Calls to action: The process of legislative response and action formation through call-out discourses on Facebook and Twitter

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ABSTRACT

As a pervasive tool, social media has furthered human interactions through the discourses that arise from expressed opinions, ideas, and ideologies. With social media platforms providing two-way avenues for expression, the platform has allowed political representatives to connect to their respective constituencies. Meanwhile, the constituents are more able to capture the attention of parties or other individuals to whom they would like to address certain concerns. This concept, termed as the "callout discourse," is evidently utilized in social media. Guided by the Social Media Integration Theory, Actor-Network Theory, and Communicative Action Theory, this study probed into the strategies employed by the Philippine legislators' respective communication teams to process the call-out discourses received online. Through the Case Study approach, the researchers looked into the process conducted from the reception of online call-outs. Although important actions for the constituents are delivered especially through the persistence of call-outs, engagements online do not directly translate to offline participation. This presents a sense of unreal political engagement that is manifested online but does not exist offline. There is a need, therefore, to encourage individuals to participate offline rather than online and rechannel the rage and/or patronage to the offline settings.

Keywords: *Call-Out Culture; Legislative response; Political participation; Social Media; Social Media call-outs*

Introduction

At the continuing height of social media, actors and key players in various social movements utilize different platforms in promoting their advocacies and calls to action. As a pervasive tool, social media has furthered human interactions (Murthy, 2018) not only through connectedness but also through the discourses that arise from expressed opinions, ideas, and ideologies. Social movements make use of available platforms, including social media, to organize and promote different social actions (Rane & Salem, 2012; Cammaerts, 2012; Conway, 2017 cited in Blomberg & Stier, 2019) that are oriented to a rationally motivated adjustment of interests and ideologies, either in the form of individual political participation or collective activism (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012, cited in Velasquez & LaRose, 2014).

With social media platforms providing avenues for expression, individuals are more able to capture the attention of parties or other individuals to whom they would like to address their concerns. This concept, termed as the "call-out culture," is evident among activists and progressives who utilize social media to "publicly name instances or patterns of oppressive behavior and language use by others" (Ahmad, 2015, para. 1). Reasons for calling-out and being called-out, as well as the intensity of the effect, may vary; however, most call-outs tend to be public. Moreover, the act of calling-out is perceived to be an end in itself, but the study would like to shed light on, if not disprove, the notion that call-out is as powerful and as wide-reaching as it is perceived to be.

The study seeks to answer the question: how do Philippine legislators' communication teams process, respond to and act upon called-out discourses on social media platforms? The study aims to: (1) characterize the different call-out discourses received by legislators through social media and (2) elucidate the process that the legislators and their respective communication teams go through from the called-out discourses on social media platforms to specific strategies or actions.

The progression of activist groups and social movements consider the utilitarian aspect and the wide scope of social media platforms. Recognizing the ability to complement the offline participatory actions to promote socially relevant causes, these political organizations maximize the capacity of social media platforms to engage the public in political discourses, redirect the perspectives of the opinion makers, and influence the consequent actions of legislators. The effects of utilizing social media are not limited to spreading awareness alone; if translated to responses from opinion makers, the public's viewpoints can be altered, too. This shift in the civic outlook can, in turn, be a significant factor in shaping the dissent over government policies and may then cause adjustments in the subsequent move of the administration.

However possible, the significant effect of the utility of social media in calls to action can only go as much as the legislators themselves would prefer to recognize or accomplish.

Related Literature

Call-out culture is an emerging phenomenon that remains barely explored. The term in itself has a negative connotation. According to Ahmad (2015), call-out culture is commonly done online by activists and progressives to "publicly name instances or patterns of oppressive behavior and language use by others" (para. 1).

Looking into the feedback mechanisms employed by the people to the government and vice versa, it can be derived that the parties make use of available platforms—both online and offline—in order to catch the attention of the other party/ies. More so, with platforms online, both the government and its constituency have an avenue to explain their perceptions and experiences, as well as insights, regarding the matters of the state.

