopolitics of contemporary neocolonial and neoliberal politics that play out continuously to maintain material inequalities. As suggested by Dutta (2011), the choice of this term is a political choice to imbue the Global South with the politics surrounding social change against the backdrop of global processes of domination and control.

In this thesis, I engage with those from the margins of contemporary societies, the minority groups, who are normally systematically erased from dominant discursive spaces of knowledge production and also placed in the sidelines of civil society activism. Despite the increasing control of the state and global neoliberal structures, communicative processes and practices of change are being articulated by minority groups in the midst of these very structures, through the use of online new media (Couldry, 2011; Dutta, 2011; Ginsburg, 2008). These spaces across the globe demonstrate the ways in which communicative practices of social change are enacted to disrupt the oppressive or marginalizing societal, national, and global conditions.

Enabling and constraining structures: historical-dialectical-structural approach

Buechler (2000), in the book *Social Movements in Advanced Capitalism*, argues that previous structural approaches in the analysis of acts of contention have overemphasized on structures as a “reified and deterministic straitjacket” that privileges structure over agency (p. 159). Buechler (2000) suggests an analysis that emphasizes the social structures and conditions that enable or constrain actors, with consideration of the struggles’ history and future. The analysis of enabling and constraining structures can be gleaned at the level of the organization, community or grouping, nation-state, and global realms (Buechler, 2000, xi, pp.159-160).

The consciousness of much online media engagement is often presently oriented, with little sense of the linkages among past action, present realities, and future possibilities for its users. An ahistorical, decontextualized approach to the interactions of structural conditions and actors in the analysis of online media engagement is insufficient and superficial, because these make it difficult to see the structural roots and historical consequences of technology appropriations, especially for emancipatory

processes. To address this shortcoming, Buechler proposes a historical-dialectical-structurational approach to the study of resistance and collective action. A historical approach recognizes that all human activities are rooted between pasts and anticipated futures. The dialectical component recognizes the interdependency and interconnectedness of the multiple levels of structures, while a structurational component avoids the tendency for reification and highlights the importance of “reflexive social agents whose conscious actions and unintended consequences continually sustain and transform the patterns we summarize as structure” (Buechler, 2000, p. 159). He argues that structures are dialectically interrelated, enabling and constraining at the same time, mutually constituting, and have a historical character. Important in this analysis is to understand society as composed of multiple, overlapping and intersecting levels of social structures embedded in social reality designated as global, national, regional and local structures (p. 62).

In the realm of technology, Raymond Williams (1974) earlier challenged the notion that new technologies (then, in the context of television) have an intrinsic power to transform society. Parallel with Buechler’s contention, Williams suggests that the emergence of new technologies and in particular new communicative systems is a result of complex interactions among technological, social, cultural and political, economic forces, different cultures and political regimes who can also take advantage of new technologies in different ways as an extension of pre-existing power imbalances. This implies that the introduction of a new medium cannot by itself significantly alter the society in which it appears.

Williams’ conclusions seem parallel to Pierre Levy’s account of an *information culture*, which, while defined by a high degree of participation and reciprocity, is still believed to exist alongside the established structures of power, multinational corporations, financial capital, and the nation-state (Levy, 2000; Jenkins & Thorburne,

2003, p.14). Thus, although actors can find a space for self-expression and resistance online, the shape of such resistance can be influenced by the politics of the technology, history, the socio-political condition of the user, and global power dynamics.

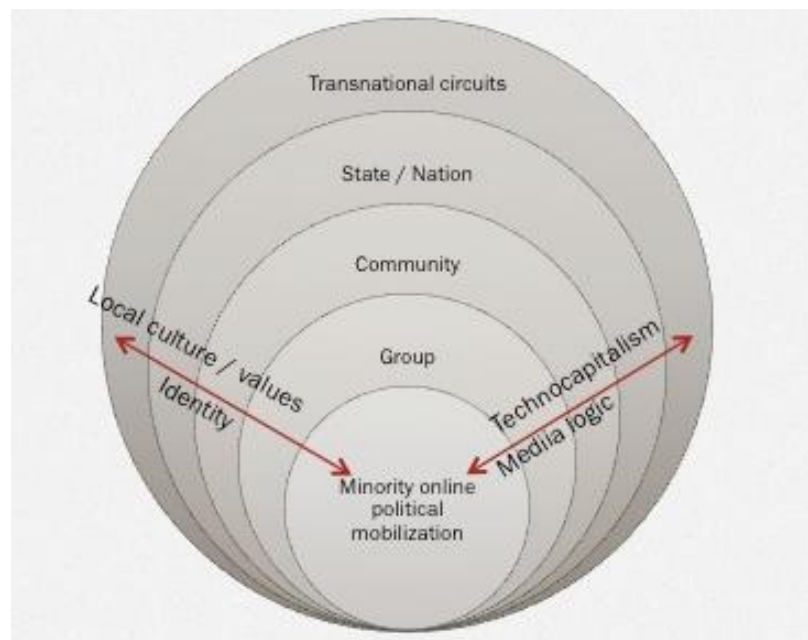
Buechler's (2001) approach, when integrated with insights from the culture-centred approach on the nature of technological mediation in society, provides a good framework for analyzing minority groups' interactions with online media and the different structural conditions enabling or constraining their purposive and creative uses. Through a situated analysis of the interdependence of media practices with the local, national, and transnational circumstances that surround them, this approach can help surface the complex ways in which minority groups are engaged in the process of using the Internet in relation to their historical, cultural, and social circumstances, and how these circumstances help them work through the limits and possibilities that the Internet as a communications medium serves for them (Figure 1.1).

- *Organization.* At the organization level, this approach will be useful in understanding the roots of the struggle, traditional communication and activist practices of the organization, as well as motivations of Internet use, which can contextualize current and future uses of the technology by a minority group. How organizational elements: leadership, membership, skills, and resources enable or constrain the organization's use of online media may be explored. Consultation, decision-making, management, and the interplay of elements of power and control within the organization are also important aspects that can influence the process of online presentations, or in planning the articulation of identity and local knowledge in a public online space. The decision-making of how identity, local knowledge, the struggle and the organization are to be represented in a virtual stage can represent an intense negotiation of local

cultural values and the opportunities and risks presented by technology to these groups.

- *Grouping/Community.* As power and influence may be at play in terms of who gains active access to technology within a grouping, an analysis of power dynamics within the community or larger minority grouping, and how the organizations being studied are positioned in this dynamics, are important conditions in the understanding of the minority engagements of online media and its larger implications. At the backdrop of technology use, how historical, colonial experiences of minoritization of the minority group or community influences the purpose, content and processes of use, make up a richer understanding of decision choices and also possible implications of online mediation to group struggle.

Figure 1.1. Levels of analysis



- *National.* The distribution of communicative spaces and the opportunities to participate in these spaces are unequally distributed, with increasing gaps in

access to communicative infrastructures between the dominant and minority groups. National minorities are often neglected or marginalized from state policies and programs and over the years some of them have established hostile relationships with the state. As minority groups seek connection with international actors to solicit alternative audience and support, the minority groups, situated well-within national boundaries, may in several ways be controlled through the political and technological environment and managed through regulatory policies. A regime of state control and surveillance at the virtual front may limit the possibilities that can be done online, and can also influence the reach, limits, and creativity of the strategies. As can be gleaned from the experience of the *minjian* bloggers in China, for example, a regime of control of online content enabled the use by the Chinese government in collusion with Internet companies, to use their information against them (Zhou, 2006)¹¹. Similarly, the Iranian blogosphere which hosted harsh critiques by activists denouncing their government is counter-attacked by government, putting into question the Internet's true possibility for emancipation amidst a regime of control (Kelly & Etling, 2008; York, 2011). Thus, the level of control imposed upon technology use by the state and the amount of tolerance granted over different types of activism and minoritization can be an important consideration, in terms of understanding the conditions that enable, constrain, or motivate minority groups in their strategic uses of online media. Further, how

¹¹ Political bloggers in the Chinese cyberspace who experienced difficulty in formally organizing themselves found resolve in airing out their political angst against government and its policies through their blogs. These political bloggers have attracted support from a significant readership and significant attention was also raised upon the closure of the two blogs. One of them, the blog of Chinese journalist-activist Michael Anti was suspected to have been removed by MSN because of its politically sensitive content, in partnership with the Chinese government. This has caught U.S Congressional attention to investigate the role of Google and MSN in the closure of the websites (Zhou, 2006, p. 21). These show individual online activism's potential and dynamism to gain public attention and facilitate dialogue, but also possibilities for counter-action and control from governments and corporate entities.

minorities work their way through the limits of these regulations and controls through their online media engagement is an important aspect for exploration.

- *Global/transnational.* Finally, the global character of online media implies the internationalization of a local struggle, where the limits of local capabilities can be enhanced through global connections with similar activists and supporters. However, whether the minority group's purpose is to simply inform or create awareness of the struggle or draw concrete support from and build connections with international actors, the use of online media by some minority groups may be attached to this dependence over the international community in addressing some claims being made at the national or local level. Putting the struggle online also necessarily "globalizes" the reach of the struggle, thereby having implications on ownership and control of information and knowledge, as well as the intricacies of managing and constructing minority activist identity amidst a "global" target audience. Issues of activist spaces' exposure and intermingling with the forces of commercialism in the Internet have been raised in previous studies (Dilevko, 2002 on development NGOs; Ginsburg, et.al, 2002 on indigenous movements). Indigenous and Muslim communities' uses of global media have also been feared to lead to greater marginalization (Bailey & Harindranath, 2006), 'strategic essentialism' and commercialization (Himpele, 2008), exposure to forces of prejudice and cultural hegemony in the broader global media (Said, 1997; Sardar, 1996), and 'objectification' (Ginsburg, et.al, 2002) even as it creates a window for expression and emancipation for some (Bakardjieva, 2003; Siapera, 2005; Campbell, 2010).

These implications of enabling and constraining structures as they interact with minority groups' engagement with online media will be dealt with in depth in the discussion of dialectical issues in minority online political mobilization in Chapter 2.

Competing notions of agency

An analysis of technological mediation of minority groups to challenge structures of power and domination entails taking a position in the understanding of "agency". The research question, how do minority groups appropriate and negotiate online media for political mobilization implies a problematization of agency in the context of internet-mediated communication. Agency

offers an actor the capacity to process social experiences. With agency, actors may solve problems, learn to manoeuvre around the flow of social events around them, and monitor their own actions, observing how others react to their behaviour and taking note of the various contingent circumstances (Long, 1992, p. 23)

Central to the debate about agency is the ability to resist power and control, and two competing perspectives seem to dominate the arguments. On one side of the spectrum, Bourdieu (1977) argues that agents are put in place to legitimate the power and position of those already powerful. Following this line, "powerful organizational players will use communication agency to create norms of discipline and submission" (Hallahan, et.al, 2007) and communication practitioners will create the rules, practices and norms of organization through which they and others are regulated by means of self-discipline (Foucault, 1982). Relevant in this regard is Foucault's conceptualization of power that is not only repressive but also capable of producing systems of knowledge and discourse, and resistance as "never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (1978, 95-96). It is in this line of thought that agency becomes problematic because even if it is "effected", it can surface in the service of the powerful and the dominant.

An analysis of resistance therefore can be used to surface forms of power and power relations underlying such struggles.

On the other side of the argument, Giddens (1984) views agency as not unaffected by structural constraints, but reflects actors' capacity to improvise, interpret, bend and negotiate their experiences within structures. In this perspective, structuring elements do not provide ready-made molds of cement that determine the shape of actors' actions and decisions but rather are more flexible elements that can be circumvented, accommodated and negotiated by social actors¹². Under this view, the communication agent is able to reflexively resist domination and play an active role in shaping the organization by communicating purposefully and creatively.

Hidden transcripts, infrapolitics, and the agency of subordinate groups

But what constitutes the agency of subordinated groups? James Scott (1990), in *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, challenged theories of ideological hegemony which claim that subordinate groups are resigned to domination. He argues that members of subordinate groups are continually engaged in resistance to domination, although these may be disguised through the use of symbolic and low profile forms of dissent. Scott's view supports the "duality of agency" argument (Giddens, 1984) that while agents are shaped by structural constraints, actors can be able to, in turn, re-shape and negotiate their experiences within structures.

Scott's important innovation in the analysis of the agency of subordinated groups, is the distinction among "public transcripts" (open interactions and presentations of the subordinated), "hidden transcripts" (discourse that takes place offstage), and

¹² For a critique on Giddens' views of structures for its "elisionism" or implausibility of causality, see Hesmondalgh & Toynbee (2008, p. 12). Instead, Hesmondalgh & Toynbee bring forth the critical realist theory of structure and agency, which insists on their ontological distinctiveness yet mutual impact.

“infrapolitics” (a coded version of hidden transcripts that takes place in the public view). Infrapolitics, or “resistance that dare not speak its own name”, “represents the politics of disguise and concealment that takes place in the public view, but is designed to have double (or ambiguous) meaning or to shield the identity of the actors” (Scott, 1990, p. 19).

Criticizing theories of ideological hegemony, Scott contends that what is believed as hegemony or “ratifying the social ideology” of dominant-group ideas is in fact only an uncritical observation of the public transcript (1990, p. 35) and that subordinate groups are capable of formulating their own criticisms of the social relations in which they find themselves in:

A combination of adaptive strategies and behaviour and the dialogue implicit in most power relations ensures that public action will provide a constant stream of evidence that appears to support an interpretation of ideological hegemony... (the) aim is to clarify the analysis of domination in a way that avoids ‘naturalizing’ existing power relations and that is attentive to what may lie beneath the surface. (Scott, 1990, p. 70)

This implies that passivity and acquiescence, or “public transcripts”, are sometimes used as strategic facades behind which subordinated groups conceal their subversive activities and strategies¹³. Through this contention, Scott highlights the importance of probing people’s ability to control what can be publicly spoken of (and what to be kept hidden), or how they creatively plan small ways of lifting themselves from subordination or challenging the dominant. As argued by Eliasoph (1996, p. 284-286), “the control of the public transcript-what is to be spoken publicly and what not, is power in itself”, and therefore, an explicit expression of agency. Scott’s analysis can be

¹³ A related important work is Taylor’s (1997) *Disappearing Acts*, which discussed covert acts of intervention and oppositional performance available in theatre. Taylor showed that theatre provided a unique social location to disrupt the naturalized operations of the Argentinian ‘Dirty War’ by exposing the ‘theatricality of terror’ in ways unrecognized by the spectators. However, while the theatre, in some ways, challenged the military dictatorship, “it did not radically challenge its ideological underpinnings”, thereby affirming the linkage between the hegemonic and counterhegemonic (Taylor, 1997, p. 253).

read as part of the process of collective action, which represents the ocean of possibilities that lie between acquiescence and revolt (p. 199). It is through such discreet forms of resistance that groups with little means are able to amass strength capable at certain historical moments of catalyzing more dramatic oppositional movements¹⁴. However, within various forms of local and everyday resistance exists a range of specific strategies and structures of power, which also need to be investigated in any careful analysis of resistance (Abu-Lughod, 1990).

Contemporary minority groups, unlike slaves used in Scott's conceptualization, are able to communicate some of their opposition publicly through printed publications, newsletters, and sometimes in rare exchanges through government or internationally – initiated fora. In certain contexts, however, some minority groups still operate in hostile environments where their resistance can be met with forced disappearances or military/police retaliation. What this dissertation explores, in bringing Scott's notion of hidden and public transcripts, is not only the dissent articulated in the online space, but the minority groups' experience in negotiating the use of Internet technology on the one hand, and the adaptive strategic behaviour in determining how (and how not) to represent themselves and their struggle in a public online space, on the other. In this complex process of decision-making, the groups' and their struggles' connections with local, national, and transnational structures also play a role. Minority groups' online spaces may appear to represent an unquestioning stance towards technology use and its implications for minority representation of identity and its struggles. By giving emphasis on the meaning-making of their online political mobilization strategies, this thesis seeks to understand what constitutes forms of resistance taking place at the backstage of online media production, based on the intentions, ideas, and language of those who actually practice it. Further, observing how minority groups are acting

¹⁴ For example, see Iletto's (1979) analysis in *Pasyon at Rebolusyon* where religious songs and poems represented the way illiterate masses articulated feelings of oppression during the Spanish occupation, which later paved the way for the formation of a revolutionary movement.

according to their understanding of who they are and what they want to achieve in the online space and how they manage the structural constraints and opportunities surrounding them, can help scholars gain a more adequate understanding of the practice of online political mobilization of minority groups.

From technological determinism to democratic rationalization of technology

This section discusses the literature on what constitutes agency within a technological discourse, and brings in the concept of “democratic rationalization of technology”, a perspective arguing about the creative appropriation of technology by its users. Earlier assumptions of technological determinism underlie much empirical research on technology use in the developing world. Initially, it was very common to find studies arguing that the Internet empowers formerly disempowered groups. Later on, research took on a more critical stance to argue that the Internet does not empower nor democratize. It was contended that the Internet would reinforce the same structures that determine offline participation and deliberation (Bimber, 2003; Hill & Hughes, 1998) and that Internet use will only help facilitate the active political mobilization of those already represented and politically active offline (Bimber, 2003). In the context of minority use of online media, some fear the debasement and displacement of organic folk culture as the expression of resistance and production of culture becomes subject to the processes of industrialization and the market forces (Lister, et.al, 2003, p. 69; McCallum and Franco, 2009, p. 1246). What may be problematic in both perspectives is that they view technology to work on its own and take for granted human purpose, experience, creative uses, and negotiations of various technologies, including the changes occurring in the way individuals and groups communicate (Yang, 2010, p. 10).

Moving from essentialist views of technology, the perspective of social construction

of technology argues that as users of technology engage with the openness of the technology, there are possibilities of surfacing appropriations that diverge from the ones originally planned or inscribed, thereby creating an opportunity for innovative functionalities and reforming of technology (Bijker, Hughes, and Pinch, 1987). Here technology users “are able to overcome the narrowness of the communication channel to create personal images and actively appropriate it given existing cultural resources, in unexpected ways” (Feenberg and Barney, 2004, p. 16). Constructivism frees the study of technology from the dogmatic assumption that some ultimate technical criterion, such as efficiency, determines which of the various possible interpretations and configurations of an artifact must prevail. While social constructivism directed attention to the importance of taking into account all “relevant social groups” when analyzing the development of an artifact (Bijker, Hughes and Pinch, 1987), early constructivist research remained limited predominantly to immediately visible groups of scientists, designers, engineers, administrators, and businessmen (Feenberg, 2009; Bakardjieva, 2009).

Feenberg (1995, 1999, 2009a; 2009b) offered social constructivism a more critical edge through the concept of “*democratic rationalization of technology*”. Democratic rationalization occurs when technology users challenge harmful consequences, undemocratic power structures, and barriers to communication that is rooted from technology (de Certeau, 1984, pp. 30–31; Feenberg, 1995, 1999; Feenberg & Bakardjieva, 2004). Specifically, “the type of democratic rationalization that has played the biggest role on the Internet is ‘creative appropriation’, the process in which users innovate new functionalities for already existing technologies” (Feenberg & Bakardjieva, 2004 p. 16). Moreover, the perspective of democratic rationalization points out that,

we need to know in what way humans will confront the limitations they meet. We need only gain insight into the form of the process of mediation. As the structure of a new social practice, the mediating activity opens infinite possibilities rather than foreclosing the future in some preconceived utopia. Adaptation maintains the formal character of the modern concept of freedom and therefore does not reduce individuals to mere functions of society. Freedom lies in this lack of determinacy (Feenberg 2002, p. 190)

Using this perspective, participants can be seen as creating dynamic and rich communities by inventing new forms of expression and through an interactive negotiation of meanings, norms and values not governed exclusively by the technical characteristics of the technology but socially constructed by democratic user appropriation of the technology (Bakardjieva, 2003, pp. 121-141; Feenberg & Bakardjieva, 2004, pp. 15-16). According to Feenberg (2009a, 2009b), there is a need for an account that emphasizes the inventiveness with which users engage with technological products.

Minority self-presentation in websites, online forums, or e-groups can represent an information-age version of creative resistance through daily practices. Ginsburg, et.al. (2002, p. 10) suggests that minority media's contact with technology enables them some degree of agency to control representation, although others argue that these "*new technologies of objectification... create new possibilities of understanding at the same moment that they pose new threats to alienation and rupture*" (Miller, D., 1995, p. 18). It is important to understand how people resolve or live out these contradictions strategically in local practice (Miller, D., 1995, Miller, T., 2005; Ginsburg, et.al., 2002; Latufeku, 2006). By engaging the frameworks of "democratic rationalization of technology" and "hidden transcripts", the dissertation probes what constitutes minority activist agency within a technological discourse and examines how minority culture and knowledge are articulated into political discourse and guide the formation of agency.

Methodology

The dissertation involves a case study design of how minority groups appropriate and negotiate the uses of online media for political mobilization. It seeks to highlight shared as well as differential experiences across cases, noting the varying struggles, history, capacity, and relationships of the minority group with the state, with the dominant group, and with the international community. A multiple case study design is preferred over a single-case design because of the analytical benefits from having two or more cases (Yin, 2009; Ho, 2008; Gerring, 2004).

A case study is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2009, p. 20). It involves an “in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system... It is research-based, inclusive of different research methods and is evidence-led.” (Simmons, 2009, p. 21 cited in Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010, p. 256). This definition captures the importance of case study as a methodological approach for this thesis, because it enables a holistic understanding of the online political mobilization experience of minority groups. It allows investigation of a phenomenon from different dimensions that situate the analysis within historical-structural-dialectical contexts.

Units of Analysis

This dissertation focuses on three minority groupings in the Philippines: (1) ethnic minority or indigenous peoples; (2) ethno-religious minority or the *Moros*; and (3) sexual minorities. Beyond being three of the most stereotyped groups in Philippine

society, these three struggles represent people's disenchantment with their socio-political conditions. The linkages of colonial history and the role of the state in the formation of these minorities' struggles have been thoroughly discussed in a number of studies¹⁵. A brief discussion on the relationship between historical experiences and conditions of minoritization is provided in each of the case study chapters 3, 4, and 5.

Organizations as units of analysis

The main units of analysis are minority organizations, and chapters 3, 4, and 5 present case studies on the experiences of five minority organizations in the Philippines engaging online media for political mobilization. The decision to look at organizations instead of individuals was driven by my preliminary reviews on the availability of online spaces at the time of planning the dissertation. While there were individual minority bloggers and online writers observed many of their spaces have been either inactive or discontinued. There were several Filipino queer blogs observed but few individual Moro and indigenous blogs. Also, many of them did not write specifically for the political struggle, and their online spaces were mostly a combination of personal, social, and political musings that were not easy to delineate, and where personal posts

¹⁵A number of studies have traced the relationships across colonial legacies in the character of Philippine politics, the state and civil society, and their relationships. Hedman and Sidel (2000) recounted how Spanish and American institutions of power and control have played in current patterns of class and state formation. They also discussed the impact of the colonial experience to resource degradation, rise of landed ruling class, the character of political and societal structures and a range of power imbalances in Philippine society. Clarke (2001) discusses ethno-religious and indigenous minorities in Southeast Asia (with significant discussion on Philippine Muslims and indigenous groups) and their struggles in the midst of state formation and ethno-development. Ben Reid's (2006) analysis of *Historical Blocs and Democratic Impasse on the Philippines* also traced how hegemonic power relations in the Philippines emerged historically, both in the context of late colonization and in the post-dictatorship government of Marcos. Reid's historical analysis of hegemonic power relations is important because these are often seen as the rallying point of resistance by individuals and groups in Philippine society. David Slater's (2006) discussion on *agents of power* is important in highlighting how imperialism has created "agents of power" working inside or complicit with the imperial state but with a myriad of links to the economy and civil society. His point that the need for democracy is often characterized by an implicit belief in the desirability of a Western liberal democratic model is important in understanding imperialist effects on Third World imaginations of democracy, and the goals set by "local democracy actors" and "agents of change".

seemed dominant. Minority organizations, on the other hand, were more explicit in their use of online spaces for advancing the struggle and for political mobilization.

Selecting candidate cases

After identifying the targeted groupings (indigenous, Muslim, and queer/LGBT), an online search was conducted in Google, Yahoo!, and Facebook for Philippine - Moro, indigenous, and queer organizations that have online spaces¹⁶. The search for organizations was not limited to registered organizations or political parties but also to non-registered groups engaged in online political mobilization. Personal associations and alumni networks were not included. The websites and social networking sites generated were reviewed for political mobilization content, recency in updating of posts, and activity in interaction. Groups that had online spaces but were inactive for three (3) months were discarded from the list.

Table 1.1 Summary of shortlisted minority groups

Minority grouping	No. of organizations with online spaces	Shortlisted organizations with active sites
Indigenous	31	10
Muslim	17	8
LGBT	12	7

¹⁶ The online search for minority organizations with online spaces was conducted from September-December, 2009. For Muslim groups, the combination of key terms: Muslim, *Moro*, Philippines, Mindanao, Islam, organization, association, group, blog, website, Facebook were used. To search indigenous groups, the combination of key terms: indigenous, *katutubo*, IP, Philippines, organization, association, office were used. To search for LGBT organizations, a combination of the key terms LGBT, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, *bakla*, *tomboy*, *binabae*, organization, association, group, blog, website, and Facebook were used. After a shortlist of organizations has been gathered, the links of other similar organizations provided in the online spaces were also checked to identify other organizations.

As case study research is generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes, the cases do not represent “samples” and the goal is not to expand and generalize theories or enumerate frequencies, but to provide a rich description and explanation about the phenomenon being studied (Yin, 2009). However, case studies cannot be selected blindly and selection of the cases requires a preliminary research and selection process based on a reflection of the research questions and theoretical propositions. It is important that case studies are selected in terms of which ones are expected to yield the widest range of insights responding to the research questions (Yin, 2009; Gerring, 2004). Theoretical development of propositions or “existing and competing explanations about why acts, events, structures, and thoughts occur” prior to collection of any case study data is an essential step in doing case study analysis (Yin, 2009, pp. 91-92).

The final case studies were selected purposively (Ibid., p. 91) based on the following pre-defined criteria: (1) highest levels of online activity based on recency of posts and activity in the online spaces; (2) legitimacy of the organization (e.g. not fly by night organizations) and scope of network based on expert interviews and secondary research); (3) degree of online political mobilization based on initial review of online spaces; and (4) agreement to participate in the research through interviews with the leaders and members of the organization. As the research questions pertained to the organizations’ meaning – making and experiences of Internet use, access to the members and leaders and to other organizational data via in-depth interviews were a critical consideration.

A dilemma in case study research is whether to identify or anonymize the case studies and there are important contextual reasons for each decision. The issue of anonymity is raised at two levels: that of the entire case (or cases) and that of the individual person within a case (Yin, 2009, p. 181-182). In this research, identifying the

case studies is important because it allows the reader to understand better the contextual background of the organizations. The groups were consulted on whether the names of their organizations can be identified and all organizations included in this study have granted permission to use their organizations' names. Table 1.2 provides a summary of the case study organizations. However, guided by the NUS principle of protecting the confidentiality of human subjects¹⁷ and given the context of the case studies as well as the sensitive nature of some of the questions, I avoided attributing any particular point of view or comment to an individual respondent from the organizations (Yin, 2009, p.182), except for "subject-matter experts" who were identified as the source of particular information.

Salient differences in the nature of the organizations are also highlighted. These were important in the selection because such differences in circumstances of minoritization are anticipated to yield different experiences with the use of online spaces for activist purposes:

- On the queer groups, one is a national political party (*Ladlad*) while the other is a university youth organization which seeks to help young LGBTs in the process of 'coming out' (*UP Babaylan*)
- On the indigenous groups, one is an umbrella of local grassroots indigenous communities based in the Cordillera with leftist/militant roots (*Cordillera People's Alliance*); while the other is an international organization working on indigenous issues, but is based in the Philippines and works with local organizations and the Philippine government agencies (*Tebtebba*)
- The Muslim group is a revolutionary organization which leads the Muslim separatist movement (*Moro Islamic Liberation Front* or MILF) and is engaged

¹⁷ NUS IRB Approval Certificate No. 972.

simultaneously in continuous armed conflict with the Philippine military and peace talks with the government¹⁸

Table 1.2. Case study organizations

Organization Name	Minoritization	Description
<i>Cordillera People's Alliance (CPA)</i>	Ethnic (indigenous)	Local activist / alliance of indigenous grassroots organizations
<i>Tebtebba</i>	Ethnic (indigenous)	International policy and research advocacy institution (Philippines-based)
<i>Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)</i>	Ethno-religious (Muslim)	One of the lead Moro revolutionary groups
<i>Ladlad</i>	Sexual minority / queer	National LGBT political party
<i>UP Babaylan</i>	Sexual minority / queer	Youth LGBT organization

Case study evidence

The case study inquiry relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data converging in a triangulating fashion and benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis (Yin, 2009, p. 15, 101-114). Baym (2006, pp.84-85) has pointed out the importance of engaging mixed methodologies that weave together interviews with technology users to investigate purposes and meaning-making of use and analyzing actual online productions and spaces. She contended that such approach strengthens case studies about how online phenomena can be understood and what people do within and around the possibilities

¹⁸ Another Muslim civil society organization, the *Consortium of the Bangsamoro Civil Society*, was initially included in this study's design but unavailability of the group's members and leaders to participate in interviews made it difficult to pursue the case study. Nonetheless, interviews with two of its leaders on the Moro struggle and Bangsamoro civil society which were conducted in April and May, 2010 have been useful in the thesis.

and constraints of technology (p. 85). This also exemplifies the challenge for research based solely on observation and interpretation conducted by researchers who are considered as outsiders or “visitors” of subject communities. Interviews alone, on the other hand, may yield reactivity or inaccurate self-reporting. For this thesis, multiple evidences were utilized: respondents’ meaning-making of technology use through in-depth interviews, observations in the field, observations of online spaces and interactions, and documentary evidence that includes an analysis of historical roots of the struggles and related developments. The sources of evidence are detailed in *Appendix A*, which was based from Jennifer Mason’s schema for linking qualitative research questions and methods (Mason, 2002, pp. 27-30), and summarized in Table 1.3 below. The sources of data for each case study are identified in each case study chapter (See Chapters 3, 4, and 5). List of case study evidences are provided in *Appendix B*.

Table 1.3. Summary of research themes and case study evidence

Research questions – major themes	Case study evidence
Conditions and structures enabling or constraining use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with group leaders and members and experts/resource persons • Observation • Analysis of historical reports and other secondary data
Purpose and meaning-making of use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with group leaders and members • Analysis of online spaces • Analysis of historical reports and other secondary data
Patterns of actual use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of online spaces • Observation
Strategies of use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with group leaders and members • Analysis of online spaces • Secondary data (i.e. published materials on the organizations’ communication strategies, internal newsletters/documents)
Perceived / consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with group leaders and members and experts/resource persons • Secondary data (i.e. web analytics) • Analysis of online spaces

Interviews

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were critical to understand the rationale, motivations, perceptions, and meaning-making of the minority groups in having their online spaces. Online engagement entails multi-site communications. What is communicated online may be different from what is communicated offline by the same person or organization. Some minority groups may also disclose information online selectively, making it important to conduct interviews to explore the organization's meaning-making and strategies of internet engagement.

Contact was established with the organizations via email requests for interview appointment¹⁹. By the end of June 2010, interviews with key officers and members of the organizations had been conducted, although succeeding interviews with informants and additional members were conducted by telephone and online until October, 2011. Each interview lasted from about one (1) hour and thirty (30) minutes to four (4) hours. Key leaders (Chairman, Executive Director, Information Technology or website manager, information and publicity managers) and members involved in maintaining the online spaces or contributing content were invited for interview. Based on initial reviews of the online spaces, the respondents' views on the rationale and meaning of the styles and content of particular online articulations observed during the online reviews were sought. Interviews with resource persons: academics, historians, and experts on minorities, social movements, and new media and communication for social change in the Philippines were also conducted. Social workers, NGOs members, and bloggers who

¹⁹ As some of the organizations did not respond by email, they were contacted by telephone through contact numbers provided in the websites. Difficulty was experienced in securing appointment with the Muslim organizations, as none of the potential cases replied to email interview requests. Due to the sensitivity of the situation in some of the Muslim areas and the nature of difficulty in reaching the Muslim organizations, assistance from key Mindanao professors and historians, including those involved in the peace talks was sought.

either have been involved with or have good knowledge of the organizations were interviewed.

Face to face interviews were conducted²⁰ in April-May 2010 and February and May 2011, mostly in the organizations' offices or in venues (i.e. camp or cafe) suggested by the respondents. The interviews were subject to ethical guidelines and an interview protocol approved by the University's Ethics Review Board²¹. Follow-up telephone and online interviews were conducted from August 2010 to October 2011 as additional questions surfaced after analysis of the interview data and developments observed in the online spaces (*See Appendix C for a sample Interview Guide and invitation letters*).

Analysis of the interviews. Following guidance from Ryan & Bernard (2003), themes were generated from recurring topics that appeared in the interviews, those that were important to the respondents, and those embedded from metaphors (i.e. "the internet is an arena of struggle"). Following Yin's (2009) methods for case study analysis, the statements were classified according to themes that support the study's "propositions" as well as "rival propositions", or issues concerning minority media presented in earlier literature (see Table 2.1 in Chapter 2). Through a process of coding, memo-writing and analysis, the thematic categories were laid down and rethought (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Mason, 2002; Richards, 2005; Denzin, 1989; Beaker, 1998).

As Beaker (1998) argued, concepts are not boxed entities that we fit things into, "but are relational and based on the system it belongs to" (p. 133-134). As developing concepts entails a continuous dialogue with empirical data, the concept of "agency" and what constitutes a "negotiation" and "democratic rationalization of technology" were rethought in the context of the lived experiences and situation of minority groups and online media use for activism. Most of the quoted messages used in this thesis are

²⁰ McCracken (1998) and King and Horrocks (2010) provided detailed guidelines for designing and conducting field interviews, and which were used in this research.

²¹ IRB Approval Certificate NUS-972.

excerpts of interviews in their original form, except for those that had to be translated from local language.

Observation – Field and Online

My observation begun from initial online interactions with the respondents, which provided insights on the ICT uses and capacity and also on the nature of these organizations²². Observation was also undertaken during the days of the interviews with the group's leaders and members, where in most cases I was privileged to explore the ICT resources and areas of use. For the Muslim group, field notes included observations while seeking the interview, online and telephone interactions with my guides (also members of the organization), conversations with my guides during our travels from my accommodation in the city to the camp, interactions with members and their families at the camp while waiting for my interviews, and observations around the camp²³. The nature of the Muslim organization's relationship with the state, for example, required that I provide them a detailed profile of myself and my background and that they conduct a series of checks of my identity prior to and during my visit²⁴. Although I was not allowed to live inside the camp during fieldwork, they generously provided several days of interviews with their leaders and members by sending a guide to accompany me back and forth to the camp. The queer organizations, on the other hand, operate on a

²² For example, I observed how one of the indigenous groups responded to my request almost instantly, while the Moro organizations never responded to online requests. Once contact had been established through the assistance of some Mindanao / Moro historians and academics, they were generous in sharing their experiences and participated in lengthy and in-depth interviews.

²³ Young armed men manning the camp's gates shared with me their education, field training, political education, and online social networking experiences, and even invited me to become a 'friend' in Friendster. They also showed me the camp's lecture and training areas. I spoke to them after my interview while waiting for my guide.

²⁴ I was not aware that I was accompanied by a member of the organization during my plane trip from Manila to Mindanao, and had been communicating with me from the same boarding area of the airport via SMS. This could have been a way for the group to validate my identity as a student and not a spy from the military. The person, to my surprise, introduced himself to me as my guide upon landing in Mindanao.

more unorthodox and informal way, and they explained this in response to my request of observing “the way they work as an organization”. They meet irregularly and often interacted online or through the hand phones. I was permitted to observe their e-group and Facebook pages for research purposes, in order to observe “the way they work online”. Also, since both queer organizations went through leadership transitions during the course of my study, I had to request interviews with both sets of leaders. Both indigenous organizations provided swift responses to all my e-mail requests and online interactions. At that time, it was a relevant insight that indigenous organizations based in the Philippines seemed to be actively using the Internet and fast in answering e-mails, a challenge to stereotypes about their having been “left behind by modernity” (Field notes). The field experience was rich in itself and constitutes a component of my findings and reflections on the cases²⁵. Continued online and telephone interactions with my respondents and ‘guides’ after my return to Singapore provided useful insights.

Analysis of online spaces. For purposes of triangulating findings, the form, content, and style of political mobilization in selected online spaces of the groups were reviewed and analyzed at three periods, January to May 2010 (in preparation for and during the first set of field interviews), October to December, 2010, and May to July 2011, although I followed these sites and visited them weekly to observe and document the issues that they present and discuss. Online spaces pertained to active website or blogs (s), Facebook sites, Twitter, and e-groups. Some of the organizations only have websites while others used a wide range of online spaces (See Table 1.4). The online spaces’

²⁵ Extended stay in the organizations’ offices was included as one of the methods in the original design of this study. However, the reality of the context that the organizations were operating in meant that an extended stay in their offices and camps was not possible for most groups. The organizations are comparatively lean or have informal organizational structures and the members often travel, attend meetings and multi-task, making it difficult for members or leaders to oversee my stay. Also, as some of the organizations were operating in ‘unsecured’ conditions, they felt it was risky both for them and me if I were to stay in their premises. For example, a member of one of the indigenous groups interviewed was abducted during the period surrounding my visit. Also, my Muslim guide informed me that sporadic clashes occurred in the vicinity of the camp where I conducted the interview with some of the leaders of the Moro organization (Field notes, April-May, 2010).

content archive were also reviewed during specific, politically relevant time periods which may affect the content and style of online political mobilization (i.e. Height of peace talks and *Ampatuan massacre* for the Muslim group; period of the anniversary of the UN declaration for indigenous peoples rights and Cordillera day for the indigenous groups, May 2010 national elections and Gay Pride month for the queer groups). The review of online spaces focused on political mobilization tactics and content (i.e. articulation of struggle and its historical roots, information dissemination, use of online spaces as a platform for debate, resource mobilization, organizing internal activities, networking, or mobilizing protest) as well as styles and forms of group identity construction online (*See Appendix D for the Qualitative Content Analysis Guide*).

Archives and documentary evidence

Understanding of the historical roots of minorities' struggles and communication strategies is deepened through an analysis of Western colonialism in the Philippines and the geopolitical subsumption of the Philippines in the world-system of global capital. Aside from historical materials, relevant policy papers, reports, and articles were included to contextualize their struggles and dynamics of online political mobilization. Also, my visits to the organizations allowed me to view and request for copies of self-produced newsletters, activist pamphlets, books, posters, and other materials (i.e. videos and cassette tapes), most of which are not distributed commercially. These helped contextualize online media engagement with other communicative media forms used by the groups. Some of the organizations also shared their website/blog analytics, which were integrated into the case study findings.

Case study validity and some notes on reflexivity

An important issue in qualitative research is ensuring the credibility and validity of the interpretations and the findings. According to Kvale (1995, p. 241), validity in qualitative research takes the form of subjecting one's findings to competing views and interpretations and providing the reader with strong arguments for a particular knowledge claim. The validity of qualitative research may be established through a variety of ways: 1) *triangulation*, or the use of two or multiple methods of data collection to look for "convergence" of research findings (Denzin, 1989; Greene, et.al, 1989; Maykut and Morehouse, 1994; Yin, 2009; Knafl and Breitmayer, 1991; Creswell, 2002; Richards, 2005); 2) member checking, or a technique where research participants as well as members of the research community (communicative validity) are asked to review a researcher's notes, draft case study interpretations, or conclusions (Kvale, 1996; Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2010; Silverman, 2000a, 2000b; Richards, 2005); and 3) considering the study's propositions amidst other alternative or rival propositions (Yin, 2009, p. 187; Kelly and Yin, 2007; Richards, 2005).

According to Tobin & Begley (2003), instead of seeing *triangulation* as a tool for "confirmability", which is an objective that assumes a "single truth" more akin to quantitative studies, it must instead be seen as a tool for enhancing the "completeness" of a study²⁶. Completeness is "important to qualitative inquirers, as it allows for recognition of multiple realities. Inquirers are thus not using triangulation as a means of confirming existing data, but as a means of enlarging the landscape of their inquiry, offering a deeper and more comprehensive picture" (Tobin & Begley, 2003, pp. 393-394). The use of multiple sources of evidence for each case (i.e. interview with

²⁶ When the aim is to verify through confirmation, the underlying supposition is that confirmation is necessary to establish truth. Assumption of one single reality, and consequently a measure of accuracy as a means of validating this truth, is problematic (Bloor, 1997) and epistemologically unacceptable from a qualitative perspective (Tobin & Begley, 2003).

organizational members and experts, analysis of online spaces, and use of historical archives and secondary data) facilitated the circumvention of possible personal biases and helped overcome the deficiencies intrinsic to a single-investigator (Kimchi et.al., 1991, p. 365), thereby increasing the validity of this thesis' findings.

Conducting the interviews with the organizations after completing one round of analysis of their online spaces was a crucial strategy in terms of correcting personal biases and misunderstanding of their online initiatives. During the interviews, the leaders and members of the organizations were able to clarify the intention and backstage planning underlying the online productions that I observed²⁷. In fact, it was through such method that I was able to generate some important differences between the “frontstage” and “backstage” performance of some these groups, which will be discussed further in the case study chapters. These clarifications shared by the organizations with regard to my initial observation of their online spaces were integral to the validity and final version of the case studies presented in this thesis.

The same procedures also worked as a mode of “member-checking”, where the organization’s representatives were requested to shed light on my initial interpretations of their online spaces. Moreover, the draft case study write-ups were shared with the major respondents for their review, together with the transcript of my interviews with them. Another related aspect is communicative validity, where the interpretation of a given finding is open to discussion and refutation by a wider community of researchers and experts in the field (Kvale, 1996, pp. 244-245; Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2010, pp. 88-89). All case study write-ups have benefited from peer-reviews during the process of

²⁷ I was also able to solicit their rationale for certain “absences” from their online spaces and information that could not be obtained through observation (i.e. absence of a chatbox in the website; regular number of visitors and other website statistics; comments received in the website or blog that may have been removed or filtered). I was also able to probe why some organizations had several mirror websites, or multiple online spaces, and sought clarification on the purposes of each online space. I also clarified why the organizational websites were designed in a particular way, or how certain cultural symbols were embedded into their websites. Moreover, these interviews were useful in clarifying their views and strategies with regard to non-members interacting with them in the online spaces.

consideration for various conferences and journal publications²⁸. The peer review and comments received from these avenues have helped to enhance the study's communicative validity.

Such processes of triangulation, member-checking and communicative validity, in essence, also contributed in seeing the case study amidst alternative propositions and possibilities of interpretation. Through such procedures, my interpretations were analyzed by the respondents and also by the research community, who offered some challenges towards my initial interpretations. These compelled me to revisit my interpretations and obtain further evidence to validate the arguments. Finally, the dialectical tensions involved in minority online political mobilization in Chapter 2 of this dissertation served as a guide for the competing propositions and possibilities of online media engagement for minorities, from which the case study findings were analyzed.

Another important issue in qualitative research is *reflexivity*, or awareness of the multiple influences researchers have on the research processes, and how research processes influence researchers in return (Mason, 2002; Gilgun, 2010). The methods engaged in strengthening validity of this research have been instrumental in this process of reflexivity. Interviews with my informants from the field challenged my pre-conceived notions of the limits of human agency, particularly that of minorities within a technological discourse. The process of interaction with the groups through the

²⁸ The material in Chapter 3 (Indigenous Online Activism) has benefited from reviews and comments during presentations at the International Communications Association Conference (May, 2011) and the International Conference on Future Imperatives of Communication and Information for Development and Social Change (Dec, 2010). The material used has also received anonymous peer-review prior to publication in *Telematics and Informatics*. The material and arguments in Chapters 4 (Online Activism of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front), Chapter 5 (Queer Online Activism), and Chapter 6 (Synthesis chapter) have also benefitted from anonymous peer-reviews and will be presented at the International Communication Association Conference (May, 2012). Material in Chapter 4 has been peer-reviewed by anonymous reviewers for *Media, Culture and Society*, and subsequently accepted for publication.

interviews facilitated a rethinking of these biases using the respondents' lens. Their narratives of strategic technology use for political mobilization added a voice into the online productions that I have observed. In turn, it is notable that most of the organizational representatives I interviewed expressed delight that a person based overseas paid attention to their online productions. During the group interviews, members also openly discussed and reflected on the strategies they engaged in the course of online political mobilization. Some respondents also shared how the process has encouraged them to think more about what they achieved with their online initiatives.

