The Mediatization of Politics and Activism

Tensions, Transformations and Adaptations in the Philippine context

Joyce Zaide

Abstract

In the recent years, the world has witnessed interesting trends in the political arena, particularly more prominent in the recent elections held in different countries all over the world. With the burgeoning of the use of web 2.0 platforms, it is quite evident that new media, particularly social media, have become important tools for both state and non-state actors to advance their own social and political agenda. This paper attempts to look at the transformations that have occurred in the social world of political communication and activism through the lens of mediatization. Using this concept, this paper argues that the social interactions among actors engaged in political communication and activism and the way they use the media are shaped by the transformations in media technologies and the power relations occurring in these relationships.

This paper is divided into five main sections: First, there will be a literature review of the concept of the mediatization of politics. Under this section, there are two subsections. One is a discussion on what is media logic and political logic; and two is an examination into the power relations and social interactions involved in the mediatization of politics. In the second, third and fourth sections, I will be looking at how the mediatization of politics manifests in the relationship between media and politicians, as well as between media and activists. Most of the empirical examples provided in this paper are from the Philippines, although there are cases from other countries included as a form of comparison. The last section provides the summary and conclusion.

Keywords

Duterte, Mediatization, Online Activism, Philippines, Politics, Propaganda, Social Media

1. The Mediatization of Politics

It cannot be denied that political communication and activism in the recent years have seen transformations brought about by developments in the media. I argue that the concept of mediatization provides a good framework for analysing how media developments have shaped political communication and activism and the relationship among the involved actors. For this paper, I refer to the mediatization of political communication and activism as the "mediatization of politics", a concept which has been explored by a number of scholars in previous literatures that will be discussed below.

According to Peters (2015), mediatization, in the context of politics and political protest,

> [...] can be used as a framework to describe how political organizations, groups and individual actors adapt to the media; how they need to change their action and communication in order to gain visibility and attract an audience and how this process affects the political action and dis-course on a long-term scale. (Peters 2015: 8)

This statement is noteworthy for several reasons: One, it tells us that regardless of whether one is a state actor (e.g. politician) or a non-state actor (e.g. activist), either party is assumed to adjust their actions when they utilize the media in communicating. Two, there is the recognition that both use the media as a tool for gathering support for their agenda and goals. Three, it emphasizes the importance of looking at all of these factors and their implications in the long-term.

Isotalus and Almonkari (2014: 290) describe the mediatization of politics as "a long-term process characterized by an increase in the influence of the media in politics". For Birkner (2015: 457), the idea that the media have influence on political processes should be "consid-ered as an important element in mediatization", that is, how politicians perceive the effect of media on others, which then shapes how they deal with the media and use media as a tool. This idea must be taken into consideration "regardless of whether this perception is correct or not" (Strömbäck 2011: 427, as cited in Birkner 2015: 457).

Without a doubt, the media are crucial in the arena of politics, particularly in moulding "public opinion and decision-making" (Meyer 2003, as cited in Couldry 2014: 37). However, in looking at the mediatization of politics from this perspective, we must be cautious not to limit our focus on media effects (Strömbäck 2008). As Schulz (2004) puts it, "mediatization

as a concept both transcends and includes media effects" (as cited in Strömbäck 2008: 232). Strömbäck (ibid.) argues that it is necessary to conceptualize media influence in a way that takes into consideration the "interactions and interdependencies of media systems, institutions and actors, political systems, culture, and sense making". These interactions and interdependencies among these various stakeholders (whether individuals or institutions) allow us to have insights into the changes and transformations occurring in the relationships among them, as well as their implications on the way we perceive reality.

1.1 Media logic vs political logic

Beyond media influence, it is the long-term process of change in society and culture in the context of media development which is central in mediatization research (Krotz 2014; Hepp 2012). As mediatization is the study of a "long-term interrelation process" (Hepp et al. 2010: 223, as cited in Birkner 2015: 455), the foci in the mediatization of politics are "the two separate but equal systems of media on the one hand and politics on the other" (Birkner 2015: 455). Scholarship on the mediatization of politics usually conceptualizes these two different systems as operating in two distinctive logics: the media logic and the political logic.

Strömbäck (2008) proposes a framework from which to analyse how politics is mediatized in a particular setting. He conceptualizes four phases of mediatization which describe the increasing level or intensity that individuals and institutions perceive and allow the media logic to govern and shape their life or perception of reality. The framework also gives insights into the extent of which media logic pervades political logic. The first phase of mediatization – which Strömbäck argues is a prerequisite for the next three phases of mediatization to occur – refers to the stage at which politics becomes mediated. This is measured by whether media have become "the most important source of information channel of communication between the citizenry and political institutions and actors, such as political parties, governmental agencies, or political interest groups" (ibid.: 236). According to Strömbäck, the concept of mediated politics is important because of the assumption that the depictions of reality portrayed by media are able to influence how individuals perceive reality, which then shapes their viewpoints. This then leaves political actors with no choice but to consider media in their attempt to shape or react to public opinion (ibid.).

Relative to the first phase, the second phase of mediatization is characterized by an increased independence of media from political institutions. Increased journalistic professionalization and commercialization can be observed. In this phase, the media start to be ruled more by media logic rather than political logic. Here, the media "make their own judgments regarding what is thought to be the appropriate messages from the perspective of their own medium, its

format, norms and values, and its audiences" (ibid.: 237). As a consequence, political actors and institutions start to realize that they need to "increase the resources aimed at developing their competence in public relations and news management" (ibid.). However, it must be emphasized that in this phase, the media are yet not totally independent from political forces (ibid.). In the third phase of the mediatization of politics, media independence further increases, and so does their influence. The media's position as the dominant sources of information is further entrenched in this phase. In people's minds, mediated reality gains significance over actual reality. This is important to note since perceptions of reality fed by media logic have an influence in shaping people's viewpoints and attitudes (ibid.).

The increase in the media's independence leaves social and political actors with no choice but to adjust to the media, instead of the other way around. In this phase, media logic dominates political logic more than ever, and social and political actors further invest in honing their media management skills. This "makes media considerations an increasingly integral part of even the policy-making processes" (ibid.: 238). The power of media is more prominent in this stage, as Strömbäck puts it:

> […] the media logic—have become so pervasive that basically, no social actors requiring interaction with the public or influence on public opinion can ignore the media or afford not to adapt to the media logic. The power of the media is not only the visible power. As noted by Asp and Esaiasson (1996: 81), 'the active mechanism is not direct influence, but adaptation'. (ibid.: 238)

Quite evident in this phase is the tension caused by the clash between media logic and political logic. In adapting to the media logic, political actors have to device ways in which they can use media as a strategic tool to their advantage, while at the same time still taking the political logic into consideration. This is not an easy feat. Clashes and compromises can be expected, which may have implications on how each party carries out its activities. This can then shape how they relate to each other.