Feedback mechanisms in the public sphere
From the people to the government

Some of the ways by which individuals and organizations provide their feedback to government policies and actions are through *mobilization* (Thurston, 2015) and *lobbying* (Jensen, 2018). Constituents mobilize politically to take steps in ensuring that their concerns are or will be addressed by the government (Thurston, 2015). Meanwhile, lobbying is performed to portray the constituency's organized interest until the government heeds their calls (Jensen, 2018). Through these systematized ways of reaching out to the government, organizations become more coordinated and convey unity in one cause. Other than the external actions, the organizations also restructure internally in alignment to their cause, thus, there is a subsequent consideration of expanding the services they provide for the welfare of the sectors they represent (Jensen, 2018).

Another way by which the constituents forward their feedback to their administration is through *online consultation* and *citizen feedback*. In China, the government's health care system was assessed through the reception of practical comments submitted by the citizens (Balla, 2012). Although most of the comments and evaluations came from constituents with professional experiences and research-based references (Balla, 2012), the method was a relevant tool in assessing government-led programs. This thus shows that to communicate with state leaders, constituents make use of the provided avenues to express their concerns. This also reflects the consideration of using online methods to connect to the government.

From the government to the people

The government is considered as the main provider of services to its constituents (Alguliev & Yusifov, 2015). In the recent years, studies suggest that there is a significant change in the way governments *provide* for their respective constituencies. In particular, there is an increasing utilization of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by the government (Alguliev & Yusifov, 2015; Thurston, 2015) to reach out and provide the basic services to its constituents. This increase in the use of ICT is seen to be essential in optimizing the services rendered by the state (Alguliev & Yusifov, 2015).

Furthermore, on the online realm, the state is becoming more involved especially in terms of connecting to their constituents. This is evident in the United States where the Supreme Court is compelled to consider the messages, as well as the associated actions, in assessing the use and availability of social media platforms (Sklar, 2015). Other nations consider and/or make use of e-governance as well to enhance their feedback mechanisms. In Zimbabwe, the adoption of e-governance has helped in increasing bureaucratic efficiency, improving transparency and accountability, reducing bureaucratic costs, and forging a better governance (Manenji & Marufu, 2016).

There is also a shift in the providence of services by the state. In the US, the government makes use of the *public-private welfare state* as the means by which the government channels its social benefits to the citizens (Thurston, 2015). This public-private welfare—encompassing tax deductions, government-regulated employer-provided benefits, and social programs, among others—are now being tasked to various private providers rather than the government itself, which thereby creates policy feedback from the citizens to the government that is distinct to the traditional welfare state institutions (Thurston, 2015).

Discourse and social media

Social media is evidently a tool to successfully communicate different ideologies, express different schools of thoughts, and even open small discussions among individuals and different institutions. The platforms of social media are considered as internet-mediated sites and services that promote connections between and among parties through exchanges and sharing of user-produced contents (Georgalou, 2016). Thus, there are instances wherein the messages produced by the users of social media are reshaped as they are integrated to the virtual sphere of today's society. Consequently, individuals and organizations utilize social media as a platform to enable the public through the open discourses of expressing different ideologies (Sharma et al., 2017). It is significant to note, however,

that the reach of social media comprises only one third of the world's total population, thus, showcasing the limitations of the set of platforms online (Price, 2013).

The role of social media in social movements

The use of social media has transcended the commercialized aspect of product exposure and messaging (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010 cited in Murthy, 2018), to becoming a significant tool in expanding and enriching advocacies. Despite the limitations, social media continues to be a set of relevant platforms utilized by activists to promote social movements and to facilitate mobilization before and during events, and also in the recruitment to the organizations' causes (Cammaerts, 2012 & Conway, 2017 cited in Blomberg & Stier, 2019).

Even the entertainment value of social media is deemed to be useful in the discourse of social movements. The ability of social media to entertain the public affords certain influences distinct from that of the traditional media (Hurley, 2019). In a study conducted by Murthy (2018), it has been found that different social media platforms are utilized to further various social movements as used by activist groups such as in Facebook (Murthy, 2013 cited in Murthy, 2018; Moody-Ramirez & Church, 2019), Twitter (Murthy, 2013 cited in Murthy, 2018), Snapchat (Valenzuela et al., 2014 cited in Murthy, 2018), and other social media platforms (Blomberg & Stier, 2019).