Argument

The thesis argues that the agency of minority groups emanate from: (1) their negotiation of technological opportunities and risks to minority identity and struggle, which can be construed as 'subpolitical acts' (Bakardjieva, 2009); and (2) their creative appropriation of technology, where they engage both overt and covert strategies such as public, hidden transcripts, and infrapolitical strategies (Scott, 1990). Here, technology appears as a site for struggle, but also as a source of struggle. Surfacing from these political excursions within the technological medium are *hidden transcripts* and *infrapolitics* of resistance that constitute new forms of political action and creative forms of technological engagement. A distinction between *public transcripts*, *hidden transcripts*, and *infrapolitics* of minority groups provides a useful foundation for the analysis of online dissent from the margins. New strategies of political discourse foregrounding hidden transcripts and infrapolitics help minority groups to circumvent traditional barriers of political communication and alter the quality of debate between minorities, the state and the international community and challenge national limits and

boundaries, which can be considered as *democratic rationalization* of technology of users from the margins.

The thesis distinguishes between the open, declared forms of resistance articulated online, as well as the backstage, undeclared forms of resistance which constitute minorities' negotiation of political mobilization amidst the risks and possibilities of online media engagement. A backstage view of their rationalization of online engagement constitutes a privileged exploration of the purpose, strategic use, and negotiation of online media from the perspective of the users of the technology based on what they seek to attain with technological use. Minorities are rational actors working strategically through a complex process of negotiating technological possibilities and risks. The frontstage view, on the other hand, is what we see as their actual performance, the way they articulate their causes, the style and content of their articulation, mode of interaction with the public and among the diverse members, and how organizational leaders moderate these online presentations. Through a view of the front and the back stage, we understand more deeply what we observe, and this observation paves the way for theorizing the agency of minority groups in a technological context.

A culture-centred theorizing of minority group's communication for social change situates experience in a dynamic field where structure and agency are continually negotiated amidst the strategic uses of cultural symbols, values, and stories (Dutta, 2011, p. 218). In contrast to some information and communication technology for development (ICTD) interventions, where technology and purpose are imported from national governments or international development agencies to the communities, these experiences of technology appropriation emanate from minority groups' exploration of how to make use of available communication tools to advance their minoritized positions and find support and solution to their struggles.

Finally, the multi-sitedness of the dissertation allows a tracking of relevant social domains of contemporary minority life and the different configurations of power, politics and culture that allow different formulations of minority online activism to surface. The thesis' documentation and analysis of local uses and meanings of online media use and production implies the importance of difference and locality while emphasizing the forms of oppression and inequality that continue to structure the information society.

Entering the conversation: significance and contribution

The empirical questions being asked in this dissertation advance the analysis of online mediations of activism by exploring the experiences of minority groups. In view of its empirical contributions, the research carves a niche in the study of computer-mediated political mobilization by bringing in experiences from an understudied context.

Many previous studies on the democratization of technologies have focused on overt forms of online activism, or internet-mediated political engagements of prominent activists. However, there are subtle nuances about the conditions underlying minority groups' online political mobilization, which require more in-depth analysis. These include not only the dialectical tensions involved in internet-mediated engagements, but also the tension between the political openings and subtle controls of the state and capital that surround their Internet engagement. In the midst of these dialectical tensions, it is important to think analytically about how minority groups' experiences of online media engagement constitute agency.

Understanding minority groups' online engagements in a developing society context is important due to the uniqueness of contexts and experiences of Southeast

Asian minority groups, and this attention to socio-political historical conditions makes this study unique from many previous studies on Western-based minority groups or diaspora communities' online participation and representation. History of colonialism and neo-colonialism and the position of being in the lower end of the global power imbalance makes minority struggles from within both offline and online unique. As works on minority groups and online new media in the non-West are scanty and enjoy much less prominence, they are inevitably overlooked in socio-technological discussions even if they have potentially important contributions. Looking at minorities from the Global South, groups and communities which are considered part of the nation but are "othered" in particular ways, brings new insights in the analysis of new technological uses and negotiations. Minority groups' differing positions and relationships with regard to enabling or constraining structural conditions such as local culture and capacities, relationship with the nation-state, and international linkages also bring in new contributions to the field.

Minority groups are also overlooked in existing studies on (1) activism, and (2) online media engagement in the Philippines. Moro, indigenous, and queer individuals and organizations have been actively articulating their claims and yet, the phenomenon of their activism has gained limited scholarly attention. There has also been limited analysis of Philippine minority groups' engagement with the online media. Although some existing studies have analyzed indigenous peoples' representation in the media, the dynamics of representation by others is different from the actual groups articulating their own struggle and mobilizing as activists in the online space. While a range of scholarly works have analyzed the roots of the Moro conflict, there have been no studies, based on my survey of the literature, which explored Moro groups' engagement with communication media at all. The Moro struggle has been ongoing for decades and the level of sophistication and activity of Moro individuals and organizations in the

online space deserves more scholarly attention, especially as online mediation exposes them to opportunities and threats embedded in the globally connected world of political Islam. Filipino queer expressions of identity and community formations in e-groups and online forums have been studied by Austria (2004, 2007). However, Philippine queers have recently joined the political arena as a national political party (which they claim is the only one in the world), and this is an important development for a Catholic society such as the Philippines. This work seeks to extend Austria's insights in the context of queer activism and political mobilization involving social media. Indigenous online media engagement in the Philippines, on the other hand, has been problematized in the context of diaspora communities and identity representation (Longboan, 2010; Rabia, 2009; Noelle-Ignacio, 2000), but did not particularly investigate activist uses of online spaces by indigenous communities.

Thesis structure

Chapter 1 has presented the key theoretical and practical issues involved in minority groups' engagement of online new media technologies for political mobilization, while at the same time situating the dissertation within a larger body of previous critical works concerning agency and structure debates within a technological discourse. It provided a conceptual definition of a minority group and identified types of minoritization in the Philippine context as well as the case studies investigated in the thesis. Chapter 1 also presented the theoretical and research questions as well as justifications for a case study design that blends a culture-centred and a historical-dialectical-structural approach to analysis.

Chapter 2 presents the dialectical tensions of agency and structure in the context of minority engagement of online media and underscores the major issues surrounding

minority online political mobilization: (1) tensions involving the intersections of minority identity, activism, and technology; (2) resistance versus accommodation and co-optation; (3) the dialectics of globalizing the struggle while localizing technology (the dynamics of media flows in transnational circuits); (4) transcending national boundaries and the persistence of state control; (5) unity and diversity; and, (6) the politics of inclusion and exclusion, which includes questions concerning the broadening of boundaries of imagined communities of minority groups, while maintaining local communities of solidarity.

Chapter 3 explores the online political mobilization experiences of two indigenous organizations: Cordillera People's Alliance and Tebtebba. Problematizing the complex interaction of technology and indigenous identity, the chapter argues that indigenous activists' online media engagement constitutes a sustained balancing act between accommodation and resistance, and online spaces are used creatively with reflection on the dangers and benefits of online spaces to the organization and the struggle. The organizations' use of online spaces is strongly driven by a need to re-shape its identity as backward and driven by a goal to strengthen its struggle through international connections. Balancing threats to identity and an opportunity to represent indigenous identity and challenge prejudist representations by others, the case shows that a peek into the backstage process, or 'hidden transcripts' of indigenous online media engagement presents a case of creative appropriation of technology.

Chapter 4 explores what constitutes a creative appropriation of technology based on a case study of a Muslim minority revolutionary organization in the Philippines, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Enabled by hybrid features of online media outlets, Muslim minorities (Moros) use multiple transcripts that target diverse audiences and oscillate across multiple, fleeting representations, narratives, and articulations. The Chapter supports the view that "infrapolitics" (the politics of disguise

and concealment that lies between public and hidden transcripts of subordinate groups) is crucial in understanding online dissent of a minority with secessionist roots and sensitive relations with the state. It highlights that new strategies of online political engagement foregrounding infrapolitics help minority groups to circumvent traditional barriers of political communication and alter the quality of debate between minorities, state and the international community and challenge national limits and boundaries.

Chapter 5 examines two cases of online political mobilization by queer groups in the Philippines. The first case study explores the online mediation experiences of *Ladlad* (Out of the Closet), a national LGBT political party aspiring for a seat in Congress under the party-list system. The case study explores the use of online media in providing a venue for the Filipino queer community to activate change, challenge discrimination, and advance itself as a legitimate political party. The purposes of online media engagement, strategies of online political mobilization, and enabling and constraining conditions for the strategic uses of online media are explored. The second case focuses on the role of online spaces for a student LGBT organization, *UP-Babaylan*, which offers support in the process of “coming out” for LGBT students and in challenging homophobia and discrimination in the university. This case explores the experiential dimension of youths experimenting with the online medium for self and identity expression and the organization’s online spaces as an arena for encouraging young LGBTs to come out, express themselves, and challenge societal prejudices. The cases of minority online political mobilization in Chapters 3 and 4 targeted external audiences. This chapter, on the other hand, highlights the use by queer organizations of online spaces for mobilizing its own community as a collective force. Examining the themes emerging from specific online spaces, I explored how the interactional characteristics of their online spaces allow for certain kinds of self-expression and resistance while also shaping their performance of sexuality and facilitating collectivity

in these spaces. I found that the online spaces constructed by these organizations serve as spheres for the coming together of a community, the mobilization of collective identity amongst a community with diverse self-concepts. Ultimately, the Chapter highlights the backstage process of this convergence as enabled or constrained by the dynamics and intricacies of online media engagement.

Chapter 6, the Synthesis Chapter, answers the research questions raised in Chapters 1 and 2 through a cross case analysis of findings emerging from Chapters 3, 4 and 5. First, the chapter brings forth an analysis of what constitutes agency of minority groups within a technological discourse based on the experiences highlighted in the case study chapters. Second, the chapter analyzes alternative forms of political practice surfacing from the three chapters. Finally, the chapter summarizes the enabling, constraining, and motivating structures involved in minority online political mobilization.

Chapter 7, the Conclusion Chapter, discusses the thesis' limitations and makes an argument for the importance of a culture-centred and historical-dialectical-structural approach in the analysis of minority groups' engagement of online media for political mobilization. The chapter provides insights on the consequences of online media engagement of minority groups to identity and struggle, and also to the future of new media use. Finally, it offers possible future directions in enriching the analysis of minority media engagement that pays attention to the constant negotiation between public and backstage performance and their meaning-making (hidden transcripts) as a significant component of creative appropriation of technology from the margins.

Chapter 2

Dialectics of Structure and Agency: Minorities and Online Dissent

What are the possibilities for activist agency, which articulates minority voices from the Third World, in the midst of the various enabling and constraining structures of the Internet as a medium for communicating activism? What function does online media engagement play in the political mobilization of minority groups, in their emancipation or in the creation and reiteration of their minoritization? Inter-related dialectical tensions capture the major issues surrounding Third World minorities and their use of online media for activism. This relationship between new media technologies and participatory practices is captured in the “democratization of technology” and “technologization of democracy” dialectic (Chouliaraki, 2010). Democratization of technology (Burgess, 2006; Hartley, 2010) focuses on the empowering potential of new media technologies for counter-hegemonic, emancipatory practices. Technologization of democracy, on the other hand, addresses self-mediation from the perspective of the regulative potential of new media technologies in controlling the discourses and in reproducing existing unequal power relations (Chouliaraki, 2010, p. 227). It is therefore important to explore minorities’ intention, meaning-making, and negotiations within the lens of this dialectical tension.

This Chapter will discuss these tensions, which include: (1) the intersections of minority identity, activism, and technology; (2) resistance versus co-optation; (3) the dialectics of globalizing the struggle while localizing technology (the dynamics of media flows in transnational circuits); (4) transcending national boundaries and the

persistence of state control; (5) unity and diversity or the question concerning the broadening of boundaries of imagined communities of minority groups, while maintaining local communities of solidarity; and, (6) the politics of inclusion and exclusion underlying issues of representation.

Intersections of local culture, activism, and technology

Culture includes the shared values, meanings, and belief structures of a community of people that are passed on from one generation to the next. In articulating a struggle or a claim, cultural groups perform culturally-situated communicative enactments, which implies a negotiation of the elements of culture, both static and dynamic, to advance an agenda or articulate resistive narratives. It is through this expression, interpretation, and reinterpretation of culturally circulated meanings that communities enact their agency, which pertains to the fundamental capacity to enact choices in negotiating structures (Giddens, 1984; Scott, 1990; Ginsburg, et.al, 2002; Dutta, 2011). The central concern is to what extent minority groups' identities are lived, transformed, or put to risk in the use of online media for political mobilization. Does online engagement facilitate the erosion of the minorities' folk wisdom, which is their capacity to think critically and independently about social and political issues? How do these global information and communication resources entangle with the micro and macro dynamics of the challenges brought about by technology to local identity?

According to new media theorists, the Internet's infrastructure is unique and offers possibilities and constraints for communicative practices and social interaction, and therefore provides a crucial context for emerging forms of communication and alternative political communities (Ginsburg, 2008; De Vaney, et.al., 2000). A central concern is that the dissemination and acceptance of new technologies for empowerment

or social change is itself also influenced by the neoliberal world order and transnational interests (Hassan, 2008; Couldry, 2011; Couldry & Curran, 2003; Hoofd, 2009; Armitage, 1999; Pieterse, 2005; Dean et.al., 2005, Dean, 2002, 2003; Lovink, 2004).

These concerns are accompanied by queries on technological challenges to identity and the implications of digital politics for equations of power and subversion (Landzelius, 2006, p. 2-13; Lister, et.al., 2003, p. 69). The argument that information and communication technologies (ICTs) have a “colonizing” capability implies a hegemonic reach of its dominant logics and their proposed importation into local sensibilities and spaces. This therefore raises concerns on the cultural neutrality of technology, putting to doubt the question of whether it can be “localized” or assimilated into local values and ways of life. The argument is that dominant modes of thinking may be embedded in ICTs, rendering the condition of use an inescapable trap from ICT hegemony (Landzelius, 2006, p. 294). A number of critical studies are expressing similar concern on the culture of acceleration and speed mediated by information technologies globally (Armitage, 1999, 2002; Hoofd, 1999) as well as Western culture and ways of life, which may be incompatible to the cultural values and aspirations of some minorities (Ya’u cited in Pieterse, 2005, p. 12; Sardar, 1996). Thus any analysis of the internet’s potential benefits for minority groups must be carefully tempered by an understanding of the technological, economic, political and cultural forces that shape their deployment and construct their use.

Resistance versus co-optation

The purpose served by subordinated groups’ mediated performance underlies an essential dialectical tension in communicating social change (Latufeku, 2006; Dutta, 2011). While narratives of resistance openly challenge the oppressive elements of the

dominant structures, such performances can also be co-opted within the dominant local and global structures and actors to serve the latter's goals (Sreekumar, 2011; Sobieraj, 2011)²⁹.

In the context of online mediations of organizations from the margins, the image that the organization depicts online becomes critical when appealing to an external audience. The quality of website content, the level of substantive information such as projects being undertaken, financial or operational reports, membership, resources, and linkages, would in an information society show some proof of organizational capacity and legitimacy (Vedder, 2003, p. 54). However, the literature on voluntary organizations has problematized this dependence on external support by non-profit organizations and the implications on the local cause. Their commitment towards social change and community empowerment may be rivaled by their need to survive as individual institutions, as well as to establish themselves as a collective force in civil society (Bebbington, et al., 2008; Sreekumar, 2011). For example, some organizations, in an effort to stay alive, may compromise on their vision and institutional mission to accommodate projects that may be inconsistent with the needs of the community or their main advocacies. Similar to accreditation processes, enhancing an organization's web presence requires additional resources, some degree of professionalization, or enhanced staff skills. Thus, it is seen as a tool to establish legitimacy in the context of the digital age (Vedder, 2003). Yet, media-centered activism (Sobieraj, 2011), where political success is equated with media success, may in actuality achieve less and fail to generate the attention it seeks, while undermining the organisations' capability to communicate with its grassroots supporters. However, this drive for professionalism across non-

²⁹ Examples in the context of health communication are instances where program planners from non-profits working for social change from the margins emphasize on family planning or population control which places responsibility on individual behaviour, as opposed to challenging exploitative structural inequities and fighting for redistribution of wealth. Thus, the fundamentally resistive capabilities of these sites of change are co-opted to carry out the overt and covert agendas of dominant global actors such as the World Health Organization (WHO) or the United Nations (UN) (Dutta, 2011, p. 218)

profits or activist organizations may undermine the spirit of voluntarism that the activists who pioneered this field brought with them, as well as the very essence of working for development or social change (Carino, 2002). Others see the active use of cultural symbols to attract international funding as “objectification” and an attempt to fit into the norms and standards of professionalism and credibility standards imposed by external actors.

Further, some of the organizations studied in this thesis have been involved in hostile relationships with the state. Online media engagement is crucial for allowing minority organizations to reach and obtain support from external actors, with the hope that these networks or allies can help mediate and influence their clamor for political settlement with the state. While online spaces may allow minority groups to build important horizontal networks of solidarity and support with actors of similar interest, thereby strengthening the groups’ advocacy and claims, they may also perpetuate the influence and involvement of certain international bodies, institutions, or actors in local political issues. Online spaces may also perpetuate dependence over Internet technology by local groups who continually need a platform to articulate the claims that cannot be addressed by the limits and controls of national boundaries. This complexity is referred to in various literatures as accommodation, complicity, conformity or assimilation, which underlies global social and political activism (Hollander, J. & R. Einwohner, 2004). It has been argued that a single activity may constitute both resistance and accommodation to different aspects of power or authority. Further, actors may also challenge their own positions within a particular social structure, while not challenging the validity of the overall structure, for example, the capitalist or commercial forces surrounding new media technologies. Therefore, it is important to explore, while presenting the possibilities generated by online articulations, how participatory elements of performance are shaped and influenced within the agendas of dominant institutions

(Dutta, 2011, p. 219). Useful questions here include: what are the purposes of the online mediations of minority groups for political mobilization, and who are ultimately served by such performances?

Globalizing the struggle, localizing the technology

The experiences of small organizations in gaining from important transnational connections and horizontal networks facilitated by online interactions have been documented in several studies (Bakardjieva, 2003; Garrido and Halavais, 2003; Oo, 2003; Zarni, 2000; Dutta & Pal, 2007). The Internet allows activists to transcend nation-state boundaries in terms of the reach of their struggles, while at the same time loosening the state's exclusive control of its territory, thereby reducing its capacity for control and homogenization. Considering that governments and large organizations used to have the monopoly over access to media such as television and newspapers, the arena of politics and configurations of what is considered political dissent had also been limited.

The Internet's unique quality of multi-logicalism (Rodgers, 2003), allows a shift from one-to-many to many-to-many interactions, and this feature basically disrupts nation-state based frames of interaction with the outside world. Suddenly, indigenous groups can more easily reach out to indigenous actors in other parts of the world. Islamic activists also find it more convenient to connect to each other. The queer groups are also finding linkages with similar communities globally.

Beyond state controls and regulatory constraints, some fear that minority activists joining the virtual realm will only find themselves entrapped by the global market-dominated and commercial forces of the Internet, rendering their activism practically muted with the dominance of consumerism and commercialization

surrounding the global Web (Hassan, 2008). A major concern, for example, in the context of indigenous groups, is how local indigenous knowledge may be taken advantage of by global commercial forces, if made available online (Ginsburg, et.al, 2002; Landzelius, 2006). However, as argued by Mark Poster, as Third World people engage in online activities, their territorial identities are destabilized as they experience the “freedom to construct themselves in any manner in relation to others”, rendering new formulations of cultural exchange and transforms the fundamental conditions of culture and politics (Poster, 2006, p. 220). Online media blurs the division between the producer and consumer that used to ensure the commodification of society in older legal and economic structures. As manifested in blogs, peer to peer file sharing programs, and online communities, consumers are being transformed into users and are able to create content as they download. Thus, “the passive individual consumer of mediated industrialism evaporates, and new figures of mediated practices arise” (Poster, 2006, p. 249). The implication of this is that online spaces have the capacity to broaden the limited space afforded in local traditional media.

The Internet can also provide access to skills and resources that are not present in local areas but are needed in local struggles, transcending scale limitations. The Internet can be useful in that it allows a local struggle to establish links with other similar local and international struggles, thereby widening its reach by embracing a greater breadth of inclusiveness in the sharing of its claims. This is important as it may reduce minority activists' feelings of isolation. More importantly, this type of horizontal networking fosters the sharing of useful ideas, strategies, and resources (Bakardjieva, 2003). Coordinated struggles are able to exert more pressure than isolated efforts. Linking local political struggles together or with similar struggles globally may offer an effective way to counter the hyper-mobility of global capitalism and national controls. Thus, the internet can dramatically expand the range of political views that might

otherwise be impossible to find in some locations by allowing groups to publish electronically and at low cost to a wide audience. Scholars argue that this permits the local to become global, and vice versa (Warf and Grimes, 1997).

However, when resistance is enacted online, it takes on a global character that reaches beyond the internal institutions that are originally the target of struggle. In essence, while the Internet provides a minority group a space to articulate its struggle, the group does not have full control over the reach of its message, nor of the readers' understanding and response towards the articulation. Moreover, while the group may attract support, it may also attract antagonism, as in the examples of extreme speech and hate speech in previous studies (Wocjieszac, 2010; Wocjieszak and Mutz, 2009; Cammaerts, 2009; Soriano, 2011). The participation of a Muslim group to articulate legitimate claims over ancestral domain or self-determination, for example, can be drowned out by global fears against terrorism and prejudice lurking in cyberspace (Soriano, 2011). Indigenous history, knowledge and productions posted in their websites, what Ginsburg calls "screen memories" (Ginsburg, et. al, 2002), can also be abused, re-posted, stolen, or placed side by side varied forms of commercialism and commodification. Media flow in the online space is unique and once ideas are posted online, local actors no longer have control over them, even as these represent local struggles. Thus, it is important that minority organizations embarking on online media activism take these risks into consideration.

Scholars have also argued that cyberspace is a raceless space, a refuge from cultural divisions, where divisions are argued to be fading as a "global culture" arises from a flow of online interactions of people from all over (Poster, 2006; 1998). To borrow Poster's terminology, such "transculture of global media" seems to be blurring the lines of the First World and Third World, colonized-colonizer, men-women, and envelopes cyberspace with a dynamic sharing of experiences, cultures, and lifestyles

across the web (Sundaram, 2000, p. 283; Poster, 2006, p.44). And yet, studies have found that race, religion, gender, and other forms of difference do manifest in many ways online. Nakamura (in an interview by Lovink 2004, n.p.) notes that gender, ethnic, and racial differences that are present offline can be manifested online and that “the Internet’s interfaces made some identity choices unavailable, some unavoidable, and otherwise served to police and limit the kinds of ways that people could define themselves”. The dilemmas surrounding minority groups' use of the Internet to expand their struggle to the international realm are considerable, and yet, minority groups continue to do so. This thesis, therefore, explores minority groups' experiences in negotiating their way through these dilemmas and the implications of engaging the Internet as a global medium.

Nations real and imagined

Although minority groups might consider themselves members of sub-national or transnational communities, the nation remains to be the primary context for everyday lives and imaginations and those who produce media and their audiences. The nation, always in relation to transnational institutions, is an important frame of reference, especially as the state still takes on a crucial role in the creation and regulation of media network (Appadurai, 1993). Moreover, the global relations of a nation often supersede the global connections of minority groups (Ginsburg, et. al, 2002, p. 11).

However, how the conception of “nation” is altered with the use of online technology for national minorities, and how the use of online media challenges the relevance of the nation for the struggle of minority groups, are interesting areas that can be explored. Here I bring in Benedict Anderson’s (1991) notion of “imagined communities”, where the media and the imagined attachments and relations created by

the media, play crucial roles in producing nations and creating national imaginaries. How does online media engagement create new perceptions or alter existing notions of nation and belonging to minority groups? How are minority groups' online media engagement affected by state interests and control strategies? What national policies enable or constrain activism (in general) and minority groups' online media uses for activism (in particular)? How do minorities work their way through such structures?

While some governments fear the Internet for its emancipatory capabilities, the use of the Net for electronic surveillance and monitoring by national governments is well-documented (OpenNet Initiative, 2011). In fact, some scholars have shown that despite its potential for linking activists from the Third World margins to larger organizations in other parts of the world, telecommunications systems are being increasingly regulated in the national and global arenas which control the infrastructure or context of communication (Kelly and Etling, 2008; York, 2011). However, the Internet does not exist within the exclusive province of states and markets. Studies have shown how smaller activists have used Internet facilities to undermine government controls and link with counterparts in other parts of the world, despite restrictive conditions (Oo, 2003; Dutta & Pal, 2007; Rodgers, 2003, p. 12; Franklin, 2001, 2005). Further, while telecommunications systems are said to be increasingly regulated particularly in more restrictive regimes, reports on filtering and censorship show that such controls are non-existent or minimal in the Philippines, and the only major impediment for minority groups would be limitations in terms of access to the Internet, hardware, and skills (OpenNet Initiative, 2011).

Unity and diversity

An aspect of new media is its capacity to encourage the formation of networks of distant communities. However, local mobilizations and national movements representing minorities also speak for a diverse group, as in the case of the minority organizations studied in this thesis. Indigenous organizations such as Tebtebba and CPA, for example, represent various indigenous grassroots and peoples organizations from several ethnic groups within the Cordillera. The MILF also advances political claims, which they claim speak for the Moro communities in the country, despite the existence of divides along sub-groups, levels of assimilation, class, and political ideologies among Moros. Finally, the issue also resonates with the Philippine LGBT political party, Ladlad, which aspires for a Congressional seat to represent LGBT communities of various incomes, education, occupations and even self-concepts. The Philippine LGBT community stands between the competing pulls of the conservative values and strong influence of the Catholic Church and alternative views about queer identity based on influence from other queer communities and activists globally.

Performances of social change, as argued by Dutta (2011, p. 221), shuffle between their representations of collective movement identities and negotiations of multiple competing issues, agendas and frames within broader questions of minoritization. The process of this negotiation of fragmented terrains of resistance includes the bringing together of differences to create entry points for unity and social change, although issues of power amidst these differences and negotiation is an important aspect to be considered.

Thus, social movement groups that find limited resources within national boundaries can strengthen and enrich their resources by establishing linkages with larger social movement organizations in other parts of the world. This analysis of the

interconnectedness of possibly distant and diverse global civil society networks is also prominent in Castells' (2009) discussion of social movement networks in his book, *Communication Power*. Another empirical example is the analysis conducted by Garrido and Halavais (2003) on how the Zapatistas' online presence serves as an anchor for smaller, diverse, social movement organizations, and helps them find a louder voice online. Other studies (Dutta & Pal, 2007, on Narmada Bachalao Dam) show how smaller local organizations found a way to strategize and mobilize resources to find local powers by bridging alliances with other organizations. The online media also makes possible the participation of minority diasporas in locally directed struggles, such as in the case of 'Burmese spiders' (Oo, 2003). However, a useful caution on the politics of inter-linkages of the local with the global social movement forces is vivid in Spivak's (1990, 1987) and Mohanty's (1998) analyses of the homogenization of the different strands of feminist struggle. Spivak argues that feminism, which takes a number of strands (i.e. Black feminism, Western feminism), can be homogenized to suit Western perspectives and neutralize the specificities of other feminist perspectives that arise from non-Western nations. While fighting for the rights of women in the West, Spivak argues that Western feminism tend to see the struggle of all women globally as universal, and therefore downplays the complexity of the oppression experienced by Third World women. According to Mohanty (1998, p. 66), on the other hand, assumptions of privilege and ethnocentric universality can have a damaging effect to different women living in the 'Third World'. Thus, the prominence of new media as a platform for activists and social movement organizations makes it possible for individuals and organizations to manifest hybridity-- simultaneously acting as resistance agents, while promoting the hegemony of certain structures at the same time (Mohanty, 1998).

Sassen (2004), on the other hand, contends that the characteristics of new media can be studied in the way it facilitates solidarity-building of people across nations, without them falling into the trap of homogenizing each other. In the same way, Castells (2009) recognizes the value of networks and linkages created online to spur the coming together of diverse organizations for activism that can bind them in the struggle against hegemonic institutions. Minority groups' online participation may reflect this diversity, which must be given attention if we are to understand their online representation. For instance, is diversity within groups manifested in online engagements, and how do minority groups use the Internet to form a collective amidst this diversity? The complexity and often-ignored tension between opposition and accommodation, and the social and interactional nature of resistance are important issues for consideration in debates about power and control and the relationship between individuals and social context. They would also greatly enrich our understanding of Third World opposition.

Politics of inclusion and exclusion

As online media use facilitates linkages of a local minority to other local and international struggles, its reach embraces a greater breadth of sharing of a group's claims. As a group publishes its struggle online, members of the minority are able to find a space for expression and interaction and the Internet dramatically expands the range of voices heard on many issues. However, this carries within it the full diversity and contradiction, especially for minorities from the developing world.

The use of online media pre-supposes access. Online actors represent the struggles of their group, yet class and ideological divisions may be present within these groups. Minority groups often have their conditions of marginalization compounded by

poverty and minority communities also feature a wide disparity in terms of levels of assimilation towards the mainstream culture, income, and education. Thus, as Internet technologies have material requirements, issues of inequality and representation of the grassroots cannot be ignored. Thus it is important that we understand how online actors collaborate with people on the ground to represent their struggles and how do they balance online and offline communicative strategies. Access to the skills, equipment, and software necessary to gain entry to the online environment threatens to create a large and predominantly minority underclass that is substantially disenfranchised from the benefits of cyberspace and an elite for whom the Net is indispensable. Thereby, a developing country minority group's engagement with cyberspace entails an analysis of representation – how a group of people speaks of and for a minority group that it represents as social categories of wealth and power are inevitably reflected in cyberspace. Furthermore, disparities in Internet access are global in scope and this implies inequalities in access and in representation, at both local and global levels. Finally, counter hegemonic uses are not an electronic monopoly of the political left. Right-wing groups, some of them racist, homo/transphobic or deeply distrustful of existing political institutions, employ the Internet and the World Wide Web in a variety of ways. Given the enormous size and rapid growth of the Web, another danger is that every position can become lost in the cacophony of competing voices (Warf & Grimes, 1997).

Chapter summary

Minorities' online political mobilization represent performative sites that challenge the hegemony of dominant structures, while creating opportunities for putting together stories from local, national, and global publics. The collective identities co-

created through these performances create openings for change by creating possibilities for the expression and representation of these voices in dominant platforms of policy discussions. Nonetheless, in the analysis of these performances, it is imperative that the dialectical tensions are highlighted to represent the realities surrounding the exercise of minority activist agency amidst enabling and constraining structures and conditions. These dialectical issues are summarized in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Summary of issues on online mediations of minority groups

Dialectical tension	Issues on minority online mediations	Alternative propositions
1. Minority identity and online activism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups “buy in the technology hype”; absence of clear purpose of use (Latufeku, 2006 p. 56) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups have a clear purpose for online media use, such as producing ‘screen memories’ of minority history & struggle that has been eliminated from traditional media forms (Ginsburg, et.al, (2002)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Folk culture will be “strategically essentialized”, objectified, and exploited (Himpele, 2008; Prins, 2002, 1997, Landzelius, 2006, p. 13) with persistent commodification and commercialism surrounding online media • The use of online media (competing in the terms of media spectacle) may “corrupt the lifeworlds” of minority groups who value alternative processes of deliberation (Landzelius, 2006, pp.124- 128) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Romanticized images will be used to seek control over and correct common media representations (Brooten, 2010) • Groups are not simply constrained by the logic of technology but are able to re-shape new forms of media in practical and ideological ways in their efforts to incorporate them into the life of their community and struggles (Campbell, 2010, p. 187)

Dialectical tension	Issues on minority online mediations	Alternative propositions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cultural nature of minority resistance will be altered with the predominant use of online media (Brooten, 2010) • Minority groups are unaware of possible negative consequences of online media use and are unable to detect threats to its identity and community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minority groups do not have a fixed and stable identity (Landzelius, 2006, p. 17; Niezen, 2005; Clifford, 2001). Although they assert attachments to their culture and traditions (Maybury-Lewis, 2002, p.6), they also engage meaningfully with the demands of their socio-political situation. • Multiplicity of identity of minority groups implies that minority groups are likely to take the necessary steps to engage globally to achieve ‘universal identity’ to advance their struggle (Longboan, 2010; Niezen, 2005, p. 534) • Minority groups will creatively project and protect its folk culture in the process of online political mobilization • Minority groups negotiate its use of technology in consideration of the limits and threats it poses to organization, identity, and struggle
2. Resistance versus co-optation and accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purposes of Internet use by minorities should be examined as they may ultimately serve the interests of the dominant: larger transnational organizations, corporations, and governments, and not of the minorities (Dutta, 2011; Spivak, 1987, 1988) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minorities’ engagement of online media for political mobilization and use of particular online strategies are motivated by internal purposes of broadening communication platforms for resistance and strategizing within the limits and opportunities posed by existing structures • Minorities are resisting structures of hegemony and domination, but these may be expressed in disguised in low

Dialectical tension	Issues on minority online mediations	Alternative propositions
		<p>profile forms that may appear as ‘public transcripts’ (Scott, 1990, in the context of subordinated groups)</p>
<p>3.Globalizing the struggle, localizing the technology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The global character of online media will expose legitimate local struggles to commercial interests and global prejudices against minorities, resulting in further minoritization and segregation (Bailey & Harindranath, 2006; Sardar, 1996) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The global character of online media allows minority groups to build horizontal networks of solidarity between like-minded peoples and communities (Bakardjieva, 2003) • Minority groups will be able to localize the technology, appropriating it creatively according to local uses and values • Use of the Internet will allow minority groups to transcend the limits of their remote locations and expose the struggle to international support networks (Landzelius, 2006) • Online spaces allow minority groups to build their organizational resources
<p>4. Nations imagined and real</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State regulatory controls will limit minority expression and use online information against minority groups (York, 2011; Zhou, 2006) • Media is a powerful tool for promoting national hegemony and social transformation, whether to create loyalty, or foster national development that will ideologically shape minority groups’ resistance tendencies. • Minority media professionals will be heavily influenced by state interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minority groups are aware and able to manage or circumvent state controls and regulations • Media and the imagined attachments and relations created by the media, play crucial roles in producing nations and creating ‘national imaginaries’ (Ginsburg, et.al. 2002; Anderson, 1991)

Dialectical tension	Issues on minority online mediations	Alternative propositions
5. Unity and diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The formation of broad collective networks may silence the diversity of voices being represented, and work to the detriment of smaller voices within the collective (Spivak, 1987; Mohanty, 1988; Hollander, J. and R. Einwohner, 2004) • Fragmented sites of imaginations will be negotiated according to power structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bringing together of diverse actors working towards a collective purpose creates possibilities of emancipation and resistance that challenges the hegemony of the dominant (Ginsburg, et.al, 2002) • Minorities will be able to work through the differences to create entry points for social change and structural transformation while working within the reality of such diversities (Sassen, 2004; Dutta, 2011; Rodgers, 2003) • The use of artful resistance and ‘creative sense-making in performative expressions’ can help emerge as the spaces for negotiating the dynamic processes and tensions within social change processes (Scott, 1990; Dutta, 2011, p. 221)
6. Politics of inclusion/exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual authorship is suspect and manifests power relations in the minority group and members with limited or no access will be unrepresented and further marginalised (Belausteguigoitia, 2006, p. 110) • Decisions over access, content creation, production and distribution in the online space are driven by powerful members of the organization and international actors (Latufeku, 2006) • While the minority group expands the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups deliberate and choose to carry out actions with regard to the adoption and use of online media • Online spaces are used to complement offline and traditional modes of dissent (Brooten, 2010) • Reflexivity is employed such that groups will speak with rather than for its community • Effort is undertaken to bring in the voices of

Dialectical tension	Issues on minority online mediations	Alternative propositions
	<p>reach of its network with the use of online media, it may detach itself from the ground by altering the nature of the struggle and alienating its local membership (Belausteguigoitia, 2006)</p>	<p>grassroots communities</p>

Chapter 3

The Arts of Indigenous Online Dissent: Negotiating technology, indigeneity, and activism in the Cordillera³⁰

How do indigenous groups carve out discursive spaces for expression and control through the online medium? For what purposes do indigenous groups use online spaces and how is technology ‘localized’ or ‘indigenized’ in the process of use? In what ways do they negotiate the opportunities and challenges of the online communicative environment? Following earlier studies concerning indigenous groups and media activism in other parts of the world (Landzelius, 2006; Belausteguigoitia, 2006; Forte, 2006), this chapter looks at the extent by which technology is “indigenized”, or creatively integrated into the practices and beliefs rooted in local cultural logic. Using James Scott’s notion of *hidden transcripts* (1990) and Andrew Feenberg’s (2004) *democratic rationalization of technology*, this chapter explores strategic approaches and conditions embedded in the construction, negotiation, and transformation of indigenous online activist media, based on the experiences of two indigenous groups based in the Philippines, Tebtebba and Cordillera People’s Alliance. The forms and characteristics of online struggles, the dynamics and strategies behind the production and distribution of online dissent, the process of localization and negotiation of technological use, and the perceived implications of online mediations on group identity, culture and struggle are explored.

Whether the global character of online media can be used to articulate local agendas and allow the meaningful production of indigenous identity and struggle is a

³⁰ An earlier version of this chapter was published in Soriano, C.R. (2012). The arts of indigenous online dissent: Negotiating technology, indigeneity, and activism in the Cordillera. *Telematics and Informatics*, 29(1), 33-44. doi:10.1016/j.tele.2011.04.004

puzzle tied to views that global technologies can challenge, distort, or undermine locality's production (Landzelius, 2006, p. 293; Sreekumar, 2011; Sreekumar and Payaril, 2002). In the online platform, indigenous communities from the developing world, previously underrepresented in mainstream media forms, can articulate claims, strategically mobilize and participate in the forms of meaning-making that constitute them. The Internet serves as a space for indigenous groups to produce "screen memories" (Ginsburg et.al, 2002), where they can re-write their history and collection of struggles that has been erased in the national narratives of dominant culture. In the process, these screen memories and online productions can constitute certain claims to self-determination or cultural rights that they make on the state. They can broaden the reach of their expression and expand their network with indigenous communities in other parts of the world. The construction of a digital public sphere mediated by information technologies enables engagements with people to be mediated, not confined to proximate physical spaces. Thus, the use of online spaces can help indigenous groups to transcend the limitations of their geographical locations and enable those from the developing world to reach out and obtain support of other indigenous groups globally. The web also has the capacity of increasing the opportunities for the representation of ethnicity, often under or misrepresented in mainstream media forms, and those undertaking web production can have their representational power magnified exponentially (Leung, 2005; Landzelius, 2006; Latufeku, 2006; Ginsburg, 2008).

However, studies on the intersections of ethnicity and the media have raised some important issues that involve a threat towards ethnic identity and the nature of the struggle. Based on previous studies exploring indigenous media in radio, video, and print news, concerns have been raised over issues of authenticity and actual authorship (Ginsburg, et.al., 2002), the consequences of "emphasizing on exoticism" (Prins, 2002; 1997), the exploitation of indigenous rituals that lead to "strategic essentialisms"

(Himpele, 2008), “objectification of indigenous culture” (Ginsburg et.al., 2002), and the contradictions entailed in the use of media to advance indigenous agendas (Brooten, 2010). In the context of indigenous online media, these concerns are accompanied by queries on technological challenges to identity and the implications of digital politics for equations of power and subversion (Landzelius, 2006 p. 2-13). These are accompanied by fears that indigenous dissent would be helpless with ever-increasing state controls and persistent commercialization and commodification. Moreover, the nature of the Internet facilitates a culture of acceleration and speed or *chronotopia* (Armitage, 1999) that would seem to run counter to indigenous communities’ traditional values, possibly rendering indigenous communities “road kill casualties” (Landzelius, 2006, p. 1) of hypermedia.

While most of the issues raised towards ethnic minority media production in the context of other media forms also resonate in the context of the Internet, the challenges involved in indigenous groups’ use of online media for activism face additional dilemmas in the Third World context. Indigenous groups, given their geographical locations, often have their conditions of marginalization compounded by poverty. Indigenous communities also feature a wide disparity in terms of levels of assimilation towards the mainstream culture, income, and education. Thus, as Internet technologies have material requirements, issues of inequality and representation of the grassroots are critical issues for consideration.

Interestingly, there is recent dynamism in the use of online media by indigenous groups to widen the reach of advocacies and engage a wider support base for the struggle. Although Internet penetration in the Philippines is still skewed in the more urban areas, a wide variety of indigenous online spaces are now in existence, some

created by non-government organizations or activist groups and others by indigenous diaspora communities³¹.

However, we still have little knowledge about indigenous groups, especially from developing Asia, and their everyday online engagements. In the realm of media studies on indigenous groups in the Philippines, they are often seen as passive actors and past studies focus on the forms and politics of representation of indigenous people in mainstream media. There is a lacuna of local media studies on indigenous people as activists finding a voice to represent themselves, primarily because they have had limited access to and control of traditional media forms. In the mountainous region of the Cordillera, for example, the indigenous groups' active use of online spaces is a more recent phenomenon which coincided with technological and call-center development that created the demand for more affordable and faster telecommunications and internet access to the communities (De Chavez, R., Personal interview, May, 2010). This entry of indigenous groups from the developing world into online communicative spaces can imply new ways of use, expression, and activism that demand important attention if we are to gain a better understanding of the relevance of new media for minorities.

Indigenous representation in websites, online forums, or e-groups can represent an information age version of creative resistance through daily practices. This chapter probes what constitutes indigenous activist agency within a technological discourse and examine how indigenous culture and knowledge are articulated into political discourse and guide the formation of agency.

The indigenous struggle and activism in the Philippines

Indigenous peoples (IPs) are sometimes referred to as indigenous cultural

³¹An online search of Philippine indigenous organizations conducted to select the case studies for this research in 2009 returned 31 indigenous organizations with online spaces (websites, blogs and social networking sites).

communities (ICCs). The 1987 Philippine Constitution defines ICCs or IPs as:

a group of people or homogenous societies who have continuously lived as an organized community on communally bounded and defined territory. These groups of people have actually occupied, possessed and utilized their territories under claim of ownership since time immemorial. They share common bonds of language, customs, traditions and other distinctive cultural traits, or, they, by their resistance to political, social and cultural inroads of colonization, non-indigenous religions and cultures, became historically differentiated from the Filipino majority.

Philippine Constitutional Law's definition of indigenous peoples is parallel to that of the United Nations, and identifies indigenous people as "those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sections of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them" (Kapunan, 2001). IPs form at present non-dominant sections of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems.

Indigenous peoples are considered as belonging to the Philippines's poorest of the poor (Eligio, 2010; Asian Development Bank, 2002). The depth of poverty in the regions with a predominantly indigenous population has deepened, and the main problem of land insecurity is a main factor for this poverty gap. The continued transgression of indigenous lands through uncontrolled and irresponsible mining has led to the unnatural movements of indigenous communities. This is made even more problematic with the enactment of a Philippine Mining Law that runs counter to the nationally promulgated law on indigenous people's rights. The Philippine Mining Act of 1995 had a considerable impact on the lands of IPs since its promulgation as it allows for the exploration of indigenous lands for mining purposes (Gobrin & Andin, 2002) with anticipated billions in revenues in return (Rivera, 2005; Eligio, 2010). The

Philippines as a bountiful site for mining is due largely to its having the third largest deposit of gold in the world (Lalata, 2003). Indigenous people also face struggles against the establishment of large commercial dams and other “development projects” that encroach on indigenous lands or destroy indigenous resource systems. Recently, indigenous peoples in the Southern Philippines are also faced with problems of their indigenous forests being turned into game zones for combat as foreign troops re-entered Philippine soil for training exercises (Radics, 2004). The Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA)³² was passed in October 1997 after the rigorous lobbying of indigenous organizations and support associations around the country. Embracing indigenous peoples rights ranging from the tangible (land) to the intangible (social justice, cultural integrity, and self-governance) demands, the law sought to simplify the requirement for the recognition of ancestral domain ownership, mandate the delivery of basic services to indigenous communities, recognize IP rights to genuine self-determination and autonomy, and repeal all laws prejudicial to the recognition of the right to ownership of ancestral domains and lands. However, despite the passing of a national law, mining, logging, dam construction and even military exercises encroaching on indigenous people’s ancestral lands still persist. The provision of basic services also proved to be easier in law than in actual implementation terms, as poor infrastructure and government systems rendered it difficult to bring services to geographically distant communities.