In the fourth and last phase of the mediatization of politics, the dominance of media logic over political logic is said to have reached its peak. If in the third phase, political and social actors adapt to the media logic, in the last phase they adopt and internalize media logic, so much that they are unable to distinguish between the two. An example given by Strömbäck is the blurring of lines between campaigning mode and governing mode by politicians. The struggle of political actors to succumb to media logic in carrying out their agenda is elucidated by Strömbäck (2008: 240) in this excerpt:

> By mobilizing all available resources in the daily battles to influence and shape the news, mainly by accommodating the wants, needs, and standards of newsworthiness of the media, political and social actors might become successful in the short term, but at the same time, their actions reveal the relative insignificance of the political logic as opposed to the media logic.

While there exist studies on the mediatization of politics that look into the relationship and interaction between media logic and political logic, "where a media logic is pit against a political logic", scholars like Thesen (2014) and Strömbäck (2008) observed that research on the latter is fairly underdeveloped compared to the former. Nevertheless, what is interesting in the discussions on media logic and political logic are the tensions within and between them. For Isotalus and Almonkari (2014), the tensions between the two logics are part of the process of mediatization. In addition to tensions between these two logics, Strömbäck and Esser (2014: 249) recognize that tensions could also occur within each of the logic. The two authors explain:

> […] there might often be tensions between policy and politics, as well as between journalistic professionalism and media commercialism. How such tensions are played out and resolved might have a significant influence on the exact nature of political logic or news media logic in particular processes, but may also change from time to time or vary across political actors, organizations and institutions, or between different news media.

For Thesen (2014), the problem is that existing scholarships often portrays the media-politics-relationship as a zero-sum game, "where mediatization necessarily implies decreasing political influence" (ibid.: 181). He, instead, argues that it is more important to see "how the media (re)distribute power between different actors or institutions in politics" in order for mediatization research and political agenda setting to forge ahead (ibid.: 182).

In parallel, it is interesting to note that while Thesen discusses the power distribution of media, Strömbäck (2008, p. 233) on the other hand, talks about the politics' involvement in "the process of distributing political power, through elections or other venues; the processes of decision making; and the question of power as it relates to 'who gets what, when and how'" (Lasswell 1950, as cited in Strömbäck 2008: 233). As both systems are viewed to have power as well as the capacity to distribute this power among different stakeholders, it would be interesting to further investigate the tensions, transformations and power relations involved, not only between the media system and political system, but also within each of them, as politics become progressively mediatized.

1.2 Power and Social Interactions

While media logic and political logic are both useful concepts in understanding the mediatization of politics, we must be cautious not to concentrate our attention on these alone. Lundby (2009), for instance, warns about focusing solely on media logic when doing mediatization research because "a focus on a general media logic hides these patterns of [social] interactions" (as cited in Hepp 2012: 7). Lundby (2009) adds that mediatization research should instead focus on "how social and communicative forms are developed when media are

taken into use in social interaction" (as cited in Hepp 2012: 7). Hepp shares this sentiment when he expresses that "[s]ociety, culture but also media communication are too manifold to reduce mediatization [...] to the pervasion of a media logic" (Hepp 2012: 8). He then proposes the concept of the "moulding force of media" as a more apt concept in studying mediatization and the media's power in shaping social relations and human actions. In this context, he emphasizes that it is the social relations in communication which are considered as the source of communicative power (ibid.).

In the study of the mediatization of politics, concepts such as "symbolic power, media power, media logic, and moulding forces" (Block 2013: 264) are important when the potential of the media to empower and disempower shall be investigated. Block proposes an approach from a "culturalist perspective, that is, in terms of the relationship between culture and power, and in acknowledgment of the role of human agency" (ibid.: 259). Two key aspects that she focused on which are useful for this paper are "the symbolic power of the media for 'constructing reality' (Bourdieu, 2003; Couldry, 2000; 2012), and their hegemonic capacity to 'shape' the 'ideological environment'" (ibid.). Block, borrowing Hepp's idea, defines communication as "'any form of symbolic interaction involving the use of arbitrary symbols and signs picked up by humans in the process of socialization from their cultural environments" (ibid.: 262). Through communication, politicians, media actors and even regular folks can have the power to "exert communicative power" (ibid.: 263).

How has the mediatization of politics manifested in the power relations and social interactions between the media and state and non-state actors? In the following sections, I am going to examine the mediatization of politics as it occurs in the relationship between media and politicians; followed by that of media and activists.

2. Media and politicians

2.1 Politicians shaping media, media shaping politicians?

The recent 2016 presidential elections in the Philippines have witnessed an unprecedented utilization of media by politicians, particularly of social media. In fact, the winning of the elected president was attributed to his campaign team's ability to harness the power of social media (Guerrero 2016). Duterte hired Nic Gabunada, a marketing consultant who was given a meager budget of about $200,000 to manage his campaign (Williams 2017). Gabunada was able to enlist an army of 'keyboard warriors' who were able to fill social media with pro-Duterte comments, spread hashtags and attack anyone who criticizes Duterte (ibid.). Even

after the elections, both paid and unpaid individuals continued to use social media to post pro-Duterte comments and provide links to hyperpartisan[1] blogs and websites, creating the perception of the pervasiveness of support for Duterte's controversial policies. Indeed, Duterte and his team have successfully exploited the social media landscape, with trolls getting paid "$2,000 a month creating fake accounts on social media, and then using those 'bots' to flood the digital airwaves with pro-Duterte propaganda" (Williams 2017).

The utilization of paid trolls is not unique to the Philippines. The Communist Party of China is said to employ trolls (dubbed as the 50 cent army) to post 450 million fake comments per year (Williams 2017). Meanwhile, in the recent US elections, Trump's assumption as President was attributed to the proliferation of fake news on social media which presented him in a positive light (while mudslinging opponents and critics) (see Allcott/Gentzkow 2017). Facebook was particularly implicated in this accusation, to which Zuckerberg disagreed, exclaiming that fake news posts on Facebook were very minimal and not influential in the result of the recent US elections (Kovach 2016).

