Engagements and entanglements in LGBTQ+ hashtag activism: The case of online Pride celebrations in the Philippines

Jonalou S. Labor, Christian Jaycee Samonte, and Earl Jaynus S. Guzman

Abstract

LGBTQ+ pride celebrations in social media are opportunities for collaboration and broader participation. This study interrogates LGBTQ+ activism in X (formerly Twitter) as a functional platform for the LGBTQ+ community to mainstream its advocacy and responses to issues its members face. This research asks the question: How did X users participate in the LGBTQ+ 2021 Pride Celebration using #SulongVaklash? Guided by concepts of hashtag activism and the transnational LGBTQ+ movement, we argue that Pride Month celebrations in online spaces commemorate the event as a transnational protest movement. Findings show that X users utilized #SulongVaklash to join the global call for action to end LGBTQ+ discrimination. Further, the content of the tweets nods to the meaningful local contexts of the online protest, such as the mainstreaming of LGBTQ+ rights advocacy. Online pride protests have also allowed individuals from across the spectrum and social categories to post against discrimination and oppression in solidarity with the LGBTQ+ movement. The study concludes that X has not just become a site for protest through the discursive political appropriation of LGBTQ+ concerns but also a cyber dwelling where LGBTQ+ members recognize the value of their involvement in the fight towards recognition, acceptance, and freedom.

Keywords: LGBTQ+, hashtag activism, Pride celebration, X, Philippines, gender equality, SDG 10: reduced inequalities

Plaridel Open Access Policy Statement

How to cite this article in APA

Introduction

Protest rallies are critical in modern LGBTQ+ organizing and are among the most popular means for advancing LGBTQ+ issues, advocacies, and goals (Buyantueva, 2020; Peterson et al., 2018). From the watershed moment that was Stonewall to the different LGBTQ+ movements across the globe that have sprung since, LGBTQ+ activism has broken through the 21st-century human rights agenda with such speed and force that, now, the struggles of gender non-conforming identities have become important (if not contentious) topics in global political discussions. Following global trends, LGBTQ+ protests in the Philippines have also seen increased activity and visibility over the years on different fronts, whether it be in the annual Metro Manila Pride, legislative lobbying, LGBTQ+-focused youth/student movements, street mobilizations, and more recently, different forms of activism in online spaces such as X.

The Philippine LGBTQ+ movement is relatively young, especially compared to Western models from which it is patterned (Inton, 2017). LGBTQ+ social movements in the country only gained real traction during the 1990s in different universities and school organizations (Cardozo, 2014). These early movements were pivotal in creating pathways for other LGBTQ+[1] organizations to emerge, so much so that by 1999, several LGBT organizations and advocacy groups like the Lesbian and Gay Legislative Advocacy Network (Lagablab) and Task Force Pride (TFP) had already built an alliance as part of a broader effort to sustain interactions with other similar organizations and push LGBTQ+ politics and issues into the mainstream. This was followed up with some success in the 2000s, specifically with the establishment of *Ang Ladlad* [The Coming Out], an organization that advocates for the protection and advancement of human rights of the Philippine LGBT community (Bernardo, 2015). Almost a decade after the group's creation and despite legal and societal hurdles, Ang Ladlad realized its goal of becoming the first political party to represent LGBT interests in the Philippine national elections (Benedicto, 2022; Bernardo, 2015; Cardozo, 2014; Coloma, 2013). The 1990s and 2000s came with unique opportunities and challenges that shaped the development of LGBTQ+ activism in the Philippines. Likewise, the decade that followed also came with enabling opportunities and tensions in the form of digital technologies, the rise of fascist-authoritarian rule, and the global pandemic. While LGBTQ+ movements in the country continue to use tried and tested repertoires of street action, lobbying, coalition building, and Pride parades, the changing political, technological, environmental, and societal landscape has forced advocates to adapt and extend spaces of protests online, particularly on social media.

Digital technologies like the internet and social media have extended the realms of discussion for LGBTQ+ identities, issues, and politics, enabled the formation of LGBTQ+ groups in conservative societies, and facilitated the transnational exchange of LGBTQ+ ideologies and resources (Buyantueva, 2020; Thoreson, 2014). Empowered by social media, sexual minorities in China, for instance, have become more visible in the public consciousness and more active in negotiating with the state for legal protection against different forms of abuse (Yang, 2018). LGBTQ+ groups in Malaysia, on the other hand, have relied on social media to circumvent religious conservatism in the country, all the while scaling up the growing LGBTQ+ movement through linkages and alliances forged online (Mokhtar et al., 2020. These examples, along with many other documented cases in LGBTQ+ activism scholarship, also demonstrate how social media have become a formidable "oppositional communicative practice" (Labiste, 2018, p. 265) against oppressive social systems and unjust power structures (Khubchandani, 2016).