Due to the lack of workable national social safeguards for indigenous peoples, international legal regimes were made available to hear the conditions and struggles of indigenous peoples³³. To internationalize the struggle and find solidarity, indigenous

³² Entitled “*An Act to Recognize, Protect, and Promote the Rights of Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples, Creating a National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), Establishing Implementing Mechanisms, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and For Other Purposes,*” Republic Act 8371.

³³ These include the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the International Indigenous Forum on Climate Change, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Human Rights Council Expert

organizations in the Philippines have established connections with indigenous organizations in different parts of the world.

Case Studies

This Chapter engaged a two-case study design of how two indigenous organizations, Tebtebba and Cordillera People’s Alliance, negotiate the use of online media for political mobilization. An online search of indigenous groups in the Philippines was undertaken using a variety of search engines as well as Friendster and Facebook, the two most heavily subscribed social networking sites in the country. Tebtebba, Inc. (Tebtebba) and Cordillera People’s Alliance (CPA) were chosen as case studies based on relatively higher levels of online activity (websites were rich in archived materials ranging from historical background on the organization, news and reports, position and petition statements, documentation of projects and activities, electronic publication of books, magazines or newsletters, and videos); recency in updating of online spaces; and agreement to participate in the study.

Table 3.1. Case study indigenous organizations

	Cordillera People’s Alliance	Tebtebba
Website	www.cpaphils.org/ (started 2004)	www.tebtebba.org (started 2006) ³⁴
Founding	1984 by indigenous leaders in the Cordillera region	1996 by indigenous leaders from different countries
Scope and location	Philippines-based, functions as an alliance-network of about 120 grassroots-based organizations and 11 major	Philippines-based, has 11 partner organizations representing indigenous peoples from 5 continents

Mechanism on Indigenous Peoples Rights, and Indigenous Peoples’ Global Summit on Climate Change: The Anchorage Declaration, and the Bali Action Plan, and the United Nations Development Program-Regional Initiative on Indigenous Peoples Rights and Development (Eligio, 2010).

³⁴ Tebtebba has started Facebook and Twitter accounts in September, 2011, but due to the recency of this development, their use of social networking sites is not covered in this thesis.

	Cordillera People's Alliance	Tebtebba
	NGOs in the Cordillera region	(Latin America, North America, Asia, Europe, and Australia-New Zealand)
Nature	Indigenous activist organization leading the Cordillera indigenous people's movement for self-determination	Indigenous policy, education, research, and advocacy organization; capacitates indigenous people to participate in policy advocacy
	Activist in orientation and has antagonistic relationship with Philippine government; has partnerships with some international organizations	Has partnerships with national and local government agencies such as census offices, human rights commissions, environmental and development departments, as well as international bodies
Issues	Defence of ancestral domain and self-determination; struggle against dams, mines and other 'development impositions'; promotion and protection of indigenous peoples rights; other peasant struggles; tribal wars; union with 'anti-imperialist' groups	Promotion of indigenous peoples rights; popularization of issues affecting indigenous communities globally (i.e. Climate Change, social justice, indigenous peoples rights), biodiversity, sustainable development)
Other media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsletters in English and Cordillera's commercial lingua franca (Ilokano) • Publications of popular materials, issue statements and workshop proceedings • Music CDs and cassettes, t-shirts, and posters on struggle • Occasional radio programs • Video documentaries on IP issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed and digitized book publications (e.g. Indigenous People and Climate Change); training modules (being translated in different languages) • Tebtebba magazine • Printed briefing materials • Video documentaries

Cordillera Peoples Alliance. The CPA is a federation of people's organizations, most of them grassroots-based among the indigenous communities in the Cordillera region of the Philippines. Cordillera is considered as the highest and the single largest mass of mountains in the entire country (Finin, 2005) and is home to the major indigenous groups such as the *Ibaloi, Kankana-ey, Bontok, Ifugao, Kalinga, Isneg and*

Tingguian (Rood, 1989). Cordillera indigenous peoples are estimated to comprise 1.2 million (ADB, 2002). The Cordillera people are characterized by “an impressive unity of cultural tradition” (particularly contrasted with the Hispanized lowlands) but also a high degree of pluralism (De Raedt, 1987 in Rood, 1990: 11).³⁵

Founded in 1984, the CPA seeks to promote and defend indigenous people’s rights, human rights, social justice and national freedom and democracy (CPA website, www.cpaphils.org, 2010). CPA was selected for its activist roots and strong linkages with other Cordillera civil society and grassroots organizations, having the historical association of leading the indigenous movement that successfully led to the halting of the World Bank-funded *Chico* dam project in the 1980s. CPA’s past lobby works have exposed it to international discourses on indigenous rights through mobilizations at the United Nations, although its attachment to its grassroots alliances allows it to remain more grounded on local indigenous issues such as extractions, dams, and “forced disappearances”³⁶ (Hilhorst, 2000). CPA provides relief and rehabilitation activities for disaster-affected areas in the Cordillera, allowing it to retain enclaves of support from the ground.

The CPA launched its website in 2004 with financial assistance from a Swedish partner, the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation. CPA’s banner tagline carries its core advocacy, “for the defense of ancestral domain and for self-determination”. Prominently placed in the website with large headers are CPA’s “Campaigns” projected through video documentaries (left hand side), “Indigenous issues” captured through mostly a list of downloadable statements, press releases and position papers (center),

³⁵ In 1986, the Philippine government created the *Cordillera Administrative Region*, on the basis of an apparent ‘commonality of indigenous practices’ (Casambre, 2010). It is made up of six provinces and one city, namely: Benguet, Ifugao, Mountain Province, Apayao, Kalinga, Abra and Baguio City.

³⁶ An example is the disappearance of James Balao, a CPA activist-member and who suddenly disappeared in 2008 after confrontations with government military and never surfaced. Another is the abduction of the “Morong 43”, supposedly rural health workers but was suspected by the government to be members of the Communist Party. These extra judicial killings and political disappearances rendered the Philippines as one of the most dangerous countries for journalists and activists. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/04/world/asia/04iht-phils.1.9721867.html>

and “News in photos” (on the right hand side of the site), a photo documentation of recent activities and landmark events, such as the formation of the “Philippine indigenous movement for self-determination”. Managing its website internally provides CPA more control in keeping updates on time, in editing the postings, as well as in maintaining security over the site’s content. All CPA officers and members in the head-office in Baguio city have laptop computers that share a wireless connection; on the other hand, many of its grassroots organizational partners have at least 1 computer in the office but have to travel to internet cafes (distance of about 1 to 7 kilometres) to access the internet.

Tebtebba³⁷ or *Indigenous Peoples’ International Centre for Policy Research and Education’s* work focuses on bringing indigenous people together for policy advocacy and campaigns and collaborates with indigenous activists in multilateral processes (www.tebtebba.org, 2010). Tebtebba’s website banner tagline, “Working for the recognition and protection of indigenous peoples’ rights” reflects the importance of the rights discourse in Tebtebba’s work. Placed in Tebtebba’s website is a “Menu” (left hand side) of information about the history and causes of the organization. In the center is ‘What’s New’, a rundown of current issues Tebtebba is involved in as well as issue statements. A review of its website showed that most of the issues and position statements identified are related to Climate Change meetings. In the right hand side of the website are links to other portals maintained by Tebtebba (i.e. the Indigenous Climate Change Portal), as well as announcements, video documentaries, and a downloadable section of Guidebooks, newsletters, brochures, training materials and other publications produced by Tebtebba. The website is updated monthly but during particular events, several posts are made on the same day.

³⁷Tebtebba comes from a word used by the indigenous Kankana-ey Igorots of Northern Philippines, refers to a process of collectively discussing issues and presenting diverse views with the aim of reaching agreements, common positions, and concerted actions.

Tebtebba is an interesting case because while most of its members were from CPA, the organization is international (with an International Advisory Board) and its advocacies are more slanted towards global issues. In contrast to the CPA which has antagonistic relations with the state, Tebtebba works actively in partnership with the national and local government agencies and UN agencies and bodies. Tebtebba's head office is in the Philippines where they manage and maintain the organization's website, as well as two other websites that represent their causes: the Indigenous Climate Portal and the Asia Indigenous Women's Network. Two members maintain these websites, supervised by a Head Information officer. Typical of many non-profit organizations, all three members multi-task and are in charge of all other communication and publication functions of the organization. They also maintain several e-groups representing salient indigenous issues such as climate change, waste management, mining and extractive industries, and human rights. These e-groups were aimed at providing updates and discussing pressing issues of indigenous people in other parts of the world, and to build a stronger network amongst its community.

It is the difference in the positionality of the two organizations vis-a-vis the state and international and local civil society organizations that interesting insights on the way different cultural and political contexts may shape online political mobilization experiences were anticipated. Case study evidence was generated from in-depth interviews, textual analysis of organizational self-representation and mobilization in their websites, and the wealth of secondary literature on the politics and dynamics of NGOs, political action, and social movement formation in the Cordillera region³⁸.

³⁸Prominent here are the studies by Hilhorst (2000) on the everyday politics of a Cordillera-based NGO which offered an insightful background on the state-civil society politics, the realities of social movement formation in the Cordillera, and the role of NGOs in democratization and development in the region, as well as by Casambre (2006) which discussed the role of political opportunity structures in the Philippine indigenous social movement.

Locating the purposes of indigenous online activism: making claims in the name of indigeneity

Building reputation and recognition

Both organizations' original motivation for going online is to generate external support from global partners and funders and build new networks with international and local organizations of like-minded interests. During the planning process of having an online space, the organizations thought that having a website would allow them to showcase the organization's causes and campaigns and updates on projects that would communicate a reputation of being credible and reliable indigenous organizations that external actors can build partnerships with. They wanted to optimize the opportunity of having a communicative space and make their information campaign of indigenous struggles to attract local and international support more dynamic. They felt that having a well-updated website with rich content is a gauge for legitimacy and allows them to differentiate themselves from spurious and money-making NGOs, a problem faced by the community of development NGOs in the Philippines (Carino, 2002). The organizations noted that the rich content in their website shows that they are active and at the forefront of the Cordillera people's struggle. Having a website has also allowed them to save resources (i.e. mailing or faxing of reports and updates) and makes it convenient for the partners to check for updates on projects and activities.

The image that the organizations depict online becomes critical when appealing to an external audience. The quality of website content, the level of substantive information, the description of the program and its services, would serve to show some proof of organizational capacity and legitimacy. Information on projects being undertaken, financial or operational reports, membership, resources, and linkages to

other important organizations would also serve as a vignette capturing an organization's capacity or legitimacy (Vedder, 2003, p. 54).

However, the literature on voluntary organizations has problematized this dependence on 'external support' by non-profit organizations and the implications to the local cause. Their commitment for social change and community empowerment may be rivalled by their need to survive as individual institutions as well as to establish themselves as a collective force in civil society (Bebbington, et. al., 2008). For example, some organizations, in an effort to stay alive, may compromise on their vision and institutional mission to accommodate projects that may be inconsistent with the needs of the community or their main advocacies. Further, maintaining web presence is seen as comparable to accreditation processes, as it similarly requires additional resources, staff professionalization or enhanced skills. This drive for professionalism across non-profits may undermine the spirit of voluntarism that the activists who pioneered this field brought with them, as well as the very essence of working for development or social change (Carino, 2002).

Tebtebba and CPA did not find it necessary to hire new staff exclusively for the management of their websites because these organizations already represent the more educated segment of the Cordillera³⁹. Initially, both sites were outsourced, but due to bureaucratic delays they decided to have members undergo some training and manage the website themselves.

While having a website would seem driven only by an accommodation of certain standards of professionalization and reaffirms certain representational processes required of developing country organizations, the groups' motivations for going online is based on the organizations' assessments of the value that online spaces would afford

³⁹ Hilhorst (2000) and Lewis (1992) noted the intellectual slant of CPA's leadership and membership. In Lewis' book, he mentioned that the CPA was actually disadvantaged by the age and education of its representatives as some of the indigenous tribal leaders initially doubted that such group would be prepared to lead a political course (Lewis, 1992, p. 10)

to them. The organizations admitted the reality of the need to constantly attract external support. However, they argue that this clamour for “external support” is less focused on the financial aspect and more on gaining strength through solidarity with indigenous activists and organizations in other parts of the world. As national minorities, the groups emphasized the limited authentic support afforded by government and other local institutions to indigenous causes, making it necessary for them to seek support from and be in solidarity with indigenous communities with similar experiences outside the Philippines. For example, CPA mentioned that because the issues they advance often attack multinational companies or government, which have significant control of local mainstream media, the only way they can be given a platform to communicate their causes and claims that can reach a broader international audience is through their online space. They specifically target an external audience in order to project positions and views alternative to Philippine media or government press releases. Given the magnitude of the claims that they make, the image that they create in the online space as indigenous activist organizations in terms of actual projects implemented or of positions on issues, becomes critical.

The orientation to building solidarity with the international indigenous community also explains the dominant use of English in the websites. While this privileges those whose medium is the English language, CPA explained that indigenous groups in the Cordillera are also not homogenous and belong to different ethno-linguistic groups, and limited resources does not allow them to provide multiple translations. CPA explained that those who have access to the online space in the Cordillera are also the ones capable of reading and writing in English, while most printed materials and local radio programs they maintain are given in the commercial lingua franca of Cordillera, which is *Ilokano*. Tebtebba, on the other hand, is

considering the translation of its website into the languages of its member organizations, although many of its print publications have already been translated.

Over time, the motivations for going online increased when they began accumulating statements, position papers, features, and documentation of projects and activities. They realized that the website is also useful to organizational management by serving as an archive of its statements, position papers, documentaries and digitized publications. At a price the two organizations deemed reasonable (US\$89-US\$95 annual web-hosting fee), they were able to store materials which can be downloaded and used by any member or supporter. The listserves also provided them an archive of discussions and issues brought up by their members that can be retrieved and reviewed. Having an online archive of organizational products and representations is particularly important to the organizations as office movement or disasters have previously resulted in the loss of materials relevant to the organization. Savings in time and resources were noted as prior to having websites, documents and materials would be faxed or sent by post to member organizations whenever needed.

Asserting the struggle, constructing identity

Woven into this reputation building and recognition is the assertion of an indigenous identity. Analysis would show that the use of the indigenous mark is woven into reputation-building and recognition processes aimed at enhancing support networks. Ethnic identity differentiates them and their causes from other civil society organizations. Indigeneity also easily arouses curiosity and attention, particularly because of cultural differences from the mainstream.

Both organizations chronicled the lengthy process of website planning and how members debated on how to best represent the organization's indigenous mark through

the online space. The process of presenting their struggle online aided the organization into clearly articulating “what makes them indigenous” and “how to present themselves and their struggles to the general public”. Their account reflected a process different from simply buying into the hype of having an online space, but rather, it involved a careful rethinking of their indigeneity as they sought to bring their claims in the online medium. Inasmuch as the website ‘represents’ and ‘constructs’ them as a people and as an organization, it has also aided them to recollect from history and from present struggles what elements would constitute this indigeneity, but also what constitutes the indigenous struggle.

CPA members narrated that once, in a meeting, some members criticized why they retained the picture of Cordillera grasslands (*damo-damo*) in the website banner. Those members joked that the website looked a bit too “basic”. At the same time, someone designed their website with a very professional but futuristic design. That design was dismissed by the collective because “It was very geometric and it does not have a trace of being an IP website”. So, I asked what they thought would be an “indigenous organization’s website”. Even CPA’s aspiration of enhancing its website is centred on maintaining its complex indigenous identity well-reflected in the online space:

What we would have wanted is that, once you open our website, you will hear our indigenous music. The tune of *gangsa* (indigenous musical instrument), wow! Then later a lady in *tapis* (indigenous costume) would come out...it would be nice if we can enhance our website but still bring in elements representative of our culture...because that’s how Cordillera is known... or banner song of the Cordillera Peoples Movement. It would have been nice if there is such a song in our website. Same with novels, progressive in content, songs of struggle and protest of the Peoples of Cordillera. (CPA leader, Personal interview, May 2010).

One way of reading the passage above is to see “strategic essentialism” at work, or the abuse of indigenous identity to advance certain objectives. Interviews with the

groups, however, surfaced a genuine desire and value attached to being able to project their identity and history in a way that it could aid the understanding by external actors of their current struggles. The members also highlighted how, by presenting the intersection of indigenous culture and political activism, they sought to address the limitations by which mainstream media representations capture and commodify the essence of indigeneity (i.e. the use of exotic costumes and headdresses and rituals in television soap operas). By presenting difference in identity, culture, and history, they argued, they are able to insist that certain “development interventions” that may seem normal or acceptable to the rest of the country is contrary to certain indigenous rituals and practices. For example, mining or the establishment of dams on indigenous ancestral lands have been strongly opposed by indigenous communities due to rituals and history tied to “ancestral land” in indigenous culture. This indigenous cultural context renders government offers for resettlement and compensation of displacements irrelevant. They also insisted that such “difference” allows them to justify certain claims; for example, advancing a discourse on indigenous peoples rights despite the fact that a Universal Declaration on Human Rights supposedly encompassing indigenous people had already been passed.

My interview with one of the organizations opened with a question by the leader, “why are you interviewing us, these information technology stuff we do not know, don’t you know that IPs are backward?” (translated from Filipino and local dialect). This joke highlights the common stereotype of the indigenous or *katutubo* as backward and left behind by modernity. A member of CPA argued that:

...having a website debunks this belief....So our main objective is to put there the description of the Cordillera, its geography, its resources, its process, its people, the issues, and the struggle of the people. What do we aspire for (to)... (CPA member, Personal communication, May 2010)

In the process of crafting their online spaces, countering stereotypes about indigenous culture as dynamic and not static and of indigenous people as active and not passive actors in society eventually became an important purpose of having an online space. Having a website allowed them to debunk notions about indigenous communities commonly projected in national media and assert that indigenous people are well able to express themselves and their struggles, if given the opportunity.

Connected with this self-construction of indigenous identity online is the dilemma attached to protecting indigenous culture on the one hand and embracing globalizing technologies and modern technological means to express oneself on the other (Landzelius, 2006, pp. 292-295). Maintaining indigenous culture and traditional ways of life while adopting the elements of modernization has been a long-standing debate amongst IP communities. I asked if there had been concerns from amongst its network about being “too globalized” or “modern” as an IP organization because of online media use, to which CPA responded:

...Culture and consciousness, that is developed. It is not possible that whatever culture that has been there 1000 years ago can be preserved because that is not the reality now. What we see is that culture is dynamic. It evolves. As long as it is geared towards the plight of the wider public and it can contribute to the advancement of peoples’ struggle, that is how we position the online space. In the history of CPA there had been debates on that, preservation of culture in its purest form. That is what we call indigenist or localist tendency. We condemn that thinking (CPA leader, Personal interview, May 2010).

Social and political developments in the region could help explain the views of these organizations with regard to indigenous identity. In the late 60s and 70s, the indigenous middle-class students in the Cordillera (the type that comprise the two organizations’ leadership) developed a sense of identity and pride based on competency, position, and professional achievements. This has stemmed from wanting to assert

oneself from decades of minoritization and prejudice as subordinate, backward and inferior peoples from the rest of the Filipinos (Victor, 2008; Olvida, 2010, p. 82).

Mobilizing campaigns and seeking local and international support

Although different in focus, the campaigns and advocacies of both CPA and Tebtebba occupy a prominent space in the websites. In the case of the passing of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* where Tebtebba played a critical role, legitimacy to the cause was obtained by being able to generate a significant number of signatures from indigenous organizations from different parts of the world, which the e-groups allowed them to do with limited funds. Not only were they able to secure support to the declaration but also strengthened ties with global organizations through shared experience. Consequently, these enhanced the legitimacy of the organization as a key actor in the social movement and as driver in realizing a long-standing goal. Tebtebba's listserv also facilitates an exchange about the situation of indigenous communities in its partner network, and enables mobilization of external support, critical when internal country conditions are too hostile to allow them to mobilize internally, such as the case of political harassments or killings believed to involve national governments.

CPA, on the other hand, mobilized online against disappearances and political killings, as some of CPA members have become victims of these "forced disappearances". Their campaign to send letters of condemnation to the government through email and listserves proved useful in gaining external support from both indigenous and non-indigenous local and international communities, and even from citizen journalists and bloggers. CPA notes that being one of the first and largest local

indigenous peoples' alliances in the country, it is important for them to be actively at the mobilization forefront of such issues.

From insights shared by the two organizations, the effort to build credibility within this “system of legitimation” seems to have allowed them to move towards more meaningful work and greater accountability. Vulnerable to losing their name and credibility, they exerted effort to live up to certain standards and became more active in publishing position statements, organizing activities and documenting them, calling for petitions, and monitoring the issues of indigenous people in other parts of the world. Some of the work that they were now able to do, such as mobilizing support for their causes and petitions, they note, was made possible through the online spaces. Tebtebba shared that since the online mobilization work for the indigenous peoples' rights, it has become easier for them to mobilize and organize for succeeding projects. It has also facilitated more partnerships with other indigenous organizations and increased engagements with some states, UN agencies and multilateral agencies.

“Use them, don't let them use us”: Negotiating online mediations

What we want is advancement of society and civilization as long as it will serve our purposes. What I mean is, use them, but don't let them use us” (Indigenous leader, Personal interview, May 2010).

The literature has laid down potential threats and consequences that online media engagement might have for minority groups or indigenous communities. This section will discuss processes by which indigenous groups' deal with the challenges and threats of online mediation.

Negotiating commercialism

One of the issues about going online for indigenous groups is that they can be suffocated by the trappings of commercialism that surround much of the Web. In cyberspace, indigenous struggles and identity representations can be placed side-by-side commercial advertisements that can distort the nature and image of the organizations. CPA, with its radical activist nature and history of fighting “all forms of imperialism and commercialism” (CPA website, 2011) that encroach on indigenous ancestral domain found itself in a dilemma involving such risks. CPA is concerned about having website advertisements which can distort the organization’s staunchly anti-imperialist and anti-capitalism image.

There was a time one of our members suggested to try putting up an online forum. But when we conducted a brain storming session, we looked at that format, we learned that Google will put its ads in the page. Of course we will lose the integrity of our website. So we don’t have it (chat facility) because we do not know who will suddenly advertise in our website. We said, if there are comments or feedback, maybe just email us a feedback note... (CPA member & website administrator, Personal interview, May 2010)

Tebtebba also acknowledged being cautious of website advertisements and avoids calls for donations in its website as it feels this may affect the credibility and image of the organization.

Negotiating content and medium

Hughes and Dallwitz (2007) warned that allowing important cultural material publicly accessible in the web could be unacceptable for indigenous communities wishing to restrict access to local cultural knowledge. Although Tebtebba’s website content is generated from its partners and indigenous communities, the information

group retains editorial control to ensure awareness of ground developments and exercise due diligence on matters of more sensitive nature:

Anything that has to be uploaded in the website, especially if it's related to a specific situation in the community or a specific concern they want to raise, we need their consent. Do you want this? Do you need this? What are the implications if we upload this issue... There is critical information that requires FPIC (free prior and informed consent). The editorial judgment of Tebtebba is needed if putting it online will help or worsen the situation. (Tebtebba Information Officer, Personal Interview, May, 2010).

According to Tebtebba, although publicizing indigenous peoples' struggles in the online space to gain broader support from different parts of the world is generally the objective of the group, obtaining the consent of the affected members and understanding the political context of the affected community is imperative in making decisions about publishing particular stories or petitions. For example, in one situation where a member of their partner organization was abducted, a thorough consultation process was conducted on whether the piece of story should be translated into a public petition posted in the website or e-group. In some cases, they explained, publicizing the story online, may put their partners in greater danger:

Interviewer: What was this case?

It was generally about abduction and killing...So they said that since their government is paranoid about that...they can be put to harm. So there was consideration on our part that FPIC was really needed and it was not put online (Tebtebba Information Officer, Personal Communication, May, 2010).

A Tebtebba member also recalled an instance when community consultation was conducted to determine the appropriateness of posting indigenous knowledge online:

...On making a decision about traditional knowledge, for example, on pest management...if we publish, it can be obtained by anyone and be patented. So to

reconcile those conditions we consult them. Would you allow us to put this online or not? It has to come from the community themselves—what do they want to be published or come out and be considered in the public domain and what should be kept secret or within the community. Usually the communities have protocol already. Which kind of knowledge is for them alone, which ones must be protected, which ones can we bring out... It was very effective (traditional knowledge) and they are still practicing it. So we discussed, do we publish? Is there community approval? But the community said that those are sacred knowledge that should not come out. So we did not publish it. Yes the community has a system for determining what is good and not good for them. This is sacred. There is ritual involved here. Outsiders should not know. We all know it is possible to steal so those knowledge stays in the community (Tebtebba leader, Personal communication, May 2010).

CPA also has similar experiences about having to manage and control what kind of information they share in the online space. As an activist organization, they always assume that their conversations, whether offline or online, are monitored, their phones bugged and website filtered. This is why they exercise caution when deciding whether to discuss sensitive matters online. Matters that are not critical for the public to know are not posted in the website. They shared that since some of their yahoo-based emails may have been hacked and this was their primary medium for exchanging views on issues, they had to invest in a more secure email system. Even the Yahoo e-group of the CPA Core Committee is currently being rethought because of “visitors” posting unwanted comments in this supposedly exclusive group.

Whose voice gets heard online?

It has been a concern that offline issues of material access to technology such as class, access, and ideological divisions, capacity to communicate, and norms of right and wrong, are woven into the dynamics of online media use. This implies that in the context of organizations, the authenticity of representation and voice projected in the online space is suspect as the online space can be restrictive in its use by members and leaders with skills and capacity (Bimber, 2003; Barber, 2003). Tebtebba explained that

it tries not to function “as a mere sounding board but seek(s) to enhance the IP’s capacity to speak, if they see the need”. They offered writing seminars to help their local members to speak and write about their issues and contribute more in producing website content or present their experiences in international fora. However, Tebtebba members admitted that this is an important challenge faced by the team and while they managed to have a few grassroots leaders to write in their own words their sentiments about their conditions, they also battle with having to uproot their members from their daily work in the fields. Because of irregular training and a lack of practice, it becomes difficult for grassroots members to be tapped to contribute actively in the website. Tebtebba members also explained that due to difficulties in expressing themselves in textual form, they are now exploring the more active use of video productions as this allows them to better capture their communities’ perspectives on particular issues that affect them. Tebtebba has an ongoing video production initiative on indigenous communities’ views and understanding on various issues, including the impact of mining and Climate Change to their localities, which has recently been uploaded into their website (www.tebtebba.org).

Managing organizational adoption of technology

The CPA believes that the Internet can bring potential advantages to the organization, provided that it is not abused. One important element of “proper use” a staff of CPA emphasized is making sure that the human connection amongst the organization’s members is not lost and that opportunity for face-to-face meetings is maintained:

...Because the danger there is that it might replace the other more efficient and effective means of communication. For example, if we abuse email, it might

replace the organizational mechanisms where you are supposed to call a face-to-face meeting and make decisions face to face. That is the danger. It is like the connective and human nature is lost and you are like a robot in front of your laptop.

Interviewer: Is it changing the dynamics of the organization?

Not yet, it has not yet reached that, but there is the tendency. Let's just email. Imagine in this floor, we still email each other. Sometimes I will say, let's stop this and talk about this face to face!

Managing the adoption of technology is a critical issue for CPA, which is an alliance of geographically marginalized grassroots indigenous communities in the region. Thus, an important consideration is making sure that members with little to no Internet access are not left out. CPA relies on Quarterly newsletters (*Hapit*) and still distributes them regularly to local partners via mail or messenger. The staff deems that these printed materials are more effective communication tools for their local network because “once the grassroots members receive the reading materials, there is a greater chance that they would be read. But when we email some documents, we are not sure whether they receive them in the first place.” (CPA Officer, Personal communication, May 2010).

CPA explains that the website targets more their external partners because very few members of its internal network have good Internet access. Thus, online communication has to be complemented by the use of short messaging service (SMS) via mobile phone, a pervasive technology even in rural Philippines. When the office communicates statements through email, they send their local partners SMS messages to retrieve the email message from the nearest Internet cafe. For those members who have to travel kilometres to access the Internet, CPA sends messengers by bus to deliver important documents or communicate important messages. Ordinary memos and publications are still sent by mail or fax and critical issues are discussed face to face.

Chapter conclusion: Hidden transcripts of indigenous online activism

The case studies find that online political mobilization for indigenous activists constitutes a sustained balancing act between accommodation and resistance. The groups began to use online media primarily to build credibility through professionalization, a norm enforced by international partners and embedded in the dynamics of survival and quest for sustainability typical of developing country NGOs. Yet this online image-building, the groups argue, allows them to present perspectives and issues alternative to those offered by mainstream media, and to reach a broader audience which they could not previously reach. This image-building also functions to challenge dominant stereotypes of indigenous communities as “backward and passive”, and of indigenous culture as “static” or “archaic”. They emphasized the importance of highlighting ethnic identity in differentiating themselves in the online space not as a ‘strategic essentialism’ as others fear, but because it is by highlighting such difference that they contextualize the cultural and historical basis of their political claims.

While the two groups initially treated the Internet like other technologies available to them—a tool to articulate an indigenous voice, the use of online technology for these indigenous activists entailed a complex negotiation of opportunities and challenges on the part of the users, to the extent that the Internet in itself is considered as “an arena of struggle”. Symbolic forms and creative techniques are engaged within an interesting negotiation of production and distribution processes that take advantage of technology while accentuating indigenous identity and challenging the forces that undermine indigenous culture and knowledge. As they resist the usual forces that undermine indigenous people’s rights, they also artfully and covertly resist state surveillance, technological abuses, commercialization, “loss of human touch”, patented local knowledge, and other online dangers to their community.

As organizations representing and working with indigenous communities, which primarily struggle for the protection of their traditional cultures, both organizations are careful about their online uses, concerned that as they endeavor with active Internet use they are not undermining their own communities or their image as indigenous organizations. CPA seemed significantly concerned that its identity as an activist IP organization is well-reflected in its online space. They ensure that their websites are advertisement free. The organizations also exert an effort to maintain human interaction despite the use of technology to ensure that members with no Internet access are not left out of the struggle. They balance sophistication of site versus ease of access by members with slow connection. They also implemented membership and access controls. They sacrificed some losses such as not having a forum in the website and attractive web content such as indigenous knowledge in order to protect it from being used by commercial interests.

These can be seen as “hidden transcripts”, to borrow from Scott, because while the online spaces carry public presentations of indigenous articulations, an active appropriation and negotiation of technology use takes place behind the stage. Through the eyes of observers, indigenous groups are swept into the hype of technological development and externally imposed norms of professionalization. At the backstage, indigenous groups are rational actors carefully planning and thinking through their online mediations to negotiate technological, state, or capitalist controls. Credibility – building would seem too donor or externally – driven, but it was shown to be useful for these issue entrepreneurs who build moments of contestation through the use of basic resources, ideas, and commitment to their cause. Through their online spaces they widen the reach of issues, organize petitions and campaigns, and stabilize existing support networks and expand them. As these are small, yet dedicated organizations, they alter the terms of public debate by mobilizing a democratic public to support indigenous

causes.

These organizations' everyday online presence would seem plain and mundane for analysis, but by uncovering these experiences, we see the democratic relevance of the Internet surfacing through the ways organizations working for social justice are able to not only work their way through the Internet, but localize it. These experiences debunk the notion that individuals are helpless with the force of technology, state controls and capitalist hegemony, a finding alluding to Feenberg's (2002, 2009a, 2009b) concept of 'democratic rationalization of technology'. By looking at the practice of actual participants, we find that users can be rational actors able to weigh the dangers and benefits of online spaces, challenge harmful consequences and barriers to communication, and work towards what they think is beneficial to them and their cause. These artful forms of resistance can serve as the backbone for organizing larger scale mass mobilizations that can advance the causes of their communities. These groups' awareness of the dangers of going online (e.g. hacking by outsiders into their system and loss of secret/ancestral knowledge) as well as internal processes to assess risks and benefits, constitute an important form of resistance even as they use the same platform for communicating their resistance to their own marginalization. Further, the need to establish credibility and image that comes with having a website also drove the organizations into more action. This is manifested by rethinking the self-representation of its identity and causes, archiving of indigenous statements, petitions, and productions, living up to proclaimed standards, and showing proof of achievements from the ground. More activities were also generated from new partnerships and solidarity established with the external community.

Uncovering the actual experiences of spontaneous creativity allows a rethinking of such forms of technology appropriation by indigenous activist groups must be taken as a source of significant innovation of technology use. A multitude of social contexts

seem to be aligned for a democratic appropriation of technology to take place. In the case of these indigenous groups, it is the commitment to promote and protect indigenous identity, rights and knowledge, progressive yet cautionary thinking of its leaders of technology's benefits and dangers, skills combined with deep indigenous activist roots, and fight for their belief and future which seem to determine the emergent structures.

Chapter 4

Multiple Transcripts as Political Strategy: Online Media and the Infrapolitics of the Moro Liberation Movement in the Philippines⁴⁰

The Muslims are a minority in Christian-dominated Philippines and decades of impasse in entitlement debates and superficial power sharing have pushed them to demand self-determination leading to armed uprising and state repression since 1969 (Quimpo, 2001: 275-76; Majul, 1999; Abinales, 2000; Soriano, 2006). The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) is considered the biggest organization leading the Moro struggle for self-determination in the Philippines. Besides being a major party in the peace negotiations, the MILF is estimated to be the biggest armed group in the country (Coronel-Ferrer, 2011). Over the years they have developed a wide set of internet-based propaganda strategies including online narratives, discursive spaces, and productions in websites, blogs, and social networking sites.

This chapter explores what constitutes agency in a technological discourse and what it means to “creatively appropriate” technology, based on lived experiences of a Moro revolutionary organization, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), in their engagement of online media for political mobilization. Building on Scott’s notion of *infrapolitics* (1990) and Feenberg’s (1999, 2002, 2009a, 2009b) *democratic rationalization of technology*, this Chapter develops the concept of *divergent transcripts* as a strategic appropriation of technology. Enabled by the multiple platforms and characteristics of online media, divergent transcripts refer to the use of multiple

⁴⁰ Some of the materials from this chapter have been used in the paper, Soriano, C.R. & Sreekumar, T.T. (in press). Multiple Transcripts as Political Strategy: Social Media and Conflicting Identities of the Moro Liberation Movement in the Philippines. *Media, Culture and Society*.

subjectivities and divergent narratives that target multiple audiences. These multiple divergent transcripts allow activist groups to surface new forms of political discourse, alter the nature of debate among a minority group, the state and the international community, and challenge national limits and boundaries. Using the framework of democratic rationalization, the chapter probes what constitutes minority activist agency within a technological discourse and examines how minority culture and history of grievances are articulated into political discourse and guide the formation of agency.

Infrapolitics and multiple subjectivities

Scott's (1990) important innovation in the analysis of the agency of subordinated groups is the distinction among "public transcripts" (open interactions and presentations of the subordinated), "hidden' transcripts" (discourse that takes place offstage), and "infrapolitics" (a coded version of hidden transcripts that takes place in the public view). Extending the discussion on Scott in Chapter 1, hidden transcripts survives only to the extent that it is "practiced, articulated, enacted, and disseminated" through disguised discourse or in sites sequestered from the surveillance of the dominant group members. Denied open public expression, the hidden transcript must insinuate itself in the public forum through a politics of disguise and anonymity, which Scott calls *infrapolitics*. According to Scott (1990), infrapolitics, or "resistance that dare not speak its own name", "represents the politics of disguise and concealment that takes place in the public view, but is designed to have double (or ambiguous) meaning or to shield the identity of the actors" (Scott, 1990, p. 19). Infrapolitics include strategies designed to disguise political message, the messenger, or both. Political subversion is disguised through linguistic strategies such as rumour and gossip, folktales, jokes, poetry, songs, codes, euphemisms, metaphor, dialects and other linguistic treats, as well as behavioural

strategies such as deception, indirection, stalling, poaching, tax evasion, dreams of revenge, carnival masquerade, or offstage parody.

Infrapolitics and the hidden transcripts are designed to be invisible to the uninformed, or to be ambiguous, innocuous, or indirect as to be capable of multiple interpretations, particularly interpretations that appear to support the hegemony of the public transcript. Although conducted and articulated within public view, the meaning of this political discourse or behaviour is discernible only to those with good knowledge of the folk culture of the subordinate group.

What permits subordinated groups to undercut the authorized cultural norms is the fact that cultural expression, by virtue of its polyvalent symbolism and metaphor, lends itself to disguise. By subtle uses of codes one can insinuate into a ritual a pattern of dress, song, a story, meanings that are accessible to one intended audience and opaque to another audience the actors wish to exclude (Scott, 1990, p. 158)

Scott further explains that one of the most effective and common ways subordinates may express resistance is by embedding it within the larger contexts of symbolic compliance (p. 166). Symbolic compliance is key to infrapolitics because although members of the dominant groups may be unable to interpret the behaviour as subordinates, they do suspect seditious content, and for this reason they attempt to control the physical locations and discursive spaces of the subordinates. Scott argues that “the social and discursive spaces where the hidden transcripts grow are themselves an achievement of resistance; they are won and defended in the teeth of power” (p. 119). Through the concept of infrapolitics, Scott highlights the importance of probing deeply about people’s ability to control what can be publicly spoken of (and what to be kept hidden), people’s capacity for multiple or concealed representations (infrapolitics), or how they creatively plan small ways of lifting themselves from subordination or challenging the dominant.

The Muslim minority are able to communicate some of their opposition publicly through printed publications, local radio, and peace negotiations with government and international actors. However, they still operate in hostile environments where their resistance can be met with military retaliation or in the context of the virtual space, censorship and antagonism of their claims. What this chapter explores, in bringing Scott's notion of infrapolitics, is not only the dissent articulated in the online space, but the Muslim minority group's experience in negotiating the use of Internet technology on the one hand, and the adaptive strategic behaviour in determining how (and how not) to represent themselves and their struggle in a public online space, on the other. I pay particular attention to the Muslim group's creative uses of online media for launching multiple transcripts that target diverse audiences, representing an interesting movement from ownership and denial, diplomacy and restiveness.

The online medium caters to information and symbolic content that can be converted rapidly and with relative ease into different forms. It offers the flexibility in projecting content and transmission, allowing users to simultaneously project multiple messages and representations with fleeting attributions or ownership. Turkle (1997, p. 72) has observed how individuals in the Internet recast their identity in terms of multiple windows and parallel lives, and encouraged the thinking in terms of multiplicity and flexibility of people's engagement with the online space. The multiple hybrid formats and activities possible online, and the flexibility in authenticity and ownership enables multiple simultaneous representations and articulations. I glean from this notion of multiple subjectivity in the virtual space, not just a reflection or expression of multiple identities, but as an articulation and strategic appropriation of technology for movements of dissent to achieve political goals.

Sources of Data

In-depth interviews with MILF leaders and members as well as social activists and historians closely related to the movement were conducted to explore the group's purposes and meaning-making of online political mobilization, situated within the historical roots of the struggle and aspirations of the Moros. Follow-up interviews were conducted online and by telephone. Ethnographic analysis of the organization's websites and social networking sites (two Facebook sites) from March 2010 to June 2011 were conducted to analyze actual uses of online spaces for political mobilization, engagement of symbolic forms, and dynamics of interactions. Secondary data such as website statistics on site visitors and other internal documents and publications shared by the organization were used. Archived documents, historical materials relating to the Moro struggle, and interviews with Moro historians were also utilized. This use of multiple resources and sites of the media engagement and meaning-making was critical in surfacing multiple representations and artful strategies being engaged by the Moros. A detailed description of case selection has been provided in Chapter 1.

The Moro people's struggle for self-determination

The Moro people's struggle is historical, dynamic and multi-dimensional, and it has multiple roots and consequences (Abinales, 2000; Majul, 1999; San Juan, 2006; Tuminez, 2008). At the same time, it can be differentiated, as some seek full assimilation (*Muslim Filipinos*), while others' ultimate goal is a separate state (*Bangsamoro*). The territorial and economic roots of the Moro grievances are intertwined with their minoritization in Mindanao, which began during Spanish colonization, continued under American rule, and was further intensified in an

independent, Christian-dominated Philippines (Tuminez, 2008, p. 2; San Juan, 2007). As a capital in production, the Moros resent the failure to recognize their entitlement to land (Mindanao) and livelihood resources, which they lost through the transmigration of Christians in Mindanao and the establishment of multinational companies in the region. This resettlement policy minoritized the Muslims in the region, which they formerly dominated with a well-functioning state, the *sultanate*. The Muslims were reduced from about 75% of Mindanao's population in the 1900s to 25% in the late 1960s (Rodil, 2004; Quimpo, 2001: 274; Gutierrez & Borrás, 2004). The influx of non-Moro farming migrants and the framework of eminent domain and private property implemented during colonization led to the alienation of the communal Moro land system and the alteration of their indigenous land-use practices (Majul, 1999). Legal discrimination on the size of private landholdings that was implemented in favor of Christians was also a strong source of grievance by the Moros (Tuminez, 2008, p. 4; Gutierrez & Borrás, 2004).

Aside from dispossession of land and statistical minoritization in Mindanao, the situation of resentment against the Philippine state is caused by the relative poverty of the Muslim dominated provinces vis-a-vis other provinces in the country. The five provinces with the highest concentration of Muslims have consistently occupied the lowest Human Development and Human Poverty (HDI) rankings from 1997 to 2009 (PHDN, 2008, pp.111-116; 2005, pp. 101-109; Gutierrez & Borrás, 2006). These Moro areas, however, are considered as the country's food basket and are rich in arable land, marine life, and mineral deposits, including oil and gas (Tuminez, 2008). Decades of sporadic clashes between the rebel groups and the government military have devastated the Moro-dominated communities, made health and living conditions fragile, and discouraged infrastructure investments, including telecommunications infrastructure. Further, there remains widespread mass media representation of the Muslims as

inherently violent and roguish. Wastage of scarce resources is blamed on Moro resistance as the war in Mindanao is perceived to siphon off large amounts of funds from national development. The role of Philippine mass media in fuelling the conflict through maligned and biased representations has been noted in several studies (Abinales, 2000, 2008; Jubair, 1999, 2007; McKenna, 1998; Soriano, 2006).

When the Philippines gained independence in 1946, most Muslims could not identify themselves with the new Republic, whose laws were derived from Western and Christian values and whose public school was Americanized and alien to Islamic tradition (Quimpo, 2001, p. 274). For the Moros, the spread of an American educational system in the country, including the Muslim-dominated provinces, served as an ideological apparatus in challenging the persistence of the Moro identity:

What the Filipinos did was like what other colonizer-nations did. They launched a program that will succeed in dampening the Moro identity and struggle. They established an educational system that aims to integrate the Moros into the mainstream ideologically. For example, we were given textbooks of pictures of the Filipinos, Pepe and Pilar⁴¹. That's the ideological move, so much so that such kind of educational system is effective too that the Moro, when he or she came to school, he or she was 100% Moro, but after many years of going to school, 10-20 years, he is already half Filipino, half Moro. Now you can see Moro professionals who consider themselves as true blue Filipinos, even the women. Some Moros would hide their Moro identity, because the textbooks say that Moros are pirates, even worse now, the Moros are terrorists. (MILF Leader, Personal communication, May 2010, some words translated from Filipino)

Government reforms and modernization schemes premised on the country's dependency on foreign investment and multinational corporations have worsened the plight of the Moros (San Juan, 2006). Over half a century of politico-economic dispossession and cultural discrimination of the Moro people occurred simultaneously with the construction of a neo-colonial state and a backward, dependent economy. From 1946 to the present, the general social condition of the Moros has deteriorated, with

⁴¹ 'Pepe' and 'Pilar' are Christian names of Filipino children used in nursery rhymes.

their lands, labor-power, and natural resources lost to settlers, bureaucrats, military occupiers, and foreign corporations (Stauffer, 1981; Silva, 1978; Third World Studies, 1979). Comprising the most impoverished ethnic group in the whole country, the average income of roughly 7.5 million Moros is only a fifth of the national average. Over half a million refugees, and about 120,000 dead (preponderantly Moro women, children, and elderly), have resulted from the continuous fighting between Moro guerrillas and government forces since the 1970s (San Juan, 2006).