Hofiliña (2016), who did an investigative article on Duterte's social media machinery, opines that social media have the potential to shape people's view of reality. In her article she writes: "the spread of wrong information can still be damaging. They can convincingly manufacture reality on social media as they wish, transforming perception to reality, and swaying opinion on the basis of perceived number and power". Aro (2016), who did a similar investigative piece on the Kremlin's use of social media for propaganda, describes a typical strategy adopted by the Russian government:

> Disinformation is designed to manipulate the receiver's feelings. Younger and more visually oriented people are lured in with memes, caricatures and videos. The messages conveyed by trolls' memes are simple: Western political leaders are often depicted as "Nazis" or "fascists". Images of corpses and alleged war crimes committed by Ukrainian soldiers are distributed, as well as photos of Ukrainian teenage girls wearing t-shirts with Nazi symbols on them—in reality these have been edited in Photoshop.

Aro's analysis is interesting for several reasons. One, it shows how images, symbols and other visuals are used, not only as tools for attracting the public's attention, but also to make the news item 'believable'. Two, it hints at the deliberate manipulation of photos in spreading disinformation. Indeed, it can be said that governments are becoming skilled at delivering their message to the people and that "for those only moderately interested in politics it could be hard to discern propaganda from the truth" (Smith 2013: 45).

---

[1] For the notion and interpretation of hyperpartisanship see Fogg (2015) and Herrman (2016).

The use of new technologies by governments for propaganda purposes is not uncommon. El-Khalili (2013), for instance, looked at how social media was used as a propaganda tool following the toppling of Hosni Mubarak's dictatorial government. According to her, the decision to use social media was partly due to the realization of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), the then interim government, of the "need to speak the same language of the Egyptian youth, to communicate with them electronically, as well as to issue counter–revolutionary propaganda". This clearly shows awareness, even by authoritarian regimes, of the necessity to use to their own advantage what is thought of as an 'emancipatory' media. It also shows their adeptness at using appropriate ways to reach their target audience.

While it may seem paradoxical that authoritarian governments use 'democratizing' media such as the Internet as a propaganda tool, it should not be too surprising since logically, they just want to control the same media that have been able to topple authoritarian regimes. Mansell (2012: 36), points out how the Internet's empowering/disempowering potential can be explained depending on from which scholarly tradition one looks at. She states:

> In the administrative tradition, the Internet, for example, has been regarded as either a progressive medium contributing to economic growth, providing platforms for advertisers and businesses, or, alternatively, as an inclusive technology that favours democracy. It is more likely to be seen by those working in the critical tradition as being complicit in contributing to the maintenance of unequal power relationships. (ibid.)

Authoritarian governments are clearly aware of this paradox when they attempt to balance the use of new media technologies to advance their country's economy and their need to control the democratizing potential of these technologies in order to keep themselves in power. This situation has been termed in previous studies as the "Dictator's Dilemma" (see Saleh 2012; Smith 2013). Morozov (2011), a vocal critic of the concept of "Dictator's Dilemma", argues that it is "a naive belief in the emancipatory nature of online communication that rests on a stubborn refusal to acknowledge its downside" (as cited in Smith 2013: 45)

The idea of the Internet being "liberating or promoting the discussion of ideas" (Block 2013: 265) has been questioned by Baudrillard. Block, citing Baudrillard, explains that "the Web embodies a 'democratic illusion' that has led to a 'dictatorship of forced exchange' of media-constructed symbols 'in which domination itself is engulfed'—the 'virtual dimension of hegemony' (Baudrillard 2010, as cited in Block 2013: 265). Quoting Lotringer she adds: "This is a situation through which 'everyone becomes both hostage and accomplice of the global power'." (Lotringer 2010: 7, as cited in Block 2013: 265)

Beyond the content and intentional manipulation of images in blog posts and 'news' articles shared on social media pages, what makes these hyperpartisan pages more potent is when they are made to appear as coming from an objective source and/or suggest that the politi-

cians are not the ones behind them. Hayness and Pitts (2009: 75), for instance, discuss how blogs are utilized to give the impression that support is coming from bottom-up:

> We may see more manipulation of information—more astro-turfing of the blogosphere where campaigns and their supporters attempt to create buzz that feels like grassroots support but is in reality simply manufactured. We have already seen a bit of this on YouTube and MySpace as campaigns planted material that had the appearance of coming from an individual but was really associated with the campaign. Social networking sites as campaign tools are really only beneficial when there is real support for a candidate.

In the case of the Philippines, a number of blogs that can be considered as hyperpartisan have cropped up starting from around the time Duterte announced his candidacy. While it cannot be confirmed that owners of these pages have been paid by Duterte, what can be observed is that before they became popular on the Internet as staunch supporters, they were either ordinary people or previously not that well known as they have become in the meantime. Also, they claim not to be paid by the candidate/s they are supporting (although some have been accused of being paid, as has been transmitted in unconfirmed reports) and emphasize they are doing this only because they believe in Duterte's capacity to create change. Notably, since early 2017, Duterte has given pro-administration bloggers occasional access to Malacañang[2] for "events like press briefings and Presidential activities" (Geducos 2017) – an opportunity that only accredited reporters have.

It is exactly these factors that made these kinds of blogs popular among their followers who would often claim on social media that these 'alternative' sources of information are more reliable than traditional, mainstream media.[3] Real or not, the power of these kinds of blogs lies in the fact that to Duterte's supporters, it seems that support is coming from the bottom, i.e. from the 'people' or the 'masses'. Duterte's campaign manager is clearly aware of the power of this kind of strategy. While not hiding the fact that he used the campaign money to build Duterte's network of social media supporters, Gabunada emphasized in an interview with online newspaper *Rappler* that the recruitment of participants was mainly "organic" and their operation was "volunteer-driven" (Gavilan 2016). He explained that with the money given to him by Duterte, he was able to recruit 500 volunteers, who then "tapped their own networks" (ibid.). Each volunteer is said to manage "between 300 to 6,000 members, but that the largest group had 800,000 members" (ibid.). What was interesting in this seemingly organic network was the ubiquitous presence of various groups on social media that have been created in support of Duterte. Moreover, what made the approach more strategic was

---

[2] Malacañang Palace is the official residence and workplace of the Philippine president.
[3] In fact, this is a popular phrase that can be seen being repeatedly posted by online commenters in various forums and social media pages. Whether such kind of thinking is induced and proliferated by paid trolls is another story.

the addition of the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) as the fourth main group in this network, in addition to the three main island groups of the Philippine archipelago (Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao). Thus, it can be said that the way that the network was built and how it appeared to people's social media pages gave a grassroots vibe to it.