The various political contents available in the social media platforms have significant effects on the opinions of media consumers. Facebook accounts, including but not limited to pages, create an opportunity for social media users to express and promote their personal and political views. Ranging from the politicians running for office to social issues that they think should be discussed especially during the election campaign period, these pages create discourses through engaging users in political conversations (Moody-Ramirez & Church, 2019). Additionally, memes—images and texts referring to popular culture—circulating in online platforms especially on Facebook, are found to have power in shaping and changing public opinion and can be used to promote social movements. Such contents are found to have significant roles in various political debates, protests, and political conversations online (Sci & Dare, 2014 cited in Moody-Ramirez & Church, 2019).

Meanwhile, as another heavily utilized platform (Skler, 2015), Twitter is deemed to be one of best sources of timely information (Javed & Lee, 2018). Twitter, especially through the use of hashtags, expands the reach of online campaigns (Javed & Lee, 2018). Thus, various social movements are further spread through the Twitter platform. This was evident during the Arab

Spring where social media played a crucial role in information dissemination and in the organization and mobilization of individuals (Al-Momani & Khondker, 2011, cited in Price, 2013; Murthy, 2013, cited in Murthy, 2018).

Various political parties also acknowledge that intensified social media presence, even outside Facebook and Twitter, attracts the attention of prospective members and sympathizers, similar to public demonstrations and local town rallies (Kaati, 2017, cited in Blomberg & Stier, 2019). The evident influence of social media in the political arena is also recognized by conservative media institutions as was the case in the Gulf-Arab region (Azaiz, 2017, cited in Hurley, 2019).

Literature suggests that social media has a crucial role in enabling participation in public discourse and engaging in significant issues even among the marginalized. In a study conducted by Harley (2019), the Gulf-Arab women, usually seen as oppressed, voiced out their experiences through social media. This suggests that the presence of social media platforms enable individuals to voice out their sentiments with less restraint compared to offline methods of dissent and/or expression.

Study Framework

This study is guided by the integration of: (1) Social Media Integration Theory adapted from social media marketing strategies; (2) Actor Network Theory (ANT) by Michel Callon, Bruno Latour, and John Law; and (3) Communicative Action Theory proposed by Jürgen Habermas.

In the age of computerized technology, social media platforms provide an interactive process between the consumers and the communication team as depicted by the Social Media Integration Theory (Garcia, 2011). With the messages expressed in the social media platforms, Actor-Network Theory describes the agency that an individual or a collective executes in the act of calling out to express stances on certain issues, and at the same time, the responses or actions of a legislator's communication team toward the call-out (Bencherki, 2017; Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). Meanwhile, Communicative Action Theory distinguishes the various claims (Bohman & Rehg, 2017; Littlejohn & Foss, 2009), specifically the call outs, by individuals or collectives which bear significant effects on the responses or actions— the process—that the legislators' communication teams accomplish in accordance with the claim.