Luwaran.com: MILF Online

The MILF set up its first website, Luwaran.com in 1998. According to its leaders, the website was built primarily to reach out to an external, international audience, provide an alternative platform to communicate the real history of marginalization of the Moros, and solicit support that will help strengthen its capacity and realize its goals. The MILF maintains four websites, (i) www.luwaran.com; (ii) www.luwaran.net, its mirror website; (iii) an Arabic Luwaran, <http://www.luwaran.net/arabic/>, and (iv) The Moro Chronicles, <http://www.tmchronicles.com/>. These three other websites all have direct links from the Home Page of the main website, luwaran.com.

All four websites are self-managed by the MILF with the help of about seven members based in Mindanao and overseas. The MILF sent its members for website management training in the Middle East, some of whom are now based in Saudi Arabia (MILF Web team, personal communication, May 2010). The Web team shared system generated reports about its website readership through website analytics, which implies that the organization conducts active monitoring of the visitors of their online spaces. For the month of April 2010, Luwaran.com received 2,018,213 hits and 67,336 total

visits. It gets an average of about 2,100 visits daily, and in my log of visits to the website Luwaran, it would always have more than 50 guests online at any time.

Asserting a Moro identity

The nation remains as the primary context for everyday lives and imaginations of most people. The nation and its citizens is a potent frame of reference and a common assumption is that citizens within nations recognize one national identity. Connected to the Moro's assertion of its struggle for the right to self-determination is the articulation of a Moro identity distinct from that of the Filipinos. The MILF reported that they devoted a significant amount of time into crafting a strategy to emphasize this assertion in the website because of its centrality to the Bangsamoro struggle. Crucial in the internationalization of the Bangsamoro struggle is defining a Moro identity distinct from the rest of the Filipinos:

Luwaran was formed so that it can help achieve the aims of the Bangsamoro struggle. To do this, there are many things to be done: The international community needs to know that there are people in the South of the Philippines that have a different nationality. It is also important for the people of Mindanao to know that they are Bangsamoro. So you have people of Mindanao, that is us; and the people in Mindanao, the Christian settlers (MILF leader, Personal communication, May, 2010).

This implies assertion of the difference, first at the national state level in terms of nationality; and at an individual and collective level, in terms of identity. To make the distinction, the Moros emphasize the difference between “people in Mindanao” and the “people of Mindanao”. The MILF explained that it is an important goal for the organization to get others, as well as their own Bangsamoro people living in Mindanao or in other areas, recognize this distinction as it provides the basis to their claims for the

right to govern themselves. Aside from the website, they conduct educational missions in the various municipalities and villages under the MILF's tutelage to clarify this distinction.

...We refused to be assimilated. We refused to be integrated because we have our own identity...Now, I believe we are successful. We already have victory that cannot be lost. That is the international community's acceptance that we are native inhabitants of Mindanao, that our identity is separate and that we have a distinct identity of being a Bangsamoro people, different from the Filipinos (MILF leader, Personal communication, May, 2010)..

This assertion is similar to the indigenous groups' aim of asserting a distinct indigenous identity, which establishes the foundation for the claims that they make in terms of indigenous people's rights and protection of their ancestral lands. Like indigenous groups, the MILF narrated how they made sure that this distinct identity of the indigenous groups is reflected in their website, not as a way of "objectifying their culture" but to help others better understand the cultural and historical bases for their claims to uniqueness. This is because in Philippine discourses, the Moros are considered as Filipinos despite the prejudice that they receive as minorities. In fact, this recognition of "difference" in identity may exist, but commonly for the purpose of casting Muslims in a negative light (e.g. Muslims as violent, or Muslims as robbers), although not necessarily as separate citizens. Further, this "othering" of Muslims as dangerous and violent serves the state's motives of garnering public support to invest important resources in an armed continent to control this "disruptive" group. But, on the other hand, the state classifies them as Filipinos, which allows it to assert a claim over them as citizens and over their ancestral land, with all its rich resources.

The Moros have a keen sense of how their religion and culture have become an intimate part of their ethnic identity. They are aware of themselves as an historic people with a long independence and a history that has run a course different from those who fell under Spanish control and adopted Catholicism. The historical antagonism between

Muslims and Christians, also historically nurtured by the Spanish church, has not yet been fully eliminated in the country. The refusal to recognize Muslims as a people having a separate culture, different religion, and cherished moral values for which they are willing to fight also underlies the Muslim restiveness. At this stage in their social and political development, Muslims as a people now find themselves demanding a bigger role in determining their future. With the use of online media, they are in a better position to defend what they consider their legitimate rights and patrimony.

The focus given by the MILF in obtaining the international community's understanding and support of their struggle is salient in the above quotes. The MILF considers as a benchmark of success the assumption that "this distinction is being recognized by the international community", regardless of whether the international community is prepared to challenge Philippine national sovereignty.

Transcripts and Narratives

Luwaran is a Maguindanaoan⁴² term for 'Code of Laws'. When the MILF planned the website, they wanted a name that will conceal their ownership of the website to avoid security attacks while communicating the struggle to a broader audience. The term *luwaran* was deemed appropriate, because it is symbolic for the Moros and cannot be easily construed as an MILF-owned website. Met initially with ambivalence of the benefits and risks, the group began with an apprehensive outlook about the full use of the Internet to communicate the struggle. However, as it gained more prominence in the mid-2000s as the organization leading the Moro struggle (Coronel-Ferrer, 2011), the website began to be used as the official communication platform for publicizing the struggle and reaching out to a broader international

⁴² Maguindanaon is one of the Moro ethnic groups in Mindanao.

audience. Their online spaces, according to MILF leaders, now serve as the MILF's central media outlet for self-representation and seek to draw the attention of mainstream media. Luwaran.com has emerged as the most prominent online space communicating the Moro struggle and is being followed as a source of news content by local and foreign organizations, including Moro historians, bloggers and the mainstream media (M. Macarambon; A. Mawalil; R. Rodil & J. Abbas, personal communication, April-May, 2010 & June-August, 2011).

Luwaran.com was originally hosted in a server located in Mindanao, but security attacks compelled the organization to invest in a secured server based elsewhere. Security has been a major issue in the virtual front. They suspect that the attacks were not a result of random hacking but may be the work of 'enemies' because in several instances, the site did not simply disappear but was vandalized, with website content replaced by pictures of pigs, a known *haram* (forbidden) in Islamic culture (MILF Web Team, personal communication, May 2010). A chat box placed in the website was filled daily with spam and derogatory remarks about Muslims, which later compelled them to remove the feature as it was used by enemies to malign them in their own space.

Based on a study on Internet surveillance (Magno, 2009), Philippine national security agencies claim that the Internet is open, and there is no intervention to censor or filter cyberspace. However, for strategic reasons, it is to the interest of the military to keep the Internet open because it is through these same technologies they can monitor the so-called enemies of the state (Magno, 2009). This insight is supported by data gathered from the Open Net Initiative, which reports that there is minimal to no Internet filtering conducted in the Philippines (Open Net Initiative, 2009). Nonetheless, minimal filtering does not mean that the information or strategy exchanged online by the

revolutionary organizations are not observed by the government military, and used for counter-intelligence operations.

Since 2002, hosting of the MILF websites was transferred to a facility based in the United States. This security investment was deemed “extremely expensive”, ‘but worth the money’ because it allowed the hosting of multiple websites with “practically no attacks” (MILF Web Team, personal communication, May 2010). As the server can host four websites, this encouraged them to open the additional websites mentioned above.

Engagement and estrangement

When the MILF started negotiations with the government formally in 1997, it framed its claims on the basis of an independent Islamic state (*Bangsamoro*) marked by political and economic self-reliance and self- governance under Islamic ways of life. Therefore, the current claims to right to self-determination on the basis of ‘ancestral domain’, which is a more contemporary concept developed out of the indigenous people’s rights movement, is a major departure from its earlier claims, especially its willingness to be subsumed under the Filipino nation as a “substate” (MILF Leader, Personal communication, May, 2010) ⁴³. While the website reports the peace negotiations with government and its shifting stance in its claims, a slogan in the Luwaran website also expresses its original aim. Animated to attract attention, the slogan reads as, “Moro is a Nation. No to Integration. No to Unitary State. Uphold moro right to self-determination” (See Figure 4.1). This contradicts the position of political conciliation that the MILF has taken in the November 2011 peace negotiations, which is essentially a move towards integration and not an independent state. Interestingly, this

⁴³ See also <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/36947/aquino-milf-chief-talk-peace-in-tokyo>

slogan used to be placed at the Homepage, but is now embedded in the linked pages. The retention of the slogan, despite shifts in actual claims during political negotiations, highlights the organization's ultimate aim, which is to establish a state independent from the Philippine government. The possibility of presenting divergent messages is possible by embedding multiple articulations within the website.

Figure 4.1. "Moro is a Nation".



Source: www.luwaran.com

One of its websites, The Moro Chronicles (TMC), is laid out as an online magazine and is not explicitly identified as belonging to the MILF. Pictures of past and current leaders of the organization, as well as the MILF slogan and logos which figure prominently in luwaran.com and luwaran.net, are not present in TMC. And yet, it contains content very similar to that of Luwaran, organized according to themes (e.g. Editorial, Columns, Peace Agreements, Articles, Documents). Identifying marks, such as "About Us", photos of previous organizational leaders, and members' publications are embedded inside the postings, rather than taking prominent spots in the Homepage, as in the official Luwaran website. Publications on the Bangsamoro struggle by its

leaders are presented under “History”, and provide the audience a good background on the historical roots of the struggle. A link at the bottom leads the reader to the Luwaran English and Arabic websites⁴⁴.

This rationale of masking the Moro revolutionary identity from some of its online spaces seems consistent with the way the MILF taps non-Moros to write for the website, arguing that “when Moros speak for themselves, it may appear as propaganda. But when non-Moros speak for the struggle, they tend to be more credible” (MILF leader, personal communication, May 22, 2010)⁴⁵. Although this may be seen as an accommodation into the norms and standards imposed by the non-Moros, this can also be seen as a strategy to establish credibility and gain wider understanding from the non-Moro community. These strategies are also related to non-government organizations and research institutions affiliated with the MILF in concealed ways (MILF leader, Personal communication, 22 May 2010).

The Moro strategy can be construed figuratively as that of a “*Marrano’s*”. Marranos were former Jews from Spain and Portugal who converted to Christianity under coercion (Yovel, 2009: ix). Coined as ‘the other within’, they live under a superficial mask of Christianity to cover their faithful Jewish religious practice in the backstage. While such “dual identities” and “existential self-deception” were considered illicit and punished by the Inquisition at that time, such identities are “a necessary form of human existence, which deserves recognition as a basic form of freedom” (Yovel, 2009: xii). In *Aporias*, Derrida (1993: 79-81) referred to the Marranos as “that which lives without having a name... anyone who remains faithful to a secret... in the very place where he stays without saying no but without identifying himself as belonging.”

⁴⁴ Many other Mindanao-based news organizations and blogs carry links to the MILF website, Luwaran.

⁴⁵ For example, a known non-Moro journalist, Patricio Diaz, writes about the MILF and the Bangsamoro struggle and is also featured as regular guest writer in the Luwaran website (http://www.luwaran.com/home/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=54&Itemid=541)

Concealment of identity is engaged by the MILF not because revealing its organizational ownership of such spaces and institutions would threaten their existence. Unlike the Marrano, the Moros are not coerced to convert or assimilate to the mainstream. Given the hegemony of overarching non-Moro cultural norms in the larger Philippine society, the strategy of removing Moro identifiers from some of the online spaces and institutions, along with the effort to invite non-Moros to speak for the struggle appears to be based on MILF's experience that "being non-Moro" tends to enhance credibility for and acceptability of the pro-Moro views and positions that some non-Moros prominently uphold. In practice, the MILF's strategy to mask the distinctiveness of Moro presence in some of their online spaces and initiatives looks strikingly similar to the process of mediating a Marrano identity, with its cautious emphasis on the concealment of Moro identifiers, leading, in part, to a symbolic compliance to the dominant norms and concerns of the cultural majority.

The MILF's Luwaran website banner carries the photographs of its past and present leaders to inspire feelings of support from the broader Islamic community of supporters and chronicle the long history of its struggle (Figure 4.2). But the MILF also shared that it does not publish the photographs of all its leaders in the website:

For example, the photograph of Salamat Hashim, our deceased former leader. It is about symbolism, the continuity of what the Chairman has started. And also mysticism. In the sense that we do not expose all of our leaders. If you will look at the photographs on top of the banner, those who(m) we already make accessible to the media are there, but there are others who are not exposed. Because although we are engaged in the peace process, which is an open engagement, at the same time we also engage in underground operation. Meaning not all of our leaders can be exposed...so we cannot put all of our eggs in one basket, otherwise, all of them may break...the MILF has that kind of sophistication, which is still a part of the struggle. That more and more people would understand the dynamics, the nuances, of the struggle. Its part of the learning process and struggle for us also. (MILF Web Team, Personal communication, some sentences translated from Filipino & local dialect, May 2010).

An MILF leader explained that this is an important strategy because while they are engaged in the peace process, which is an open engagement, they also conduct underground operations in the armed struggle with the government. In this sense, identifying all their leaders may be risky for their military operations in times of armed conflict. This also implies that despite the expectations that they can seal a workable peace agreement with the government, they continually suspect a movement towards war.

Figure 4.2. “History of MILF leadership”. MILF Luwaran’s banner



Source: www.luwaran.com

Quotes from its deceased leader, Hashim Salamat, are also used in the website to enliven the sentiment of other Muslim supporters. According to the historians interviewed for this case, Salamat is a well-respected leader of the Moro community and a key actor in the internationalization of the Bangsamoro struggle (Pentaliday, A., Rodil, R., Personal communication, May 201 & Oct 2011). Thus, the use of his writings is a strategic move of the MILF Web Team to symbolically elicit both local and international support.

Strategic uses of websites and Facebook

The websites show that the Muslim minority's use of online spaces is intended to internationalize the struggle and draw foreign support, veer away from suspected linkages to terrorism, and showcase its participation in the peace negotiations. This is with the expectation that internationalization will make their claims more audible and legitimate, bolster the struggle, and exert greater pressure to receive more serious attention from important Philippine and international bodies, while also building financial resources. To reach its grassroots members, offline communication and mobilization strategies, which have been the pervasive strategy for the group, are the norm.

During the first phase of website reviews conducted in January to May, 2010, a banner carrying, "No to Terrorism! This website support(s) Peace Process in Mindanao, Philippines" was observed at the bottom of the website's Home page (See Figure 4.2). The MILF Web Team explained that as the international community rejects terrorism, there is a need to ensure that their organization reassures visitors to the website that the MILF is not a terrorist organization. The emphasis on their participation in the peace process despite ten years of failed negotiations, as highlighted in the banner, is important as the peace process is overseen by international actors and monitored by an International Monitoring Team (IMT) composed of non-government institutions in Asia and in the European Union. Most mainstream discourses in the Philippines, tend to show Moro rebels as having a homogeneous identity refusing to differentiate the MILF from the militant separatist group Abu Sayyaf⁴⁶. The website, arguably, attempts to correct the mistaken perception that all Islamic revolutionary groups, including the

⁴⁶ The Abu Sayyaf, whose members draw from the two major Muslim groups (MNLF and MILF), was founded on fundamentalist Islamic principles and committed to an independent Islamic state encompassing 13 provinces, the historic Moro homeland. The Abu Sayyaf has been heavily involved in several random bombings and sensational kidnappings, including terrorizing civilian communities (San Juan, 2006)

MILF, are terrorist organizations. The MILF conducts meetings with international organizations and posts documentation and photographs of these meetings in the website. They note that if they were considered terrorists, international parties would not agree to meet them.

With the prodding of its younger members, the MILF began to take on social networking. It runs two active Facebook Pages, *Luwaran Marshland* and *Luwaran*⁴⁷, and a Twitter and MySpace page, which as of July 2011, have no content. According to the Web Team, being on Facebook is an advantage because they are able to see the opinion of younger members of the organization, “without having to answer for it”. They also argue that “this allows us to present the organization “soft and hard”, and explained that while they are often projected as violent, backward, and terrorist, they can also project themselves as “humans”, modern, and capable of articulating their struggle both in diplomatic and informal ways (MILF Web team, personal communication, May 2010).

Figure 4.2. “No to Terrorism”.



Source: www.luwaran.com⁴⁸

⁴⁷ The MILF has two Facebook pages: Luwaran <https://www.facebook.com/pages/luwarancom/390099909273> and Luwaran Marshland <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100000873888025>. Luwaran Marshland functions as an official sounding board and provides links to articles and documents available in the website. Luwaran is a more interactive space where members and antagonists debate. (Review of Facebook pages, Mar 2010-July 2011)

⁴⁸ Snapshot taken on May, 2010 from www.luwaran.com. This banner is no longer visible in the website and the bottom banner is now replaced with photos of former MILF participating in the International Monitoring Team (IMT)

The website is used strategically to chronicle their version of history of the Moro struggle, present a detailed account of the Moro's political ideology, differentiate itself from terrorist organizations and assert their unique identity from 'Filipinos'. This assertion of "a unique Moro identity that is not Filipino and not terrorist" is crucial as it forms the fundamental basis of the Moro struggle for self-determination and self-governance. The website also allows the group to emphasize its diplomatic position by highlighting its participation in peace talks and challenging predominant prejudices. The same group's Facebook page (linked to its official website), *Luwaran*, however, presents a completely different picture. Run by those claiming to be the "youth leaders and members of the organization", it openly showcases hatred of Muslim youth against the government, the military, and the Christian settler community in Mindanao; and openly advocates an armed struggle arising from frustration over decades of failed peace negotiations. These so-called "youth member-activists" post pictures of drones and missiles on a regular basis, and write about the need to "advance the group's technological capability" in arms and weaponry to move the struggle forward. Such posts obtain reinforcement through the Facebook support system of "like", presenting an image of an articulation that is supported by the community of sympathizers.

While this Facebook page began as a sounding board of the MILF website, it has evolved into a space for heated argumentation and debate amongst participants. Some of the debates directly contradict the contents of the *Luwaran* website and some of the diplomatic positions advocated by the MILF in their website. For example, where the website highlights its participation in the peace process and its 'non-terrorist' stance, several postings in the Facebook page reflect frustration over the peace process, imploring the leadership to stop the peace talks and move on to war:

We are calling the MILF leaders to please...give us a chance, STOP PEACE TALKS with the Philippine government (Walid Ilajan, Facebook posting, 24 November 2010, 2:03am)

We must stop the peace talks with enemy. We should go to war, 12 year of peace process is a wasting time. Let us try it without peace talks, we will wage guerrilla warfare, hit and run attack, destroy all enemy power resources... (Mars Basco, Facebook posting, translated from Filipino, 7 November, 2010, 7:14pm, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/luwarancom/390099909273>)

Interestingly, such calls for dropping peace negotiations and to move towards an armed struggle are accompanied by street mass actions and protests in Mindanao organized by Moro youth and civil society organizations (IRINAsia, Feb 2011). A collection of posts from the *Luwaran* Facebook page from March 2010 (e when the Facebook page was started) until July 2011 shows that the online space is being used to mobilize the Moros, express anger over the military and Philippine government's actions and frustration over the MILF leadership and internal conflicts. Several of these posts also express hate towards the Christian settlers in Mindanao:

Fellow young mujahideen, our ultimate targets must be the settlers who still occupying our lands in Mindanao. If we only attack the military camps, there is little impact. .. but if we attack the settlers, we burn and massacre, this will fast track the negotiations between the Philippines and Bangsamoro (Mars Basco, Facebook posting, 13 July 2011, translated from a mix of English-Filipino-Visayan)

In turn, these are also counter-attacked by those who express severe prejudices towards the Moros. The messages seek to spread hatred and violence and provoke the members to break civil norms without respect for humanitarian conventions. The posts also project "a method of combat in which random or symbolic victims serve as (an) instrumental *target(s) of violence*", which can be classified as a terrorist strategy (Schmid & Jongman, 1988, p.1).

Throughout the Facebook page, some members have also suspected that these postings, as well as ‘Likes’ came from the same person or group. Such posts ignite an exchange of violent threats, as those claiming to be anti-Moros would also retaliate with expletives. As a result, members have begun to express concern, “Why are we always talking about war here? This is making the Bangsamoro look like barbarians” (Jay Galura, Facebook posting, 15 July 2011). As one camp posts to aggrieve the other, the other camp retaliates, and the Facebook wall page is chequered by violent exchanges of words between the warring camps, albeit from contested and ambiguous identities. Some participants are suspected of having been planted by the enemy to spread radicalism in order to tarnish the image of the Moros.

MILF is a revolutionary group through its Islamic guidance and principles, not a kidnap or ransom or any kind of criminal group...any criminal act, brutal genocide and inhumane actions is not acceptable and not belonging to the MILF policies and principle. MILF is not a terrorist group or a rouge organization. Our vision is clear, to regain our homeland regardless of who is the tribe living here, we must respect them. Our first option is peace. Weapon is made only for defensive purposes not oppress others (Bangsa Moro, Facebook posting, January 9, 10:25am).

There are threads where the members suggested that the administrators block the non-Moros and “fake posters” who propagate a terrorist image of the organization, and yet the same posters remain active in the page.

We know that this page is a worldwide page that can be read by all people of this planet and the plan of this people who promote mass destruction under the umbrella of the Moro struggle is to show to the world that Moro people is no more but an extremist, fanatic and backward minded terrorist...the enemy of Islam will be very happy to see the Muslim ummah to become a more backward mentality terrorist, I wish to say that we are not one of that idiot used by the enemy to destroy our own religion (Helton Lamb, Facebook posting, 23 January 2011, 1:51pm)

While some participants openly doubt the “fake Moro posters” as using the Facebook page to destroy the MILF’s image, some of the participants expressed concern about the publication of “internal plans and strategies”, “...we should stop sharing our thoughts and plans here because the enemy is still far and yet they can already see us” (Nhor Galman, Facebook posting, translated from Maguindanaoan and Filipino, 13 November, 2010)

The exchange of contested identities and postings create multiple and divergent representations depending on when one views the page. It also confuses the reader on the true identity of the posters. The posts that express radicalization by those claiming to represent the Moro youth are also countered by those who argue that terrorism and civil war are against the tenets of Islam and the MILF.

Seeking international support

Although Luwaran.com and Luwaran.net have the capacity for translating its content to various languages, the MILF deemed it important to publish a website catering to an Arabic/Islamic audience for financial and moral support. A team of MILF members and supporters maintain the Arabic website and translate the local content from the English-Luwaran to the Arabic Luwaran, although unique content is also generated for the Arabic website. The group believes that it has received tremendous support from “sympathetic and benevolent philanthropists” in the Middle East through the online space, and that this has helped them significantly in raising funds:

It reaches out. To the Muslims in the Middle East. Because the Muslims in the Middle East, the Arabs, they can be very soft-hearted and sympathetic. There are many benevolent philanthropists who give without expecting anything in return. Once they read about the struggle, or of recent attacks by the military, for

example of mosques, of Moro people, there seems to be a direct effect and they help. Because many of those who are “rila”, “for Allah Alone”, they never really expect anything. Sometimes they send to us support without knowing who they are or they ask to be anonymized. So in a way it has really helped us in raising funds. (MILF leader, Personal communication, May 2010, translated from English-Filipino)

Apparently, the Moro leaders are able to find audience, sympathy and financial support from Muslim activists, intelligentsia, philanthropists, and supporters-- both reformists and extremists. However, the MILF leaders discussed some of the challenges in reaching out to the Islamic community that has contrasting beliefs and ideology. They said that some “hardliners”, in response to their online spaces, question their continued participation in the peace talks and pledge to offer support for more aggressive operations to achieve their political goals,

But the backlash is that many if not most of the philanthropist in the Middle East are hardliners. They want us to go to war. But the MILF, we are not all about war, we balance armed struggle and diplomacy. So sometimes they would say that the way of the MILF is wrong. They would say, ‘don’t you see that your enemy is viciously waging war against you?’ Because of that sometimes they don’t want to help. So it takes a lot of explanation. It takes a lot of reaching out, explaining everything. Every revolutionary organization is unique by itself. Meaning, what you can apply in for instance in Afghanistan, cannot necessarily be applied here. See? So in this sophistication, there is also a backlash. That is the backlash, they would say, this MILF is engaging in the peace process. Just go to war. So that’s the backlash. (MILF leader, Personal interview, May, 2010, translated from English-Filipino)

Besides potential Islamic supporters, the organization’s website also targets the members of the International Monitoring Team, neighbouring countries in Asia, and the United States. Based on website analytics, the MILF is aware that several institutions based in the United States are actively monitoring the situation. They emphasized the importance of protecting MILF-US relations in the hope that this can “help rectify historical wrongs connected to the annexation of Moro communities to Philippine

territory” during the grant of Philippine independence in 1946, in which the US played a key role (MILF leader, personal communication, May 2010).

The MILF highlights the importance of using the website for building credibility and continued appeals for support. They interpret the increased attention from American institutions towards the struggle as a possible route to pressuring the Philippine government into taking the peace negotiations more seriously (MILF leaders, personal communication, May 2010). However, the MILF leadership also recognizes the realities of the US relations with the Philippine government, which has recently been heightened by joint efforts towards counterterrorism cooperation. It has also been a US policy concern that Al Qaeda and its supporters might exploit local grievances of the Moros. Since 2002, the US has increased support to the Philippine military to combat terrorism and has also made a pact with the MILF to support its counterterrorism measures (Tuminez, 2008: 18).

From the examples above, we see that the aspirations of reaching out to multiple international entities are channelized through use of multiple media platforms negotiating an evolving balance between radicalism and diplomacy. It can be seen that Moros use certain platforms to assert religious identity and reticently uphold radical postures but at the same time certain other platforms are used to negotiate alliances with potential supporters with a different ethico-ideological vision. It is for this reason that the MILF raised the issue of difficulty in having the right people and writers who “fully understand the MILF’s political ideology and strategies”. The leaders shared that the experience of managing several online spaces has helped in terms of “reportment of skill”, or in determining which members imbibe the ideology and complexity of MILF’s operations and relations (MILF Web Team, Personal communication, May 2010).

Online divergent transcripts as infrapolitical

The multiple online spaces used by the MILF represent mediation of multiple identities, constant movement of owning and disowning of online spaces, debunking and accepting representations, and marking and unmarking articulations. The flexibility afforded by social media allows them to oscillate across multiple representations depending on what may suit its purposes. The multiple online spaces engaged by the MILF unveil several playful transcripts that tend to reverse the positions that the movement publicly takes in its official website. The use of online strategies where the message and messenger are made ambiguous through techniques of disguise and concealment, also facilitate open criticism and contestation as well as uninhibited expressions. Although MILF's website has direct links to the Facebook page and TMC online magazine, the multiplicity and ambiguity of possible authors provide a protective cover, and thus, no clear author to round-up or investigate, and no official manifestos to denounce. Such is an infrapolitical form of political action designed to obscure the intentions or to take cover behind an apparent meaning or author (Scott, 1990: 200). Precisely because infrapolitical strategies make the message or identity ambiguous, they often escape notice and yet, such strategies represent truthful transcripts of grudges and aspirations that serve as foundation for vengeful dreams, resistant subcultures, and elaborate, open, and institutional forms of resistance. The MILF's online spaces, as component of its broader political communication strategy, serve as their platform for mobilization, reaching out to a broader, global audience, present discourses alternative to those offered by government, and complement its own official press releases. Catering to multiple audiences, this use of divergent online transcripts can be seen as strategic appropriation of technology. The online initiatives represent careful planning, especially as the group negotiates technological, state, military, and international

relations and controls. The MILF leaders explained that the international exposure received by the website has helped the organization tremendously in expanding the reach of the struggle and in gaining prominence as an organization at the forefront of the struggle. The international linkages help them in enhancing their bargaining capacity with the government.

However, internationalizing the struggle online also presents lived dilemmas of using the Internet for a Muslim minority group. First, while the group strategizes its online engagement to broaden support towards the struggle, the nature of the online space imposes material requirements that challenge genuine representation from its conflict-affected and poverty-stricken Moro communities. Second, while the leaders believe that the website's return on investment is "tremendous" in terms of gaining attention by the international community that it seeks to reach, there is no effective gauge over how such international linkages and connections can contribute to a resolution of the struggle in the way envisioned by the group. Third, the maintenance of a Facebook page where antagonists and members challenge the identity and position that it seeks to build in the website can also work to distort this identity. Although disowning of radical postings is already being articulated, the reach and interpretations of online messages are unpredictable, and the posts can be used by antagonists to reinforce anti-Moro prejudices and nullify the seriousness of its demands. Fourth, these findings present dilemmas over the dynamics of participation in the online space. The publicly accessible Facebook page allows the organization to solicit the comments and alternative perspectives of its young members and an external audience, possibly as a space for dialogue which it does not have in its website, but also makes possible the entry of "enemies" aimed at using their online spaces against them. At the same time, the uncontrolled exchanges expose the organization's competing ideologies, covert operations, internal conflicts, and membership of extremist inclinations, that may cast a

shadow of doubt over the organization's capacity to speak for and manage the rest of its community (an aspect which they note is important to their international supporters). These experiences manifest the challenges of venturing into the virtual realm, the difficulties of maintaining control over organizational image, the challenge of finding capable and articulate ideologues, and the importance of both pre-determined and emergent strategies of appropriation.

Chapter Conclusion: Online political mobilization and infrapolitics of the Moros

Through a backstage view of meaning-making and multiple uses of online spaces, divergent transcripts where the MILF holds together multiple identities, mobilize politically, talk back to power institutions, rewrite their history, and connect local with global interests, have been identified. New media is not homogenous in terms of configurations, and users can create multiple, divergent representations across multiple online spaces. Internet technology enables the formulation of multiple divergent transcripts which they use to articulate social and political claims aimed at transcending their subordinated positions. The inclusion of Muslim minorities as legitimate actors in national and international politics by virtue of their online spaces surface alternative forms of political practice and create new dimensions for understanding political action as well as technological possibilities and constraints. The possibility of transnational identities emerging as a consequence of this micro-politics is important for strengthening global politics, even as the risk of nationalism and fundamentalism is present in these dynamics as well. Enabled by hybrid features of online media outlets, minorities used multiple transcripts that target diverse audiences and oscillate across multiple, fleeting representations, narratives, and articulations. The politics of disguise and concealment that lies between public and hidden transcripts of

subordinate groups becomes crucial in understanding online dissent. It has been shown that new strategies of political discourse foregrounding infrapolitics help minority groups to circumvent traditional barriers of political communication and alter the quality of debate between minorities, state and the international community and challenge national limits and boundaries.

The group learned to manage their use of technology in ways that allow them to they can construct their Moro identity and strengthen their impact, while simultaneously managing multiple representations and articulations across the virtual space. This in a way would also imply online discourse shaping practice, as it changes the organization in return and the dynamics of debate and political discourse between the group, local constituents both for and against the group, the government, and the international community. The process of engaging technology for social and political mobilization reflected that the need to establish credibility and image that comes with having a website also drives the organization into more action--whether by rethinking its identity and causes, by developing an archive of history and productions, by showing proof of its achievements from the ground, and by actively selecting and recruiting effective communicators and leaders.

Chapter 5

Constructing collectivity in diversity: Online political mobilization of LGBT organizations in the Philippines

Queer online activism

The environment for discussions of queer identity and sexuality has opened up because of the Internet (Gross, 2002, 2007; Pullen, 2010; Friedman, 2007; O’Riordan, 2007). The interconnectivity made possible by Internet technologies, and the availability of new local and regional materials on queer identity and struggle, enable the swift exchange of queer ideologies and networks across ways of life in distant spaces. These provide a space for queer individuals to “get to experience something of a queer community”, obtain advice, and obtain information about a variety of queer issues (Fraser, 2010, p. 31; Castells, 2010). As highlighted by Gross (2002, p. vii), online spaces are anticipated to facilitate the coming together of the LGBT community, because they are the most plentiful and avid users of the Internet. The striking activity of LGBT online also provide them the opportunity for engaging intensely in identity formation and exploration (Rak, 2005, pp. 166-182; Gross, 2007) and social action (Pullen, 2010, p. 18-36; Castells, 2010). In the Philippine context, as the queer community reaches a critical mass in the online space, LGBTs are forming communities of solidarity for sharing similar experiences and causes that increase motivation for more members to go online (Austria, 2002, 2007).

But the LGBT community in the Philippines is highly diverse. Estimated to

constitute at least 670,000 persons⁴⁹, the community represents multiple competing views of how to live out an LGBT identity with diverse self-concepts, ways of life, and ideologies. While the predominance of Catholic teachings as majority norm influences a significant membership of the community, LGBTs can be found across a wide range of occupation, education, class, and spiritual belief. Pockets of the LGBT community are now actively challenging the Catholic Church's positions about the LGBT way of life, same-sex marriage, and reproductive health. Similarly, the availability of internet access for various income classes by virtue of affordable marketing schemes and cybercafés means that the online LGBT community is represented not only across sexual orientations, or religious beliefs, but across class. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered/transsexual are categories that represent differing needs and positions within the present culture, but which have a common heritage. Despite their different positions in the context of social experience, they also have in common the generalized forms of exploitation and discrimination that occur along racial, ethnic, and class lines.

The double-edgedness of online new media for LGBT activism

The Internet's unique feature, multi-logicality (Dahlgren, 2001, p.46), which transcends the "one-to-many" correspondence of traditional media to "many-to-many", promises diverse participation and reach. Through the online space, minority groups are given the opportunity to transcend local and national boundaries and limits that contribute to the ongoing reconfiguration of political practices. Computer mediated communication can work for political mobilization by: (a) lowering the cost of mobilization; b) facilitating a network of people sharing a common interest and needs despite geographical distance; and c) creating new venues to come together secretly

⁴⁹ Cited in Ladlad's Petition to the Supreme Court
<http://sc.judiciary.gov.ph/jurisprudence/2010/april2010/190582.htm>

(Gross, 2002, 2007; Castells, 2010; Dahlgren, 2001). These potentials suit the queer community specifically, by pooling together people, resources and capacities that are needed in local struggles and allow limitations of dispersion to be transcended (Friedman, 2007). The last is particularly attuned to LGBTs because the character of online spaces serves as a space for expression and belonging even for those still “in the closet” (Gross, 2002; Chang, 2006, p. 167) or those who have ‘come out’ but uncomfortable with public expression of their sexuality.

Aside from the capability of bringing members of a minority together for horizontal networking, online spaces are also viewed as spheres that allow the possibility of resistance through a “speaking back” to certain power structures (Mitra, 2010). “Cyberqueer spaces” are constituted as points of resistance against the dominant assumption of the normality of heterosexuality (Wakeford, 1997, p. 408). As a group that has suffered from others’ image-making and issue-framing practices, LGBTs find a platform for communicating their issues and raising them to the attention of the state as political issues. By becoming new actors in the political arena, LGBTs can intervene in the reconfigurations of citizenship (Wakeford, 1997, p. 409). Further, as the Internet becomes the symbolic mode of organization of both cultural and economic power, “cyberqueer” can be used strategically by challenging the superiority of patriarchy and heterosexuality (Castells, 2010, pp. 266-287) and by making evident the silences created by dominating cultures and economics of late capitalism. Possibilities for networking and counteracting also creates opportunities for them to mirror and counteract the networking logic of domination in the informational society (Castells, 2010, p. 427). Marginalized sexual minorities can use online media to strategically contextualize their struggle as a part of a transnational LGBT rights campaigns that reverberate across national borders. Here, the discursive potential of an “imagined community” of LGBTs

(Pullen, 2007; 2010, p. 2) becomes vividly real as LGBTs take the form of agency as “counterpublics” (Warner, 2002).

However, despite the Internet’s enabling opportunities for the political mobilization of LGBTs, it also poses several constraints. These include concerns such as further segregation and “ghettoization” as opposed to fostering communication (Friedman, 2007, p. 797); potential loss of “real physical community” (Pullen, 2010, p.11); dangers of queer essentialism (Rak, 2005, pp. 177-178; Jolly, 2001, 475-476; Fraser, 2010), and commercialization of queer sites (Campbell, 2005). The courting of the LGBT community by mainstream marketers represents a repositioning in commercial panoptic formations based on the perceived desirability of these populations as niche markets (Campbell, 2005). Concern has been expressed that even the radical discourses of cyberqueer movements can be targeted by capital (Wakeford, 1997, p. 410). Moreover, tied to the very globality of online spaces and the possible formation of transnational networks of queer activists is the entrapment in certain hegemonic discourses that define the ideals of “queerness” and “queer activism” (Puar, 2007; Jaleca, 2011). Connected here are concerns that geographically located experiences and local emancipatory acts can become lost in the cacophony of voices arising from a “global LGBT activist community” (Alexander, 2002; Friedman, 2007, p. 797). Further, while online spaces allow the amplification of queer voice, it can also expand the reach of discrimination in these spaces, thereby exposing the queer community to new vulnerabilities and controls. Aside from issues of discrimination online, the important question underlying the Internet’s potential for queer political mobilization is how a critical mass of online users facilitates interpersonal discussion resulting in political mobilization and construction of a collective identity (Nip, 2004). Some question the Net’s potential for critical and reflective discussion of issues and on whether online engagement is bent on participating in a discussion of issues or in pursuing private

purposes of online engagement (Austria, 2007).

Queer formulations and political formations

*Queer theory*⁵⁰ has developed as a course of inquiry that challenges the stability of identities and rejects the traditional “heterosexual/homosexual” dichotomy. Queer theory believes that it is the socially-produced binaries (gay/straight, man/woman) that are the basis of oppression and that disrupting those categories, is the key to liberation. In this deconstructionist politic, clear collective categories are an obstacle to resistance and change.

Queer theory’s questioning of what counts as ‘gay’ or lesbian’ identity, or whose definition of gay counts, led to questions about the overall viability and political usefulness of using sexual identity as the basis of political formations (Kirsh, 2000; Gray, 2009; Cooper & Dzara, 2010). Butler’s (1990) theory of performativity looks at gender and sexuality as a performance, or as a repetitive series of performances, whose effect is the production of a united subject, an identity. The theory rests on the premise that identity is neither a substantive entity nor a metaphysical inevitability, but the effect of repetitive performances of discourses and acts that paradoxically produce the subject who enacts these performances (Butler, 1990, pp.24-25). Queer in this sense is not an identity category but a form of ‘meta-identity’ that is not limited by labels nor social constructions and disassembles common beliefs about gender and sexuality (Kirsh, 2000, p. 33). Conducting a critique of social order, queerness was used to challenge the stability of any identity and theorized cultural forms as iterative performances (Butler, 1990, 1993).

However, gay and lesbian social movements have built a quasi-ethnicity,

⁵⁰ The queer theory is understood to have originated from Teresa de Laureti’s (1991) use of the term, citing Eve Sedgwick’s challenging of the meaning assumed in the binary definitions of sexuality in *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990).

complete with its own political and cultural institutions, festivals, neighborhoods, and for some organizations, even its own flag. Underlying that ethnicity is typically the notion that what gays and lesbians share, which is minority status and minority rights claims, is the similarity of collective selves with non-heteronormative desires. The shared oppression, these movements have forcefully claimed, is the denial of the freedoms and opportunities to actualize this self. In this ethnic politics, clear categories of collective identity are necessary for successful resistance and political gain.

However, by focusing on individual performance as a site for change, queer theory has developed along a path that questions the basic tenets of past resistance movements based on sexuality while championing the right of inclusion. Other scholars expressed concern that queer theory moved sexual and gender politics towards questions of discursive constructions but neglected economic and political regimes (Gray, 2009, p. 215; Gamson, 1995). As Gamson points out: “[F]ixed identity categories are both the basis for oppression and the basis for political power” (1995, p. 391). Such dilemma then affects any political movement drawing on identity to mobilize constituents (Gamson, 1995, pp. 401- 402). The concern, therefore, is how groups might do the political work of deconstructing identity without undercutting their fight against identity-based oppression (Gamson, 1995, p. 400; Gray, 2009). By focusing on diversity, queer theory has done little to understand the ability for this inclusiveness to form communities of resistance (Kirsch, 2000, p. 121). As the individual becomes the centre of analysis, there is also a lack of fundamentals to explain and make meaning out of how certain groups that organize on the basis of sexual orientation come together to advance social change. As argued by Hirsch, under queer theory, “the right to be oneself becomes a mechanism for self-protection rather than a call for equality” (2000, p. 122). In rethinking queer theory’s limits in addressing and explaining queer movements for social change, Kirsh (2000, 2006) argues for finding explanations for strategies where

queer individuals come together to form a collective force for social change.

How then and for what purpose do queer groups form and what constitutes a structural basis for such an alliance? As Melucci (1995, p. 291; 1996) asks, how do heterogeneous individuals find themselves as part of a collectivity and what processes and strategies underlie the continual tensions and negotiations of collective action, particularly through internet-mediated engagements? This chapter explores the backstage strategies of Philippine queer organizations in bringing together a diverse LGBT community as a viable social and political force.

Philippine LGBTs and the problem of difference

Rethinking queer theory's relevance for understanding Philippine gay culture, Garcia (2000, p. 267-268; 2008; 2004) argued that while employing central insights of Butlerian performativity in cross-cultural productions is productive, it is important to be reminded of how localized and context-bound gender and sexuality always are. Garcia (2008) contended that sexual and gender subjectivity in the Philippines falls between religious and secular registers, "a Filipino 'psycho-spirituality': a hybrid site of sorts that indicates how important religiosity, despite the trappings of modernity, continues to be for most Filipinos". Understanding of the self is still very much embedded in the teachings of folk Catholic symbology, for example, the common reliance on *albularyo* or quack doctor before a Filipino would consider consulting a psychiatrist or a medical doctor. It is for this reason that the lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender is conflicted on the exercise of sexuality, particularly because the church, which he or she sees as moral authority, only accepts union between a man and a woman under the norms of procreation. This can also explain why the *bakla* (male homosexual) seeks to become a woman, in contrast to the concept of a drag for British radical fems, which implies

“giving up the power of a male role”, although “passing off as a women is never the object of their forays into cross-dressing” (Garcia, 2000; Dumdum; 2010). The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines position that “if a homosexual goes into partnership with another homosexual it is wrong. If it’s only attraction, there’s nothing wrong. It is just a feeling” (Dizon, D., 2011) is accepted and adhered to by some members of the community. It remains influential in society through various institutions that serve as apparatus for disseminating Catholic values and teachings.

Case Studies

Ladlad Online: Out of the closet and into politics

In May 2010, a political party of self-identified lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender/transsexuals (LGBT), *Ladlad* (Out of the Closet), was on the ballot for the first time in the Philippines, after the Commission on Elections finally granted them accreditation under the party-list system. The party-list system of elections, promulgated in the Philippine Constitution of 1987, was intended to allocate space for the inclusion of society’s marginalized sectors in law-making. Despite the enactment of Human Rights codes, proof of physical violence and discrimination against LGBTs reflect the need for the protection of their rights and from criminalization attacks against this group. A Congressional seat is deemed to give the LGBT community a voice in the crafting and passing of the pending Anti-Discrimination Bill. *Ladlad* did not receive the sufficient number of votes to acquire a seat in Congress during the 2010 elections, but the party has already launched an intensified campaign for the 2013 polls. This inclusion of LGBTs as political actors is a significant departure from typical characterizations and caricaturizations of LGBT people in society and an interesting

aspect for the analysis of LGBT political formations within a largely conservative and Catholic society. In recent years, Ladlad has developed a wide set of Internet based campaign strategies including online narratives, discursive spaces, and productions in its website, individual member-blogs, e-group, and social networking sites. An interesting aspect of its campaign is how Ladlad mobilizes a collectivity of highly diverse LGBT groupings and individual identities through multiple internet-mediated strategies.

The Commission on Elections (COMELEC) denied Ladlad's registration as a sectoral political party in 2006 for lack of "substantial membership base", and again in 2009, for "lack of moral grounds" (*Ang Ladlad LGBT Party v. Commission on Elections*, 2010). The COMELEC's decision was overturned by the Supreme Court, eventually paving way for Ladlad to run for party-list elections for the first time in 2010, but with barely less than a month left to campaign. In its petition with the COMELEC, Ladlad claimed that it has 16,100 affiliates and members around the country, and 4,044 members in its electronic discussion group. Ladlad was organized in 2003 and although formally registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), it did not have an office / headquarters until 2011, and used to hold meetings at its leaders' homes. Face to face meetings are held monthly and most day-to-day communication are done virtually or over the phone. The organization's funds come primarily from collected annual fees of P100 (US\$2.4) per working member (P50 or US\$1.2 for students), donations, and fund-raising events (Ladlad leaders, personal interview, May 2010, October 2011).