2.2 Some parallels between Venezuela's Chávez and Philippines' Duterte

Block's case study of Venezuela's political communication during Chávez' time interestingly draws some parallels with what is happening now under Duterte's administration. Block presented five features that characterize Chávez's political communication: First, is how Venezuelans get their information on their country's political situation through the mainstream media, and increasingly, through social media. According to Block (2013: 272), the Venezuelan's engagement with new media makes them "feel connected with 'a level of sociability' beyond their family dimension, realizing their social and political life symbolically, through the mass media" (ibid.). In the case of the Philippines, statistics have shown that the recent Philippine election "has been the number one most engaged elections in Asia-Pacific"[4] (Dela Paz 2016). In fact, Facebook is said to have recorded "about 22 million Filipino Facebook users actively engaging in conversations about the 2016 Philippine elections with friends and family members" (ibid.).

A second feature discussed by Block is Chávez' "savvy engagement with the media" (Block 2013: 272). Through his "manipulation of cultural symbols and adversarial discourses communicated through a 'brutal, abusive' interaction with the media", Chávez was able to create "a mimetic 'melodramatic bond (M. H. Otero, personal communication, December 3, 2010) with his constituents" (ibid.). This "involved the creation and consolidation of a powerful public mass media platform, a regulatory architecture of intimidation, and the daily use of media spaces (M. H. Otero, personal communication, December 3, 2010)" (ibid.). Similarly, Duterte projected in the media a tough-talking persona and no-holds-barred-politically-incorrect manner of speaking, which critics would often say is unprofessional and unbecoming of a President. He is known for his frequent use of expletives during interviews and press conferences, had previously cursed the Pope and Barack Obama on TV (The Associated Press 2016), and called US Ambassador Philip Goldberg a "gay son of a whore" (Chan 2016). This, however, made him even more endearing to the masses that would often refer to him on social media as "Tatay Digong" (Tatay means Father and Digong is Duterte's nickname). Moreover, the fact that he created the Presidential Communications Operations Office

---

[4] This was stated by Elizabeth Hernandez, the head of Asia-Pacific Public Policy at Facebook, in an interview with *Rappler*. The statement was based on a research conducted by Facebook.

(PCOO) almost immediately upon assumption clearly shows his astuteness towards the use of media in political communication. PCOO is a newly created office under Duterte's administration and is in charge of the government's public relations. Critics call it the government's propaganda arm. It has been accused of historical revisionism, particularly of attempting to whitewash issues related to Martial Law (Angeles 2016). More recently, PCOO chief Martin Andanar – whose task includes supervising the state-run news agency Philippine News Agency (PNA) – drew flaw when PNA utilized a Wikimedia commons image of the Vietnam War for a write-up on the Marawi siege.[5]

The "mediatized character of Chávez' opposition" is the third feature raised by Block (2013: 273). She describes it as the portrayal of media and journalists by Chávez as his enemies, legitimizing the commercial media "as the political enemy to defeat" (Cañizales 2011: 64 et seq., as cited in ibid.). Interestingly, Duterte's treatment of journalists and use of the media is also notorious. Upfront the inauguration, he already announced a media boycott that lasted for about two months, limiting his press conferences to state-owned TV stations during this period. This decision was in reaction to Reporters Without Borders' call to Philippine media to boycott Duterte after the latter said that corrupt journalists deserve to die. There was also an incidence of him catcalling a reporter during a press conference.[6] In various occasions and in different ways, he had characterized commercial media outlets negatively, calling them dishonest, low-life, garbage and always watching out for mistakes (see Bacungan 2017; Andolong 2016; Placido 2017; Reuters 2017).

The polarization of Venezuela as a nation is the fourth feature discussed by Block. She claims that while differences in ideologies is not new in the country, "the levels of polarization reached unseen proportions during the Chávez era, overdimensioned by a highly polarized media" (Cañizales 2009, as cited in Block 2013: 273). She observed that those supporting Chávez get their information mainly from the state-owned media and the President's Twitter account. On the other hand, his critics mainly source their information from commercial media and Twitter of journalists who oppose him. The same polarization at extreme levels is also happening in the Philippines. What is more interesting is the pitting of commercial media, mostly of traditional media, against new media. As mentioned earlier, supporters of the President would often express that they prefer getting their news from (hyperpartisan) Facebook pages and blogs. Commonly repeated name-callings used by Duterte's supporters

---

[5] Since 23 May 2017, there has been an ongoing military operation by the Armed Forces of the Philippines against Maute, Mindanao-based ISIS-linked group, in Marawi City in southern Philippines (see Marcelo 2017). For details on PNA's use of the Vietnam War photo, see de Jesus (2017b).

[6] For details, see "GMA reporter scores Duterte for catcalling wife Mariz Umali", retrieved from http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/788794/gma-reporter-raffy-tima-scores-duterte-for-catcalling-wife-mariz-umali.

against critical media are "Bias" (biased), "Bayaran" (paid), "Dilawan" (yellow, color of the opposition party), and "Oligarchs". These media establishments and their journalists are often attacked on social media in a "vicious and personal" way, some even receiving death or rape threats (Ressa 2017). These threats are not limited to critical media, but also to ordinary people who posts opposing views on social media. This then has the negative effect of creating fear among those who hold opposing views, silencing them on social media. Given that paid and unpaid trolls are more active on social media, the situation in turn creates a perception that support for the President is stronger than ever.

The last feature defined by Block reflects the growing desire of Venezuelans to have their voices heard. This, according to Block, "seems to have achieved a level of fulfillment, at least symbolically, top-down, through either Chávez's or his opponents' mediatized and mediatizing voices" (Cañizales 2011; J. V. Rangel, personal communication, 29 November 2010, as cited in Block 2013: 273). Block adds that "[p]olitical mobilization and participation increased in Chávez's Venezuela, but most of all symbolically: a matter of illusions or perceptions boosted from above via the media." (España 2009, as cited in Block 2013, 273). In the case of the Philippines, a similar situation has been observed. As mentioned earlier, the recent Philippine elections have been the most engaged elections in the Asia-Pacific. Through social media and blogs, whether supporters or critics of Duterte, ordinary people were able to join political discussions and debates, albeit involving incivility at times.

The trend that could be observed in the previous discussion is that most of the transformations occurring in the context of the mediatization of politics can be linked to the introduction of new technologies into the equation and to how both political and non-political actors have integrated these technologies into their social and political lives.[7] So far, we have shown:

– how media, particularly new media, have been central to people's lives in terms of where they get their information about their country's political situation and also in using it to express their political opinions;

– how politicians have been able to use media to their advantage and how they have easily adapted the use of social media in their political communication;

– the pitting of commercial media against state-media as well as traditional media against new media;

---

[7] It is important to note that most of the features described above are also observable in US politics under Trump's administration. However, due to space constraints, I will not go into the details of that in this paper.