This study is built on the assumption that depending on the feedback received from the constituents, different *agencies* within the communication teams of the legislators become involved, and that the actions also vary based on who are involved in the process of *translation* of the organization's values and principles.
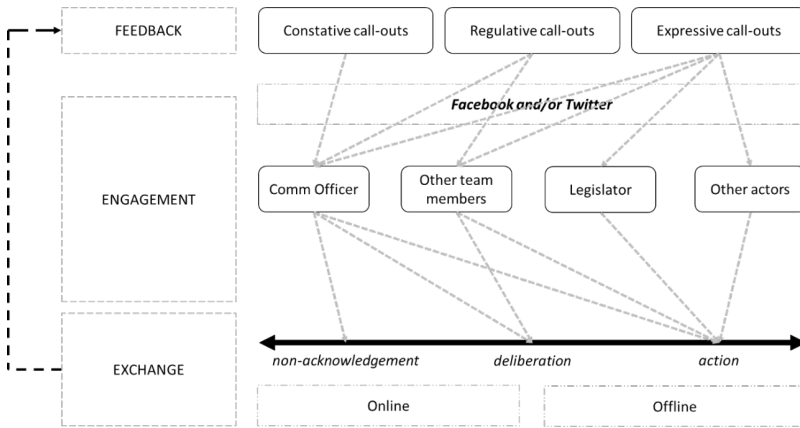
Individuals, as members of the society, provide their feedback through expressions of their stances, opinions, beliefs, suggestions, etc., in the form of *validity claims*. In the social media platforms, these feedbacks usually come in the form of call-outs, through Facebook comments, posts, and replies, or Twitter comments, tags, or hashtags. There are three forms of feedback as validity claims namely: constative call-outs, regulative call-outs, and expressive callouts. These forms of call-out aim to capture the attention of the legislators to whom the call-outs are addressed to, however, as these call-outs are posted on the public space of Facebook and Twitter, it is also accessible to others to whom the call-outs are not directly addressed to.

The legislators' respective communication teams receive different feedbacks from their constituents. Depending on the type and nature of the call-out, different *agencies* become involved in the process of addressing the call-outs. These agencies pertain to the actors who are involved in the process of *translation* where the received feedback, considered as a *constative call-out*, ranges from *non-acknowledgement* to *immediate response*. Non-acknowledgment equates to lack of response or action, while immediate response provides a superficial or preliminary reply. Meanwhile, as *regulative claims* involve desirability of action, the team deliberates on the appropriate action toward the call-out. The *deliberation* entails considerations of what has been raised wherein simple *acknowledgment* would not suffice. From the deliberation, considering the political agenda and approaches along with the influence of the agencies at work, strategies are generated. These strategies express the interests of the organization and are articulated by the *macro actors*, usually the Communication Officers themselves, either through replies on social media platforms, posts, and publicity materials. On the other hand, *expressive call-outs* provide the sender of the feedback's analyses and feelings which they would like to convey primarily to the legislator. Thus, this type of call-out involves even the legislators themselves and may even engage other actors—such as other legislators, the executive branch, nongovernment organizations, and other constituents—in the process of action formation.

The spectrum of the probable reactions from the received call-outs posits that there are variations depending on the type and nature of the call-out and the actors involved in it. However, the process re-enters the loop as the action (or lack of) may generate feedback as well.

Figure 1.

Integrated Operational Framework

Methodology

This study used the qualitative research approach to describe the process that occurs upon reception of call-out discourses until actions are appropriated in the Philippine political setting. The approach helped determine the process of response and/or action formation of legislators and their respective communication teams upon being called out by their constituencies in social media. The selected legislators and communication teams shared their narratives—experiences and insights—which helped identify the process of how call-outs conveyed through the social media platforms are dealt with.

The informants of this research are members of the communication teams of three legislators, two of which are partylist representatives and the other one, a district representative. Through the case study approach, the representatives from the legislators' respective communication teams were asked to describe the process on how they respond to different call-outs in their social media accounts. By this, the researchers identified how the legislators and their communication teams process (the process of responding, the actors who engage in the process, and the level of decision-making in responding), respond, and act upon the call- outs in social media. The key informants were purposively selected based on the following criteria: (1) the legislator currently holds a seat in the House of Representatives; (2) the legislator must have an active social media account/s; and (3) the legislator has a communication team who handles their social media accounts.

The researchers conducted interviews to gain insights on how the legislators and their respective teams respond to and/or act upon the issues brought up in social media platforms. First, the researchers looked for

current legislators in the Philippine Congress who were available within the last week of April and the first week of May 2018 and asked for their consent, along with their schedule, for the conduct of the interviewed. Subsequently, upon confirmation of the legislators and their teams' availability, the researchers conducted interviews with the legislators' communications team representative/s to discuss the process that takes place upon being called-out. Moreover, the interviews tried to capture their reactions on the issues on the instances that legislators have been called-out.