Ladlad Online. Ladlad set up its website, www.angladlad.org, in 2007, after the COMELEC turned down its first bid for elections. The website was created to serve as a channel for broadcasting its petition for reconsideration and for reaching external supporters and internal members. Its leaders believe that having a website serves as a cost-efficient tool to support the campaign by expanding its membership and increasing

exposure. A Ladlad leader explained that prior to the Internet, the LGBT community saw itself only through the lens of mainstream media and dominant culture, as there were limited opportunities for LGBTs to represent themselves and articulate their causes publicly. Online spaces allow them to represent themselves and their causes without the controls or mediation of others. Ladlad maintains its website <http://www.ladlad.org/>⁵¹, which is complemented by a Yahoo! Group, a Facebook page, Ladlad Partylist <https://www.facebook.com/angladlad>, and a newly created official Facebook group, <https://www.facebook.com/LadladPartyListOfficial>. The group recently opened a Twitter account, <http://twitter.com/#!/angladlad> which echoes the announcements it makes in its Facebook page.

The website is seen as the organization's image on the virtual front, a lens by which the group is understood and recognized. It is for this reason that pieces in the website are more carefully crafted with write-ups about LGBT history and experiences. The Yahoo! e-group page, on the other hand (with 4,307 members as of August, 2011) functions as a private discussion board and requires registration. Prior to Facebook and Twitter, the e-Group served multiple purposes and was the central space for communication across the community—from public announcements and sharing of LGBT issues or petitions, to private matters such as internal conflicts, issues, or rules of membership. Now that many of its members have subscribed to Facebook, matters relevant to the group that do not need to be kept internally, such as announcements, news, features and opinion pieces are posted in Facebook and Twitter. Facebook drives more members to participate, especially the younger ones, because “there is a feeling of safety, belonging, and spontaneous solidarity” in terms of LGBT issues and concerns. It serves as a virtual home where members feel at ease (Ladlad member, Personal interview, May 2010). Ease of maintenance and participation enabled the involvement

⁵¹ Ladlad used to have a multiply site, a Friendster, which are no longer maintained to date and have been replaced by Facebook and Twitter. Some of its core leaders also maintain their blogs that have postings concerning the organization.

of more members in content development and continued activity. The automatic alert and tagging features facilitate the drawing of members' attention and in disseminating information to a large audience that includes non-LGBTs. Thus, the Facebook newsfeed shows an amalgam of posts shared by its members, ranging from political and intellectual talk to personal greetings, making their Facebook site more current and active in terms of content than their website. Ladlad's Facebook page is updated daily, with more than 10 messages posted in a day, while the website is updated at least every 2 weeks.

UP Babaylan and the LGBT youth

Founded in August 1992, UP Babaylan⁵² is the oldest LGBT students' organization representing the different campuses of the state university, the University of the Philippines (UP), nationwide (<http://upbabaylan.blogspot.com/2006/05/about-up-babaylan.html>). Many members of Ladlad were members of Babaylan. According to UP Babaylan members, the organization came out of the need for a support group among LGBT students at the time when this support was most needed:

It is often during this time that LGBTs begin the need for an outlet for expression, but when we do that we can be sent away by our parents for our sexual preference, be grounded, or they would cut our allowance. When we come out, we normally face discrimination. When we stay in the closet we experience an internal struggle. (Babaylan member, transgender, some phrases translated from Filipino, Personal interview, April, 2010)

Aside from helping student LGBT members in the process of coming to terms with their sexual identity, the group also seeks to forge unity among gay and lesbian students and faculty against discrimination in the university. In June 2010, UP

⁵² Babaylan is a term identifying an indigenous Filipino religious leader, who functions as a healer, a shaman, and a community "miracle worker", or a combination of these. (Strobel, 2010; Garcia, 2008, pp. 162-167; UP-Babaylan leader, Personal communication, April, 2010).

Babaylan had thirty-three (33) members in its main campus, but it has had over 500 members since it was founded in 1992. UP Babaylan chapters have been organized in other campuses of the university (i.e. UP Manila and UP Los Banos).

As a student organization with no regular source of funds, Babaylan uses only free online platforms and all its online activities are the result of voluntary efforts from its members. Its first online presence stemmed from one of its members' personal blogs which morphed into an organizational website, www.upbabaylan.blogspot.com. The blog has been a central site for updates on organizational meetings and activities. It also serves as a space for posting membership recruitment activities to attract new members. Eventually, they created content on organizational history and posted essays, news articles and educational materials on LGBT rights and on understanding the differences across the groups that the group represents (i.e. lesbian, gay, transsexual, transgender, bisexual). Representing the LGBT youth's artistic nature, the blog is colorful and hosts an amalgam of banners and posters capturing the group's news, events, and advocacies.

Its Multiply site <http://upbabaylan.multiply.com/> used to be the major site for interaction amongst its members and was used heavily for the photo documentation of its activities. Eventually, the group found most of its members active on Facebook and began to organize events and announce news and activities in its Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/upbabaylan>. Facebook's facility for organizing events conveniently has been useful to the group. Moreover, due to familiarity with the Facebook system, more members are able to contribute content, such as documenting cases of discrimination that they encounter, or information, movies, or news that they can share with the group. The blog manager explained that using the website / blog requires familiarity with blog coding for article layout as well as good writing skills, which is the reason for it being maintained by only a few members.

Babaylan's blog manager shared that based on website analytics, most of its blog visitors were referred from search engines such as Google or Yahoo. Thus, they assume that its visitors include not only its members but non-members considering to apply for membership, as well as researchers or journalists. Their Facebook site is used for organizing meetings and events and sharing materials and views to both existing and potential members. A Twitter page serves as a sounding board for any new blog posts. Multiply used to be the main space hosting group photographs. Now, all photos are made available in both the blog and Facebook pages, while the e-group remains an exclusive space. The members use their personal resources (i.e. personal computers and connection) for engaging with the organization online. As students of the state university, a group leader shared that all of the members have ICT access and skills, while about 80 to 90% are active on social networking sites.

Sources of Data

Based on a shortlist of queer organizations in the Philippines, Ladlad and Babaylan yielded the highest number of active online spaces and were selected purposively as case studies (Yin, 2009, 91). Ladlad is the only national LGBT political party in the Philippines, and this makes it suitable for the analysis of how minorities use online spaces to mobilize themselves as a collective political force. Babaylan, on the other hand, being a youth / student organization, presents an interesting case for understanding the dynamics of online engagement by young LGBTs forming a collective on the basis of sexuality to challenge the discrimination and oppression that they confront daily. Both Ladlad and Babaylan are cases of using online spaces for social and political struggles on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, but representing diverse self-concepts and values.

In-depth interviews, with current and former leaders and members as well as activists closely related to the organizations were conducted together with ethnographic analyses of the organization's websites⁵³. The Twitter and official Facebook sites were only active in 2011 and were covered in this review. Archived documents and historical materials relating to the groups' struggle were also utilized. This use of multiple resources and sites of media engagement and meaning-making was critical in understanding the online strategies of the groups.

Online strategies: Construction of a community amidst diversity

Carving out a space for belonging

Giddens (1990) argued that modernity involves a profound reorganization of time and space in social and cultural life, which is spelt out in his discussion on “time-space distantiation” and “embedding and dis-embedding” that take place in modernity. Social relations of pre-modern societies are largely confined to face-to-face interaction (Giddens, 1990, p. 18). However, the advent of the Internet as a form of this modernity undermines this social interaction by fostering relations between ‘absent others’, locationally distant from any given situation of face-to-face interaction. Internet technology dis-embeds social relations from local contexts of face-to-face interaction and rearranges them across time and space. Reflexivity, Giddens (1990) argues, is bound by the issue of trust with respect to dis-embedded institutions, as well as considerations of security and risk of involvement. In the context of Ladlad and Babaylan, LGBTs from distant locations are forming a group of solidarity with others living out similar circumstances.

⁵³ Organizations' websites reviewed were: www.ladlad.org and <http://upbabaylan.blogspot.com/> and Facebook sites <https://www.facebook.com/angladlad> and <https://www.facebook.com/upbabaylan>

Social networking sites have actually paved an era of gayness. Everyone is just so free to do whatever they want to do online. Subconsciously, this freedom progresses into the real world. By mingling with old LGBTs, we get this drive, sort of a confidence; it's a real world outside the web. Then we start to use gay lingo. (Babaylan member, gay, Personal interview, April 2010)

As argued by Gross (2007, ix), “the potential for friendship and group formation provided by the Internet is particularly valuable for members of self-identified minorities who are scattered and often besieged in their home surroundings.” The quote above reflects the symbolic confidence gained by belonging to a community that also drives the performance of one's sexuality and open association with the community (i.e. speaking of gay lingo). In Ladlad's Facebook page, some members express a feeling of protection, “Don't hurt us, we will report you to Ladlad!” (Ladlad Partylist Facebook, online posting, 22 Jan 2011). As a bigger group comprising four kinds of sexual minorities, the LGBTs feel stronger than if they faced discrimination as individual minorities. Ladlad's members also talked about how the online page allows them to solidify as a community that lends more credibility in their bid for a seat in Congress in the next national elections.

LGBT Cocoons

In most cultures, heterosexuality is a privileged site of social and political organization, while other types of relationships are considered less or are rendered invisible (Slagle, 1995, 2009; Epstein, 1999; Gross, 2003; Johnson & Henderson, 2005; Pullen, 2010; Rand, 2006). The Internet reverses this norm by giving visibility to alternative forms of organization, allowing groups, regardless of preferences, to come together and form a community. Babaylan members explained that the Internet's facility

to control the community that young queers surround themselves with makes it easier to segregate and shield them from discrimination and find belonging.

The LGBT culture is very online because that's where discrimination is very low. That's where you can really be yourself. The only one controlling your actions would be you. You are not exposed to other people, what people have to say about you. Unlike if you want to be gay in public you are exposed to scrutiny and ostracism of people, criticism of other people. We can easily shut off people who write against us. Chances are the 'community' is very screened because people who are familiar with our social network, or who would actively search us are also the LGBT. Others wouldn't know what '*Planet Romeo*' or '*Downlink*' is. So I believe there's very little port of entry for threats to the community online. You can be as gay as you want without the fear of being bullied anymore. (Babaylan member, gay, Personal interview, April 2010)

Seeking advice online is one of the common themes arising from the e-group page of the political party Ladlad, as members ask for advice in terms of coming out or share personal conflicts in coming to terms with their identity or in confronting discrimination. Sunstein (2006, 2007), a prominent thinker on online spaces, argued that individuals are more likely to align themselves with networks and views that suit their predispositions and prejudices in the online space. He warned that people tend to customize their daily universe by selectively exposing themselves only to information that support their existing views or that reinforce their group ideology. Lovink also argued that information cocoons allow people's beliefs to be reinforced and within this environment, "feel validated" (p. 29) within a closed, self-referential environment. While information cocoons have been seen as leading to narrow thinking and extreme speech in online discussion forums and blogs (Sunstein, 2006, 2007), the possibility to form cocoons in the online space seems to work for the Philippine LGBT community, where a critical mass of online users come together to form reinforcement and support and shield themselves from discriminatory voices. Ladlad makes an effort to delete derogatory comments in their Facebook pages, because these taint the credibility of the organization as a political party. "We don't want to allow ourselves to be maligned in

our own site. Because this is a pro-LGBT site. That is the beauty of Facebook, you can remove what you don't like easily so it can be the page for promoting yourself and your cause" (Ladlad leader, Personal communication, May 2010).

Members also call the group's attention to homophobic spaces or groups in the Internet, and these members in turn, would come together and 'attack' such homophobic spaces. A significant number of Filipino LGBT members and supporters online, now in the thousands, make this possible. Examples are Facebook groups inspired by the theme, "*Mabuti pa ang magnakaw kesa mamakla*" (It is better to be a thief than to be in a relationship with a gay) <https://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=106357086063524>. Ladlad members managed to report and take down some of the first few groups formed under the banner, although two groups still remain as of September, 2011. A gaming group page, "*Pinoy Patay Bading*" (Filipinos Kill Gays), was also reported to the Ladlad Facebook site, after which the page was filled with posts from Ladlad members against discrimination, which outnumbered the homophobic posts.

Ladlad organizers post messages of protection and provision of security and strength to its community and offer concrete benefits for being part of the organization. It actively calls on its members to report personal experiences of discrimination, "Have you experienced discrimination because you are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender? Report to Ladlad!" (Facebook and Twitter posting, Jan 5). These calls to report and share personal experiences of discrimination allow the organization to act as an entity working to protect and defend the community. Further, Ladlad encourages its members to share experiences of discrimination and connects them to free legal assistance, "U need lawyers? Ladlad Partylist will offer free legal assistance to Pinoy LGBTs who are victims of injustice and discrimination." (Posted in Twitter and Facebook, Jan 7, 2011). This form of service bridges LGBT communities across class and occupation, by

mobilizing professional LGBTs to help out the disadvantaged members of the community.

Amidst this internal mobilization is the question of representation across diverse groupings that the two groups represent. In Ladlad's Facebook page, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgenders participate, but there are occasional quips, "Gays again? How about us lesbians?" Both Babaylan and Ladlad noted that there is relatively more active participation amongst the gay and transgender/transsexual people in the online spaces, and that they consider it a challenge to present a balanced representation in their campaigns.

Queer online political mobilization and campaigning

When Ladlad's candidature was denied by the COMELEC in 2009 on the basis of 'immorality', the LGBT community, together with its supporters, actively campaigned against the decision both offline and online. In their blogs and social networking sites, LGBTs and their non-LGBT supporters created online 'causes' and petitions condemning the COMELEC's decision. As the queer community does not have a high level of ownership of mainstream media, the Internet became a space where they received fairer representation with other players such as its detractors and other well-funded political parties.

Given social networking sites' capacity to be shared, forwarded and tagged, Ladlad's campaigns also reached the non-LGBTs. This reaching out to non-LGBT supporters, Ladlad argues, is important because it allows them to provide alternate representations of the LGBT community and struggle beyond mainstream media depictions. Also, most of the voters still represent the majority of non-LGBTs. The capability of sharing and exchanging posts in social networking sites creates enhanced

reflexivity with non-LGBTs and can help in achieving the LGBT's broader goals of soliciting greater understanding of their claims. In the Facebook and e-group pages, trickles of posts from those who claim to be non-LGBT but "voted for Ladlad" were noted.

However, as many parts of the archipelago still have no reliable internet connection, face to face campaign rallies are critical to reach the grassroots communities. Online spaces serve to complement their provincial caravans, which require huge funds to mount. Since Ladlad intensified its online and offline campaigns, some 52,000 members have already signed up as members and volunteers, a significant increase from its 2010 figure (Benedito, B., Personal interview, October, 2011). Ladlad believes that there are about 10 million LGBTs across the country that they can mobilize, and that only 150,000 votes are necessary to acquire a seat in Congress. In 2010, the Facebook page served as a central portal for announcements, complaints, mobilization, and organizing of the group's provincial campaigns that involved LGBT members posting updates and concerns regarding the campaign from various parts of the archipelago.

For the 2013 elections, they have been actively using the Facebook page to post upcoming regional and provincial visits and alerting community organizers about assemblies and motorcades as early as 2011. The 2013 election is crucial for Ladlad because a second loss would imply a disqualification as a political party for the subsequent elections. Photos of these provincial visits and meetings are posted in Facebook and affirm Ladlad's reach as a national organization. Fund-raising and organization-building events such as plays, musicals, parties, movie screenings, and book launches are also shared in the Facebook page. The website also facilitated online donations from which the organization generated some P20,000 (US\$450) for the campaign in 2010. Another point raised by a member is that the online space serves as a

venue for those who still refuse to campaign or support Ladlad openly or participate in assemblies where public association is required. Online mobilization and participation allows members to join and offer support to the party while being shielded from the discriminatory eyes of peers and families.

Common ground for political mobilization

A review of the e-groups and Facebook posts of both organizations reflects a representation of LGBTs across a wide range of diversity in class, occupation, and even religion. While no available studies have analyzed class representation in these spaces, evidence shows that Internet access is no longer a privilege of the elite or upper middle class. In the Philippines where ‘sachet culture’ (small packages) exists especially in the rural areas, marketing offers reflect the attempt of telecommunication and internet companies to reach the lower income strata through ‘unlimited’, ‘prepaid’, ‘sachet’ and other ‘low-cost’ schemes. In Facebook, some members would post about seeking help in finding jobs, or apologizing for not being able to attend events or meetings because they don’t have transportation money.

A common theme running across their website, e-group and Facebook page is the sharing of experiences and a goal to mobilize the community against multiple facets of discrimination. In Ladlad where some members are known celebrities, writers or professionals, they still report their experiences of being treated as second-class citizens. It appears that elite markers still co-exist with their experiences of marginalization as a sexual minority. Members shared experiences of having been refused entry to bars, restaurants, while others report discriminatory practices in company promotion exercises. The Chairperson shared her personal experience of having been denied entry to a spa. Discourse on marginalization in terms of sexuality and gender work is both a

levelling and mobilizing factor that brings together members from various rungs of prestige, profession or income. Experiences of discrimination across all realms – amongst professionals in the workplace, in overseas jobs, in employment applications, in bars, in prisons, and in the university, are shared. Ordinances and policies that discriminate against queers (e.g. imposition of separate toilets for LGBTs) are also raised to the attention of group members.

Aside from political institutions, the Catholic Church is a common subject, as counter-reactions towards the church's statements of incrimination of the non-heteronormative way of life are voiced out. Contrasted with criticisms of the Catholic church for its vocal disapproval of the LGBT lifestyle are clusters of posts around the theme "God does not discriminate" or "God loves *bakla* (gay)". In such posts, members of religious and spiritual inclinations share their belief in a "loving and understanding God" (various Facebook postings, May 2010- 2011). An interesting facet of Ladlad's posts is that it is common to combine criticisms of the Catholic church's positions with quips of, "God bless us all". These show that queer spirituality is highly diverse and some go beyond agreeing with the teachings of religious institutions and leaders.

Sometimes, intellectual discussions on queer theory or heteronormativity are raised and joined by a cluster of students or academically inclined members, as they historicize and dissect the roots of discrimination in Philippine society. Others would cluster in posts sharing unequal treatment in the workplace, where some with legal background join the discussion. Harassment or physical violence conducted by the police, military and prison wardens towards LGBTs were also exposed and condemned. Students report experiences of discrimination in schools and universities. Another group comprising of overseas workers or families and friends of migrant workers shared issues concerning discrimination of Filipino LGBTs abroad.

The online space is working to mobilize the group's strength, facilitates reporting and compilation of discrimination cases and better knowledge of its gravity, and allow some of its privileged members to be of help to members in need of assistance. Ladlad's Chairperson shared that the website receives about five to seven complaints on discrimination cases sent by its members every day, which they compile to strengthen their advocacy for the passing of the Anti-Discrimination Bill. This chronicle of such cases and experiences of discrimination is important because it justifies Ladlad's clamor for recognition as a political party aspiring for a Congressional seat.

Constructing identity in diversity

Beyond diversity in regional or provincial representations or sexual preferences, diversity was manifested in terms of self-concepts and positions on LGBT issues. Competing opinions on how queers must act in society and what constitutes a queer identity were also noted. In the Facebook page, some participants argued in a public forum on "*Homosexuality is not a sin*":

A: i object....i'm gay....but sometimes, isn't it that it's....nicer if let's leave spiritual matters to the rightful ones...homosexuality is not a sin..but havin sex with same gender is the sin...

B: homosexuality is not a sin but having sex with the same gender is? that's so patently ridiculous it's funny. i thought i only hear that statement from clueless & ignorant catholic priests. a lot of protestant denominations like the MCC, Episcopalian, and other Anglican churches treat homosexuality as harmless and equal as heterosexuality. :)

A: don't judge my opinion my friend ..as much as i want to oppose that views...i think i would prefer to believe that truly it's a sin....and i'm really sad about it...i read it on the bible..and those protestants, Mcc etc...i hate to say..but i guess they are opposing GOD's word...now i admit i'm a sinner...not as a gay..with by having sex with same gender... let me clarify...God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, not because of homosexuals...but because they chose to have sex with same gender...that is clear...Being GAY is not a sin... some gays start from childhood...and they are not sinners..coz they dont have the

sexual urge with the same sex... but once sex comes in...there the sin starts...that is why I am sad... because as much as I want to obey God...I can't give up my baby...huhuhu :)

B: LOL. you can believe whatever you want to believe but please remember not to impose your belief unto others. i hope your views only represent a very tiny minority in the LGBT community. for homosexuality was NEVER a sin, period. :)

A: i'm not imposing...i'm just sharing my view...minority or not...i'm still part of a gay movement in our area...that is why we chose to keep distance from the church..we don't want to drag God in our desire to be happy...

(Series of exchanges in Ladlad's Facebook page, some words and phrases translated from Filipino, June 5 2010)

It will be noticed that A's opinion is heavily influenced by the Catholic church's teachings about homosexuality. As pointed out by Hodges and Hutter (1974, n.p.), "the ultimate success of all forms of oppression is our own self-oppression. Self oppression is achieved when the gay person has adopted an internalized straight people's definition of what is good and bad". Such repressions create a split in a queer's identity, alienating one from his or her passions, and encouraging an abandonment of personal feelings or desires and "internal feelings of sin, sickness and criminality" (Austria, 2004, p. 49). This implies that self-oppression complicates the overlapping layers of struggle faced by Filipino queers (Austria, 2004, 2007), particularly in terms of internal conflict between willingness to express one's sexual preferences and urges and the Catholic church's teachings as moral authority.

It could also be noted from the quote above that although the two members expressed very different views about homosexuality, the disagreements were expressed civilly with "smileys" at the end of their posts, an attempt to attach respect in the midst of disagreement. This could be explained by the fact that most members posting in the Ladlad Facebook page and e-group do not use pseudo accounts and it is possible that these members could see each other during national assemblies. A trace of their profiles would show that the accounts used to post are their real personal accounts, and some members are known LGBT activists, professionals, or educators. In cases when they use

pseudonyms, some members still know their real identities (Ladlad leader, Personal communication, October, 2011).

Aspects like the design and the basic assumption that a participant is not anonymized are elements that highlight the construction of Ladlad's online spaces (Ladlad leader, Personal communication, October, 2011). As participation by members in both e-group and Facebook pages can be managed and controlled, a leader explained that it is easy to gauge if someone is hiding behind an alias. The exchange of hate and extreme speech in many online forums is attributed to anonymity and lack of accountability of participants in the posts that they make (Sunstein, 2006). As anonymity is not engaged and online spaces are moderated, a civil exchange of viewpoints and opinion is reflected in Ladlad's spaces. As Ladlad's leader argued, "We need names and real members, not trolls. We rely on membership, warm bodies. So yes the offline is very much connected to the online world of the org" (former leader, Ladlad, Personal interview, May, 2010).

There are other points of debate and contention within the community. For example, the Gay Pride march, where members parade on the streets in colorful costumes as communicative of their activism against discrimination, is viewed by some members to be reinforcing traditional media prejudices that caricaturize the LGBT image. The group is also divided over the contentious issue of same sex marriage and reproductive health and debates on this issue have taken place in its e-group site. The membership also expressed competing views on Ladlad's support to particular candidates during the 2010 elections. The restraint in showing internal disagreement in a public space is both self-regulated by the members and managed by the moderators.

A similar contention was observed in Babaylan's blog when a transgender female member, Hender Gercio, filed an anti-discrimination case against one of her University Professors for refusing to address her by her chosen female identity. The

Professor's insistence on addressing her as a "he" was based on religious beliefs as an Evangelical Christian. Based on a website posting of the letter she filed to the College Dean:

..She noticed me correcting my classmates whenever they referred to me using male pronouns (in French: *il, lui*) or male forms of address (in French: *Monsieur*). I replied that I identified and socially presented myself as female, and that addressing me as a woman was the appropriate thing to do. She then asked me about my biological sex. I told her that my legal sex (i.e. the sex/gender marker on my legal documents) was male, but I argued that this was irrelevant and ultimately misleading, because my legal sex did not accurately reflect my real-life identity, that of being a transsexual female...(She) then admitted to me that she did not feel comfortable addressing me as female in class. She said "I am a Christian, and this is against my religious beliefs." She also told me that she cannot separate being a Christian from who she was as a teacher. She then continued that she believed that homosexuality was a sin, and it was due to this reason that she cannot allow herself to accept and address me as female...."⁵⁴

The organization's leadership appeared to support the member's complaint by posting the letter in its website, as well as succeeding editorial articles and posters in vocal support of the complaint. However, the post received an active exchange of conflicting opinion from the community on what constitutes discrimination, generating the most number of comments ever received by the blog (UP Babaylan leader, Personal communication, Sept, 2011):

Hmmm...What you are after is essentially your right, yes? Human right? But hasn't she her own right, too, though, to have her own belief? please don't get me wrong... this is not saying I am against your kind. I mean I am gay myself... all I'm saying is live and let live (Anonymous member posting, some words translated from Filipino, 24 Feb 2011)

..... how do you decide what is politically right? because the western people consider it as such?... (Anonymous posting, 23 Feb 2011)

... And you said it yourself, we have no existing transgender laws yet so she and

⁵⁴ Transcript of the complaint letter submitted by Hender Gercio, a Babaylan member and former leader, to the Department of European Languages, College of Arts and Letters, University of the Philippines Diliman and posted in the website www.upbabaylan.org

your classmates are not legally obliged to address you as a female (Anonymous posting, 23 Feb 2011).

The selected posts above represent the major themes underlying the arguments of the participants. A major contention is rooted in standing up to one's religious beliefs as clashing with a person's demand to be recognized for his or her gender identity. Some participants claiming to be members of the LGBT community are in conflict on what constitutes discrimination and the issue broadly resonates with many other clashes in constructing identity and discrimination. The complainant was also accused of using Western ideals as a basis for her interpretation of gender rights, which is seen to conflict with local values. Finally, a third cluster of posts point to the absence of laws, and as there is no law on discrimination against queers, the occurrence does not count as offensive. On the other hand, several members of the community expressed their support of Hender's courage to fight for what she believed in.

People like us have lived our entire lifetimes in compromise with the rest of society and in the end, we have compromised our own lives... We have struggled to play roles according to the script that the norms of society have written for us. We have dressed up as girls deemed unacceptable, as men deemed incomplete, as persons unequal. And now, Hender asks for the dignity to be referred to as the woman that she rightfully is; she comes upon a wall saying that she may not be a woman in (her Professor's) eyes because regarding her as such is contrary to her religious belief... denying someone else's person on such grounds, I cannot let that pass.... I'm appalled because of all the places where it can happen, it happened in the University of the Philippines, a cradle of the human rights movement, on whose own blood-stained walls, students and professors fought to champion human rights (Excerpt from an article posted in the UP Babaylan blog by B.Bernabe, 1 March 2011).

There are a number of interesting observations unique in Babaylan's blog as a medium for discussion of queer issues. First, unlike Laddad, which disallows comments in its website and is more careful in screening divergent opinion in its social networking site, Babaylan's blog allowed the posting of divergent opinions from its members and non-members. This is despite the organization's vocal support for the complainant.

Second, because of the nature of the blog, many of the comments disagreeing with the complainant are expressed as “anonymous”, which could include organizational members who refuse to be identified. However, despite the conflict of opinion and the use of anonymity, there was still restraint in flaming and use of hate speech typical of other online forums where issues of identity and difference are salient (Wocjieszak, 2010, Wocjieszak & Mutz, 2009; Cammaerts, 2009; Soriano, 2011). An analysis of the thirty-four comments following the post showed that there was no use of vulgar words or extreme speech and that there was a general attempt by those posting to express their views based on analysis of the issue. Some participants even brought in previous Supreme Court rulings and international cases to support their arguments.

An interview with the complainant affirmed the varied self-concepts of queerness across the LGBT community. Sharing the comments received in her Facebook Note on the issue, she highlighted how different LGBT organizations, queer historians and writers shared their overwhelming support. No divergent comment was expressed in her Facebook Note. She shared, however, that when her case got more publicized in her organization’s blog and in online and television news, she saw dissenting comments of others and also began to receive private hate mail, including from the members of the LGBT community (Hender Gercio, Online and telephone interviews, 21-22 September 2011).

This exchange of competing views reflects that a unified conception of LGBT identity is reductive. It also brings to the surface the complexity of capturing the LGBT identity and what constitutes discrimination, and all issues that LGBT organizations attempt to reconcile within their memberships. In an interview, a Ladlad leader acknowledged such differences and the importance for the organization to represent LGBTs of differing views while finding a common ground for solidarity. Further, the

online spaces allow them to discuss and present alternative and multiple understandings and expressions of what constitutes queer identity.

Members bespoke Ladlad's interest in constructing and debating opinion on a wide range of national political issues, and particularly those that involve marginalization of all sorts. Public, political talk mattered, and often, the Facebook manager would solicit the membership's views on national issues such as transport hikes, corruption, or governance. As a political party which works under the veil of "equal rights, not special rights", the organization is careful that while it addresses LGBT issues primarily, it also has a firm stand and awareness on other national and political issues. By bringing such political and governance issues in the group page, awareness and exchange of views is facilitated and LGBT members who might otherwise shy away from political discussions elsewhere are encouraged to participate.

Posting Rules: Delineating the personal from the political?

To display or not to display; to tell or not to tell; to let on or not to let on; to lie or not to lie; and in each case, to whom, how, when and where" (Goffman, 1963, p. 42).

The online space presents opportunities but also challenges for discerning self-presentation. Goffman (1963, 1959) wrote about the decision-making strategies involved in daily interactions and self-presentations of people, which he calls "information control". In face-to-face interactions, certain cues make possible an easier discernment of acceptance level or how much to reveal at any time. On the contrary, online spaces and their multi-logicalism present greater opportunities in terms of increased representation and horizontal networks, but also challenges in terms of managing self-presentation and identities. This constitutes an active negotiation of identity that is based on management and control of information. I examined the

implications of the private and public separations of sexual practice in the articulation of LGBT activism. I observed that particular kinds of speech and performativity are placed in the public space while specific situated queer sexual practice is hidden in private spaces still not to be revealed for fear of consequence.

Participants enacted "queerness" in style as well as in explicit talk about LGBT identity and politics. There was little uncivilized talk and the members generally expressed respect or civility in the posts. Snappy repartees, ironic commentary on LGBT - identified sensibilities, and playfulness with language were styles of talk that members collaborated in producing. There is a discernment of how to represent the organization publicly and which matters to keep private. As the websites were seen as the organization's online image, there was caution that "private matters" were not spoken "publicly" and limits were imposed on the topics and subjects discussed even in the Facebook pages where only members are anticipated to participate. Ladlad in particular had explicit rules about what messages can be posted "publicly". For example, rules are imposed in the e-group and Facebook pages, where all members are free to participate, as long as:

(1) No pornography. (2) Also if you want to push a product since we need to raise something, pls. donate something... 3) No dating, no boyfriend wanted. Those posts, we just delete. We discuss ideas here, but if you want porn, the internet is full of porn. It's not the place for that. There are so many dating services in the Philippines and Internet. (Ladlad former leader, Personal interview, May 2010).

Conversation in Facebook rarely touched on members' private lives or their love relationships, except in quick jest. Even the popular gay lingo or *swardspeak*, a unique coded language used actively by gay groups (Manalansan, 2003) is not actively used in these organizations' online conversations. Members seem to be aware of other spaces for catching up with each others' private lives beyond the Facebook page. In Ladlad's

Yahoo Group, there would be a few posts about looking for partners, or seeking jobs, but these were minimal and the general nature was still about organization directions and how to advance the campaign. Both the e-group and Facebook pages served as venues for sharing and discussion of LGBT and national political issues, as well as organizing campaigns, fund-raising and social events. The online spaces were used as a public forum, and there is an attempt to ensure that posts had relevance to the LGBT community as a whole, and not for a group of friends who gave themselves a name. Ladlad and its membership clearly understood itself as acting in the public eye. There was delineation between private sexual practice and public queer activism.

Berlant and Warner (2002, cited in McCann, 2011) argued that a prevailing assumption of a liberal, heteronormative public sphere necessitates the delineation between the private and the public where ‘sex acts should remain private’. While others adopt an assimilationist perspective that would have “same sex desiring citizens adopt the privatized sexual practices of their heterosexual counterparts”, others have argued for more radical practices that challenge the domain of privacy, thereby problematizing heterosexual privilege (McCann, 2011). McCann argues that “any LGBT rhetoric that privileges the rational over the sensual, the decorous over the transgressive, the family-friendly over the backroom cocksuckers” places limits on how queer citizens express their sexual liberation (2011, p. 260). McCann’s arguments support Yep, Lovaas and Elia’s (2003) call for radical sexual ideology as the “appropriate enactment of a queer counterpublic”. Setting up the two cases amidst these theories of what counts as queer counterpublics would point to a view that these groups support heteronormativity, a silencing of queer subjectivity and a willingness to assimilate and be subsumed under heterosexual norms.

However, a closer analysis of Philippine queer groups’ online spaces would manifest a more complex arena of strategic communication and negotiation of online

spaces that operates within cultural orientations and political objectives. Ladlad's move for setting rules on what is to be spoken of publicly and privately can be seen as an "assimilation" of heteronormative norms. However, Ladlad stands as a national organization existing within a divergence of ideologies carried by its members, including those whose self-concepts are heavily influenced by the Catholic church. Moreover, the LGBT community still works largely within the confines of a Catholic society, which still widely influences social mores and norms. The reality of religious influence over Philippine culture shows that setting up rules for public, political talk and private talk is necessary in order to advance an agenda in Philippine society, because extremely radical approaches can be immediately nullified or censored. As one LGBT leader had clearly put it in the interviews, "We need to strategize our battle, otherwise we will be completely shut off. This is why same-sex marriage is not formally in our plan of action. We have our individual opinions about it, but if we push for it as a national organization, we will have a lot of enemies both inside and out and people will stop listening to our call against discrimination" (Ladlad leader, Personal interview, May 2010)". Here we see how the organization assesses the issues that it advances and strategizes based on its assessment of society's cultural and political climate and collective support within its membership.

And yet, there is a need to emphasize ways in which the queer community inserts the sexual into the public, blurring the lines between the private and the public. Promoting a book about liberation and coming out of one of its members, the Ladlad website read: "I am a gay man, a homosexual. I engage in sexual relations with the same sex. I have paid other men to have sex with me. I have never had sex with a woman. I have a husband'. The words come out staccato-like, unblinking. It's fizz from a soda bottle that had long been covered" (Posted 14 June, 2010 <http://www.ladlad.org/?m=201006>). Occasionally, members tag the organization's

Facebook page with photos, some of which include people in the same sex locked in romantic embrace or a passionate kiss. To consider such negotiations as simple assimilation is to nullify the process by which subordinated groups in a majority-dominated society work their way and strategize their acts through culturally accepted norms. This may not ultimately lead to a changing of social structures but it allows them to gradually alter the site of politics. Instead of being fully silenced and censored, it is necessary to find a voice, even if such a voice is negotiated or sung differently. Here we see multiple forms of identity talk as well as flexible forms of solidarity, which sustain both unities and particularities.

Chapter Conclusion: Queer online political mobilization and constructing collectivity

It has been argued that “while much is being said about how movements should be interpreted, they are treated as a blackbox: how movements organize their collective political will, how they manage continuity and unity, are factors that make them into collective actors” (Mayer and Roth, 1995, p. 315). By looking at the organizations’ meaning-making and actual uses of online spaces for political mobilization, we get a privileged view of this blackbox. The case studies surface internal political mobilization in practice as the groups strengthen their collectivity and visibility through the Internet. An important theme arising from the LGBT cases is the construction of a ‘we’ amidst heterogeneous elements surrounding the Philippine LGBT community. This is critical for a predominantly Catholic society such as the Philippines, where deeply ingrained religious norms can clash with themes such as self-expression and the exercise of one’s sexual and gender choices.

For both groups, the creation of a collective space that can be secluded from discrimination by external actors, and where LGBT members find courage through

belonging to a community to share experiences and participate in politics, serves as a purpose that draws them together online. The nature of the organizations and the critical mass of online members influence the purposes and uses of online media for the groups. Both organizations leverage on multiple resources and functionalities available on the Internet. The website (blog for Babaylan) was used for image-building purposes to attract more new members, and serves as its official site where press releases, organizational history, campaigns, news, opinions on important LGBT issues, events, and also information about membership are made available. Representing its public transcript, the tone and style of the website is relatively more formal and the content screened. Internal planning or private matters are excluded from being posted in the websites. The e-groups are confined to members such that they will have a space to communicate sensitive issues freely and plan their campaigns. The Facebook pages, on the other hand, serve as an organizing space for its activities and for reporting the day to day experiences of its members.

A backstage view of both groups' online spaces shows how narratives of discrimination are used to mobilize the sentiments of the membership and move them into solidarity and action. Discourses on discrimination and support are used to rally the members of the community to speak out against personal experiences that become essentially the basis for their political struggle. In terms of framing strategies, these focus on the detection of problems (diagnostic framing), presenting solutions (prognostic framing), and giving members and potential recruits a reason for joining collective action (motivational framing) (Snow and Bedford, 1988; Dutta, 2011, p. 229). These frames work to break the accepted frames that operate within the status quo that some members of the community have unknowingly accepted (i.e. that LGBTs are already 'accepted' in Philippine society; that it is a sin to have same-sex relations; or that sexuality cannot be a basis for social or political formations).

Through the sharing of personal instances of discrimination and offers of support, LGBTs from a diverse range of class, social strata, religious beliefs, and self-concepts, find a common ground. This sharing of common experience serves as an affirmation of belonging and works as the foundation for community and social movement online amongst members “dis-embedded” physically, but “embedded” socially and politically. The capacity of online spaces to bring together an ideologically diverse and geographically dispersed LGBT community with shared experiences of discrimination, while at the same time allowing it to form “cocoons” that can shield them from discriminatory voices, work well in creating arenas for solidarity and belonging. This proof of solidarity and collective force online works to increase the popularity of the sites and solicit the sympathy and support even from non-LGBTs. Amidst differing self-concepts, experiences, and contexts of discrimination lies the commonality of subordination to majority’s societal norms by LGBTs who used to feel excluded by earlier modes of political participation, but who now felt that they can finally participate in politics on their own terms.

It has been argued that as traditional bounds of sexual relations are shaken off, agitation occurs more often between groups of minorities than against the objects of oppression (Engels quoted in Weeks, 1985, p. 252; Kirsh, 2006). These cases show, on the contrary, that realities of differences within the group, whether in terms of class, religion, education, or sexual preference, need to make this difference contributory rather than oppositional. Community, as we saw in the study of the two groups, is where “a space of belonging and safety” is created. The recognition and accommodation of the differences within the community and identification with the struggles and projected goals work for the groups as a social movement. This is parallel to the logic of many resistance movements in the past, especially of subordinated communities who experience difficulty in expression and resistance as individuals. Past feminist

movements for example, pulled together women of differing class, status, race and sexual orientation, which underlie a common understanding of the goals of liberation, even as they exercise activism separately (Kirsch, 2000, p. 101). As we glean from the Philippine case, LGBTs of diverse backgrounds and levels of power in society share a common experience that works symbolically to solidify their fight against discrimination.

Ladlad and Babaylan's online political mobilization cases show that the private and sexual are heavily embedded in the political articulations and shared experiences of discrimination that form the basis for their individual and collective political resistance. These experiences help formulate an explanation for collective identity-building and emphasize the relevance of using sexual identity as the basis of political formations.

Chapter 6

The Arts of Online Political Mobilization from the Margins

Theories on social change communication highlight concerns that the controls surrounding information technologies will creep into emancipatory movements and development and social change initiatives around the globe. The pervasiveness of the neoliberal and capitalist logic in technology (Hassan, 2008; Dean, 2002, 2003; Dean, et.al., 2005; Armitage, 1999, 2002; Lovink, 2004; Lovink & Zehle, 2005; Pieterse, 2003; Sreekumar, 2011; Castells, 2000, 2009; Hoofd, 2009; Bimber, 2003; Barber, 2003), coupled by state controls in internet-mediated activism (Zhou, 2006; Kelly & Etling, 2008; York, 2011; Dean, 2002; Castells, 2000, 2009) have raised some very crucial questions on the value of the Internet for social change movements from the margins. At the same time, the essentialism ingrained in developmentalist approaches that characterize technology as an emancipatory tool leads to a superficial understanding of internet-mediated engagements in developing societies (Sreekumar, 2011; Zamorano, 2009; Pieterse, 2003; Lister, et.al., 2003).

Chapter 1 explored the question of what constitutes the agency of subordinated groups within a technological discourse amidst conditions surrounding technological engagement and minoritization. The dialectical tensions involved in the minorities' use of online new media for political mobilization were further elaborated in Chapter 2. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 have shown that through multiple case studies of minority online political mobilization, we can glean interesting insights on how minority groups surface agency by working through the limits, challenges, and possibilities posed by online media. This Chapter integrates the findings from case studies and analyzes internet-mediated artful forms of resistance across indigenous, Muslim, and queer groupings of

minoritization. It then makes an argument about the value of such forms of resistance as alternative modes of political practice that broaden the realm of the “political”, expand the scope of political strategies, and create pathways for the disruption of structures of inequality and injustice. Finally, the Chapter summarizes the structures and conditions that enable and constrain minority groups’ artful strategies and creative appropriations of technology for political mobilization, while also emphasizing the dilemmas and dangers of such engagements that continue to threaten their internet-mediated activism.

Minorities, the Internet, and modes of artful resistance

Until quite recently, much of the active political lives of subordinate groups have been ignored because they take place at a level we rarely recognize as “political”. Resistance is often captured through overt achievements of political liberties from rallies, street protests, and other forms of open political expression. However, for many of the least privileged minorities, open political action will hardly capture the bulk of political action and resistance. Exclusive attention to declared or overt forms of resistance is also limited in understanding the process by which new political forces and demands germinate. If conception of the political activities is confined to those that are openly declared, we can be driven to conclude that minorities have limited political life, or that minorities are easily swept by the hype of the emancipatory promises of using various technologies. To reiterate Scott, “to do so is to miss the immense political terrain that lies between quiescence and revolt... It is to focus on the visible coastline of politics and to miss the continent that lies beyond” (Scott 1990, p. 199).

In the online realm, there has also been significant scholarly attention towards overt political action and the formation of networks between small and large transnational civil society and activist organizations. For minorities, the Internet is seen either as a

tool which marginalized groups can easily appropriate for emancipation, or as a medium that can further marginalize unknowing minorities. In the context of minority users, there remains room for exploring technology as an arena for struggle and negotiation.

By summarizing the findings from the online political mobilization experiences of the three groupings — indigenous, Moro, and queer, the political strategies of minorities will be articulated: first, as they strategically manage the online medium as an arena of struggle with threats and opportunities that they continuously test, negotiate and localize into their political strategies; second, as they use multiple and creative internet-mediated strategies to communicate resistance against dominant and oppressive power structures; and third, as they use online spaces to mobilize collective action of a largely dispersed and diverse community of members.

Negotiating online media engagement: Hidden transcripts of minority groups

In Chapters 3, 4, and 5, it has been shown that the use of online technology by minority activists entailed a complex negotiation of opportunities and challenges, to the extent that the Internet in itself is considered as “an arena of struggle”. Symbolic forms and creative techniques are engaged as part of a multi-layered negotiation of production and distribution processes that took advantage of technology while accentuating identity and challenging the forces that undermine culture and knowledge. For example, the indigenous organizations had a clear understanding of the varied threats posed by security, commercial forces, and unmanaged internet use towards indigenous culture and ways of life that accompanied the opportunities of using online spaces. Conscious efforts to veer away from website advertisements at the expense of not having interactive chat facilities, of exercising caution over indigenous knowledge productions published online, and creating spaces that represent local culture, history, and struggles

are ways through which ethnic minorities negotiate and localize their internet engagement.

In Chapter 4, findings showed how the MILF, a Muslim minority group involved in armed conflict with the Philippine's military, invested resources to enhance the security of its websites given its experiences with hacking and filtering. Like the indigenous groups, awareness of the dangers of security threats in the online spaces pushed the group to strategize and mobilize resources to minimize such threats, such as disabling interactive forums or chat facilities in their websites. The MILF's website was also managed to communicate its involvement in the peace process, emphasize its engagement with international actors and support by local non-Moros, and its "commitment to anti-terrorism", which is well-targeted given the group's assessment of the website's visitors and possible audience. The MILF's Luwaran website banner was also designed such that it carries the photographs of its past and present leaders to symbolize the history and continuity of the struggle and to inspire feelings of support from the broader Islamic community of supporters.