– the opportunity that new media have afforded for alternative voices to be heard.

The last point shall be explored more extensively in the next section where I will look at the transformations in communicative practices in the social world of activism and mobilization as brought about by the use of media.

3. Voices: Media, Activists and Political Mobilization

The transformation of communication practices brought about by new media technologies is not limited to politicians and state actors. As mentioned in the previous section, it has given ordinary people the power to have their voices heard. This is particularly true in the social world of activism and political mobilization. This ensuing discussion will delve on how new media technologies have shaped the way non-state actors such as activists connect with their intended audience and how they carry out their political mobilization activities.

Often, activism is associated with clashes and violent confrontations. This idea, however, is mainly shaped by images provided by traditional media of offline activism (e.g. street demonstrations and protests). However, it is important to note that not all activisms have to be violent. There is the concept of "everyday activism and resistance" (Klang/Madison 2016: para. 9) which are deeds that are relatively safe and small scale requiring "little or no formal coordination" (ibid.). These acts, "despite not being perceived as confrontational or threatening" can still have "political intentions or consequences" (Scott 1989, as cited in Klang & Madison, para. 9). I argue that new media have afforded everyday activism to be more common than ever before and that they have allowed ordinary people to easily join causes that they feel strongly about.

Nalbantoglu (2014) points out how voices of traditional movements have been mainly pushed by their leaders and representatives. With social media, everybody can now create content and "potentially all of the movement participants can create and disseminate information or any audio-visual materials […] to mobilize people" (Castells 2013, as cited in Nalbantoglu 2014: 45). Meanwhile, Bonilla and Rosa (2015) discuss the advantage of Twitter over other earlier forms of technology in the context of activism. According to them, Twitter has enabled us to watch live streams from different sources simultaneously, including seeing reactions from ordinary people regarding an ongoing event. This enables an individual to experience vicariously through other people what it feels like to be in the actual scene where the event is taking place.

> Engaging in these activities is akin to participating in a protest in the sense that it offers an experience of 'real time' engagement, community, and even collective effervescence. Through this

form of participation, users can experience the heightened temporality that characterizes all so-cial movements: the way days marked by protest become 'eventful,' distinguishing them from quotidian life. (Bonilla/Rosa 2015: 7)

Indeed, scholars have drawn attention to how new media technologies have brought about benefits to political movements and mobilizations. Saleh (2012: 479), for instance, discusses how social media such as Facebook have "leveled the playing field between activists and the authoritarian state", particularly by allowing non-political citizens to be reached and making ordinary persons into gatekeepers, all at a low cost. Nalbantoglu (2014) similarly discusses how digital media have allowed "fast, easy and cheap communication and flow of information that cannot be limited by time or distance" (Castells 2013; Farrell 2012; Juris 2005, as cited in Nalbantoglu 2014: 44). Further, similar to Saleh (2012), he also emphasizes how new media have helped social movements to put pressure on repressive governments. Likewise, for Ciszek (2016), social media have been beneficial to activism in that they have helped shift "the balance of power and functioning as tools of resistance" (Veil et al. 2015, as cited in Cizsek 2016: 315) as well as provide "alternative platforms for communication" (Kaur 2015, as cited in Ciszek 2016: 315). According to her, "social media may become counter-public spaces where activists challenge dominant discourses and provide a platform for multiple competing, and often conflicting, perspectives to emerge" (Ciszek 2016: 315).

Challenges to dominant discourses are prominently investigated by studies that looked at marginalized groups and how these groups have utilized new media technologies to have their voices heard. One such research study is by Keller who examined young girls' participa-tion in the blogosphere. According to her, blogging has enabled girls to participate in the public sphere "as agential citizens and political actors", despite not being considered as adults in the eyes of others (Keller 2012: 442). She points out the awareness of these bloggers of the need to form their messages in a way that will not be seen as too radical. Keller explains that the girls know the importance of crafting messages in a way that will make their blogs more appealing to the mainstream audience, if they want a wider reach.

Another study that looked at marginalized group's use of new media is by Dreher, McCallum, and Waller (2016). Focusing on indigenous groups in Australia, Dreher et al. examined how these groups utilized digital media as a tool for voicing out issues affecting them, with the aim of influencing policy-makers. The authors point out how "[i]ndigenous people have pio-neered innovative uses of digital media for global connectivity and contestation" (ibid.: 24). They also argue how the rapid transformations in the "indigenous participatory media sector presents possibilities to challenge and reconfigure the political communication system, which has for so long worked against the democratic involvement of Indigenous people around the world" (Alia 2010; Hokowhitu/Devadas 2013; Meadows 2001, as cited in Dreher et al. 2016:

24). However, the authors emphasize that having a voice does not assure that one will "be heard by powerful media and political institutions in key policy debates". The problem, according to Dreher et al. (2016: 27) is that "[p]olitical and bureaucratic processes closely aligned with dominant, mainstream media, blocking other voices such as grassroots, alternative media".

The pitting of mainstream media against grassroots media is something that has been observed not only in mediatization studies, but also in studies on the concept of media convergence. Jenkins (2004), for instance, argues how in our current media system, a plethora of tensions and contradictions are occurring, mainly because we are currently in a "transitional moment" (ibid.: 36). In his article, Jenkins discusses the power relations between two kinds of media: commercial/mainstream and collective intelligence/grassroots. He explains the former are generally seen as authoritative and usually focus on topics that are relevant to the national agenda and core values, while the latter are expected to present these issues in a different manner and give a chance for ordinary people to be heard. For Jenkins, while this may sound too simplistic, it is worthy to look at how tensions between the two manifest in real life.

Indeed, with regard to the world of politics and activism, particularly in the Philippines, I have mentioned in the previous section how Filipino masses, mainly supporters of President Duterte, despise mainstream media and prefer 'alternative' media such as Facebook and hyperpartisan blogs as sources of news. Interestingly, in their perception, the latter are the authoritative sources and not the mainstream media – quite the opposite to what Jenkins talked about. This, as I have touched on earlier, could be mainly due to the fact that commercial media in the Philippines is critical of the current President. Moreover, his supporters (including the people working for him) see the new media as an easier (and perhaps more potent) tool to use in countering negative news about Duterte and influencing the masses.