To complement the findings of the interviews, the researchers also looked into various social media comments received by the interviewed legislators. Textual analysis was utilized to broadly describe those who call-out, categorize the different texts present in the social media accounts of the legislators, and illustrate actions on instances where their accounts are called-out. Facebook posts, comments, and shares, as well as Twitter retweets and replies, from January 2019 to April 2019 were considered in the analysis of the call-out discourses on the two aforementioned platforms. In particular, the researchers looked into the social media accounts, particularly Facebook and Twitter, of the legislators: Kabataan Partylist, ACT Partylist, and Congressman Dale "Along" Malapitan. The texts available online provided further insights as to how the call-out discourses are delivered by those who call-out and how these call-outs are received by the communication teams of the legislators. The texts, reviewed prior to the interviews, were also brought up during the conversations with the communication team representatives in order to elucidate the strategies and actions they employed on specific instances.

Data from the interviews were transcribed and thematized to gather common elements and distinctive components that are considered in the formation of response and/or action from the call-out instances.

Results and Discussion

Messages in the social media feedback loop

In the process of receiving call-outs on social media platforms, there are two key actors that create the social media feedback loop. The political organization's team representative/s who handles the social media accounts is a key actor in the feedback loop. Meanwhile, the individuals or other organizations who conduct the call-out also serve as essential actors in the loop; without the sender of the call-outs, the existence of call-outs will be dubious.

Different call-outs are received by the legislators through their social media accounts. The researchers consider the differentiation of their concerns based on the *scope of concerns* and the *nature of concerns.*

According to the scope of concern

The scope of concerns distinguishes the varying forms of call-out discourses online based on who would benefit or who are affected. This may come in the form of *personal* (relevant to their individual), *familial* (concentrated on their families and close kin), or *organizational/communal* (depending on the organizations/communities where they belong to such as religious affiliation, academic affiliation, among others).

According to Atty. Layog, the chief of staff of Cong. Malapitan, the senders of messages through social media who call-out are most often their constituents asking for personal matters.

> *Sa call-out kasi parang fiesta. Kung minsan, may involved dun sa exchange of discussion na may personal motives sila.* [Call-outs are like fiestas; those who are involved in the exchange of discussions have personal motives.]

These concerns constitute requests that would benefit mainly the self, with the constituent's motives evident in the call-out discourses. Call-outs with personal motives sometimes do not directly concern neither the representative's office nor the constituency, and personal concerns that cannot be answered by the representative or their office are often forwarded or redirected to other agencies or organizations, if and when they are perceived to be a matter of concern. However, in some cases where the personal concerns are directly needed for a certain action, more interactive actions are conducted by the representatives.

While there are personal concerns, some concerns are focused on the needs of the immediate family or relatives. Such concerns are raised on social media to attend to the constituent's relational immediate needs. The distinction between the personal and familial concerns is based on who benefits if the call-outs are addressed. Usually, people call-out the legislators but they do not know the correct process on how and where to forward their concerns. Thus, people opt to send and post their concerns on social media platforms with the hopes that doing so might help them address their familial concerns. Call-outs of this type usually ask for financial and medical assistance to support a loved one. For example, Kabataan Partylist communicates with the message sender to address the concern.

Kapag mga nanghihingi ng mga scholarship, nanghihingi ng medical assistance, mas personal na naming syang hinahandle. So no need for posting. Nirerefer lang naming sya dun sa team naming na nag-aasikaso ng mga ganon. [When they ask for scholarships, medical assistance, and the like, we personally handle the concerns without posting anything online. We refer them to the team member who handles such concerns.]

Lastly, organizational/communal concerns affect not just the sender of the call-out but other individuals as well. Similar to the distinction of personal and familial, the organizational/communal form bears semblance to the other types of concerns, yet refers more to other social groups which the call-out sender belongs to. The effects of the call-out, if addressed, are usually felt by a significant portion of the constituency.