In Chapter 5, the case of the queer organizations showed that the construction of their identities as queer online activists was essential in legitimizing their work against the discrimination of LGBTs in society. Private talk on dating or pictures of nudity were discouraged in their online spaces, not to abide by heteronormative ideals of "decency", or to judge the sexual as unacceptable, but in consideration of other available online spaces that cater to different objectives for LGBT communities. Political space for the Filipino LGBTs to discuss issues of human rights and discrimination is limited, and efforts to seclude such spaces from the intrusion of external homo or transphobics were made. The organizations also make an effort to warn their members of the consequences of posting private matters in the online space. While queers are not concerned with online security and filtering in the same sense as indigenous or Moro activists, they are

aware that loud voices of discrimination can silence their struggles. They have sought to counter this by “attacking spaces of prejudice” while simultaneously protecting their own space from discriminatory forces. Moreover, Ladlad, the LGBT political party, expressed awareness that if they focused exclusively on queer rights, they would not obtain widespread support even within their own community, given the power of the Church and the self-censorship of these minorities. Thus, it was important to present themselves as fighting against all types of injustice or even seek support from the non-LGBT community, and such expressions of careful discernment show their political savviness.

These forms of silent resistance to threats embedded within technological engagement can be seen as ‘hidden transcripts’, to borrow from James Scott, because while the online spaces carry public presentations of their articulations, an active appropriation and negotiation of technology use takes place behind the stage. Through the eyes of casual observers, minority groups appear to be swept into the hype of technological development, commercialism, or externally imposed norms of professionalization and strategic essentialism. But this dissertation’s “backstage” exploration reveals that these groups are rational actors, carefully planning their online mediations to negotiate technological, state, capitalist, or majority controls. Online credibility-building would seem externally driven but it was shown to be useful for these activists for building moments of contestation and mobilizing support for the struggle. Through their online spaces, they broaden the reach of their struggle to include possible local and global supporters who cannot be reached by their other means of communication. They also organize petitions and campaigns and stabilize existing support networks. As these are small, yet dedicated organizations, they alter the terms of public debate by mobilizing a broader democratic public to support their causes.

Thus, as can be gleaned from the practice of minority organizations, users can be seen as rational actors able to weigh the dangers and benefits of online spaces and challenge harmful consequences and barriers to communication, given their objectives of usage. These debunk the notion that minorities are helpless under the force of technology, a finding alluding to Feenberg's concept of "democratic rationalization of technology" (2002, 2009).

However, while the groups studied in this thesis have come up with creative uses and negotiations of the technology to better achieve their purposes and minimize threats, none of the organizations have engaged in an active interrogation of the Internet's capitalist connections. They also seemed to assume that Internet technology did not necessarily conflict with their cultures and values, but saw it simply as a tool that could be appropriated or negotiated to suit their purposes. To these minority groups, online spaces serve as a platform for the expression of a voice that they have been denied for a long time due to restrictions and limited access in mainstream media forms, although its use needs to be negotiated and managed given the accompanying threats and risks. Engagement with online media was interpreted as part of a continuing process of coping with available opportunities and threats that come with new tools and developments. Among the groups, indigenous organizations have been most cautious about the implications of online engagement to their image as indigenous activist organizations, to indigenous knowledge and way of life, and to their struggle.

Multiple transcripts as political strategy

Chapter 4 has shown that the multiple online spaces used by a Muslim minority revolutionary organization, the MILF, represent the mediation of multiple identities through the process of owning and disowning of online spaces, debunking and accepting

representations, and marking and unmarking articulations. Through an analysis of the meaning-making and multiple uses of online spaces, divergent transcripts were identified, showing how the organization holds together multiple identities, mobilizes politics, talks back to power institutions, rewrites its history, and connects local with global interests. Online media affords them the flexibility to oscillate across multiple representations depending on their goals and purposes. Social media's capacity in facilitating anonymous social communication that can be used to flexibly mark and unmark identity can be considered as an opportunity for multiple representations and articulations that can be owned and disowned amidst layers of multiple subjectivities. Internet technology enables the formulation of multiple divergent transcripts across multiple online spaces, which they use to articulate social and political claims aimed at transcending their subordinated positions. The multiple online spaces engaged by the MILF unveil several playful transcripts that tend to reverse the positions that the movement publicly takes in its official website.

The website is used strategically to narrate their version of history of the Moro struggle, present a detailed account of the Moro's political ideology, differentiate themselves from terrorist organizations and assert an identity unique from 'Filipinos'. This assertion of a unique Moro identity that is not Filipino and not terrorist is crucial as it forms the fundamental basis of the Moro struggle for self-determination. The official website also allows the group to emphasize its diplomatic position by highlighting its participation in peace talks and negates the homogenizing of all Moros as violent and terrorist. Further, they are able to solicit the sympathy and support of the larger Islamic community, among other international actors. Yet the MILF maintains other web sites: an Islamic website directly targeting the greater Islamic community, an e-magazine, which is not fully identified as MILF, as well as Facebook pages that reflect a discourse which at times contradicts its official 'diplomatic positions'. It also invites non-Moro

historians and writers to post opinion pieces in its website. The Internet is providing opportunities for the Moros to construct public spaces online, an opportunity for expression by a group of people who has experienced colonization and marginalization from various media forms for centuries.

If we rely on the *public transcripts* (Scott, 1990), we receive only one version of the group's reality. Without a privileged peek at the *infrapolitics*, we have no way of seeing alternative realities or heterogeneous viewpoints. The multiple online media uses that accompany the official website, and the seditious messages embedded in its official website provide a snapshot of this rupture. Although articulated within the public view, *infrapolitics* are designed to be invisible to the uninformed, or to be ambiguous or indirect so as to be capable of multiple interpretations. As online spaces are considered public spaces and are visible and possibly under the surveillance of the military, the embedding of disguised political message under the blanket of ambiguity and anonymity, and yet presented in public, is key to the MILF's *infrapolitics*. As Scott argues, the impenetrability of anti-hegemonic discourse within public spaces of surveillance, "the social and discursive spaces where the hidden transcripts grow are themselves an achievement of resistance; they are won and defended in the teeth of power" (Scott, 1990, p. 127).

The use of online strategies where the message and messenger are made ambiguous through techniques of disguise and concealment, also facilitate open criticism and contestation as well as uninhibited expressions. Although MILF's website has links to the Facebook page and TMC online magazine, the multiplicity and ambiguity of possible authors provide a protective cover, and thus, no clear author to round-up or investigate, and no official manifestos to denounce. Such is an *infrapolitical* form of political action designed to obscure the intentions or to take cover behind an apparent meaning or author (Scott, 1990: 200). Precisely because

infrapolitical strategies make the message or identity ambiguous, they often escape notice and yet, such strategies represent truthful transcripts of grudges and aspirations that serve as foundation for vengeful dreams, resistant subcultures, and elaborate, open, and institutional forms of resistance. The MILF's online spaces, as a component of their broader political communication strategy, serve as their platform for mobilization, reaching out to a broader, global audience, present discourses alternative to those offered by government, and complement their own 'official' press releases. Catering to multiple audiences, this use of divergent online transcripts can be construed as strategic appropriation of technology and an infrapolitical strategy.

As the new media is not homogeneous in terms of configurations, users can create multiple, divergent representations across online spaces. The online strategies of MILF explored in this dissertation show that Internet technology enables the formulation of divergent transcripts which organizations can use to articulate a wide spectrum of conflicting social and political claims as a strategy of negotiating with multiple agencies including the state, national and international media, grassroots activist supporters, fellow travellers and funders. The politics of disguise and concealment that lies between public and hidden transcripts of subordinate groups becomes crucial in understanding online dissent. These new strategies of political discourse foregrounding infrapolitics help minority groups to circumvent traditional barriers of political communication and alter the quality of debate between minorities, state, and the international community and challenge national limits and boundaries.

Building a collective amidst diversity

Of the three minority groupings, the use of online spaces to bring together members and mobilize them as a collective force was only possible for the queer

organizations because of the critical mass of members that have online access. The Moro and indigenous organizations, due to the limited Internet access of their members to the Internet, used their online spaces primarily for the purpose of reaching out to an external audience to solicit local and global support. It is along this line that I reiterate the importance of the material requirements of technology and how the availability of necessary resources shapes the purposes and actual political uses of the Internet for minority groups.

Evidence from the two queer cases presented the diversity in self-concepts of the Philippine queer community. The framing of narratives and posts in the website and social networking sites converge towards the sharing of experiences of discrimination and marginalization to create solidarity and “community” among the members of this minority group. The reality that homo/transphobia lurks across all sectors in society — in politics, in the workplace, in the university, in the prison, and overseas, implies that LGBTs share a common threat irrespective of their education, religion, and socio-economic status. In the case of Ladlad, a national organization where most online members have no regular face-to-face contact, it is through the community of belonging where they share and confront the basis of oppression, which is discrimination of sexes and genders on the basis of dominant values and norms. A backstage view of their online spaces shows how minoritization and narratives of discrimination are used to mobilize the sentiments of its membership and move them into solidarity and action. Through the sharing of personal experiences of discrimination, LGBTs from a diverse class, social strata, religious beliefs, and self-concepts, find a common ground. This sharing of common experience serves as an affirmation of belonging and works as the foundation for community and social movement online amongst members who are physically ‘dis-embedded’, but socially and politically ‘embedded’. Online spaces where they discuss and exchange experiences and support in ‘cocoons’ shield this group

from discrimination, offer solidarity and support — and at times even legal assistance --
- and allow them to act together against forces of queer discrimination.

A closer analysis of Philippine queer groups' online spaces shows a more complex arena of strategic communication and negotiation of online spaces that operate within cultural orientations and political objectives. A careful discernment of the features, functionality, and risks of different online spaces and the strategic appropriation of these spaces to suit particular purposes in the process of their meaning-making of Internet use were shared by the queer organizations. The organizations' move for setting rules on private and public talk can easily be dismissed as an accommodation of heteronormative norms. However, the organizations cater to a diverse range of ideologies, including those of members whose self-concepts are heavily influenced by the Catholic church. The LGBT community works largely within the confines of a Catholic society, which still widely influences social mores and norms. Setting up rules for distinguishing between "public, political talk" and "private talk" is deemed necessary in order to advance a queer agenda in Philippine society because extremely radical approaches can be immediately nullified or censored. And yet, some members bend such rules creatively. This is by inserting private talk containing personal and sexual musings into the public space. Further, as highlighted in earlier examples, the private and sexual are also embedded in the political articulations and shared experiences that form the basis for their individual and collective political resistance.

The various forms of minority engagement with online media for political mobilization are summarized in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1

Strategic online political mobilization from the margins

	Indigenous	Moro	Queer
Resistance to the threats and risks posed by technological engagement	Managing content production to prevent commercialization of ritual-based indigenous knowledge	Planning of website content and investment in secured services as the group negotiates technological, military, and international relations and controls.	Resistance to threats from homo / transphobic posts by managing the content of its online spaces and working together to report spaces that are abusive or prejudist of LGBTs
	Managing threats to security and online filtering by minimizing interactivity in its website; negotiating the publication of sensitive political content	Managing threats to image and enhancing legitimacy of online productions through the careful assessment of its online audience	Managing threats to image and enhancing legitimacy of online productions through the careful assessment of its online audience
	Consciousness and cautiousness about its ‘public online articulations and content’, and threats to privacy	Consciousness and cautiousness about ‘public online articulations’, and threats to privacy	Consciousness and cautiousness about ‘public online articulations’, and threats to privacy of its members Distinguishing between “public” and “private” talk
Strategic uses of online spaces to communicate resistance	Careful construction of indigenous identity and struggle as strategy to communicate the historico-political context of the struggle	Aspirations of reaching out to multiple international entities are channelized through use of multiple media platforms and negotiating an evolving balance between radicalism and diplomacy	Leveraging on online spaces to conduct framing strategies that facilitate collective resistance and action amidst diversity of membership Presenting the organization as a ‘partner’ of the discriminated and presenting solutions to the problem (prognostic framing) Giving potential recruits a reason for joining collective action (motivational framing) Focusing on detection and pointing out of

	Indigenous	Moro	Queer
			problems that concern the queer community, and breaking some accepted frames in status quo (diagnostic framing)
	Connecting with active networks of indigenous communities globally, sharing of resources and reports on the situation of indigenous communities, and collaborating for international advocacies	Use of multiple divergent articulations across online spaces to target multiple audiences and conceal political meanings	Online spaces are used as cocoons for 'belonging' and to shield the group from discrimination
	Use of indigenous symbolic forms in online spaces to identify and differentiate itself from other not for profit organizations	Use of anonymity and ambiguity to flexibly mark and unmark identity and appeal to varied stakeholders and supporters	Negotiation of online content and image: delineation of the public and private; attacks derogatory posts, deletes negative comments on its own space
	Archiving of position papers, newsletters, publications, and other communication materials for convenient retrieval of member organizations	Use of photographs of its past and present leaders, documentation of its meetings with international actors, and engagement of non-Moro guest writers are strategies for establishing credibility and strengthening the legitimacy of its claims.	Discrimination issues submitted or raised by the LGBT online are compiled as evidence for the struggle and advocacy towards the Anti-Discrimination Bill
Role of technology	Flexibility afforded by online media allowed them to control the extent of Internet engagement, choose the use of particular online media, construct indigenous identity, and minimize the intrusion of	Flexibility afforded by various online media forms allowed them to oscillate across multiple representations that can be owned and disowned amidst layers of multiple subjectivities	Intersection of intimacy and impersonality is made possible in the online space, as a collective is formed out of impersonal ties among queers (embedding-disembedding)

Indigenous	Moro	Queer
commercial	forces	
in its online spaces		

Alternative forms of political practice

The inclusion of minority groups as legitimate actors in national and international politics provides alternative possibilities of doing politics and articulating resistance. This section will discuss the following alternative forms of political practice arising from minority online political mobilization: 1) broadening the arena of politics by seeing the technological as political; 2) expanding the realm of minority politics beyond the nation state; 3) broadening the scope of political strategy through hidden transcripts and infrapolitics; and 4) facilitating the disruption of structures.

The technological as political: broadening the arena of politics

Beck (1997, p. 103) advanced the concept of “*subpolitics*” to represent a new mode of operation of the political, in which agents coming from outside the officially recognized political and corporate system appear on the stage of social design, including different professional groups and organizations, citizens’ issue-centered initiatives, social movements, and individuals⁵⁵. This vision introduces not only political actors organized around traditional institutional identities, but also collective agents of less comprehensive and permanent common characteristics and concerns.

The Internet’s accessibility for geographically disadvantaged and relatively

⁵⁵ This kind of redefining of the sphere and nature of the political to include individuals carries some risks, as Mouffe (2005) has forcefully argued. It hides the danger of reverting the understanding of the political back to the narrowly individual choices and decisions where liberal notions of democracy and citizenship started out (Bakardjieva, 2009).

under and misrepresented minorities provides a platform for those who wish to articulate their claims and generate wider, horizontal support locally and globally. The Internet, therefore, expands the range of political actors beyond the traditional arena of politics, such as the state or large civil society organizations. The platform for engagement, information sharing and public debate created by the minority group's online spaces allow these alternative actors to heterogenize the Internet, challenge its persistent commercialization and disallow the hegemony of certain actors to solely dictate the course of this communications medium. For example, synchronous communication with large groups of people or the multi-logicality of the Internet allows low-resource activists to join the cacophony of voices in the online space.

In asking the question "what is political in subpolitics?", De Vries (2007) distinguished between actions undertaken with the intention of an external end or goal (*poiesis*) and actions that aim at the activities themselves (*praxis*), which involves processes of planning, discussion, negotiation, and decision-making (De Vries, 2007, p. 792). He explained that the political not only constitutes actions where instrumental action is present and a desired end is clearly outlined. The process of engaging in a good discussion, for example, constitutes the realm of the political in subpolitics (p. 795).

It will be recalled, in Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis, how some past studies have perceived minority groups as having lack of control over technology, and therefore potentially further marginalized by its use. In the case studies, we found that minority groups are active subpolitical actors negotiating their engagement with technology as they use it to articulate their political aims. Minority groups did not have clear intention of challenging the instrumental logic of technology, or fighting a predominantly Western, capitalist medium, that is the Internet. However, in the process of engagement, they deliberate and make decisions about its relevance to their cause. The experiences of minority groups with the use of online media for activism showed that strategic use of

technology is *emergent*, and in reality, arises out of practice. The multitude of challenges, threats, and risks but also possibilities clothed in online media engagement make planning strategically, in the strict sense of the term, onerous. Minority groups' strategic use of technology developed with a continued engagement and reflection by the actors of the implications of technology use for the group and the struggle. The organizations had pre-set purposes for particular communication strategies, yet such purposes developed over time. The decision of the minority groups to continue or expand the use of the online space also developed after learning how to negotiate technological engagement. I argue that the process of backstage planning, deliberation, and negotiation by the groups about their online political mobilization can be construed as subpolitical strategies.

The process of choosing positions and courses of action vis-a-vis debates and clashes of values and interests in a larger social world represents an instance of subpolitics (Bakardjieva, 2009, p. 96). The case studies presented in this thesis have shown how the interests of disenfranchised minorities and participants in technological systems have gradually become articulated and have led to the emergence of politicized formations challenging the existing hierarchical order. With their collective as well as individual decisions and negotiations surrounding online political mobilization, minorities have demonstrated not only that they are able to make their political claims audible if provided the opportunity, but they also showed that the technological can be political. Thus, such forms of democratic rationalization of technology (Feenberg, 1999, 2002, 2009a, 2009b), where users experience technology as "an arena of struggle" and in turn work their way through such struggle, are subpolitical acts.

Expanding the realm of the minority politics beyond the nation-state

The nation-state is an important frame of reference for asserting claims, and serves as the primary context for the everyday lives and imaginations for most people. Minorities' claims of unmet grievances and experiences of suffering from the majority's issue-framing practices are closely related to their situation as minorities within the nation-state. Chapters 3 and 4 provided empirical evidence and analysis of how the Internet is being used by minority groups to bring local issues into the international political arena to solicit support. Specifically, the indigenous and Moro groups value the establishment of international networks and connections with a variety of actors as a way to move out from their minoritization. Thus, minority activists are expanding the realm of the political as they reach out beyond national territorial boundaries. Simultaneously, their use of the medium also poses a challenge to the boundaries of the political arena.

The queer groups do not directly target the international community in their online articulations but reported interactions with and recognition by some international organizations of the activities posted in their website, particularly their accreditation as a political party. Fridae.com, BBC and CNN, for example, have covered the organization's struggle for accreditation as an LGBT political party as well as its candidature in the 2010 elections. But despite this interest from international "players," the group has chosen to remain localized in its focus.

Moreover, the Internet provides activists with a medium through which they can develop informational resources. The groups found the online archiving of petitions, opinion statements and documentation of organizational activities useful for convenient retrieval by its members or supporters, especially given the problems these groups face with regard to displacements, disasters, and office movements. As information resources

used to be dominated by those who have access to mainstream media, these productions by minority groups are also important as they expand information and political resources that can be tapped by journalists, bloggers, academics, and political analysts both local and abroad. According to Rodgers (2003), this expansion of informational sources can limit the opportunities for any category of actors to hegemonically influence the discourse of political legitimacy.

A challenge for these alternative sites of politics is generating an audience from those it seeks understanding from — the target governments, the social majority, intellectuals, and the broader mass media — that can further broaden the reach of these groups' articulations and productions beyond its membership or existing supporters. For the queer groups, the Facebook tagging feature is believed to have facilitated the inadvertent exposure of the groups' advocacies and campaigns to potential non-LGBT supporters (and voters) and it has called the media's attention towards important cases of LGBT discrimination. Ladlad's Twitter function, for example, has allowed it to connect to important media and entertainment personalities, publicly known intellectuals, and journalists, who have begun to promote the organization through their television shows and "tweets" in *Twitter*.

According to the MILF, the generation of up to date news and editorial content in its website is important, as it is used actively by Moro bloggers and international journalists. A review of MILF's website analytics for the month of April, 2010 showed that its website is visited by guests from a variety of countries, with the top visitors coming from the United States, Saudi Arabia, and the Philippines. Moro bloggers, historians, and Mindanao analysts interviewed for this study confirmed their regular reliance on MILF's website for news on the Moro struggle and general updates in the Moro communities (J. Abbas, A. Mawalil, and M. Macarambon, Personal communication, April-May, 2010 & June-August, 2011). Indigenous organizations,

however, refuse to engage in interactive social media due to resource and capacity limitations and security concerns. Nonetheless, they still publish online their position papers, documentaries, and news on a variety of issues affecting indigenous communities. Members of indigenous organizations' network of NGOs share them in their respective social networking sites with the objective of reaching a broader audience. Video documentaries on indigenous land struggles uploaded in their website are also cross-posted in other video-sharing sites to generate broader attention and viewership.

Hidden transcripts and infrapolitics: Broadening the scope of online political strategy

As summarized in the earlier section, a backstage view of the meaning-making and strategic engagement by minority groups of their online spaces surfaces *hidden transcripts* and *infrapolitics* that represent creative ways by which they resist technological challenges and at the same time negotiate the risks and opportunities of online political mobilization. By distinguishing between the open, declared forms of resistance of minority groups which attract the most attention, and the low-profile, undeclared resistance that constitutes the minorities' use of technology to advance their political claims, this study identifies alternative ways that resistance to domination and hegemony can be exercised. Paying close attention to the use of particular features of online media, political acts are disguised, concealed, or made ambiguous, and multiple meanings can be generated to target diverse audiences, and cater to competing voices that may support a minority organization. Such strategies create new dimensions of understanding political action and technological possibilities and constraints in creating new spaces for actors from the margins.

Moreover, indigenous organizations, given their broad exposure and participation in resistance against capitalism and corporate greed disguised as ‘economic projects’ in indigenous ancestral lands, have exercised the same caution and resistance in the online space. Their careful crafting of website content and planning of website features that veer away from the trappings of commercial forces in the online medium also reflect a political and counter-hegemonic strategy.

Disruption of structures

The use of online spaces by minority groups to articulate their struggles and positions is directed toward the disruption of the status quo and its structures, which often support inequity and injustice. The voices of minorities amidst Philippine’s democracy, for example, is a reminder that despite freedom of speech and democratic structures of governance that are supposed to look after the needs of all Filipinos, minority oppression and marginalization persist. This disrupts the narratives of normalcy and false democracy presented in mainstream discourses. Communities at the fringes that pose challenges and threats to dominant cultures assert their right to be recognised, and seek new platforms to voice their grievances.

For instance, articulation by indigenous communities about corporate mining encroaching upon indigenous ancestral lands communicates a counter-hegemonic attack not only against the forces of capitalism that drive such encroachment, but also against the government, which has publicly vowed to protect indigenous peoples’ right to ancestral domain under local laws and internationally recognized declarations. Connections made with indigenous communities in other parts of the world help them build horizontal networks that reinforce their courage in speaking against power

structures. Such articulations and representations of local reality disrupt the narratives of progress expected out of such ‘development’ projects in indigenous lands.

On the other hand, the Muslim minority’s continued performance of “screen memories” (Ginsburg, et.al, 2002), historical roots of minoritization of the Moros and circumstantial annexation to the Philippine state, and its clamour for recognition of the oppression and neglect under the Philippine state, help provide a basis for understanding their political claims. Such presents a disruption of the rhetoric of Philippine democracy. In this instance, Moro performances online “disrupt the status quo symbolically” (Dutta, 2011) by situating the dominant rhetoric of democracy and peace beside the lived experience of conflict, oppression, hunger and marginalization of Moro communities. Articulations in the MILF’s Facebook page also communicate another disruption as they present views alternative from the MILF leadership. Similarly, queer online articulations with regard to the depth of discrimination in Filipino society challenges dominant notions that queers are “well-accepted” or “tolerated”.

Culturally, such performances draw attention to structural injustices and articulate calls for various sectors, local and global, to aid in the efforts of disrupting the structures of oppression. In the case of minorities that have a critical mass of members online such as the queer community, collective identities that are created through performances bring together shared experiences of discrimination and difficulty, which in turn creates group aspirations of social justice and creates mechanisms for exchange of resources and experiences. As argued by Dutta (2011), as markers of culture, these performances demonstrate material possibilities of dynamic cultural expressions that deconstruct old meanings and create new ones, and “such cultural politics opens up spaces for change in consciousness, which in turn forms the basis for legislative and other forms of political change.” (p. 214).

The performance of dissent by these minority groups online extends local symbolic sites of resistance to the realm of the mainstream culture, state regulation and capitalist controls. These performances also disrupt the material structures of exploitation. Without communicative spaces, structural marginalization is reified because it perpetuates minorities' inability to articulate the absence of resources and inability to find solutions to absences. Online political mobilization gives minority groups a voice to speak against historical structures surrounding their minoritization. This process also provides them the opportunity to learn about similar issues and strategies from other minority actors in other parts of the globe, attract understanding and support from the external community, and obtain strength through solidarity and belonging with minorities of similar experiences. At the same time, they facilitate the production of their own resources as well as archive of statements and histories that they pass on to inspire future struggles.

Enabling and constraining structures and conditions

I now discuss the multiple enabling and constraining structures surrounding minority online political mobilization. According to Sreekumar (2011, p. 164), civil society-led ICT initiatives fail if they ignore the embedded nature of technology. As technology is not independent of local and social forces and resources, it is important that ICTs are appropriated by local organizations with careful assessment of the actual usefulness of the technology given local conditions. Thus, the identification of social and political constraints that marginalized communities face in their engagement with technology is crucial in understanding social innovations.

The cases of online political mobilization by minority groups represent cases of technological engagement from within. This differentiates minority groups' online

political mobilization from ICT for development interventions for marginalized communities where the purposes and rules of use are often developed from the “top” (i.e. policymakers, technology providers) and imposed upon the “bottom” (grassroots community of users). The lure of technological promises to development and project funds attracts marginalized communities to take in ICT for development projects. However, such technology interventions may not necessarily have relevance to the communities’ everyday lives, struggles, or needs. In contrast to many ICT for development interventions, where technology and purpose are normally imported from national governments or international development agencies to the communities, these experiences of new technology appropriation explored in this study emanate from the minority groups’ exploration of how to make use of available communication tools to advance their minoritized positions and find support and solutions to their struggles. A long history of minoritization from social, economic, and political fronts, and their previously limited access to outlets of expression and fair representation in traditional media forms have encouraged these groups to value the availability of online spaces in which they can communicate their struggles strategically to a broader audience that other media forms they use for communicating resistance (i.e. local radio, newsletters) could not reach.

The organizations reported that launching online spaces was attractive to them because an online space serves as a communicative space that they could build and own, ‘without the mediation or control of others’ and which was accessible to them despite their limited resources. Purposive and strategic uses of online media emanated from a drive to use available technological tools for emancipation and weave them into existing activist and resistance goals of the organizations. This is one of the most important enabling conditions of minority groups’ strategic uses of online media.

The minority groups' awareness of their relations with the State and the existing controls and regulations governing online spaces inspire their strategic appropriation of technology. Although technology is introduced through external sources (i.e. other organizations or partners/funders), the objective, purpose, and design of online spaces develops internally. Their activist roots, prolonged immersion into community causes and anti-capitalist views from decades of colonial experience yielded a more careful appropriation of technology, which prevents undermining cultural identity and community values. As national minorities, these groups have often been marginalized from state support. Thus, international linkages are deemed to play an important role in making their issues more prominent in national and international circuits, thereby creating opportunities for obtaining greater state attention towards their issues.

Historical motivations. The historical experience of marginalization, “Othering”, and prejudice inspired the groups to be careful of how they constructed themselves and their struggle in online space. They believed that what they put online contributes to the construction of minority activist agency, as articulated by a CPA leader, “Our website is us — our organization, our struggle, what do we aspire for. The website represents us!” At the same time, they are minorities, and therefore have a particular way of representing themselves ‘uniquely’. “This is who we are. That is what we are not... This kind of information we can say public, these ones are ritual-based and should not come out” (Tebtebba leader, Personal communication, May 2010). These considerations make them cautious at the backstage, in the process of deciding what words, symbols, and meanings would constitute them and the struggle. Similarly, the MILF Web team narrated that the Luwaran website banner carries photographs of past and present MILF leaders, including those who have passed away, as these communicate the long history of the struggle and inspire feelings of support from their Islamist supporters.

Clearly, the groups were not only concerned about expression: voicing out their dissent, angst, frustrations, or even anticipated futures, but took into consideration a target audience, what an audience might make of their articulations, and what the audience could do with their online utterances and productions. Their exposure to issues of imperialism and global capitalism, which played an important role in the devastation of their lands (indigenous groups) or minoritization from a place they previously ruled (Moros), made them cautious that similar forces could potentially affect their online initiatives. For indigenous and Moro organizations, their distrust of the state motivated them to invest in more secure Internet hosting facilities and caution in their website articulations. The queer groups are also conscious of homo and transphobic entities lurking in online spaces. Laddad, for example, has imposed rules that discouraged anonymity amongst the members participating in its social networking sites and e-groups.

Further, online media engagement is shaped by enabling and constraining structures, which have historically evolved to shape minorities meaning-making of this communicative space. Historical linkages with international actors and entities influenced the connections they sought to build through their online activities. The Moros' experiences with colonization and continued armed conflict with the state have encouraged them to seek support from the international community, particularly Islamic supporters and philanthropists from the Middle East, international entities monitoring the peace and conflict situation in Mindanao, and the United States, given its historical involvement in the conflict in Mindanao. A strong network of indigenous organizations globally, on the other hand, and the availability of globally linked indigenous initiatives and advocacies have inspired and sustained the indigenous group's use of online spaces not only to document its internal activities but to exchange developments and initiatives with indigenous groups in other parts of the world. The groups' reflection and

awareness of the history of their minoritization and their relationships with the state and other international actors, suggest a purposive appropriation of technology.

Nation-state. National minorities are often neglected or marginalized from state policies and programs. As minority groups seek connection with international actors to solicit alternative audiences and support, minority groups remain restricted by the technological environment and regulatory policies imposed at the nation-state level. A regime of state control and surveillance at the virtual front may limit the possibilities of what can be done online, and can also influence the results of their online political mobilization.

All the three minority groupings, connected to their position as subordinated cultures, have complex relationships with the state. Historically, the articulation of their respective claims is foregrounded by a sustained tension between state response and political openings vis-a-vis state control or aggression. The Moro group, given its secessionist roots and armed conflict with the military, encounters the greatest animosity in terms of state relations despite being involved in continued peace negotiations. It is because of these conflicting relations with the state that they need to manage multiple online representations. As they continue to participate in peace negotiations and bargain for an acceptable political settlement, they need to project a diplomatic stance in their official website pages, especially as international actors monitor the peace talks and movements of Muslim revolutionary actors under counter-terrorism. However, the group also works through this constraint imposed by the need to pursue its political bargain with the Philippine state. As presented in Chapter 5, through the use of multiple online spaces, some members are free to articulate expressions that may run counter to their official website positions.

The Moro group also showed how imaginations of an Islamic “nation” have inspired them to seek support and solidarity with Islamic communities outside the

Philippines. In the earlier chapters, I introduced Anderson's (1991) concept of an 'imagined community', where media play crucial roles in producing nations and shaping national imaginaries. Here, we look at the Muslim minority's use of online media as a mode of reconfiguration of a *Bangsamoro* nation (Islamic Republic separate from the Philippine state) that has well-established ties with international actors of similar experience. The situation of Islam in the Philippines (and its role for a Moro nation) and globally, is also analyzed dialectically, especially as the resurgence of Islam can only be comprehended as a selective response to concrete historical transformations:

The reassertion of self-respect in the face of generations of humiliation at the hands of Europe and America naturally bears an Islamic face, for it is among the villages and the new proletariat that traditional Islamic cultural expression has survived, and it is in those groups that the ideas of individual Muslim thinkers have found the mass support necessary to become a political movement of historical importance (Nielsen, 1982, p.3, quoted in San Juan, 2006, p. 414).

The use of an Islamic version of the website thus created a sense of belonging with other Islamic communities, as the MILF was able to find audience and solidarity among Muslim activists, intelligentsia, philanthropists and supporters, as well as fundamentalists. However, the organization's location within the boundaries of the Philippine nation and the hosting of its websites in the United States implies that the political uses and controls of cyberspace by national or international structures also figure in the Muslim minority's actualization of its goals in the use of online media. Constraints in terms of national resources, infrastructure, and skills that are connected to the Moro's position as national minorities also determine the reality of the reach of the message to the grassroots, and raise questions about issues of representation and 'speaking for' the rest of the Moro community. Also, while MILF's websites reached their target Islamic supporters both for moral and financial support, the sites also attracted extremists offering support and encouraging the MILF to shift from its 'diplomatic' approach to 'more radical' directions.

The indigenous group CPA, which has a more leftist orientation, also expressed concern over the radical posts it articulates in its website, but nonetheless argued that they need to report and provide opinion even on sensitive issues, such as abductions, land grabbing and adverse effects of ‘development projects’ towards indigenous communities. Tebtebba, an international indigenous organization, also expressed caution on reporting harassment or political abuses rendered by certain governments towards some communities, given these communities’ expressed fears of retaliation by government.

Both organizations reported experiences of hacking and spamming of their online spaces and this has affected their decision not to have interactive chat features in their websites to prevent their adversaries from maligning them in their own spaces. These examples show how minority groups, even in contemporary times, are cautious of the implications of online public presentations to their articulations. The control of what to express publicly and what to keep private, as well as managing the expression of their resistance, are strategies that have emanated from their online media engagement. These strategies encompassing public expressions and private uttering, and the use of symbolic forms are important components of politics, in the context of minoritization.

However, while minority activists widen their repertoires of contention, states are still the drivers of technology and have huge control over its development. While minorities are able to build international alliances through their online presence, these international entities still strongly recognize state institutions over activists; and even though the groups are able to reach out to potential networks beyond the nation state, their struggles still require nation-state attention. The actual outcomes of their online political mobilization to solicit support from international actors are dependent on how these solidarities and support generated could translate into influence on state positions and expedited action towards their grievances and claims.

Global/transnational. The Internet's global character allows minorities to share common experiences, problems, and strategies with people who face similar cases of minoritization around the world. Given the limits of opportunities provided to minorities at the nation-state level, minorities globally have sought connections and networks with similar communities in other parts of the world. It is within this global networking that formal and informal international organizations of minorities have been established.

For the Moro and indigenous groups, it is this connection, and the possibilities of expanding their network of supporters that motivated the groups to embark on the creation of online spaces. For the MILF, this includes the perception that obtaining the international community's support (i.e. the United States, International Monitoring Group, and Organization of Islamic Countries) would influence the Philippine state in taking more seriously their political demands for sub-statehood. They believe that such networks and negotiations project an image of commitment to peace and cooperation, which could help fast track the enactment of political resolutions to the conflict. This strategy reflects the transnational context by which such minority activists craft their purpose and strategies of online political mobilization. It also shows that nation-states as the sole defining basis for political interaction is therefore undermined by online media use.

For the Moro cause, the international community monitoring the conflict as active audience and the presence of Muslim brothers to draw support from served as motivational factors for the MILF to go online. Given the MILF's aspirations for broad international networks, the organization maintains a balance in seeking the support of potential international supporters that have competing politico-ideological ends. The internationalization of the struggle was a primary objective of having the online space and also motivated the organization to strategize using the medium's functionalities.

Similarly for the indigenous groups, the internationalization of the indigenous rights discourse stemmed from the collective work of indigenous communities in different parts of the world. Given the commonalities of struggle of many indigenous communities globally, international solidarity had been strengthened over the years. The passing of the *Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, where both indigenous case study organizations actively participated in, is an example of international solidarity building that motivates a local organization into participating within global discourses. Likewise, the intervention of the international community on national issues of forced disappearances, mining and extractions, and climate change that impact on communities' ancestral domain give prominence to the importance of these networks for smaller local indigenous communities.

It was surprising that the same was not apparent for the LGBT groups, despite the level of online activity of many queer groups and their activism in other parts of the world. Although the queer groups studied in this thesis cited instances of LGBT movements or cases of discrimination in other parts of the world, the online spaces were built primarily to convene a local movement and collective rather than to reach out to a global audience. This seems to show that when a critical mass of minority members uses technology, the political mobilization appears to become more internally targeted. Nonetheless, they also attract Filipino LGBTs located in other parts of the world. Given that the political voice (i.e. seat in Congressional policy-making) sought by *Ladlad* is determined through national elections, the group perceives that it first needs to prioritize the generation of support from its membership, local and abroad. By doing so, they will have sufficient capacity to penetrate the state and alter policy.

The indigenous and Moro groups aspire to internationalize the struggle in response to government's shortcomings in protecting their interests, whether from corporate greed or oppressive "development projects". The solidarity built with other groups

globally, the information, resources, and strategies exchanged, and feeling of finding a broader audience is valued by these minority groups. However, while minority groups' uses of new media have been strategic and purposive, the transnational circuits and structures surrounding online new media render these spaces not fully controllable by the minority groups. Therefore, while we see emergent strategies of creative appropriation and concrete benefits in terms of resource mobilization by reaching out to a wider, international audience, we also see ways in which minority struggles can be threatened by the same transnational nature of the online space. Media flow is much too dynamic to be controlled, but the minority groups attempt to manage their online expositions through a discernment of the risks accompanying the publishing of content and the construction of their identities and struggle.

Community/organization. It is important to note that most of the organizations studied in this thesis have relatively more resources in comparison with other minority organizations in the Philippines. Limitations in financial resources are compensated by educated and activist leaders who have some background on the use of computers and Internet, and who have linkages with local and global actors and organizations. CPA, Tebtebba, Ladlad, and the MILF are broad-based organizations in the Philippine context, which represent a number of members, member-organizations, and networks. In comparison to the four groups, UP Babaylan, as a student organization, is smallest in terms of membership, more informally-organized, and relies heavily on the volunteerism of its members. Nonetheless, Babaylan is run by students from the State University with ample Internet capability and also receive some support from its alumni network, *Babaylanes*, who also have become the leaders of other bigger LGBT organizations in the country.

As online engagement entails material and skill requirements, the groups' purposes were driven by the reality of Internet access of their communities and

members. As the queer organizations have a critical mass of users to mobilize online, they capitalized on social networking sites where queers actively participated, to campaign and mobilize as a political force. As most communities represented by the indigenous and Moro organizations did not have access and the skills to use the Internet, the online spaces were targeted towards the external community of supporters, while traditional forms of communication and mobilization were maintained for their grassroots communities to retain enclaves of support from the ground. For these groups, the Internet is seen as most useful for publicity, credibility-building, and networking with like-minded and internet-connected local and international organizations. In interactions with their local networks and members which are mostly grassroots-based, they still rely on face to face communication and other relevant media such as print, radio, and telephone communication. This implies that minority groups are aware of what are the most appropriate media to reach particular audiences.

Further, while the groups strategize their online engagement so that they serve the purpose of broadening support towards the struggle, there is no effective gauge over how such “international linkages and connections” can contribute to a resolution of the struggles in the way envisioned by the groups. Online articulations and connections increased the exposure of the groups’ struggles and provided alternative discourses that challenge dominant frames. However, as emphasized in the case studies, the role of mainstream media and intellectuals that make these alternative online productions, statements of opposition and alternative histories accessible to the mainstream and public majority is relevant. The Facebook characteristics of tagging and sharing of resources helped the queer groups in expanding the reach of their campaigns to non-queers, as it allows inadvertent exposure to content not normally sought by a user.

Technological. The online communicative environment alters the social conditions in which people speak, making it possible for ordinary individuals and

underrepresented groups to move from being passive consumers of information, to active participants. In this environment, minorities are offered opportunities to communicate their struggles, correct lingering prejudices, and potentially become part of the process of building a democratic culture (Bailey & Harindranath, 2006, p. 311-313; Siapera, 2007, 2010; Ginsburg, 2008; Mehra, et.al., 2004; Meier, 2008). But there are competing perspectives on whether online media work for, or against, cultural diversity as the online media logic also sets its own rules, norms, and politics of representation (Siapera, 2010, p. 183; Ginsburg, et.al., 2002, Ginsburg, 2008; Latufeku, 2006; Lovink, 2004; Nakamura, 2002, 2007). What features of online spaces enable or constrain minority groups' political mobilization? How does minority online engagement contribute in the shaping of the future of media?

Online media's capacity for bringing in dispersed minorities together to discuss common issues, express fears, or provide advice had been particularly useful for these minority groups, where public and offline articulation is limited by available spaces for physical gatherings. Moreover, all the three groups have limited access to mainstream media forms. Media representations of these minorities are often biased and there is limited space for articulating their political claims. The many-to-many reach of Internet technology allowed these minorities to penetrate the scene of politics. The absence of mass-media style editorial control also opens up possibilities for new forms of political engagement, and gives minorities the opportunity to create new informational resources about their grievances, aspirations and struggles. According to the deliberative model of politics, encountering new opinions would encourage people to rethink their views, reconsider their biases and predilections, and foster reflection and understanding (Arendt 1968 cited in Wocjieszak, 2010, p. 640). Fraser argued that minorities are important in balancing the views within any rational critical discourse, and emphasized the importance of multiple public spheres (rather than a unitary public sphere) to allow

minority groups to form an opinion, plan, and strategize their actions. In a multicultural context, Dahlgren (2001) predicted that the Internet will likely encourage these multiple public spheres which serve as spaces for discussion.

Online spaces afford the flexibility of secluding group articulations into cocoons of solidarity and support on the one hand, while simultaneously enjoining the support of external communities and attacking prejudist remarks in these spaces. This flexibility works for minority groups who need spaces where they can build a community while challenging misrepresentations and prejudices. The evidence of multiple and simultaneous strategies show that the coming together of minorities as secluded groups does not necessarily reinforce their segregation or marginalization. Nonetheless, the online space remains a site of diverse voices and interests and continues to cater to prejudice and hate speech, commercial forces, and state-controlled entities that can undermine or pose challenges to the representations made by minority groups.

The circuits, reach, and interpretations of online messages are also unpredictable, and the posts can easily be used by antagonists to reinforce prejudices, further segregate minorities, and nullify the seriousness of their demands. Further, uncontrolled exchanges can expose the organizations' competing ideologies, covert operations, or internal conflicts and cast a shadow of doubt over their capacity to speak for and manage the rest of their community. These dilemmas represent the challenges of venturing into an interactive virtual realm, the difficulties of maintaining control over organizational image and representation, and the importance of both pre-determined and emergent strategies of technological appropriation. Still, their online articulations provide an important alternative and pose a challenge to hegemonic discourses and, as earlier argued, contribute to the disruption of the structures of prejudice and discrimination. These then provide an entry point for new or alternative political

articulations and voices. These sites of solidarity-building and political mobilization can serve as basis for the germination of louder and broader forms of resistance.

Nonetheless, the emancipatory power of the Internet should not be exaggerated. It would be wrong to perceive that the online strategies are free of the domination imposed by class, gender, or religion (Fung, 2002). As Foucault argued, when subjects participate in any social practices, they are immediately caught up within the relationships of power struggle (Foucault, 1980). Amongst the Moro activists and members of the Web Team, for example, the men significantly outnumber the women. The important leadership positions, those who make important decisions on the online content and productions, were occupied by men. For queer organizations, having balanced representations from the diverse groupings is also a challenge. The organization would have to manage the predominant representations by gay males and potential overshadowing of issues of other groupings within the community. Also, within these minority groupings are further sub-groupings that add layers to the extent of minoritization. A leader of Ladlad emphasized the difficulty experienced in mobilizing LGBT members from the Muslim community, not only because many of them do not have access to the Internet but because they face more stringent societal and religious norms that prevent them from coming out as members of the queer community.

However, these strategies are not just instruments of power or manifestations of power struggles, but also have the potential to become the sources of liberation (LaFountain, 1989, p. 128). This is manifested in the way in which the discursive politics taking place in their internet political mobilization strategies provide users with the possibility of contesting hegemonic discourses that bind subjects within the control of 'normal' identities (Fung, 2002). These include having the capability to challenge dominant representations and misrepresentations. For example, contestation of such

judgments can be seen in wide-ranging debates over the way that the largely Christian dominated Filipino society perceives the Moros as violent, of indigenous people as backward, or gays as immoral, comedians or hairstylists. It is at such a juncture that counter-discourses can be used as “a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy” (Foucault, 1980, p.101). As Best and Kellner (1991, p. 59) explained, “counter-discourses provide a lever of political resistance by encapsulating a popular memory of previous forms of oppression and struggle and a means of articulating needs and demands”.