One of the most popular of such blogs is owned by former sexy starlet-turned-'political blogger' Mocha Uson, a staunch supporter of the President. She has more than 5 million followers on Facebook and 144,000 on Twitter.[8] Based on this number alone, she can be considered as an influential figure in the online world, as far as the Philippine context is concerned. Her blog and social media posts are frequently shared by supporters of the President. However, her critics accuse her of spreading false information, memes and other unconfirmed reports intended to discredit anyone who opposes the current administration. Interestingly, in May 2017, she has been appointed by Duterte as assistant secretary of the

---

[8] As of 22 June 2017 (see https://www.facebook.com/Mochablogger/ and https://twitter.com/mochauson).

Presidential Communication Operations Office. Duterte himself called the appointment as a payback for her support during the Presidential elections campaign (Placido 2017). Soon after her appointment, she received flak for sharing a photo on her Facebook of "supposed Filipino soldiers kneeling in prayer" (de Jesus 2017a) in which she exhorted her followers to pray for the Philippine Army fighting in Marawi. It was later found out that the photo is not of the Philippine Army but of the Honduras police. Uson defended herself by saying that the use of the photo was only "symbolic" (ibid.).

Another staunch supporter of the President on social media, who was previously unknown, is Netherlands-based Sass Rogando Sasot, who on her Facebook profile describes herself as being educated in Leiden and having interests in international relations and diplomacy. Calling herself a "political analyst" and "blogger", she can be considered as a social influencer, based on the number of people liking her Facebook page[9] as well as the frequency with which her posts get shared and liked by supporters. I consider both Uson and Sasot as activists in their own ways, considering how they are able to influence and mobilize their followers. For instance, in September 2016, Sasot called for her followers to take a photo of themselves with one hand in a raised fist (a Duterte symbol) and the other hand holding up a sign which says "Dear international media, stop destabilizing the Philippines". The goal was to encourage people to post their photos on their social media pages and make them viral. They were even asked to add the following hashtags: #DuterteFIGHT, #CNN, #BBC, #AlJazeera, #RT, #CCTV, #TheGuardian, #ABC, #TimeMagazine.[10] This call for mobilization was in line with Sasot's and Uson's and supporters' claim that the international media is painting a negative image of Duterte, his government, and his policies, thus threatening the political stability of the Philippines. Indeed, several of Sasot's and Uson's followers have followed suit. Whether the campaign can be considered viral or not is subject to debate. The point is that, one, this case shows how ordinary bloggers can easily mobilize people to do certain things in a concerted effort online. Two, it illustrates how new media can be used to challenge mainstream media.

Online activism, however, is dismissed by some scholars as not being on par with offline activism for several reasons. One is that since it is easier and quicker to do, and demands less time and commitment compared to offline movements, its effectiveness may not be the same as traditional movements. According to Nalbantoglu, online activists may have less bargaining power against the authorities "since they stay in the virtual realm where they do not

---

[9] 427,318 as of 22 June 2017. See https://www.facebook.com/forthemotherlandph/.
[10] For example, see https://www.facebook.com/forthemotherlandph/posts/311255982573388:0 and http://globalford.org/dear-international-media-please-stop-destabilising-philippines/.

create any challenge to power elites as harsh as their offline counterparts such as strikes, protest marches and riots" (McLellan 2010; Petray 2011, as cited in Nalbantoglu 2014: 21). A similar view is argued by Morozov (2011) who states that "'Net delusion' will not necessarily promote an increase in democratic participation or activism but rather it will create a faux participation or 'slacktivism' in place of real activism" (Morozov 2011, as cited in Klang/ Madison 2016: para. 10).

While other scholars put down social media activism as "slacktivism" and being unable to create substantial changes, Vie (2014) believes that online activism "can have significant impacts on off-line behaviors" (Vie 2014: last para.). She notes that it can combat micro-aggression and discrimination, foster group identity and create a sense of belongingness. Vie also argues that digital activism "help[s] draw attention to societal issues and problems and can result in increased feelings of support for marginalized groups" (Vie 2014: para. 5).

At this point, what should be emphasized is that offline and online activism need not be pitted against each other. Each of them can be used to complement the other to strengthen mobilization efforts. A case in point would be when more than one million Facebook users virtually checked-in at Standing Rock, North Dakota, in support of the protestors physically present on the actual site, where an oil pipeline was being built (see Levin/Woolf 2016). By checking-in on the site through Facebook, even though they were not physically present, online participants were able to express their solidarity with protestors on the actual site, creating a sort of a "hybrid space" (de Souza e Silva 2013: 118) where virtual and offline worlds merge, which can also "temporally repurpose public and private spaces" (Frizzera 2015: 11). Moreover, the virtual check-in by users was not only for expression of solidarity, but also was used to "potentially confuse authorities" who were accused of using the virtual check-in function of Facebook to track and target protestors onsite (to which police have denied) (Dicker 2016). Such a case shows that while location-aware technologies have bene-fits for activists such as reaching out to a wider audience, they come with issues related to privacy, particularly to risks of surveillance (de Souza e Silva 2013).

Evidently, the use of new media technologies has its limitations and weaknesses that can either be beneficial or disadvantageous, depending on which side of the movement you are on. For instance, van Dijck (2009) argues how easy it is to manipulate rankings of online videos on YouTube to ensure a certain list of top videos. What makes social media different from mainstream media, is that they can "measure popularity at the same time and by the same means as it tries to influence or manipulate these rankings" (van Dijck/Poell 2013: 7). If a group of people wanted something to trend, they can do so by launching online gimmickry which could involve hijacking the algorithm through misuse of the share and like buttons of

social media platforms. An example given by van Dijck and Poell (2013: 7) was the Facebook riots that happened in Haren wherein "a group of opportunists shrewdly deployed the Like and ReTweet buttons to stage a party that was not a party, and they managed to mesh up their powerful social tools with the prevailing tactics of mass media to achieve their preset disruptive goals".[11]

Another feature of the social media that can be abused and have implications on democratic participation is the flagging or reporting feature in platforms such as YouTube and Facebook. Users, acting like mobs, can have the power to take down a video, page, or post, if a certain number of them flag it as having an inappropriate content. Cases of this feature being abused is a common occurrence on social media, particularly by interests groups who feel that they or the person/s they are supporting are being criticized and/or when they see that the posts are counter to their viewpoints and agenda. This is particularly true in the Philippines where Duterte supporters are known to mobilize together to flag pages which they view as being anti-Duterte (see Hegina 2016). In fact, there is a website created by Duterte supporters collating a list of Facebook pages and blogs that are known to be critical of the Philippine President. This puts those on the list at risk for harassments and threats and/or encourages Duterte supporters to flag or report these pages (including private Facebook accounts) and have them blocked by Facebook.