Beyond state suppression and concerted efforts by hostile actors to stifle LGBTQ+ voices, the COVID-19 pandemic has also introduced new challenges to LGBTQ+ organizing. The exceptional situation created by the pandemic is sometimes exacerbated by state crackdown on dissent, limited on-ground LGBTQ+ actions, and other forms of offline organizing. In some cases, this socio-spatial rearrangement of collective action put another hurdle in scaling up LGBTQ+ movements, especially in societies where such movements have a documented history of struggle to gain any political relevance or impact. In other cases, however, this new dynamic resulted in a radically accelerated shift of movements and interactions traditionally performed in physical spaces to virtual platforms where they can bypass or overcome the limitations imposed by COVID-19. The pandemic forced LGBTQ+ organizations worldwide to celebrate Pride Month on different mediated platforms. Celebrations and protests traditionally done in streets and other physical spaces were transferred to social networking sites (SNS). Most organizations from multiple countries that went through the lockdown opted to host online events because of their communities' enforced restrictions and lockdowns. In the US, Pride celebrations have been broadcasted as virtual experiences through community video watching of Pride Fest parades, webinars, and other festivities (Heilman, 2021). Other groups in the global north postponed their face-to-face activities but pushed for connections and celebrations through live-streamed events (Eyck, 2021). In Asia, where a slow but sure coming out of the LGBTQ+ community is unfolding, online rallies and activities have happened in different cities and states (Xinghui, 2021). These efforts of mainstreaming LGBTQ+ issues

led to greater visibility and brought adverse reactions among community members.

In the Philippines, where the mainstreaming of LGBTQ+ issues started as early as the 90s (UNDP & USAID, 2014), despite the absence of legal recognition of LGBTQ+ rights, Pride celebrations are allowed to provide the community space and a platform for protest and community-building (Labor & San Pascual, 2022; Soriano, 2014). The earliest celebrations were organized in the 1990s when small-scale protests against discrimination and police brutality were organized by the LGBTQ+ group Progressive Organization of Gays (PRO-Gay) alongside the Metropolitan Community Church (Palatino, 2021). Hence, in 2021, Metro Manila Pride (MMP) launched a series of online events that bring attention to conversations and discussions on LGBTQ+ issues. Jacolbia (2021) noted that Philippine-based organizations have always been leading in mainstreaming LGBTQ+ discourses through education and entertainment. We focused on the 2021 Pride celebrations because they were thoroughly organized despite the pandemic. Hence, we wanted to find how the systematic and large-scale efforts of the LGBTQ+ community, the event organizers, and its partners would translate into an actual Pride celebration. Compared to the 2020 online Pride celebration, the 2021 installment had better preparation time because the country was still on lockdown, whereas the 2020 online Pride celebration was an alternative staging of what could have been an on-the-ground event (Jacolbia, 2021). The study of the celebration on X is an exciting decision for the researchers as the space has been used by both LGBTQ+ and heterosexual individuals to actively support causes through messages of support and posts using a limited set of characters (Alingasa & Ofreneo, 2021). The SNS expressions in X also serve as possible "support artifacts" in enabling mainstreaming narratives about the LGBTQ+ community. SNS participation in X is an important activity that allows socio-political change for marginalized groups (Clark, 2016; Coleman, 2021; Murthy et al., 2016). We posit that studying X is crucial for understanding LGBTQ+ activism because the space amplifies visibility through the limited number of letters, connects individual thoughts through hashtags, and enables a networked understanding of public opinion. The affordances of X enable queer individuals to participate in network publics, counternarratives and visibility, identity performance, and real-time communication and mobilization (Dhiman, 2023); hence, it is important to establish how X continues to enable such benefits.

One of the palpable ways of mainstreaming LGBTQ+ rights in the Philippines is pride celebrations. Such vibrant expressions of LGBTQ+ community-building and resistance focus on joyous celebrations of LGBTQ+

identity expression, belongingness, and acceptance that reinforce LGBTQ+ visibility and advocacy (Labor & San Pascual, 2022). Through artistic performances, parades, and other creative means of showcasing LGBTQ+ organizing and activism, pride celebrations have fostered a strong sense of community empowerment that points out diversity and acceptance. With new generations of LGBTQ+ individuals and allies joining the cause and participating in mainstreaming the movement through more comprehensive media coverage and with regional events happening across the country, there is an expectation that pride celebrations will be more than festivities but as venues for educating LGBTQ+ and heterosexual Filipinos about anti-discrimination initiatives and basic human rights (Pascual, 2013).