According to the nature of concerns

Aside from characterizing call-out discourses based on the scope of the concern, these discourses can also be described based on their nature—*neutral*, *negative*, or *positive*. Neutral call-outs are often questions directed toward the legislator or the team. Call-outs in the form of inquiries can be mainly considered neutral. Some call-out senders also inquire for the authenticity of certain information provided through the platform. The concerned constituents who post such call-outs may strongly express their need for assurance in the claims posted by the representatives in their respective social media accounts.

However, social media are commonly utilized by the constituents to express their discontent toward the actions of the legislators. Negative call-outs may come in the form of hate messages, misrepresentation, and even red-tagging. In most instances of red-tagging, any member of the communication teams removes the comments on their posts or respond to the call-out sender to provide clarifications. Moreover, cases of red-tagging are usually reported through the platform per se or through filing cases against the call-out sender.

On the other hand, social media is also used to share acknowledgements and convey gratitude to their legislators or local government representatives. These positive call-outs are usually expressions of support and hope for the legislators. This implies that the constituents recognize the actions taken, as well as the future actions, of their representatives and/or legislators through and by presenting their expressions of support on social media platforms.

It must be noted, however, that the communication teams of the legislators restructure their social media presence accordingly. Some

communication teams also consider their social media accounts as platforms to share only accomplishments and achievements without entertaining the different concerns posted on their accounts. This may also explain why some legislators seemingly neglect or even reject social media comments and call-outs.

Mechanisms in the social media feedback loop

Each of the communication teams of the legislators in the lower house have their own unique composition and prioritization. Although the team representatives who focus on the social media campaigns and coordination differ among the congressional representatives interviewed, there remains certain similarity and accordance with regard to the processes and the actions they undertake in terms of their responses to social media call-outs.

The online discourses

Upon the reception of the call-out comments, posts, tweets, and tags, these call-outs undergo a certain, although not rigid, processing. Depending on the nature of the call-outs as discussed in a previous section, the team conducts a background check to know more about the sender of the call-out.
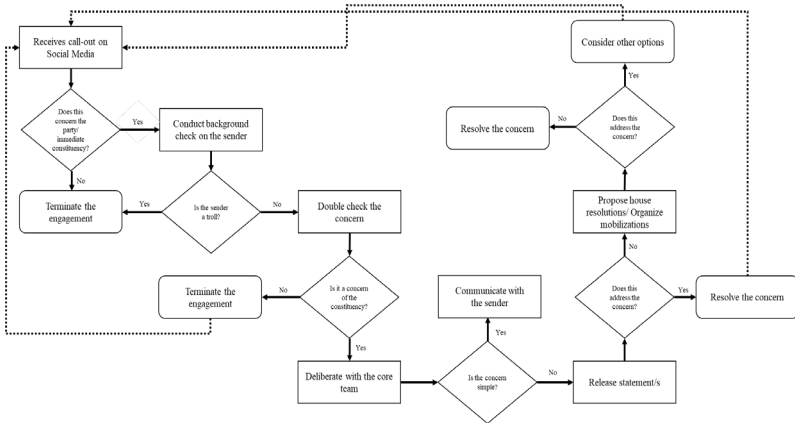
There are instances where the members of the team can immediately recognize fake accounts—the trolls and the bots that provide templated or automatically generated responses—and during these instances, the team's representative no longer engage with the call-out nor the sender. However, if there is a certain significance and/or urgency to the content of the call-out, the team's representative will conduct the background check to know more about the sender of the call-out. This is accomplished through a quick visit on the profile of the call-out sender. Although the persona behind the call-out does not have much bearing on the response, the background check allows the teams to identify the trolls and the bots that are not immediately recognizable. If, through the background check, the team representative confirms that the sender of the call-out is a legitimate constituent, the team double checks the concern being forwarded.

The verified concern is then deliberated by the core team if it concerns the constituency, otherwise, a representative of the team will either coordinate with the message sender or terminate the engagement. Simple concerns are directly addressed by communicating with the sender, while bigger concerns need to be addressed and shared with the bigger constituency, therefore, statements are released online. If this form of action is sufficient to address the concern, then the issue is resolved. However, if the issue is of an even bigger concern, the legislator's team creates a house resolution/s that the representatives can propose in the congress. The partylists may

also organize and mobilize the members of their organization to raise the concerns in the streets.