As becomes apparent from the discussion above, new media technologies have changed the way activists carry out their mobilization activities. Evidently, these changes can be paradoxical as they both bring about empowerment and disempowerment. Nevertheless, it can be said that new media technologies have been used to complement and enhance offline activism and have allowed ordinary people's voices to be heard.

4. Conclusion

This paper has shown how the communicative practices of various actors involved in political communication and activism, as well as their relationship with and utilization of the media, have been transformed by recent media developments. Using the mediatization of politics as a framework for analysis, the tensions and new power relations brought about by these transformations give us insights into how actors adapt to and shape their use of media. Indeed, it has been shown that both state and non-state actors are able to utilize new media technologies to advance their goals and agenda. While new media have been hailed as a tool that allows alternative voices to be heard, it has also been misused and coopted by interest

---

[11] For details on the incident see Sawer (2012).

groups to disempower oppositions and critics. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that new media have afforded ordinary people and grassroots movements to be more participative in political processes and to mobilize political activities more easily and economically than in the past.

5. References

Allcott, Hunt/Gentzkow, Matthew (2017): Social media and fake news in the 2016 election. Journal of Economic Perspectives, vol. 31, No. 2, pp. 211-236.

Andolong, Ina (2016): Duterte stands by statement on media killings. Retrieved from http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2016/06/03/Duterte-media-killings-journalists.html (2017/06/22).

Angeles, Peach (2016): #Superficialgazette: Official Gazette draws flak from Facebook over Marcos 'birthday card'. Retrieved from http://www.ibtimes.ph/superficialgazette-official-gazette-draws-flak-facebook-over-marcos-birthday-3840 (2017/06/22).

Aro, Jessika (2016): The cyberspace war: propaganda and trolling as warfare tools. In: European View, vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 121-132.

Bacungan, VJ (2017): Duterte echoes Trump's 'dishonest' media claim. Retrieved from http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2017/02/09/duterte-trump-dishonest-media.html (2017/06/22).

Birkner, Thomas (2015): Mediatization of politics: The case of the former German chancellor Helmut Schmidt. In: European Journal of Communication, vol. 30, No. 4, pp. 454-469.

Block, Elena (2013): A culturalist approach to the concept of the mediatization of politics: The age of 'media hegemony'. In: Communication Theory, vol. 23, No. 3, pp. 259-278.

Bonilla, Yarimar/Rosa, Jonathan (2015): #Ferguson: Digital protest, hashtag ethnography, and the racial politics of social media in the United States. In: American Ethnologist, vol. 42, No. 1, pp. 4-17.

Chan, Melissa (2016): Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte calls US ambassador 'gay son of a whore'. Retrieved from http://time.com/4446262/philippine-president-rodrigo-duterte-calls-us-ambassador-gay-son-of-whore/ (2017/06/22).

Ciszek, Erica (2016): Digital activism: How social media and dissensus inform theory and practice. In: Public Relations Review, vol. 42, No. 2, pp. 314-321.

Couldry, Nick (2014): Mediatization: What Is It? In: Kramp, Leif/Carpentier, Nico/Hepp, Andreas/ Trivundža, Tomanić Ilija/ Nieminen, Hannu/Kunelius, Risto/ Olsson, Tobias/Sundin, Ebba/Kilborn, Richard (eds.): Media practice and everyday agency in Europe. Bremen: Lumière, pp. 33-40.

De Souza e Silva, Adriana (2013): Location-aware mobile technologies. Historical, social and spatial approaches. In: Mobile Media and Communication, vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 116-121.

Dela Paz, Chrisee (2016): Filipino Facebook users most engaged voters in Asia-Pacific. In: Rappler. Retrieved from http://www.rappler.com/nation/politics/elections/2016/132423-filipino-facebook-users-engagement (2016/05/09).

de Jesus, Stacy (2017a): FACT CHECK: PCOO's Mocha Uson shares wrong photo of PH army. In: Rappler. Retrieved from http://www.rappler.com/technology/social-media/171343-pcoo-asec-mocha-uson-wrong-image-ph-army (2017/06/22).

de Jesus, Stacy (2017b): Philippine News Agency uses Vietnam photo in Marawi siege story. Retrieved from http://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/fact-check/171315-philippine-news-agency-vietnam-photo-marawi (2017/06/22).

Dicker, Rachel (2016): Here's why your Facebook friends are checking into Standing Rock, North Dakota. Retrieved from https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2016-11-01/facebook-users-check-in-to-standing-rock-indian-reservation-to-support-pipeline-protest (2016/11/01).

Dreher, Tanja/McCallum, Kerry/Waller, Lisa (2016): Indigenous voices and mediatized policy-making in the digital age. In: Information, Communication and Society, vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 23-39.

El-Khalili, Sara (2013): Social media as a government propaganda tool in post-revolutionary Egypt. In: First Monday, vol. 18, No. 3.

Fogg, Erik (2015): On the root causes of hyperpartisanship. Retrieved from https://www.byline.com/column/25/article/454 (2017/06/26).

Frizzera, Luciano (2015): Mobile media as new forms of spatialization. In: Interdisciplinary Science Reviews, vol. 40, No. 1, pp. 29-43.

Gavilan, Jodesz (2016): Duterte's P10M social media campaign: Organic, volunteer-driven. Rappler. Retrieved from http://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/rich-media/134979-rodrigo-duterte-social-media-campaign-nic-gabunada (2016/06/01).

Geducos, Argyll Cyrus (2017): Duterte grants staunch social media supporters access to Palace events. Retrieved from http://news.mb.com.ph/2017/02/09/duterte-grants-staunch-social-media-supporters-access-to-palace-events/ (2017/06/22).

Guerrero, David (2016): The Du30 phenomenon: How social media won the presidency in the Philippines. Retrieved from http://www.campaignasia.com/article/the-du30-phenomenon-how-social-media-won-the-presidency-in-the-philippines/426945 (2017/06/22).

Haynes, Audrey/Pitts, Brian (2009): Making an impression: New media in the 2008 presidential nomination campaigns. In: PS: Political Science & Politics, vol. 42, No. 1, pp. 53-58.

Hegina, Aries Joseph (2016): Facebook restores journalists' page with anti-Duterte post. Retrieved from http://technology.inquirer.net/48270/facebook-restores-journalists-page-with-anti-duterte-post (2017/06/22).

Hepp, Andreas (2012): Mediatization and the "molding force" of the media. Communications. Retrieved from http://www.andreas-hepp.name/hepp_2012.pdf (2017/06/22).