The way in which such an engagement of discourse politics by marginal groups foregrounds their own identity and facilitates the development of new forms of subjectivity and values (Foucault, 1982, p. 216) can be demonstrated by the ways in which these minority activists create their own “screen memories”, construct their struggles, and define themselves online. It is important to emphasize that all the groups found importance in their online spaces as a way of articulating their struggles through their own voices, and finding room for speaking about themselves in a way that challenges the decades of prejudice and misrepresentation that the majority or mass media has created. For example, the Moros have asserted that through their online spaces, they can be seen not only as fighters, as projected by the mass media, but as “humans”. The indigenous organizations, on the other hand, have found their online presence as a way of providing a counterpoint to assumptions that indigenous people are passive, backward, or technology-averse.

Finally, the queer organizations’ online political activism is an attempt, firstly, to invite its members to be engaged in issues that concern the community, and second, to convince them that they are not a nuisance, but can be political actors articulating real claims on politics and human rights. Moreover, subjectivities are surfaced within the organizations. Queer leaders noted how, through online reporting by its members, they

are made aware of the breadth and extent of discrimination faced by LGBTs across the archipelago. Similarly, online networks and connections made by indigenous organizations with similar advocates in other parts of the world allow them to share experiences of oppression and strategies for activism. As seen in the social networking sites of the MILF, members with viewpoints that are contrary to its official views were able to express them in the organization’s website. Mainstream intellectuals with political and social influence also play a critical role in creating spaces which capture, share, and exchange these minority productions and presentations and which facilitate dialogue across multiple voices and views. Given the above, the Internet therefore reconfigures agent-structure relations, most specifically by disputing the role of structure as the key determinant in defining agency.

Table 6.2. Enabling and Constraining Structures and Conditions

Levels of Analysis	Enabling or Constraining Structures
Organizational /minority grouping	<p><u>Historical motivations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• History of minoritization (exclusion from formal communicative institutions; historical grievances; suffering from others’ representation and image-making practices; absence of platforms to represent themselves and articulate struggles; desire for a voice and correct mis-representations; goal of gaining a broader audience) influence strategic online political mobilization <li>• Groups have a clear purpose for online media use, such as producing “screen memories” of minority history & struggle that has been eliminated from traditional media narratives <li>• Exposition of minority culture online is not seen as a strategic essentialism but a need to articulate local culture to present the historical and cultural basis for their political claims <li>• Public space for mobilization and articulation of minority grievances is limited <li>• Colonial experience as source of struggle <p><u>Organizational capacity and management structures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activist leadership

Levels of Analysis	Enabling or Constraining Structures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal ICT resources but educated, middle class leadership aware of opportunities and challenges / risks of technology • Sensitivity to technological risks and leftist stance influence the style of regulation and content of the online spaces, including decision-making on private – public utterances
State / Nation	<p><u>Regulatory policies and state-minority group/civil society relations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differential levels of political conflict with the state • Different aspects of minoritization yield different kinds and levels of regulation of online articulations • Some levels of state response vis-a-vis state controls and inability to address the long history minority grievances • Political climate allows general tolerance over expressions of dissent • State regulation and controls inspire multiple, divergent presentations online • State relations with minorities provide caution on content and style of online presentations • For radical organizations, sensitive relations with the state discourage them from the use of online media’s functionalities (i.e. interactive chat in online spaces) • State relations inspire minorities’ control of public and hidden transcripts and exercise of infrapolitics • Aspiration to belong to an imagined community (i.e. Muslims and indigenous peoples in other parts of the globe) also inspired online political mobilization
Technological.	<p><u>Features and capacities of online spaces</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding-disembedding. Online media’s capacity for bringing in dispersed minorities together in a platform for solidarity-building and discussion of issues • Multi-logicality. The many to many characteristics of internet technology allowed minorities to penetrate the scene of politics; Members are able to participate in online discussions, particularly in social media outlets • Flexibility and anonymity. Capability to move swiftly from anonymity to authenticity in multiple online spaces (retains multiple divergent articulations while denying accountability in certain representations) • Global character of the internet allows locally-situated groups to reach out to global actors. • Multiplicity of online spaces with different characteristics and features allows the groups to choose online spaces to

Levels of Analysis	Enabling or Constraining Structures
	<p>serve different functionalities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User controls to manage online image and self-presentation • Capability to build solidarity and support as “cocoon” and protecting the online community from prejudice, balanced by the presence of conservative actors on the Web
Transnational/ Global	<p><u>International linkages and partnerships</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonalities of marginalization with minorities in different parts of the world • Already existing solidarities and networks with similar minorities • International minority rights discourse • Enhanced possibilities for resource building and financial support • Networking with international actors with competing ethico-political ideologies and interests requires complex and emergent strategies • Global actors may support minority interests but respect national sovereignty

Chapter summary

The strategic imperatives of minority groups’ online political mobilization strategies make these appropriations of technology fundamentally different from the logics of political action in modern democracies. Beyond the public claims being made, an entire range of purposes and strategies, as well as enabling and constraining structures are obscured behind an apparent meaning. Such political actions can be explicit (open articulations of historical grievances) or covert (internal negotiations of Internet use and political expression). Their online political mobilization strategies communicate important meanings by which minorities engage with technology, view the controls and forces surrounding technology, and use technology to achieve political goals in the light of structures and conditions of use.

Without a view of front stage and back stage strategies, we are driven to see technology only as either an emancipatory or colonizing tool and disregard the web of constraining and enabling structures that shape minority groups' engagement. What this synthesis chapter has sought to show is how minority online political mobilization must be understood, which is, first, an arena of struggle, where online media engagement involves a careful negotiation of technological opportunities and risks. At the same time, it can be seen as a context for struggle, where the online space is used as a platform for the expression of resistance, mobilization, and networking with potential supporters, which in turn create new and creative forms of political engagement. Through such online political mobilization experiences, we see alternative forms of political practice that push the boundaries of the political beyond the nation-state, expand the scope of what counts as political strategy, present the technological as political, and create opportunities for the disruption of structures of injustice.

A history of minoritization, exposure to multiple threats and controls, and deprivation of communication resources have shaped a conscious and cautious stance of technological engagement by these groups, with attention to the structures that enable and constrain their strategic uses of technology. Through creative strategies, they are able to find ways of transforming technology beyond being an arena of struggle and extend it into a site in which they can articulate their claims and mobilize their communities and supporters.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

The fact of having kept silent...this is the most dangerous thing of all. For by keeping silent one is relegated to oneself.

(Kierkegaard, 1954, p. 167 [1849])

A community will evolve only when people control their communication.

(Fanon, 1967)

This thesis aimed to contribute to the literature on cultural politics and Internet-mediated activism by analyzing a recent form of political mobilization that is being conducted beyond the confines of traditional civil society activism. The thesis focused on activists from the margins--indigenous, Muslim, and sexual minorities -- and their engagement of online media technologies for political mobilization. Multiculturalism has inspired studies on cultural politics, or the political mobilization of minorities on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, or gender, while the availability of the Internet for these minorities have inspired various forms of political engagement and mobilization. But the Internet caters to the competing forces of hegemony and counter-hegemony. As a neoliberal product, the Internet carries potentials for nurturing the exploitative agendas of multinational and transnational corporations, in maintaining state controls, in silencing activism, and in reinforcing dominant cultures and norms. At the same time, however, the Internet also opens up a space by which the resistive capabilities of people from the margins can be facilitated and the articulation of their struggles amplified.

Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 highlighted that the online political mobilization strategies of minorities are two pronged. On the one hand they enlarge the communicative spaces of these minorities for producing their *screen memories* which serve as narratives of their oppression and alternative rendering of events. In turn these

screen memories disrupt the grand narratives of development, fake democracies, and economic progress that do not trickle down benefits towards minorities. Through these online spaces, they are able to challenge misrepresentations, misunderstandings, discriminations and prejudices, as well as interrogate social injustices, as they articulate possible futures for themselves and alternative solutions for their struggles. These locally narrated stories highlight alternative rationalities, new forms of engaging with politics, new ways of forming collectivities, and create entry points for global connections against marginalization among minoritized peoples. The circulation of these media globally, through the use of the Internet, has become an important basis for the growing network of minority activists and for broadening the reach of alternative information resources of activism created by minorities (Dutta, 2011, p. 286). By inserting their own versions of history and struggle into national narratives, they see online media as a vehicle for furthering their goals for social and political transformation.

On the other hand, they also negotiate their technological engagement, seeing online spaces both as an arena of opportunities for them, who have been communicatively marginalized through traditional media forms of expression, and also as a platform with challenges and risks to their minoritized conditions. The case studies demonstrated that minority groups, at the backstage, rationalize and plan their online media engagement not only for voicing out their struggles, but also as spaces that construct their culture, values, and identities as minorities and as activists. As they find opportunities in the online space, they also caution against its possible impact on group cohesion and representation, the danger of the commercialization of local knowledge, the possibility of state surveillance and controls, and the fact that online spaces themselves are not free of discrimination and prejudice.

While some of the cases would seem marginal at first glance, upon closer examination they would emerge as central to conversations about how minorities negotiate the complex intersections of national, racial, religious, and gender identity. Such a focus on the marginal yielded some unexpected insights. By use of multiple case studies, the thesis has illustrated the different ways the Internet is used by minority actors in political processes, which helps contextualize minority Internet activism in practice.

Thesis Contributions, Limitations, and Future Directions

The aforementioned analysis of online political mobilization by different minority organizations showed how the Internet became a unique site where minorities could articulate their subjectivity within the complex grid of disciplinary, normalizing and panoptic powers and controls that surround them as minorities. The analysis highlights the way in which their online strategies become manifestations of social and political practices within a specific political problematic.

The argument that can be proposed here is that political mobilization strategies conducted by minorities in the online space, foregrounded by subpolitics, hidden transcripts and infrapolitics, become means by which members of the minority can strategically assert their respective struggles within these spaces, staging acts of resistance against the power and control structures that exist at this specific historical conjuncture. While it is not feasible to try to erase power or to completely oppose the power relationships in which social actors participate, the emancipatory potential of the Internet can be examined by looking at what marginal groups actually do, how they strategize their engagement with technology, and how they articulate their own view, identity, subjectivity and their own emancipation project through online practices.

The thesis argues that a distinction between *public transcripts*, *hidden transcripts*, and *infrapolitics* of minority groups provides a useful foundation for the analysis of minority online dissent. New strategies of political discourse foregrounding hidden transcripts and infrapolitics help minority groups to circumvent traditional barriers of political communication and alter the quality of debate between minorities, the state and the international community, and also challenge national limits and boundaries. This, in turn can be construed as ‘democratic rationalization’ of technology of users from the margins. A backstage view of their rationalization of online engagement constitutes a privileged exploration of the purpose, strategic use, and negotiation of online media from the perspective of the users of the technology based on what they seek to attain through the use of technology. The model for understanding minority media, therefore, entails an understanding of the complex interaction and simultaneity of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic factors and the recognition that online political mobilization for minority activists constitutes a sustained balancing act between these. As argued by Mumby (1997, p. 346), “it is precisely in this struggle between various groups over interpretive possibilities and what gets to count as meaningful that the hegemonic dialectic of power and resistance gets played out”. Based on this perspective and on the online mediation experience of minority groups, hegemony becomes not merely a top-down domination by an elite. Through these new spaces for articulation of dissent, minority groups are able to negotiate their position in these power and social structures, as well as the role and place of technology in their activism. Such acts, in effect refashion the tools of capitalism and Western hegemony into localized efforts to reinforce minority culture and create a space for their struggles (Ginsburg, 2008). As argued by Evans (2002, p. 324), at the heart of media use by minorities is the locus of control. If control in the creation, imagination, production, and dissemination of media lies in minorities’ hands, more culturally grounded perspectives

can result. It is in this light that a continued analysis of the power structures governing and influencing minority media creation and production becomes important.

A culture-centred theorizing of minority group's communication for social change situates experience in a dynamic field where structure and agency are continually negotiated amidst the strategic uses of cultural symbols, values, and stories (Dutta, 2011, p. 218). Some studies on the engagement of minority groups with technology describe their experiences and the consequences of their use based solely on observation of their online productions, but do not clearly define the meaning attached by minority groups to their online media engagement. Observation is an extremely useful methodology, but may be insufficient without the exploration of subordinated groups' self-understanding of their uses of online media and a direct interrogation of purposes situated within social dynamics and historical contexts. Through mixed qualitative research methods, this study found that minority groups are rational actors who carefully think through their technological engagements. Their actions and purposes are also heavily shaped by historical experiences of minoritization and socio-economic and political conditions. In contrast to some information and communication technology for development interventions, where technology and purpose are imported from national governments or international development agencies to the communities, the experiences of technology appropriation shown in this thesis emanate from minority groups' exploration of how to make use of available communication tools to advance their minoritized positions and find support for and solution to their struggles. The multi-sitedness of the dissertation allowed a tracking of relevant social domains of contemporary minority life and the different configurations of power, politics and culture that allowed different formulations of minority online activism to surface.

Whether groups actually succeed in attaining specific goals would necessitate an observation of the longer-term consequences of their online political mobilization

activities, and therefore is beyond the aims of this study (although it is certainly possible to study this in the future). As earlier argued, this will also depend on reflexivity on the part of the audience, or the extent by which the minorities' online productions reach the attention of the mainstream media, the opinion-makers, and international community, who in turn can help broaden the reach of these groups' articulations and productions beyond its membership or existing supporters.

What this thesis aimed to do, and has achieved, was to reveal how such practices of minority groups constitute a form of resistance, political practice, and creative appropriation of technology. The argument above has illustrated this by demonstrating the multiple hidden and public transcripts and infrapolitics of minority groups that were gleaned from their meaning – making and actual uses of online spaces for political mobilization. This includes how the online activities of the different groups constitute a form of resistance to the pressures of dominating structures.

It is worth stressing that very different conclusions might be drawn about the emancipatory potential of online media for minorities. When faced by the extensive commodification and commercial acquisition of political and cultural practices by commercial forces, state controls, and articulations by the social majority in cyberspace, minority resistance may seem to be whispers amidst these loud voices. However, the value and importance given by these minority groups to “their own political space” in the Web, given decades of deprivation of a communicative and political voice, and the disruption in dominant structures and political discourses made by these practices, cannot be ignored. Even as the groups may be interpreted to be abiding by the “logic of efficiency” and the “logic of instrumentality” (Hassan, 2008), this efficiency and instrumentality are grounded on being able to communicate the struggle, to emancipate themselves, to be in solidarity with others, and to feel like they are no longer marginalized in their own secluded social space, or geographically isolated entity.

The case studies also showed the ways in which grassroots-based organizations achieved organizational growth through their online experiences. The websites and e-groups offered a basis for launching online mobilization. At the same time, online mobilization has become a means for organization building too. The groups learned to manage their use of technology in ways that they can construct their identity and struggle, build solidarity, and strengthen their impact, while being aware and cautious of its possible dangers to the organization or their cause. This, in a way, would imply online discourse shaping practice, and shows that being able to communicate strategically not only works to influence others, but affects organizational aims, and practice in return. The process of engaging technology for social and political mobilization also showed that the need to establish credibility and an image that comes with having online spaces also drives an organization into more action--whether by rethinking its identity and causes, by developing an archive of statements and productions useful to its member networks, by living up to their proclaimed standards, by generating comments from internal membership, by showing proof of its achievements from the ground, or as a result of more activities generated from new partnerships and solidarity with the external community.

The multitude of challenges, threats, and risks, but also possibilities clothed in online media engagement, makes planning strategically, in the strict sense of the term, onerous. Based on minority groups' experiences, the strategic uses of online media was found to be of a more dynamic and emergent nature as it develops with a continued engagement and reflection by the actors of the implications of technology use for the group and the struggle. The organizations have pre-set purposes for specific communication strategies, yet such purposes developed over time. The decision of the minority groups to continue or expand the use of the online space also developed after learning how to negotiate technological engagement.

Not only is it necessary to have some conception of the intellectual, political, economic, and technological dynamics that make the information technology a reality, but there is also a need to be cognizant of what constitutes people's understanding of this reality, including its production and consumption. Minority groups' differing positions and relationships with regard to enabling or constraining structural conditions such as local culture and capacities, relationship with the nation-state, and international linkages offer contributions to the field. This direction also allows us to explore minorities not only as recipients or users of technology but as online political activists creatively working their way through multiple challenges and opportunities that come with online mediation.

Bibliography

- Abinales, P. (2008). Pancho Sanza in Buliok Complex. In P. Abinales (Ed.), *Whither the Philippines in the 21st Century*. Singapore: Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, 277-312.
- Abinales, P. (2000). *Making Mindanao. Cotabato and Davao in the Formation of the Philippine Nation State*. Quezon City: Ateneo De Manila University Press.
- Abinales, P. and Amoroso, D. (2005). *State and Society in the Philippines*. New York and Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- Abu-Lughod, L. (1990). The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power Through Bedouin Women. *American Ethnologist*, 17(1), pp. 41-55.
- Alim, G. (June, 1995), *Philippine Solidarity 2000: In Search of New Perspectives*. Paper presented at the European Solidarity Conference on the Philippines, Hoisdorf, Germany.
- Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Appadurai, A. (1993). Patriotism and Its Futures. *Public Culture*. 5(3), 411-429.
- Ang Ladlad Party v. Commission on Elections, 190582, Supreme Court of the Philippines (2010), Available from <http://sc.judiciary.gov.ph/jurisprudence/2010/april2010/190582.htm> (accessed June 2010)
- Armitage, J. & Roberts, J. (2002). *Living with Cyberspace: Technology and Culture in the 21st Century*. New York: Continuum.
- Armitage, J. (1999). *Resisting the Neoliberal Discourse of Technology. The Politics of Cyberculture in the Age of the Virtual Class*. CTheory.net. Retrieved from <http://www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=111> (Accessed November, 2009)

- Arora, P. (2010). *Dot Com Mantra: Social Computing in the Central Himalayas*. UK: Ashgate Publishing.
- Asian Development Bank (2002). *Indigenous Peoples/Ethnic Minorities and Poverty Reduction: Philippines*. Manila, Philippines: Asian Development Bank.
- Atton, C. (2004). *An Alternative Internet*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Atton, C. (2002). *Alternative Media*. London: Sage.
- Austria, F., Jr. (2004). JUDING_GERZI ONLINE: Insights into the Potentials of Virtual Communities in Yahoo Groups in Addressing the Challenges of Being Gay in the Philippines. *Plaridel*, 1(2), 21-48.
- Austria, F. (2007). Gays, the Internet, and Freedom. *Plaridel*, 4(1), 47-76.
- Bailey, O. G., & Harindranath, R. (2006). Ethnic Minorities, Cultural Difference and the Cultural Politics of Communication. *International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics*, 2, 299-316.
- Bakardjieva, M. (2009). Subactivism: Lifeworld and Politics in the Age of the Internet. *The Information Society*, 25, 91–104.
- Bakardjieva, M. (2005). *Internet Society: The Internet in Everyday Life*. London: Sage.
- Bakardjieva, M. (2004). Virtual Togetherness: An Everyday Life Perspective. In A. Feenberg & D. Barney (Eds.), *Community in the Digital Age: Philosophy and Practice* (pp. 121-142). Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Bakardjieva, M. (2003). What Knowledge? Whose Fingertips? Negotiating and Serving Diverse Identities through Information Technology. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 35(3), 133-149.
- Balibar, E. (1991). Is There a Neo-racism? In E. Balibar & I. Wallerstein (Eds.), *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (pp. 17-18). London: Verso.

- Barber, B. (2003). Which Technology and Which Democracy? In H. Jenkins and D. Thorburn (Eds.), *Democracy and New Media* (pp. 33-48). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Baym, N. K. (2006). The Emergence of On-line Community. In S. Jones (Ed.) *Cybersociety: Communication and Community* (pp. 35-68). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Beaker, H. (1998). *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think About Your Research While Doing It*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bebbington, A., et.al. (2008). *Can NGOs Make a Difference?: The Challenge of Development Alternatives*. New York: Zed Books.
- Beck, U. (1997). *The Reinvention of Politics: Rethinking Modernity in the Global Social Order*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Belausteguigoitia, M. (2006). On-line, Off-line and In-line: The Zapatista Rebellion and the Uses of Technology by Indian Women. In K. Landzelius (Ed.), *Native on the Net: Indigenous and Diasporic Peoples in the Virtual Age* (pp. 97-111). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bennet, L. (2003). Communicating Global Activism: Strengths and Vulnerabilities and Networked Politics. *Information, Communication, and Society*, 6(2), 143-68.
- Best, S. & Kellner, D. (1991). *Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations*. London: Macmillan.
- Bijker, W., Hughes, T. & Pinch, T. (Eds.) (1987). *The Social Construction of Technological Systems. New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology*. MA: MIT Press.
- Bimber, B. (2003). *Information and American Democracy: Technology in the Evolution of Political Power*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bloor, M. (1997). *Techniques of Validation in Qualitative Research: A Critical*

- Commentary. In G. Miller & R. Dingwall (Eds.), *Context and Method in Qualitative Research* (pp. 37-50). London & Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brooten, L. (2010). Indigenous Peoples' Media. In J. Downing (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Social Movement Media*. New York: Sage Publications, Inc. Available from www.sage-ereference.com/ (accessed 27 Feb 2011)
- Brown, M. & Ganguly, S. (Eds.) (1999). *Government Policies and Ethnic Relations in the Asia-Pacific*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press,.
- Buechler, S. (2000). *Social Movements in Advanced Capitalism. The Political Economy and Cultural Construction of Social Activism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Burgess, J. (2006). Hearing Ordinary Voices: Cultural Studies, Vernacular Creativity and Digital Storytelling. *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, 20(2), 201–214.
- Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* New York: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Cammaerts, B. (2009). Radical Pluralism and Free Speech in Online Public Spaces: The Case of North Belgian Extreme Right Discourses, *International Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, 12(6), 555-574.
- Campbell, H. (2010). *When Religion Meets New Media*. New York: Routledge.
- Campbell, J.E. (2005). Outing PlanetOut: Surveillance, Gay Marketing and Internet Affinity Portals. *New Media and Society*, 7(5), 663-683. doi [10.1177/1461444805056011]

- Carino, L. (2002). *Between the State and the Market: The Non-Profit Sector and Civil Society in the Philippines*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines-National College of Public Administration and Governance.
- Carpentier, N. (2007). The Online Community Media Database RadioSwap as a Translocal Tool to Broaden the Communicative Rhizome. *Observatorio Journal*, 1, 1-26.
- Carpentier, N., Lie, R. & Servaes, J. (2003). Community Media: Muting the Democratic Media Discourse? *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, 17(1), 51-68.
- Casambre, A.L., (2006). Indigenous Peoples in Politics, Governance. In T. Tadem and N. Morada (Eds.), *Philippine Politics and Governance Challenges to Democratization and Development* (pp. 105–122). QC: University of the Philippines Press.
- Castells, M. (2010). *Power of Identity. The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture* (2nd ed., Vol. 2). Malden, MA; Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Castells, M. (2009). *Communication Power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Castells, M. (2000). *The Rise of the Network Society* (6th ed). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Chouliaraki, L. (2010). Self-Mediation: New Media and Citizenship. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 7(4), 227-232.
- Clarke, G. (2001). From Ethnocide to Ethnodevelopment? Ethnic Minorities and Indigenous People in Southeast Asia. *Third World Quarterly*, 22(3), 413-436.
- Clifford, J. (2001). Indigenous Articulations. *The Contemporary Pacific*, 13(2), 468-490.
- Cooper, M. and Dzara, K. (2010). The Facebook Revolution: LGBT Identity and Activism. In C. Pullen and M. Cooper (Eds.). *LGBT Identity and Online New*

- Media* (pp. 100-112). New York: Routledge.
- Corbin, J. & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of Qualitative Research (3e) Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. London and Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Coronel-Ferrer, M. (February, 2011). *Negotiating a Peace Agreement with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front: Governance and Territory Questions*, Lecture organized by the Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore.
- Creswell J.W. (2002). *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Method Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Couldry, N. (2011). *Why Voice Matters. Culture and Politics After Neoliberalism*. London: Sage.
- Couldry, N. and Curran, J. (Eds.) (2003). *Contesting Media Power: Alternative Media in a Networked World*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- de Lauretis, T. (1991). Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities. *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 3 (2) 3-18.
- Derrida, J (1993). *Aporias*. (T. Dutoit, Trans.) Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Dizon, D. (March 2, 2011), Bishops Tell Homosexuals: Come out of the Closet. *ABS-CBN News Online*. Available from <http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/-depth/03/02/11/bishops-tell-homosexuals-come-out-closet> (accessed July 2011)
- Dalhberg, L. (2002). The Internet and Democratic Discourse: Exploring the Prospects of Online Deliberative Forums Extending the Public Sphere. *Information, Communication and Society* 4(4), 615-633.
- Dalhberg, L. (2001). Extending the Public Sphere through Cyberspace: The Case of Minnesota e-Democracy. *First Monday*, 6 (3). Retrieved from www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue6_3/dahlberg/index.html#note2 (accessed Dec 2010)

- Dahlberg, L. and Siapera, E. (2007). *Radical Democracy and the Internet. Interrogating Theory and Practice*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dahlgren, P. (2001). The Public Sphere and the Net: Structure, Space and Communication. In L. Bennett and R. Entman (Eds.), *Mediated Politics in the Future of Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Danby, C. (2007). Political Economy and the Closet: Heteronormativity in Feminist Economics. *Feminist Economics*, 13 (2), 29-53.
- Dean, J., D. Anderson, and G. Lovink (2005). *Reformatting Politics: Information Technology and Global Civil Society*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Dean, J. (2003). Why the Net is Not a Public Sphere. *Constellations*, 10 (1), 95-112
- Dean, J. (2002). *Publicity's Secret: How Technoculture Capitalizes on Democracy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- De Certeau, M. (1984). *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Denzin, N.K. (1989). *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Derrida, J. (1993). *Aporias*. Trans. Thomas Dutoit. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- De Vaney A., Gance, S., & Yan Ma (2000). *Technology and Resistance: Digital Communications and New Coalitions around the World*. New York: Peter Lang.
- De Vries, G. (2007). What is Political in Subpolitics? How Aristotle Might Help STS. *Social Studies of Science*, 37, 781-809.
- Dilevko, J. (2002). The Working Life of Southern NGOs: Juggling the Promise of Information and Communications Technologies and the Perils of Relationships with International NGOs. In P. I. Hajnal (Ed.), *Civil Society in the Information Age*, (pp. 67-94), Burlington: Ashgate.

- Downing, J.D.H. (2001). *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Drushel, B. (2010). Virtually Supportive: Self-Disclosure of Minority Sexualities Through Online Social Networking Sites. In C. Pullen & M. Cooper (Eds.), *LGBT Identity and Online New Media* (pp. 62-72). New York: Routledge.
- Dumdum, O. O. (June, 2010). *Jerks Without Faces: The XTube Spectacle and the Modernity of the Filipino Bakla*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Suntec Singapore International Convention & Exhibition Centre, Suntec City.
- Dutta, M. (2011). *Communicating Social Change: Structure, Culture and Agency*. New York: Routledge.
- Dutta, M. & M. Pal (2007). The Internet as a Site of Resistance. The Case of the Narmada Bachao Andolan. In S. Duhe, S. (Ed)., *New Media and Public Relations* (pp. 203-215). New York: Peter Lang.
- Eder, J. & Mckenna, T. (2004). Minorities in the Philippines: Ancestral Lands and Autonomy in Theory and Practice. In C. Duncan (Ed)., *Civilizing the Margins. Southeast Asian Government Policies for the Development of Minorities* (pp. 86-115). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Eliasoph, N. (1996). Making a Fragile Public: A Talk-Centered Study of Citizenship and Power. *Sociological Theory*, 14(3), 262-289.
- Eligio, J. (December, 2010). *Communication Imperatives for Indigenous Peoples' Representation in Policy Making: Lessons from IPRA*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Future Imperatives of Communication and Information for Development and Social Change, Bangkok.
- Epstein, S. (1999). Gay and Lesbian Movements in the United States: Dilemmas of Identity, Diversity, and Political Strategy. In B. Adam, J. Duyvendak, & A.

- Krouwel (Eds.), *The Global Emergence of Gay and Lesbian Politics: National Imprints of a Worldwide Movement* (pp. 30-90). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Escobar, A. (2001). Culture Sits in Places: Reflections on Globalism and Subaltern Strategies of Localization. *Political Geography*, 20 (2), 139-174.
- Escobar, A. (1992a). Culture, Economics, and Politics in Latin American Social Movements, Theory, and Research. In A. Escobar & S. Alvarez (Eds.) *Making Social Movements in Latin America: Identity, Strategy, and Democracy*. Colorado: Westview Press.
- Escobar, A. (1992b). Culture, Practice and Politics: Anthropology and the Study of Social Movements. *Critique of Anthropology*, 12 (4), 395-432.
- Evans, M.R. (2002). Hegemony and Discourse: Negotiating Cultural Relationships Through Media Production. *Journalism*, 3(3), 309-329. doi: 10.1177/146488490200300302
- Fanon, F. (1967). *A Dying Colonialism*. New York: Grove Press.
- Feenberg, A. (2009a). Democratic Rationalization: Technology, Power and Freedom. In D. Kaplan (Ed.), *Readings in the Philosophy of Technology* (pp. 139-155). Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Feenberg, A. (2009b). Critical Theory of Communication Technology: Introduction to the Special Issue. *The Information Society*, 25, 1-7
- Feenberg, A. (2002). *Transforming Technology. A Critical Theory Revisited*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Feenberg, A. (1999). *Questioning Technology*. New York: Routledge.
- Feenberg, A. (1995). *Alternative Modernity: The Technical Turn in Philosophy and Social Theory*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

- Feenberg, A. & Barney, D. (Eds). (2004). *Community in the Digital Age: Philosophy and Practice*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Feenberg, A. & Bakardjieva, M. (2004). Consumers or Citizens? The Online Community Debate. In A. Feenberg & D. Barney (Eds.), *Community in the Digital Age: Philosophy and Practice* (pp. 1-30). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Feldman, A. (2001). Transforming Peoples and Subverting States: A Pedagogical Approach to the International Indigenous Peoples Movement. *Ethnicities*, 1 (2), 147-178.
- Fianza, M. (2004). *Contesting Land and Identity in the Periphery: The Moro Indigenous People of Southern Philippines*. Presented at the Tenth Biennial Conference, Commons in an Age of Global Transition: Challenges, Risks and Opportunities, International Association for the Study of Common Property 9-13 August, Oaxaca, Mexico.
- Flew, T. (2005). *New Media: An Introduction*. South Melbourne, Vic: Oxford University Press.
- Forte, M. (2006). Searching for a Center in the Digital Ether: Notes on the Indigenous Caribbean Resurgence on the Internet. In M. Forte (Ed.), *Indigenous Resurgence in the Contemporary Caribbean: Amerindian Survival and Revival* (pp. 253-270). New York: Peter Lang.
- Forte, M. (n.d.) *Commentary on the Paper "Rethinking the Digital Age" by F. Ginsburg*. Retrieved from http://www.media anthropology.net/forte_comment.pdf (Accessed Oct 2011).
- Foucault, M. (1982). The Subject and Power. In H. Dreyfus & P. Rabinow (Eds.), *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (pp. 208-26), Brighton: Harvester.

- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, C. Gordon (Ed.). Brighton: Harvester.
- Foucault, M. (1978). *The History of Sexuality*. (R. Hurley, Trans.) Vol. 1, New York: Pantheon Books.
- Franklin, M. (2005). *Postcolonial Politics, the Internet, and Everyday Life: Pacific Traversals Online*. New York: Routledge.
- Franklin, M. (2001). Postcolonial Subjectivities and Everyday Life Online. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 3(3), 387-422.
- Fraser, V. (2010). Queer Closets and Rainbow Hyperlinks: The Construction and Constraint of Queer Subjectivities Online. *Sex Research Social Policy*, 7, 30-36
- Friedman, E.J. (2007). Lesbians in (Cyber)space: The Politics of the Internet in Latin American On-and Off-line Communities. *Media Culture and Society*, 29(5), 790-811.
- Froehling, O. (1997). The Cyberspace "War of Ink and Internet" in Chiapas, Mexico. *Geographical Review*, 87(2), 291-307.
- Fry, H. (2006). *A History of the Mountain Province*. Quezon City: New Day Publishers.
- Fung, (2002). Identity Politics, Resistance and New Media Technologies: A Foucauldian Approach to the Study of the HKNet. *New Media & Society*, 4(2), 185-204. doi [1461-4448(200206)4:2;185-204;023412]
- Gamson, J. (1995). Must Identity Movements Self-Destruct? A Queer Dilemma. *Social Problems*, 42(3), 390-407.
- Garcia, J.N.C. (2008). *Philippine Gay Culture. Binabae to Bakla, Silahis to MSM (2nd ed)*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press.
- Garcia, J.N.C. (2004). Male Homosexuality in the Philippines: A Short History. *International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) Newsletter*. Retrieved July, 2011, from http://www.ias.nl/nl/35/IIAS_NL35_13.pdf

- Garcia, J.N.C. (2000). Performativity, the Bakla and the Orientalising Gaze. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 1(2), 265-281.
- Garnham, N. (2000). *Emancipation, the Media, and Modernity: Arguments about the Media and Social Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Garrido, M. & Halavais, A. (2003). Mapping Networks of Support for the Zapatista Movement: Applying Social Network Analysis to Study Contemporary Social Movements. In M. McCaughey and M. Ayers (Eds.), *Cyberactivism. Online Activism in Theory and Practice* (pp. 166-184). New York: Routledge.
- Gerring, J. (2004). What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good for? *American Political Science Review*, 98(2), 341-354.
- Giddens, A. (1990). *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The Constitution of Society. Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gilgun, J. (2010). Reflexivity and Qualitative Research. *Current Issues in Qualitative Research*, 1(2), 1-8.
- Ginsburg, F. (2008). Rethinking the Digital Age. In D. Hesmondhalgh & J. Toynbee (Eds.), *The Media and Social Theory. Culture, Economy and the Social* (pp.127-144). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Ginsburg, F. (1997). From Little Things Big Things Grow: Cultural Activism and Indigenous Media. In R. Fox and O. Starn (Eds.), *Between Resistance and Revolution: Cultural Politics and Social Protest* (pp. 118-144). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Ginsburg, F. (1991). Indigenous Media: Faustian Contract or Global Village? *Cultural Anthropology*, 6(1), 92-112.
- Ginsburg, F., Abu-Lughod, L. & Larkin, B. (Eds.) (2002). *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain*. CA: University of California Press.

- Georgiou, M. (2007). Transnational Crossroads for Media and Diaspora: Three Challenges for Research. In O. Bailey, M. Georgiou, and R. Harindranath (Eds.) *Transnational Lives and the Media: Re-imagining Diasporas*. UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Georgiou, M. (2005). Diasporic Media Across Europe: Multicultural Societies and the Universalism-Particularism Continuum. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31 (3), 481-498.
- Gobrin G. & Andin, A. (2002). Sigalot ng Kaunlaran: Ang Karanasan ng Pilipinas. *Macro Study: Minority Rights Group International*. 1-15.
- Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma. Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday.
- Gray, M. (2009). Queer Nation is Dead/Long Live Queer Nation: The Politics and Poetics of Social Movement and Media Representation. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 26(3), 212-236.
- Greene, J. C., & Caracelli, V. J. (1997). Defining and Describing the Paradigm Issue in Mixed-Method Evaluation. In J. C. Greene & V. J. Caracelli (Eds.), *Advances in Mixed-method Evaluation: The Challenges and Benefits of Integrating Diverse Paradigms* (pp. 5-17). (New Directions for Evaluation, No. 74). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Gross, L. (2007). 'Foreword'. In K. Riordan & D. Phillips (Eds), *Queer Online. Media Technology and Sexuality*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Gross, L. (2003). The Gay Global Village in Cyberspace. In N. Couldry & J. Curran (Eds.), *Contesting Media Power: Alternative Media in a Networked World*. New York: Routledge.

- Gutierrez, E. & S. Borras, Jr. (2004). *The Moro Conflict: Landlessness and Misdirected State Policies*. East West Center Washington. Policy Studies 8.
- Jenkins, H. & Thorburn, D. (Eds.) (2003). *Democracy and New Media* (pp.33-48). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Hallahan, K., Holtzhauzen, D., & van Ruler, B., et.al. (Eds.) (2007). Defining Strategic Communication. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 1 (1), 3-35.
- Hartley, J. (2010). Silly Citizenship. *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 7 (4), 233-248.
- Hassan, R. (2008). *The Information Society*. Digital Media and Society Series. Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Hedman, E.L. (2001). Contesting State and Civil Society: Southeast Asian Trajectories. *Modern Asian Studies*, 35 (4), 921-951.
- Hedman, E.L. & J. Sidel (2000). *Philippine Politics and Society in the Twentieth Century: Colonial Legacies, Post-Colonial Trajectories*. London: Routledge.
- Hemer, O & Tufte, T. (2005). The Challenge of the Glocal. In O. Hemer, et.al. (Eds.), *Media and Glocal Change: Rethinking Communication for Development* (pp.13-22.), Goteborg: Nordicom.
- Hernandez, C. (1998). The Philippines in 1987: Challenges of Redemocratization. *Asian Survey*, 28(2), 229-241.
- Hesmondhalgh, D. & Toynbee, J. (Eds). (2008). *The Media and Social Theory*. Abingdon & New York: Routledge.
- Hesse-Biber, S.N., Leavy, P. (2010). *The Practice of Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Hilhorst, D. (2000). *Records and Reputations: Everyday Politics of a Philippine Development NGO*. (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation). Wageningen University, Wageningen, the Netherlands.

- Hill, K. & J. Hughes (1998). *Cyberpolitics: Citizen Activism in the Age of the Internet*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Himpele, J. (2008). *Circuits of Culture: Media, Politics and Indigenous Identity in the Andes*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Ho, K.C. (March, 2008). *Meandering Beyond the Single Case in Urban Studies*. Paper Presented during the Workshop on Research Methods in Urban Studies, National University of Singapore.
- Ho, K.C., Baber, Z., & Khondher, H. (2002). Sites of Resistance: Alternative Websites and State-Society Relations. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 53 (1), 127-148.
- Hodges, A. & Hutter, D. (1974). *The Gay Liberation Pamphlet. With Downcast Gays*. Available from <http://www.outgay.co.uk/>
- Hoffman, D.L. & Novak, T.P. (1996). Marketing in Hypermedia Computer-Mediated Environments: Conceptual Foundations. *Journal of Marketing*, 60, 50-68.
- Hollander, J. & Einwohner, R. (2004). Conceptualizing Resistance. *Sociological Forum*, 19(4), 533-554.
- Hoofd, I.M. (2009). Activism, Academia, and the Humanist Aporia: Indymedia Intensified in the Age of Neo-liberal Globalisation. *Cultural Politics*, 5(2), 199-228.
- Howley, K. (2010). *Understanding Community Media*. UK: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Hughes, M. & Dallwitz, J. (2007). Ara Irititja: Towards a Culturally Appropriate IT Best Practice in Remote Indigenous Australia. In L.E. Dyson, et.al. (Eds.), *Information Technology and Indigenous People* (pp.146-158). Hershey, PA: Information Science Publishing.
- Ileto, R. (1979). *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910*. Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

- IRINAsia (2011, Feb). Philippines Mindanao Separatist Hardliners Refuse Peace Talks with Government. *IRIN Humanitarian News and Analysis*. Retrieved from <http://www.irinnews.org/> (Accessed May, 2011).
- Jensen, M., Danziger, J., & James N., et.al. (2007). Civil Society and Cyber Society: The Role of the Internet in Community Associations and Democratic Politics. *Information Society*, 23(1), 39-50.
- Jha, S. (2005). Exploring Internet Influence on the Coverage of Social Protest. Content Analysis Comparing Protest Coverage in 1967 and 1999. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 84(1), 40-57.
- Johnson, E. P., & Henderson, M. (2005). *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Jones, S. (1999). *Doing Internet Research: Critical Issues and Methods for Examining the Net*. London, UK: Sage.
- Joyce Y. M (2004). The Queer Sisters and Its Electronic Bulletin Board. *Information, Communication & Society*, 7(1), 23-49.
- Jubair, S. (2007). *The Long Road to Peace. Inside the GRP-MILF Peace Process*. Cotabato City: Institute of Bangsamoro Studies.
- Jubair, S. (1999). *A Nation Under Endless Tyranny*. Kuala Lumpur: IQ Marin
- Kapunan, J. (2001). Separate Opinion. In A.G.G. Ballesteros (Ed.) *A Divided Court: Case Materials from the Constitutional Challenge to the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997*. Philippines, LRC-KSK/Friends of the Earth-Philippines.
- Karl, I. (2007). On-/Offline: Gender, Sexuality, and the Techno-Politics of Everyday Life. In K. Riordan & D. Phillips (Eds.), *Queer Online: Media, Technology and Sexuality* (pp. 45-66). New York: Peter Lang.

- Kahn, R. & Kellner, D. (2007a). Technopolitics and Oppositional Media. In D. Bell and B. M. Kennedy (Eds.), *The Cybercultures Reader* (2nd ed, pp. 618- 637). London: Routledge.
- Kahn, R., & Kellner, D. (2007b). Globalization, Technopolitics, and Radical Democracy. In L. Dahlberg & E. Siapera (Eds.), *Radical Democracy and the Internet: Interrogating Theory and Practice*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kellner, D. (1989). *Critical Theory, Marxism and Modernity*. Cambridge & Baltimore: Polity Press & John Hopkins University Press.
- Kelly, J. & Etling, B. (2008). *Mapping Iran's Online Public: Politics and Culture in the Persian Blogosphere*. Internet and Democracy Case Study Series. Retrieved from http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/sites/cyber.law.harvard.edu/files/Kelly&Etling_Mapping_Irans_Online_Public_2008.pdf
- Kenix, L.J. (2007). In Search of Utopia: An Analysis of Non-Profit Web Pages. *Information, Communication & Society*, 10(1), 69-94.
- Kimchi, J., Polivka, B. & Stevenson, J.S. (1991). Triangulation: Operational Definitions. *Nursing Research*, 40(6), 364–366.
- King, N. & Horrocks, C. (2010). *Interviews in Qualitative Research*. London and Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Knafl K.A. & Breitmayer B.J. (1991). Triangulation in Qualitative Research: Issues of Conceptual Clarity and Purpose. In J.M. Morse (Ed.), *Qualitative Nursing Research: A Contemporary Dialogue* (pp. 226–239). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Kierkegaard, S. (1954 [1849]). *The Sickness unto Death*. New York: Doubleday.
- Kirsh, P. (2006). Queer Theory, Late Capitalism, and Internalized Homophobia. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 52(1/2), 19-45.
- Kirsch, M. (2000). *Queer Theory and Social Change*. London and New York: Routledge.