In a number of instances, the house resolutions and/or mobilizations addresses the concerns, but there are also times when these moves do not suffice, thus, the consideration of other options are proposed. This may entail coordination with other organizations which have a better grasp of the issue forwarded through the call-outs. The cycle may, but not always, continue if and when the actions taken by the legislator's team are not what the constituents, especially the call-out senders, deem to be necessary. The flow of call-out processing is depicted in the figure below:

Figure 2

Call-out Flow Chart

The offline discourses

Overall, the informants suggest that the strength of social media call-outs can barely be compared to the feedback and actions received and conducted offline, specifically, on on-ground works.

The legislators' respective teams utilize various social media platforms in a variety of purposes. Although there is merit to the use of these platforms, the representatives of their communication teams emphasize that these platforms can only do so much in terms of raising awareness and reaching to the public online. The accessibility of Facebook allows a faster way of disseminating information, whereas Twitter as a platform rallies a quicker exchange of queries and responses from parties involved. Yet, not the entire population, neither the whole of their respective constituencies, has reliable access to the internet.

The legislators' communication teams prefer the use of offline methods more than the online avenues. To the members of the team, the urgency and

significance of the issue can be more easily accessed through the on-ground interactions, and to a great extent, quicker responses can be delivered through this method rather than through online.

> *Hindi talaga enough yung online. Mahahagip mo yung mga tao pero mas maraming magagawa sa labas ng socmed.* [Online methods would not actually suffice. You can get people's attention but there are a lot more things you can do outside social media.]

Additionally, the representatives from the partylists expressed how they are more able to mobilize and advance their causes outside the social media sphere. Through mass integration, may it be in schools or communities, they are more able to gather the narratives of the people and draw actions and further advocacies. Thus, the legislators' communication teams firmly believe that although social media platforms are highly useful, there are also limitations in the online realm. To emphasize, they prefer to converse with their constituents through offline methods.

Among the constituents, however, there is a preference on the use of social media platforms. With the belief that these platforms provide easy interaction and accessibility, constituents are under the *illusion* that they are able to do their part, as citizens, by expressing their sentiments through online platforms. Moreover, with the recurrence of actions being employed by the legislators, the constituents further imagine that their call-outs lead to actions being taken. However, this is usually not the case. This illusion, therefore, needs to be transcended, and the preference of the legislators and the constituents with regard to communicating with each other needs to be aligned for a more effective and efficient governance and participation.

Actions in the social media feedback loop

The scope and gravity of the call-out discourse can be considered as the most significant factor that can determine the extent by which the legislators, with their team, acknowledge, consider, and/or act upon the messages directed to them. In particular, the response is determined by: (1) the sender of the message, (2) the nature of the message, (3) the content of the message, and (4) the avenue of the message.

The sender of the message

Messages that are sent by trolls or bots are usually left unnoticed by the communication team. Thus, if the message sender is an apparent troll or bot, the call-out would usually not be responded to. Meanwhile, call-out discourses received from valid accounts are considered for both the

background checking of the sender and subsequently, the double checking of the concern. If the call-out sender happens to be a fake account, the communication team no longer looks into the message. On the other hand, call-outs from valid accounts need further verification in terms of the concern being raised. Based on this, the communication team responds to the call-out in the manner deemed to be appropriate. In this regard, the validity of the account is imperative in the acknowledgment and/or consideration of the call-out discourse.

The nature of the message

Another consideration would be the nature of the message. Although messages from trolls or bots are usually not responded to, hateful messages sent by such accounts are reported through the platform. Simple remarks sent through private messages or comments are sometimes responded to by any communication team member to provide clarifications. However, serious cases of red-tagging, especially those that are sent by legitimate accounts on the platform, lead to the filing of legal complaints.

On the other end of the spectrum lie the positive comments. Support statements and expressions of gratitude about the causes and recent or previous actions of the legislators are scattered online. Although the nature of such call-outs is positive in nature, these messages receive less recognition from the communication team. The nature of the message thus tells us that the more positive remarks are rarely acknowledged publicly while the negative ones usually get noticed, and to some extent, raise certain actions from the communication team.