Herrman, John (2016): Inside Facebook's (Totally Insane, Unintentionally Gigantic, Hyperpartisan) Political-Media Machine. In: The New York Times Magazine

https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/28/magazine/inside-facebooks-totally-insane-unintentionally-gigantic-hyperpartisan-political-media-machine.html (2017/06/26).

Hofileña, Chay (2016): Fake accounts, manufactured reality on social media. Rappler. Retrieved from http://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/investigative/148347-fake-accounts-manufactured-reality-social-media (2016/10/09).

Inquirer.net (2016): GMA reporter scores Duterte for catcalling wife Mariz Umali. Retrieved from http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/788794/gma-reporter-raffy-tima-scores-duterte-for-catcalling-wife-mariz-umali#ixzz4kpATFt2C (2017/06/22).

Isotalus, Pekka/Almonkari, Merja (2014): Mediatization and Political Leadership: Perspectives of the Finnish newspapers and party leaders. In: Journalism Studies, vol. 15, No. 3, pp. 289-303.

Jenkins, Henry (2004): The Cultural Logic of Media Convergence. In: International Journal of Cultural Studies, vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 33-43.

Keller, Jessalynn Marie (2012): Virtual Feminisms. In: Information, Communication and Society, vol. 15, No. 3, pp. 429-447.

Klang, Mathias/Madison, Nora (2016): The domestication of online activism. In: First Monday, vol. 21, No. 6.

Kovach, Steve (2016): Mark Zuckerberg has flip-flopped on his fake news stance since the election. Retrieved from http://uk.businessinsider.com/mark-zuckerberg-comments-on-facebook-and-fake-news-in-live-video-2016-12?r=US&IR=T (2017/06/22).

Krotz, Friedrich (2014): From a social worlds perspective to the analysis of mediatized worlds. In: Kramp, Leif/Carpentier, Nico/Hepp, Andreas/ Trivundža, Tomanić Ilija/ Nieminen, Hannu/Kunelius, Risto/ Olsson, Tobias/Sundin, Ebba/Kilborn, Richard (eds.): Media practice and everyday agency in Europe. Bremen: Lumière, pp. 69-82.

Levin, Sam/Woolf, Nicky (2016): A million people 'check in' at Standing Rock on Facebook to support Dakota pipeline protesters. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/oct/31/north-dakota-access-pipeline-protest-mass-facebook-check-in (2017/06/22).

Mansell, Robin (2012): Social imaginaries of the information society. In: Mansell, Robin (ed.): Imagining the Internet. Communication, Innovation, and Governance. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 29-65.

Marcelo, Ver (2017): Gov't forces, Maute group clash in Marawi City. Retrieved from http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2017/05/23/marawi-city-clash.html (2017/06/22).

Nalbantoglu, Huseyin Cahit (2014): Digital activism: Social Movements in the Digital Age. PhD thesis. Spalding University.

Placido, Dharel (2017): Duterte: Media always on the lookout for mistakes. Retrieved from http://news.abs-cbn.com/news/01/18/17/duterte-media-always-on-the-lookout-for-mistakes (2017/06/22).

Placido, Dharel (2017): Duterte on Uson appointment: 'Utang na loob ko 'yan sa kanya'. Retrieved from http://news.abs-cbn.com/news/05/10/17/duterte-on-uson-appointment-utang-na-loob-ko-yan-sa-kanya (2017/06/22).

Peters, Rikke Alberg (2015): Mediatized Extreme Right Activism and Discourse: The Case of 'The Immortals'. In: MEDIA@LSE Working Paper Series, vol. 32. Retrieved from

http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/mediaWorkingPapers/pdf/WP32-FINAL.pdf (2017/06/21).

Ressa, Maria (2016): Propaganda war: Weaponizing the internet. In: Rappler. Retrieved from http://www.rappler.com/nation/148007-propaganda-war-weaponizing-internet (2017/06/22).

Reuters (2017): Philippine media groups cry foul over Duterte's diatribes. Retrieved from http://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-duterte-media-idUSKBN172130 (2017/06/22).

Saleh, Nivien (2012): Egypt's digital activism and the Dictator's Dilemma: An evaluation. In: Telecommunications Policy, vol. 36, No. 6, pp. 476-483.

Sawer, Patrick (2012): Facebook party leads to riots in Dutch Town. Retrieved from http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/netherlands/9559868/Facebook-party-leads-to-riots-in-Dutch-town.html (2017/06/22).

Smith, Victoria S. A. (2013): Digital Activism and the Public Sphere. Master thesis, University of Alberta.

Strömbäck, Jesper (2008): Four Phases of Mediatization: An Analysis of the Mediatization of Politics. In: The International Journal of Press/Politics, vol. 13, No. 3, pp. 228-246.

Strömbäck, Jesper/Esser, Frank (2014): Introduction. Making sense of the mediatization of politics. In: Journalism Practice, vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 245-257.

The Associated Press (2016): The Philippines' Rodrigo Duterte: Obama swear threat wasn't meant to be personal. Retrieved from http://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/philippines-rodrigo-duterte-obama-swear-threat-wasn-t-meant-be-n643176 (2017/06/22).

Thesen, Gunnar (2014): Political Agenda Setting as Mediatized Politics? Media-Politics Interactions from a Party and Issue Competition Perspective. In: The International Journal of Press/Politics, vol. 19, No. 2, pp. 181-201.

van Dijck, Jan (2009): Users like you? Theorizing agency in user-generated content. In: Media, Culture and Society, vol. 31, No. 1, pp. 41-58.

van Dijck, Jan/Poell, Thomas (2013): Understanding Social Media Logic. In: Media and Communication, 1. Vol., NR. 1, S. 2-14.

Vie, Stephanie (2014): In defense of slacktivism: The Human Rights Campaign Facebook logo as digital activism. In: First Monday, vol. 19, No. 4.

Williams, Sean (2017): Rodrigo Duterte's army of online trolls: How authoritarian regimes are winning the social media wars. In: New Republic. Retrieved from https://newrepublic.com/article/138952/rodrigo-dutertes-army-online-trolls (2017/06/22).

Short Biography of Author

Joyce Zaide is currently an Erasmus+ scholar taking up the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master in Digital Communication Leadership (DCLead) from the University of Salzburg and Vrije Universiteit Brussel. She previously held research and communications-related positions in various think tanks in the Philippines and Singapore. Joyce also earned a master's degree in Southeast Asian Studies from the National University of Singapore and a bachelor's degree in Communication Research (cum laude) from the University of the Philippines-Diliman.

contact: jzaide@vub.ac.be