- Kolko, B.E., Nakamura, L., & Rodman, GB. (2000). Race in Cyberspace: Introduction. In BE. Kolko, L. Nakamura, & GB Rodman (Eds), *Race in Cyberspace* (pp. 1-14). New York: Routledge.
- Kvale, S. (1995). The Social Construction of Validity. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 1, 19–40.
- Kymlicka, W. & He, B. (2005). *Multiculturalism in Asia*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kymlicka, W. (2002). *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 284-367.
- Kymlicka, W. (1995). *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*. Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press.
- LaFountain, M. (1989) 'Foucault and Dr. Ruth', *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 6(2), 123–37.
- Lalata, D.M. (2003) Indigenous Peoples: In Pursuit of their Freedom and Security. *Tanawan*. 6(1), 4-9.
- Lallana, E. & Soriano, C. (2010). *Towards Universal Internet Access in the Philippines*. Quezon City: Ideacorp and Intel Technology Philippines, Inc.
- Landzelius, K. (2006). Introduction. Native on the Net and Postscript: Vox Populi from the Margins. In K. Landzelius (Ed.), *Native on the Net: Indigenous and Diasporic Peoples in the Virtual Age* (pp. 1-42; 292-301). New York: Routledge.
- Latufeku, A. (2006). Remote Indigenous Communities in Australia: Questions of Access, Information, and Self-Determination. In K. Landzelius (Ed.), *Native on the Net: Indigenous and Diasporic Peoples in the Virtual Age* (pp. 43-60). New York: Routledge.
- Lebert, J. (2003). Wiring Human Rights Activism: Amnesty International and the Challenges of Information and Communication Technologies. In M. McCaughey

- and M. Ayers (Eds.), *Cyberactivism: Online Activism in Theory and Practice* (pp. 209-232). New York: Routledge.
- Lévy, P. (2000). *Collective Intelligence: Mankind's Emerging World in Cyberspace*. New York: Perseus.
- Leung, L. (2005). *Virtual Ethnicity: Race, Resistance and the World Wide Web*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- Lewis, M. (1992). *Wagering the Land: Ritual, Capital, and Environmental Degradation in the Cordillera of Northern Luzon 1900-1986*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Longboan, L. (2010). *Redefining Indigenous Communities in the Digital Age*. Paper presented at the International Conference Future Imperatives of Communication and Information for Development and Social Change, Bangkok, December 20-22.
- Lovink, G. (2004). *Talking Race and Cyberspace*. Interview with Lisa Nakamura. Available Online from <http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-l-0405/msg00057.html>
- Lovink, G. & Zehle, S. (2005). *Incommunicado Reader*. Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures.
- Lister, M., Dovey, J., & Giddings, S., et.al. (Eds.) (2003). *New Media: A Critical Introduction*. London: Routledge.
- Magno, F. (Sept 2009). *Internet Surveillance in the Philippines*. Paper presented at the Living the Information Society 2 Conference, QC: Ateneo de Manila University.
- Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative Researching* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- Mahon, M. (2000). The Visible Evidence of Cultural Producers. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 29, 467-92.
- Majul, C. A. (1999). *Muslims in the Philippines*. QC: University of the Philippines Press.

- Manalansan, M. (2003). *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Maybury-Lewis, D. (2002). *Indigenous Peoples, Ethnic Groups, and the State*, 2nd ed., Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Mayer, M. & Roth, R. (1995). New Social Movements and the Transformation to Post-Fordist Society. In M. Darnovsky, B. Epstein, & R. Flacks (Eds.), *Cultural Politics and Social Movements* (pp. 299-319). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Maykut, P. & Morehouse, R. (1994). *Beginning Qualitative Research: A Philosophic and Practical Guide*. London & Washington, DC: Falmer Press.
- McCann, B.J. (2011). Queering Expertise: Counterpublics, Social Change, and the Corporeal Dilemmas of LGBT Equality. *Social Epistemology*, 25(3), 249-262.
- McCracken, G. (1998). *The Long Interview*. London and Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- McCallum, K. & Franco, P. (2009). Community Business: The Internet in Remote Australian Indigenous Communities. *New Media and Society*, 11(7), 1230-1251.
- McLagan, M. (2002). Spectacles of Difference: Cultural Activism and the Mass Mediation of Tibet. In F. Ginsburg, et.al. (Eds.), *Media Worlds. Anthropology on a New Terrain*. Berkeley & Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.
- McKenna, T. M. (1998). *Muslim Rulers and Rebels: Everyday Politics and Armed Separatism in the Southern Philippines*. Pasig City: Anvil Publishing, Inc.
- Mehra, B., Merkel, C. & Bishop, A.P (2004). The Internet for Empowerment of Minority and Marginalized Users. *New Media & Society*, 6(6), 781–802. doi: 10.1177/146144804047513
- Meier, M. (2008). *Empowering Indigenous People in Asia through Communication*. United Nations Development Programme. Retrieved from www.undp.org (Retrieved on January, 2011)

- Melucci, A. (1996). *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age*. Great Britain: Cambridge University Press.
- Melucci, A. (1995). The Process of Collective Identity. In H. Johnston and B. Klandermans (Eds.), *Social Movements and Culture. Social Movements, Protest & Contention* (vol. 4, pp. 41-63). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Meyer, S., Whittier, N. & Robnett, B. (2002). *Social Movements: Identity, Culture, and the State*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Meyers, B. (1984). Minority Group: An Ideological Formulation. *Social Problems*, 32(1), 1-15.
- Miller, D. (1995). Introduction: Anthropology, Modernity, Consumption. In D. Miller (Ed.), *Worlds Apart: Modernity through the Prism of the Local* (pp.1-23). London: Routledge.
- Miller, T. (1995). Exporting Truth from Aboriginal Australia: 'Portions of our Past Become Present Again, Where Only the Melancholy Light of the Origin Shines.' *Media Information Australia*, 76, 7-17.
- Mitra, R. (2010). Resisting the Spectacle of Pride: Queer Indian Bloggers as Interpretive Communities. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 54(1), 163–178. doi: [10.1080/08838150903550485]
- Mohanty, C.T. (1988). Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses. *Feminist Review*, 30, 65-88.
- Mouffe, C. (2005). *On the Political*. London: Routledge.
- Mumby, D. (1997). The Problem of Hegemony: Rereading Gramsci for Organizational Communication Studies, *Western Journal of Communication*, 61 (4), 343-375.
- Nakamura, L. (2007). *Digitizing Race: Visual Cultures of the Internet (Electronic Mediations)*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- Nakamura, L. (2002). *Cybertypes. Race, Ethnicity and Identity on the Internet*. New York: Routledge.
- Noelle-Ignacio, E. (2000). Ain't I a Filipino (Woman)?: An Analysis of Authorship/ Authority through the Construction of Filipina on the Net. *Sociological Quarterly*, 41(4), 551-572.
- Nip, J. (2004). The Queer Sisters and Its Electronic Board. *Information, Communication & Society*, 7(1), 23-49.
- Niezen, R. (2005). Digital Identity: The Construction of Virtual Selfhood in the Indigenous Peoples' Movement. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 47(3), 532-551.
- Oo, Z. (2003). Mobilising Online: The Burmese Diaspora's Cyber Strategy Against the Junta. In Steven Gan, et.al (Eds.), *Asian Cyberactivism* (pp. 514 -555). Bangkok, Thailand: Friedrich Neumann Foundation.
- Olson, L. (2009). Centering Queers in Communication of Conscience. *Spectra*, 45(8), 3-4.
- O' Riordan, K. (2007). Queer Theories and Cybersubjects: Intersecting Figures. In O'Riordan & D. Phillips (Eds.), *Queer Online* (pp.13-30). New York: Peter Lang.
- Olvida, C. (2010). Development of Ethnic Identity Measure (EIM) for Cordillera Indigenous People. *Educational Measurement and Evaluation Review*, 1, 78-89.
- Open Net Initiative (2009), *Internet Filtering in Asia 2009*. Retrieved from <http://opennet.net/research/regions/asia> (Accessed December, 2010)
- Papacharissi, Z. (2002). The Virtual Sphere: The Internet as a Public Sphere. *New Media and Society*, 4(1), 9-27.
- Philippine Human Development Network (PHDN) (2008). *Institutions, Politics and Human Development: Philippine Human Development Report 2008-2009*.
- Philippine Human Development Network (PHDN) (2005). *Peace, Security and Human Development in the Philippines: Philippine Human Development Report 2005*.

- Philippine LGBT Crime Watch (2011). *A Database of Killed Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Filipinos*. Retrieved from <https://skydrive.live.com/?cid=11a3f2713fdfa524&id=11A3F2713FDFA524%2110> (Accessed July 2011)
- Puar, J. (2007). *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Prins, H. E. (2002). Visual Media and the Primitivist Perplex: Colonial Fantasies, Indigenous Imagination, and Advocacy in North America. In F. Ginsburg, et.al. (Eds.), *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain* (pp. 58-74). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Prins, H. E. (1997). The Paradox of Primitivism: Native Rights and the Problem of Imagery in Native Survival. *Visual Anthropology*, 9(3-4), 243-266
- Poster, M. (2006). *Information Please: Culture and Politics in the Age of Digital Machines*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Poster, M. (1998). Virtual Ethnicity: Tribal Identity in an Age of Global Communications. In S. Jones (Ed.) *Cybersociety 2.0: Revisiting Computer-Mediated Communication and Community* (pp. 184- 211), London: Sage.
- Pieterse, J.N. (2005). Digital Capitalism and Development: The Unbearable Lightness of ICT4D. In G. Lovink & S. Zehle, (Eds.), *Incommunicado Reader* (pp. 11–29). The Netherlands: Institute of Network Cultures.
- Pullen, C. (2010). Introduction. In Pullen, C. & M. Cooper (Eds.). *LGBT Identity and Online New Media* (pp. 1-13). New York: Routledge.
- Quimpo, N. (2001). Options in Pursuit of a Just, Comprehensive and Stable Peace in the Southern Philippines. *Asian Survey*, 41(2), 271-289.
- Rabia, S. (2009). *The Igorot in the World Wide Web: Exploring the Igorot Ethnic Identity Through the Communicative Act of Blogging*. Paper presented at the

- Media, Arts and Southeast Asia Conference, University of California, Riverside, Oct 2-3.
- Radics, G.B. (2004). Terrorism in Southeast Asia: Balikatan Exercises in the Philippines and the US 'War against Terrorism'. *Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs*, 14 (2), 115-127. Retrieved from <http://www.stanford.edu/group/sjeaa/journal42/seasia1.pdf>. (Accessed Nov, 2010)
- Rak, J. (2005). The Digital Queer: Weblogs and Internet Identity. *Biography*, 28 (1), 166-182.
- Rand, E. J. (2006). *Risking Resistance: Rhetorical Agency in Queer Theory and Queer Activism* (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation). University of Iowa, Iowa City.
- Reid, B. (2006). Historical Blocs and Democratic Impasse in the Philippines: Twenty Years After "People Power". *Third World Quarterly*, 27(6), 1003-1020.
- Rennie, E. (2006). *Community Media: A Global Introduction*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Richards, L. (2005). *Handling Qualitative Data. A Practical Guide*. London & Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Rivera, R. (Jul. 27-Aug. 2, 2005) Malaking Pagmimina: Paglapastangan sa Pambansang Soberanya at Patrimonya. *Pinoy Weekly*.
- Rodgers, J. (2003). *Spatializing International Politics*. New York: Routledge.
- Rodriguez, C. (2001). *Fissures in the Mediascape: An International Study of Citizens' Media*. Creeskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Rodil, R. (2004). *The Minoritisation of the Indigenous Communities of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago*. Davao City, Philippines: AFRIM.
- Rood, S. (1989). *Issues on Creating an Autonomous Region for the Cordillera, Northern Philippines*. Baguio City, Philippines: Cordillera Studies Center.

- Ryan, G. & Bernard, R. (2003). Techniques to Identify Themes. *Field Methods*, 15(1), 85-109.
- Said, E. (1981/1997). *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*. New York: Vintage Books/Random House.
- Salazar, J.F. (2004). *Imperfect Media: The Poetics of Indigenous Media in Chile*. (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation). University of Western Sydney, Australia.
- San Juan, E., Jr. (2007). *US Imperialism and Revolution in the Philippines*. New York: Palgrave.
- San Juan, E., Jr. (2006). Ethnic Identity and Popular Sovereignty: Notes on the Moro Struggle in the Philippines. *Ethnicities*, 6, 391-422. doi: [10.1177/1468796806068326].
- Sardar, Z. (1996). alt.civilizations.faq: Cyberspace as the Darker Side of the West. In Sardar, Z & Ravetz, J. (Eds.), *Cyberfutures. Culture and Politics on the Information Superhighway* (pp.14-41). New York: New York University Press.
- Sardar, Z. (1999). *Orientalism*. Open University Press.
- Sassen, S. (2004). Local Actors in Global Politics. *Current Sociology*, 52, 649-670.
- Schock, K. (1999). People Power and Political Opportunities: Social Movement Mobilization and Outcomes in the Philippines and Burma. *Social Problems*, 46(3), 355-375.
- Schmid, A. P., & Jongman, A. J. (1988). *Political Terrorism: A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data Bases, Theories, & Literature*. New York: North-Holland; New Brunswick: Transaction Books.
- Scott, J. (1990). *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press.
- Scott, A. & Street, J. (2001). From Media Politics to E-Protest: The Use of Popular Culture and New Media in Parties and Social Movements. In Webster, F. (Ed.),

- Culture and Politics in the Information Age: A New Politics?* (pp. 32-62). New York: Routledge.
- Schock, K. (1999). People Power and Political Opportunities: Social Movement Mobilization and Outcomes in the Philippines and Burma. *Social Problems*, 46(3), 355-375.
- Sedgwick, E. K. (1990). *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Siapera, E. (2010). *Cultural Diversity and Global Media: The Mediation of Difference*. UK: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Siapera, E. (2007). Multicultural Radical Democracy and Online Islam. In L. Dahlberg & E. Siapera (Eds.), *Radical Democracy and the Internet. Interrogating Theory and Practice* (pp.148-167). UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Siapera, E. (2006). Multiculturalism Online: The Internet and the Dilemmas of Multicultural Politics. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 9(1), 5-24.
- Siapera, E. (2005). Minority Activism on the Web: Between Deliberative Democracy and Multiculturalism, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31(3): 499-519.
- Silver, D. (2000). Margins in the Wires: Looking for Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Blacksburg Electronic Village. In B.E. Kolko, L. Nakamura, & G.B. Rodman (Eds.), *Race in Cyberspace* (pp. 133-150). New York: Routledge.
- Silverman D. (2000a). *Doing Qualitative Research*. London & Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Silverman D. (2000b). Validity & Reliability. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook* (pp. 175–190). London & Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Slagle, R. A. (2009). LGBTQ Research Past and Future. *Spectra*. National Communication Association, 48(8), 1.

- Slagle, R. A. (1995). In Defense of Queer Nation: From Identity Politics to a Politics of Difference. *Western Journal of Communication*, 59(2), 85-102.
- Slater, D. (2006). Imperial Powers and Democratic Imaginations. *Third World Quarterly*, 27(8), 1369-1386.
- Snow, D.A & Benford, R.D. (1988). Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization. *International Social Movement Research*, 1, 197-217.
- Smith, L. (2006). Mobilizing Indigenous Video: The Mexican Case. *Journal of Latin American Geography*, 5(1), 113-128.
- Sobieraj, S. (2011). *Soundbitten: The Perils of Media-Centered Political Activism*. New York and London: New York University Press.
- Soriano, C.R. & Sreekumar, T.T. (in press). Multiple Transcripts as Political Strategy: Social Media and Conflicting Identities of the Moro Liberation Movement in the Philippines. *Media, Culture and Society*.
- Soriano, C. (2012). The Arts of Indigenous Online Dissent: Negotiating Technology, Indigeneity, and Activism in the Cordillera. *Telematics and Informatics*, 29(1), 33-44. doi [10.1016/j.tele.2011.04.004].
- Soriano, C. (May, 2011). *Debating Muslim Separatism Online: Rethinking Agonistic Pluralism in the Case of Extreme Speech Discourses in Philippine Blogs*. Presented at the International Communication Association Conference, Westin Boston Waterfront, Boston, Massachusetts, USA.
- Soriano, C. (2006). The Challenges of Relief and Rehabilitation in Ongoing Conflict: The Mindanao Case. *Kasarinlan. Philippine Journal of Third World Studies*, 21(1), 4-33.
- Spivak, G. (1990). *The Post-colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*. In S. Harasym (Ed.), New York and London: Routledge.

- Spivak, G. (1988). Can the Subaltern Speak? In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (pp. 271-313). Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Spivak, G. (1987). *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. New York: Methuen.
- Splichal, S., Calabrese, A. & Sparks, C., (Eds.) (1994). *Information Society and Civil Society: Perspectives on the Changing World Order*. West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press.
- Sreberny-Mohammadi, A., & Mohammadi, A. (1994). *Small Media, Big Revolution: Communication, Culture, and the Iranian Revolution*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Sreekumar, T.T. (2011). *ICTs and Development in India. Perspectives on the Rural Network Society*. London & New York: Anthem Press.
- Sreekumar, T.T. & Parayil, G. (2002). Democracy, Development and New Forms of Social Movements: A Case Study of Indigenous People's Struggles in Kerala. *Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, 45 (2), 287-310.
- Strobel, L.M. (2010). *Babaylan: Filipinos and the Call of the Indigenous*, Davao: Ateneo de Davao University Research and Publications Office.
- Sundaram, R. (2000). Beyond the Nationalist Panopticon: The Experience of Cyberpublics in India. In J.T. Caldwell (Ed.), *Electronic Media and Technoculture* (pp.270-294). New York: Routledge.
- Sunstein, C. (2007). *Republic.com 2.0*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Sunstein, C. (2006). *Infotopia. How Many Minds Produce Knowledge*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Taguieff, P.A. (1993). From Race to Culture: The New Rights' View of European Identity. *Telos*, 98/99, 99-125.

- Tai, Z. (2004). *Civil Society and Internet Revolutions in China* (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation). University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations.
- Tan, S. (1993). *Internationalization of the Bangsamoro Struggle*. Quezon City: Center for Integrative and Development Studies & University of the Philippines Press.
- Tauli-Corpuz, V. et. al. (2009). *Guide on Climate Change and Indigenous Peoples* (2nd ed.). Baguio City: Tebtebba Foundation.
- Taylor, D. (1997). *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's "Dirty War."* Durham: Duke University Press.
- Tobin, G. & Begley, C. (2003). Methodological Rigour within a Qualitative Framework. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 48(4), 388–396.
- Tuminez, A. (May, 2008). The Past Is Always Present: The Moros of Mindanao and the Quest for Peace. *Working Paper Series No. 99*. Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Southeast Asian Research Center, 1-32. Retrieved from http://www.niu.edu/CSEAS/current_initiatives/PYLP/PastIsAlwaysPresent_Tuminez.pdf (Accessed July, 2011).
- Turkle, S. (1997). Multiple Subjectivity and Virtual Community at the End of the Freudian Century. *Sociological Inquiry*, 67(1), 72-84.
- Ubayasiri, K. (2004). A Virtual Eelam: Democracy, Internet and Sri Lanka's Tamil struggle. In S. Gan, et.al., (Eds), *Asian Cyberactivism* (pp.514 -555). Friedrich Neumann Foundation.
- Umbac, A. (2011, September). Published Interview by R. Caluen, An Angel at the End of the Rainbow, *The Philippine Reporter*. Retrieved from <http://www.philippinereporter.com/2011/07/08/an-angel-at-the-end-of-the-rainbow/> (Accessed July, 2011).

- United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (2008). *Resource Kit on Indigenous Peoples' Issues*. New York: United Nations. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/resource_kit_indigenous_2008.pdf (Accessed Dec, 2010).
- United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (May, 2006). *Report of an Expert Workshop on Indigenous Peoples and Migration: Challenges and Opportunities*. New York: United Nations. Retrieved from <http://social.un.org/index/IndigenousPeoples/MeetingsandWorkshops/IndigenousPeoplesandMigration.aspx> (Accessed Dec, 2010).
- United Nations (2009a). *State of the World's Indigenous Peoples*. New York: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations. Retrieved from <http://www.galdu.org/govat/doc/sowip.pdf> (Accessed October, 2010).
- United Nations Development Group (2009b). *Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues*. New York and Geneva: United Nations. Retrieved from <http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=270> (Accessed October, 2010).
- UNDP RIPP at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples (Mar 2009). *Regional Initiatives on Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Development Newsletter*. Retrieved from http://www.undp.org/partners/civil_society/publications/Indigenous/RIPP%20_Newsletter_May_2009.pdf (Accessed Oct, 2010).
- Van Aeist, P. & Walgrave, S. (2002). New Media, New Movements: Role of the Internet in Shaping the Anti-Globalization Movement. *Information, Communication, and Society*, 5(4), 465-493.
- Vedder, A. (2003). *Internet NGOs: Legitimacy and Accountability*. Refereed Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Electronic Government, EGOV 2003, Prague, Czech Republic, September, 49-54.

- Verkuyten, M. & Yildiz, A.A. (2006). The Endorsement of Minority Rights: The Role of Group Position, National Context, and Ideological Beliefs. *Political Psychology*, 27(4), 527-548.
- Victor, L. (2008). *Migration, Education and the Cordillera Cultural Landscape: Memories, Reflections and Challenges*. Paper presented during the seminar on “Faces and Challenges of Migration: The Cordillera Experience” held at Hotel Supreme Convention Plaza, Baguio, Philippines.
- Wakeford, N. (1997). Cyberqueer. In S.R. Munt and A. Medhurst (Eds.), *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader: A Critical Introduction* (pp. 20-38). London: Cassell.
- Warf, B. and Grimes, J. (1997). Counterhegemonic Discourses and the Internet. *The Geographical Review*, 87, 259-274.
- Weeks, J. (1985). *Sexuality and its Discontents*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Williams, R. (2003/1974). *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*. New York: Routledge.
- Wirth, L. (1945). The Problem of Minority Groups. In R. Linton (Ed.), *The Science of Man in the World Crisis* (pp. 347-372). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Wojcieszak, M. (2010). ‘Don’t Talk to Me’: Effects of Ideologically Homogenous Online Groups and Politically Dissimilar Offline Ties on Extremism. *New Media & Society*, 12(4), 637-655.
- Wojcieszak, M., & Mutz, D. (2009). Online Groups and Political Deliberation: Does the Internet Facilitate Exposure to Political Disagreement? *Journal of Communication*, 59, 40-56.
- Yang, G. (2010). *The Power of the Internet in China: Citizen Activism Online*. New York: Columbia University Press.

- Yep, G. A., Lovaas, K.E., & Elia, J.P. (Eds.) (2003). *Queer Theory and Communication: From Disciplining Queers to Queering the Discipline(s)*. New York: Haworth Press.
- Yin, R. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (4th ed., vol. 5). Applied Social Research Methods Series. California: Sage Publications.
- York, J. (2011, June). When Social Networks Become Tools for Oppression. *Bloomberg*. Retrieved from <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-06-07/when-social-networks-become-tools-of-oppression-jillian-c-york.html> (Accessed October, 2011).
- Yovel, Y. (2009). *The Other Within. The Marranos: Split Identity and Emerging Modernity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Zamorano, G. (2009). *Video and Indigenous Struggles in Contemporary Bolivia* (Doctoral Dissertation). City University of New York, New York. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations.
- Zarni (2000). Resistance and Cybercommunities. In A. De Vaney, S. Gance, & Y. Ma (Eds.), *Technology and Resistance. Digital Communications and New Coalitions Around The World* (pp. 71-88). New York: Peter Lang.
- Zhou, Y. (2006). Understanding Chinese Internet Politics. In Mohr, M. (Ed.), *China and Democracy: A Contradiction in Terms*. Asia Program Special Report, No 131. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. June. Retrieved from http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/FinalASIA_131.pdf#page=21 (Accessed 19 April 2008).

APPENDIX A
RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SOURCES OF DATA

Research Questions	Sources of Data and methods	Justifications
<p>1. What are the purposes and emergent patterns of online political mobilization of Philippine minority groups?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How did the groups come up with the decision to publish the struggle online? ○ What constitutes online political mobilization for minority groups? ○ How do minority groups make sense of their online political mobilization experience? 	<p>Interviews with minority group leaders and members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roots of the struggle and nature of the organization • Purposes and motivations for going online • Targeted audience • Decision-making and planning process of going online • Process of content creation and publishing <p>Analysis of online spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clustering and thematic analysis of mobilization activities in the online spaces 	<p>There are limited studies on minority groups and their uses of online spaces in the Philippine context (except for indigenous peoples who have migrated to other countries and studies that look at media representation). Primary data from the interviews with the leaders and members of the groups was valuable in understanding the process of planning, decision-making, and purposes to use the Internet for political mobilization. The interviews also provided sufficient contextual information on the struggle (history and roots) from the organizations' members that complemented secondary data. The members' insights on the dynamics of content creation and online publishing were also valuable.</p> <p>Analyses of the content of the online spaces were used to compare the purposes provided in the interviews.</p>
<p>2. What structural conditions enable or constrain minority groups' uses and negotiations of online media for political mobilization?</p>	<p>Interviews with minority group leaders and members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factors that enabled their use of the online spaces for political mobilization • Factors that constrained their use of online spaces for political mobilization <p>Interviews with resource persons (i.e. historians/analysts on social movements and minorities in the Philippines)</p>	<p>Interviews with the leaders and members of the groups supplemented the data from existing studies and reports and complemented the analysis of the online spaces. The members/leaders insights captured specific relations and conditions that enabled or constrained their online media use</p> <p>Resource persons provided alternative explanations and analyses of enabling and constraining conditions for minority groups.</p>

Research Questions	Sources of Data and methods	Justifications
	<p>Secondary data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social, political, and economic roots of the struggle • Levels of ICT development and sources and flows of IT resources • Transnational and national connections of the minority groups <p>Qualitative analysis of online spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host/sponsor of online spaces • Testimonies of assistance provided in the funding, maintenance and management of online spaces • Managers of online spaces and profile provided • International, national, regional and local partnerships • Analysis of online interactions (for interactive spaces) • Analysis of communication styles, symbols, and forms 	<p>Secondary data from historical analyses and existing studies on social movements and cultural activism in the Philippines gave a good insight on the structural conditions for online political mobilization and provide a more contextual and historical analysis of the findings.</p> <p>Observation and analysis of online spaces showed how these enabling or constraining conditions may be enacted in the online space.</p>
<p>3. To what extent are minority groups able to negotiate the challenges and benefits of new technology mediations for political mobilization?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What characterize these negotiations and emergent strategies of online media use? 	<p>Interviews with group leaders and members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threats and dangers experienced in the use of online spaces • Strategies employed in managing the threats • Factors that enabled or constrained strategies <p>Analysis of online spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies employed in managing threats • Apparent threats • Character and dynamics 	<p>In-depth interviews with the members and leaders of the organizations was useful in better understanding the strategies for negotiation of technology use, and the processes involved in coming up with the strategies. This also provided a better understanding of their perception of collective identity and the role of cultural values in crafting the strategies.</p> <p>The online spaces were useful in validating the threats, as well as strategies employed by the groups to manage the threats.</p>

Research Questions	Sources of Data and methods	Justifications
	of online interactions (for interactive spaces) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-representation styles, symbols, and forms • Mobilization styles, symbols and forms 	
4. What implications do new technology mediations have for minority group identity, struggle, and for broader collective action?	Interviews with group leaders and members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive outcomes of having online spaces to the struggle and to the organization • Negative outcomes / challenges / difficulties experienced in having online spaces Analysis of online spaces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback received and new partnerships made / established • Review of archives • Dynamics of online interactions (for interactive spaces) Analysis of secondary data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website analytics • Organizational reports • Other materials shared by the organizations 	The members and leaders' perceptions on what they have gained and the challenges experienced in using the online spaces for political mobilization were useful. The interviews allowed them to connect their gains and losses based on purposes and goals initially set. The in-depth interviews allowed them to recount and elaborate on specific instances and examples of gains and threats. The online spaces gave a good comparative view of the consequences mentioned by the members and leaders during the interviews. Some of the organizations were generous in sharing the website statistics and these were very useful supporting data regarding website readership as well as geographical representation of the website's audience. These secondary data provided richer insights that helped validate and enrich the interview and online data.

Table developed from Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative Researching*, pp. 27-30.

APPENDIX B CASE STUDY EVIDENCE

1. Indigenous case studies

Interviews with organizational leaders and members (anonymized per NUS-IRB Guidelines):

- Nine interviews with members and leaders of Cordillera People's Alliance (Baguio City, 15-17 May, 2010; multiple follow-up online and telephone interviews, June 2010 – July 2011)
- Eight interviews with members and leaders of Tebtebba (Baguio, City, 17-19 May 2010; multiple follow-up online and telephone interviews, June 2010 – July 2011)

Personal communication with other resource persons:

- Ms. Lourie Victor, indigenous activist, February, 2011, Quezon City
- Ms. Leizel Longboan, indigenous researcher/activist, December 2010, Bangkok
- Ms. Aida Vidal, researcher on indigenous peoples rights and Muslim indigenous communities in the Philippines, April, 2010
- Ms. Jennifer Eligio, expert, indigenous peoples rights and rural development, Dec 2010
- Mr. Roberto Verzola, expert, rural development and Philippine political economy, QC, Feb 2011

Online Spaces

- Cordillera People's Alliance website www.cpaphils.org
- Tebtebba website www.tebtebba.org

Documents

- Website analytics, CPA website
- Video CD, Conversations on Climate Change (not reviewed but mentioned in the study)
- Books, newsletters, pamphlets, and other published materials by the organizations

2. Moro case

Interviews with leaders and members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (anonymized per NUS - IRB Guidelines), Sultan Kudarat, 21-27 May, 2010; follow up interviews online and by telephone (June 2010-Aug 2011)

Interviews with other resource persons:

- Dr. Norodin Salam, Institute of Bangsamoro Studies, 23 May 2010 , Cotabato City
- Mr. Hasim Iskak, Institute of Bangsamoro Studies, 22 May 2010, Cotabato City
- Dr. Rudy Rodil, Mindanao historian and member of the GRP Peace Panel, online interviews, April & June, 2010
- Mr. Sammy Maulana, Secretary General, Consortium of the Bangsamoro Civil Society, 24 May 2010, Cotabato City
- Mr. Jun Macarambon, Moro historian and blogger, Quezon City, April, 2010; multiple online interviews
- Mr. Jamal Ashley Abbas, historian and writer, June-August 2011, multiple online interviews
- Mr. Amir Mawalil, Moro journalist and blogger, June 2011, online interview

Online Spaces

- Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) Luwaran official website
- MILF The Moro Chronicles
- MILF Arabic website (not reviewed but mentioned in the study)
- MILF Luwaran Facebook site
- MILF Luwaran Marshland Facebook site

Documents

- Full website analytics, MILF Luwaran website for the month of April 2010
- MILF publications on the Bangsamoro struggle (i.e. Bangsamoro Dossier)
- Full website analytics of Moro blogs Postprandial Musings, The Moro blogger
- Organizational publications and presentations shared by the MILF

3. Queer case studies

Interviews with organizational leaders and members (anonymized per NUS-IRB Guidelines)

- Eight interviews with leaders and members of Ladlad (Quezon City, April and May, 2010, Feb 2011; multiple online and telephone interviews, July-Oct, 2011)
- Nine interviews with leaders and members of Babaylan (Quezon City, 3-11 May 2010, Feb 2011; multiple online interviews, June-Aug 2011)

Online spaces/materials

- Ladlad website and mirror websites
- Ladlad Facebook site
- Ladlad E-group
- UP Babaylan website / blogspot
- Campaign posters available in Facebook page of Ladlad

Documents

- Website statistics of UP Babaylan website
- Organizational publications and presentations shared by Ladlad and Babaylan

4. Interviews/personal communication with other resource persons:

- Members of the Computer Professionals Union, February, 2011
- Dr. Roberto Verzola, Professor, University of the Philippines, and author, *The Political Economy of Information*, Quezon City, February, 2011
- Mr. Al Alegre, Executive Director, Foundation for Media Alternatives, Quezon City, April, 2010
- Other anonymous resource persons

APPENDIX C

[sample invitation letter – for organizations]

20 March 2010

[NAME]

[Designation]

[Organization Name]

Dear Mr./Ms. _____ :

Greetings! I am a PhD student of the Communications and New Media Program of the National University of Singapore and I am conducting my PhD research entitled, “***New Media and Political Mobilization: The Case of Online Mediations of Minority Groups in the Philippines***”. This research focuses on Philippine minority groups and their engagement of new media technologies for social and political mobilization. I wish to probe the experiences of six case studies representing three of the major cultural minorities in the Philippines: indigenous, ethno-religious and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) groups. In this regard, I have selected your organization, _____, as one of six organizations representing these three minority groupings. Your group came out as one of the minority groups that have active online presence and which uses Internet applications for the expression of resistance.

I would therefore like to seek your consent to participate in an interview sometime between May 1-30, 2010 at your place of convenience. The interview will cover questions about your organizations’ experiences with regard to your use of online media for articulating group claims and solidarity building. I also wish that you suggest names of at least five members of your group who may likewise be interviewed (i.e. Web manager, PR/Information officer, Content writers/editors, and members). The Interview Guide is provided in the attached sheet.

Your participation in this study is important and will greatly enhance the outcome of this research. In case you would not be available, I would appreciate if you can refer another officer or senior member of your group, particularly those involved in the production and distribution of your online materials. A Participant Information Sheet (FAQ) is also attached for your reference. Should you have questions, I can be reached by email at cheryllsoriano@nus.edu.sg or cheryllsoriano@gmail.com.

Maraming salamat!

Sincerely,

(original signed)

Cheryll Soriano

PhD Candidate, Communications and New Media
National University of Singapore



[Sample Invitation letter-FOR EXPERTS]

Date

Name
Position
Organization's Name
Address

Dear Mr/Ms. _____:

Greetings! I am a PhD student of the Communications and New Media Program of the National University of Singapore and I am conducting my PhD research entitled, ***"New Media and Political Mobilization: The Case of Online Mediations of Minority Groups in the Philippines"***. This research focuses on Philippine minority groups and their engagement of new media technologies for social and political mobilization. The research consists of probing the experiences of six case studies representing three of the major cultural minorities in the Philippines: indigenous, ethno-religious and queer (or lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups).

As an expert in the field of [ICT development / Minority culture and history / Activism and social movements in the Philippines], I wish to request for an audience with you for an informal discussion or interview on [Philippine ICT policies for minorities / Roots of the struggles of minority groups / Online activism in the Philippines]. I will be in the Philippines/Manila/Cordillera/Davao on _____ and I would appreciate meeting you at your most convenient time and place.

Your participation in this study is important and will greatly enhance the outcome of this research. A Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form is also attached for your reference and signature. Should you have questions, I can be reached by email at cheryllsoriano@nus.edu.sg or cheryllsoriano@gmail.com or via telephone number _____.

Thank you very much in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Cheryll Soriano
PhD Candidate, Communications and New Media
National University of Singapore

New Media and Political Mobilization:
The Case of Online Mediations of Minority Groups in the Philippines
TENTATIVE INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Background on the Minority Group, Nature/Roots of Struggle, and ICT Engagement

- Nature and organization
 - Core group advocacy (ies)
 - Historical roots of the struggle
 - Group membership
 - Relationships with other minority organizations, partnerships with international organizations
 - Traditional and current modes of communicating dissent
- General ICT use and dynamics
 - General ICT uses and capacity of the organization
 - Perception of technology and technology use
 - [Use projective technique, if necessary]

2. Online Struggle and Political Mobilization of the Group

- Rationale for online initiatives
 - Primary reasons for the groups' use of online spaces
 - Who is the target audience for your online initiatives?
 - Anticipated action from targeted audience resulting from online initiatives
- Experienced tensions on the use of online spaces and presentation of identity?
- Forms and Characteristics of Minority Online Media
 - Modes of online political mobilization- In what ways does the group articulate ideologies, norms, practices and solidarity online?
 - In which online /social media?
 - Why these media (i.e. website, facebook, twitter?)
 - Do you invite engagement in dialogue/discussion/debate– why and why not?
 - Do you mobilize action and resources? (i.e. petitions, street protests)
- How does your group work within the possibilities, limitations, and the politics of technology?
- Production and distribution
 - Process of creation, editorship, and distribution of content
 - Who decides what content to put online?
 - Describe the process of content production

- Describe the process of editorship, in relation to the content used for other media (i.e. TV, newspaper, or radio) used by the group
 - How does the group decide/agree on the distribution of uploaded materials?
 - How are the online spaces maintained?
- Decision-making on which media / online media to use
 - Who decides which online medium to use?
- Online-offline relations
 - Group perception about the groups' online sites? Had there been a need to consult group members on online content? What do the members think of the online spaces?
 - Has the group's struggles/character of organization changed over time with the use of technology, etc?
 - With the advent of social networking sites, does the organization allow individual members to post group-related information/activities in his/her individual sites (i.e. personal blogs)? Are there positive or negative implications?
 - How do you assess the effects / implications of the social networking sites and e-group to the organization? Is it good or bad?
- Online experiences in interacting with others
 - Do your online spaces allow participation/comments by others?
 - How do you deal with people commenting in your websites/blogs?
 - Is there any implication of these online interactions on group identity and struggle?
- Feedback received on online activities
 - What sorts of reaction/feedback with regard to their online action have you received so far?
 - From other members?
 - From government
 - From similar groups
 - Others
- [Add specific questions based on preliminary analysis of online spaces]
 - Clarify meaning of specific posts and strategies
 - Clarify cultural symbols and strategies used (probe for any hidden strategies)
 - Clarify dynamics of interaction among internal members and with others
- Closing/Summary. If you were to identify two or three of the most important advantages or benefits, as well as most important challenges of online engagement for your organization, what would it be? How about for the struggle?
- Request for available statistics of online spaces; any available videos, and other productions; and internal memos concerning the use of the Internet

1. Project title : Minority Groups, New Media, and Political Mobilization in the Philippines

2. Principal Investigator and co-investigator:

Ms. Cheryll Ruth Soriano (PI) +65 9324 2915
Dr. TT Sreekumar (co-I) +65 6516 3148
Communications and New Media Programme, National University of Singapore

3. What is the purpose of this research?

This research seeks to produce a comprehensive picture of Philippine cultural minority groups' use of online technologies for political mobilization. The study probes the experiences of six case studies representing three of the major cultural minorities in the Philippines: indigenous, ethno-religious and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) groups and their engagement of Internet technologies for articulating claims on national politics.

This information sheet provides you with information about the research. The Investigator or her representative will also describe this research to you and answer all of your questions. Read the information below and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to take part.

4. Who can participate in the research? What is the expected duration of my participation? What is the duration of this research?

Leaders and members of organisations representing indigenous, Muslim (ethno-religious) and lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender (LGBT) groupings are the targeted respondents for this research. These shall be minority group organisations that have active online presence and which use Internet technology applications for the expression of resistance.

5. What is the approximate number of participants involved?

I wish to interview at least 5-6 members of each group, including the Executive Director, IT/web developer, PR officer, Editor, and other members. Resource persons and experts are also being contacted for interview.

6. What will be done if I take part in this research?

You will be requested to participate in an online or face to face semi-structured interview(s) on the use of online media for political mobilization. The interviews will be conducted mostly in English or Taglish. Both individual and group interviews shall be held at the venue of choice of the group or group members. The interviews are expected to last for approximately 1-2 hours.

The interviews will be tape recorded with your consent. Written notes will be taken if you feel uncomfortable with the tape-recording.

7. If data are taken, what will be done with them?

Your name, position in the organisation, and contact information will be collected for this research, as well as your opinion / views on your group's uses of internet technology for political mobilization.

To protect your confidentiality, your *data* will be coded. All identifiable information will be kept separate from the *data*. The link between your identifiable information and the code number will be kept confidential by the principal investigator.

8. How will my privacy and the confidentiality of my research records be protected?

Your explicit consent will be secured prior to the citation, quotation, or identification of any of your statements given during interviews and focus group discussions. All other identifiable and private information such as contact information will be kept securely by the Principal Investigator and shall not be shared with other parties. Your information collected will be destroyed after the completion of the PI's thesis.

9. What are the possible discomforts and risks for participants?

None

10. What is the compensation for any injury?

Not applicable. I don't expect the study to afflict any injury to the respondents.

11. Will there be reimbursement for participation?

Your transportation expenses for going to the research venue shall be reimbursed and simple meals or snacks will be provided during the interviews and focus group discussions, if necessary. The interviews will be held at the interviewees' preferred location.

12. What are the possible benefits to me and to others?

There is no direct benefit to you from participating in this research. I am documenting the experiences of minority groups' uses of online media for political mobilization, including the politics and issues related thereto. However, while there may be no direct immediate benefit to you by participating in this research, the knowledge gained will benefit minority groups and the public in the future. Understanding the intricacies involving civil society groups' uses of new media technologies can aid in the design of future interventions for the fruitful use and pronounced benefit of ICT use for minorities and CSOs in general.

13. Can I refuse to participate in this research?

Your decision to participate in this research is voluntary and completely up to you. You can also withdraw from the research at any time without giving any reasons, by informing the principal investigator and all your data collected will be discarded.

14. Whom should I call if I have any questions or problems?

Please contact the Principal Investigator, [Ms Cheryl Soriano] at cheryllsoriano@nus.edu.sg for all research-related matters and in the event of research-related injuries.

For an independent opinion regarding the research and the rights of research participants, you may contact a staff member of the National University of Singapore Institutional Review Board (Attn: Mr Chan Tuck Wai, at telephone 6516 1234 or email at irb@nus.edu.sg).

APPENDIX D

TOPIC	THEMES	QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS GUIDE
Background on the Minority group, Nature/ Roots of Struggle, and ICT Use	Nature and organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core group advocacy (ies) • Historical roots of the struggles • Group (i.e. national, regional, community-based) • Relationships with the central and local governments, other civil society actors, and international organizations (note affiliations and membership to umbrella organizations) • Traditional and current modes of communicating dissent (*radio or television guesting; podcast, publications that they upload on the website)
	General ICT use and dynamics	General ICT uses and capacity of the organization (if stated or manifested)
Rationale for online initiatives	Primary reasons for the groups' use of online spaces (Identify primary, then identify all that apply)	<p>Primary reasons for the groups' use of online spaces (i.e. A. Organize internal activities B. Mobilize protest activities or petitions C. Information dissemination about org and struggle, communicate claims and represent causes D. Open a venue for dialogue; E. Invite new membership; F. Generate resources). Rank if possible based on postings</p> <p>Different purposes for different spaces?</p>
	Target audience / Anticipated response/action from where?	<p>Target audience for their online initiatives (is it their internal community, external community, government, business, etc.?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • internal community only: (building solidarity, organizing) • business: whether they are taking advertisements • government / links • other civil society groups • donors • external audience <p>Anticipated action from targeted audience</p> <p>Uses of online spaces for resource mobilization (fund generation, membership recruitment, attracting donation, advertisements)</p>
Forms and Characteristics of Online Media	Modes of online political mobilization- In what ways does the group articulate ideologies, norms, practices and solidarity online?	<p>Available online spaces and date of first posting</p> <p>Last date of posting</p> <p>Are the different spaces linked?</p> <p>What is the focus of the online space: is it information dissemination on the struggle or on the organization?</p>

TOPIC	THEMES	QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS GUIDE
		<p>What kind of information do they disseminate?</p> <p>Do they mobilize action and resources? In what ways -- do they invite for street protests, petitions, etc?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modes of online political mobilization- In what ways do the groups articulate ideologies, norms, practices and solidarity online? Do they use plain texts, features, opinion pieces, videos, pictures, poetry, gossip, blind items, stories, music, etc. Describe all forms used. Give emphasis to covert (symbolic) and overt (explicit) forms <p>symbolic: use of jokes, gossip, music, poetry, the way the site is designed (banner, layout, color, photos, graphics)</p>
<p>Character / nature of interaction within community / with other audiences</p>	<p>Dialogue / interactions</p>	<p>Do they invite engagement in dialogue/discussion/debate on their issues (i.e. Chat, forum, blog open for comments, etc)? How?</p> <p>Do they have spaces allotted for internal communication and discussion? (i.e. restricted for members only page; e-group, etc)</p> <p>Do they have feedback mechanisms? What are these?</p> <p>Who are participating/posting in their online spaces (is it internal community OR external audience?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they allow comments? Note extent of comment and interaction. • Facebook: Note how many friends/fans or members they have. • What is the average content and character of comments? by whom? From other members or external? • Profile of participants (i.e. are they supporters/members or non-supporters of the org, country of origin). <p>Do they respond to the comments? In what way?</p> <p>In general, how would you describe the character of the online interactions -- is it supportive, chaotic and aggressive, deliberative and civil?</p>

TOPIC	THEMES	QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS GUIDE
Processes of Production and distribution	Process of creation, editorship, and distribution of content	<p>Note the number of hits/visitors on the site.</p> <p>Who are the identified org members? Who are involved in the online postings?</p> <p>Identify the sources of the postings. Are they mostly self-generated content, or are they links to already available content?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they develop their own content (their own editorship within the organization) or bring in links from other organizations? <p>On the average, assess the frequency of posting and updating</p> <p>Do SNS spaces conflict with website content?</p>
Source of support	Funding, assistance, support	<p>Who helped establish the online site? (i.e. normally websites say who funded it; support in website assistance)</p> <p>Are there guest writers in the websites? Who are the writers?</p> <p>With which organizations is the website linked? (see links)</p>
Style	Style, symbolic forms	<p>Describe the style of writing (Are they explicit or symbolic?). Symbolic posts are important in this study-- those that have hidden meanings of resistance-- identify any of such posts that are notable. Note also in which types of spaces are these found (i.e. Is it in the blog, website, e-group or in the SNS?)</p> <p>Are the authors normally identified? For what types of posts are the authors identified? Are there instances when the authors anonymize themselves?</p>