The content of the message

Essentially, one of the important factors in processing the call-out discourses are the messages the senders are trying to convey. Not all messages are responded to by the communications team, although there is an attempt to address all issues raised. Yet, the priority of the communication team is not solely on the online interactions, thus, not all call-outs are addressed. Issues that concern the primary constituency or the general public are normally given more consideration. Thus, there is a certain degree of significance and/or urgency required to secure the response of the legislators' communication team.

The avenue of the message

The communication team also commonly receives the call-outs through different avenues online; frequently, they receive these call-outs through Facebook comments. They also receive call-out messages through Facebook private messages. Between these two, the communication team gives less

priority to the comments, while most of the time, the team responds to the private messages. Outside Facebook, less call-outs are received on Twitter. However, to the communication team, messages sent through e-mails bear more significance, thus, there is a preference on messages sent over e-mail compared to either Facebook or Twitter, or any other social media platform.

Summary and Conclusion

The study looked into the communication process that takes places in the social media platforms Facebook and Twitter upon the reception of call-outs. In order to understand how call-outs are processed until pertinent actions are taken, the researchers looked into the key actors of the call-outs, the messages of these call-outs, and the processes that occur in line with these call-outs.

Based on the interviews conducted, there is neither a uniform label nor composition for the legislators' communication team. Oftentimes, there is also an overlap in terms of tasks performed by the communication teams and the other teams or members. Furthermore, there is no rigid set of operations that guide the communication team in handling the call-out discourses on the social media platforms.

The process of social media feedback, oftentimes a circular course, constitutes the involvement of two primary actors—the senders of the call-outs (usually the constituents) and the receivers of the call-outs (the legislators and their respective communication teams). It is essential to note that the types of call-out sender (whether from an authentic account or fake account) bear certain weight in determining the process to employ in order to handle the call-out discourse. Other actors also become involved depending on the nature and scope of the concerns. With the varying types of call-outs received by the communication teams, different processes are employed in order to provide the most appropriate course of action to address the call-out.

Overall, the communication teams prioritize call-outs that are: (1) sent by authentic accounts, (2) of general/public concerns, and (3) sent through personal messages or e-mails. However, it should be noted that there remains no concrete characterization of which call-outs are acknowledge and which ones are not, and the information presented are based on the reports and narratives of the informants of the study.

The presence of call-outs discourses online demonstrates that social media platforms, including Facebook and Twitter, are no longer merely spaces for social interactions. Political underpinnings have also entered these social media spheres and have integrated within the various contexts

of social interactions. The use of social media platforms for service delivery is evidently used by the constituents in order to reach out to their representatives. Among the communication teams of the legislators, social media platforms are avenues to answer or respond to call-outs from their constituents with immediacy. Although this mechanism is not without flaw and does not have a rigid process to follow, as can be seen through social media platforms, it provides a more systematic feedback loop that improves the service delivery beyond short-term assuaging.

Yet, there are still negative effects of the use of social media platforms. As constituents are given the avenue to express, the ability to interact may also be utilized to destabilize organizations, if not institutions. The threat of bots and trolls also brings with them more risks including the spread of fake news and hate posts. Also, social media platforms, although implying broader reach, is still very much limiting as not all individuals have access to social media. Thus, the communication teams of the legislators still firmly believe that offline interactions and actions are much more relevant than what is conducted online.

This entails that the sense of strength, through the use of online voice, may not be as powerful as we perceive it to be. While this strength provides the perspectives and ideologies for the wider audiences, there is no certainty that online interactions translate to offline actions. Moreover, issues raised during face-to-face interactions can be addressed with more immediacy in comparison to those provided online.

Furthermore, the concept of digital divide must be considered. Although the internet allows connections to widen, not all individuals, especially those who come from developing countries such as ours, have access to the internet nor to digital devices. Thus, there are tendencies of further marginalization if the preference shifts toward online interactions instead of the grounded relations.

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