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the LGBTQ+ community to hold the pride celebration online because of the health-related protocols and restrictions that have been put in place by the Philippine government as part of its response to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Using the theme "Sulong, Vaklash!"—a play on the Filipino words sulong [to move forward], *bakla* or its derivative *vakla* [gay], and *baklas* [break off]—the nationwide pride celebration called for the collective strength of LGBTQ+ members and allies to fight discrimination and abuse, while promoting healing (Lariosa, 2021). The platformization and digitalization of activism and protest are constant sources of study since these offer unique windows for online presence and participation that defy geographical distance and safety concerns while allowing LGBTQ+ individuals and organizations new ways to connect and build communities (Labor & San Pascual, 2022, 2023).

With virtual spaces fostering a sense of belonging and identity and a site for activism, awareness, and advocacy, this study asks the question: How did X users participate in the LGBTQ+ 2021 Pride Celebration using #SulongVaklash? As hashtags in X function as an information organization and a sharing mechanism to situate and connect political messages in micro and macro-social contexts (Brock, 2012), the paper explores how X users were able to celebrate the spirit of Pride through the hashtag #SulongVaklash. The study also identifies the way X users frame intersectional rights and, in the process, critique participation in the online celebration. Taken together, the study argues that Pride Month celebrations in online spaces can be commemorated as a transnational activist protest movement that mainstreams LGBTQ+ issues through hashtag activism in the hopes of dismantling the oppressive system that disables the LGBTQ+ community (Jacolbia, 2021).

Constructing transnational LGBTQ+ activism

To foreground the formation of the LGBTQ+ cause as a modern transnational movement, we lay out in this section a brief historical sketch of key movements and watershed events that led to the formation of contemporary transnational LGBTQ+ activism that has expanded to digital spaces.

Modern transnational LGBTQ+ movements are a product of smaller initiatives that have since coalesced into a global LGBTQ+ advocacy. While Stonewall and Pride events have been attributed to giving LGBTQ+ advocacy a transnational dimension, it is important to point out that transnational initiatives have existed long before Stonewall (Lustbader, 2018; Stein, 2019), though not in the same breadth and magnitude post-Stonewall. Throughout its development, transnational LGBTQ+ movements have focused on key themes such as gay freedom and liberation and equal gender and sexual rights. Nascent efforts during 19th and 20th century Europe are examples of collective efforts centered on gender and sexuality, which focused on some form of gay rights by opposing anti-homosexuality laws (Belmonte, 2019; Hekma, 2015; Morris, 2017). The era of sexology studies, on the other hand, sought to enlighten public understanding for the gamut of human sexuality and behavior in an attempt to improve public attitudes toward homosexuality. The homophile movements of the post-war period revolved around the same themes of decriminalization and enlightenment, employing tactics such as publications, conferences, research initiatives, and media engagements to counter discriminatory frameworks and entrenched cultural conceptions about homosexuality.

The rise of the civil rights movement in the 1960s laid the sociopolitical groundwork for a more abrasive LGBTQ+ resistance (Peterson et al., 2018; Valocchi, 2005) that would underscore the shift from gay rights to gay freedom and liberation. This culminated in the 1969 Stonewall Uprising, an event that has been interpreted as the beginning of the contemporary gay rights movement and overt gay identity political struggle. Stonewall would be commemorated a year later with the first Pride parades in New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago—a massive cultural event that combined traditional protest with avant-garde, public celebrations and spectacles of gender and sexuality. Pride also enlarged the transnational dimension of LGBTQ+ activism as it diffused to other parts of the globe. LGBTQ+ advocacy would be met with new sets of challenges—and opportunities—in the decade that followed, particularly with the onslaught of HIV/AIDS and the rise of religious right countermovement. Just as the HIV/AIDS epidemic ravaged the gay population, religious right opposition quickly latched onto the epidemic to spread anti-gay rhetoric and lobby for anti-LGBTQ+ policies. To

adapt to this new dynamic of movement and countermovement, LGBTQ+ movements resorted to different tactics, such as coalition-building with HIV/AIDS advocacies and pro-LGBTQ+ Christian groups to consolidate support, collaborate with other interest groups, and intersect LGBTQ+ issues with broader health issues. Consequently, the LGBTQ+ response to HIV/AIDS would also inspire LGBTQ+ advocacy in the South, such as Malaysia, Jamaica, India, and Ecuador, where LGBTQ+ is present (Roberts, 1995).

The next two decades also saw the rise of LGBTQ+ youth culture and digital technologies, and thus facilitating further the increasingly borderless nature of LGBTQ+ activism. The affordances of digital communication technologies have facilitated the creation of virtual activist spaces that promote intersectional social justice and discussions of LGBTQ+ sexuality and deterritorialized collective action for marginalized identities, especially in areas where civil liberties are suppressed (i Martí, 2006; Soriano, 2014). Some examples include the #IAmGay# online post that circulated on the Chinese microblogging site Sina Weibo as a response to censorship of homosexual content (see Liao, 2019) and the Turkish LGBTQ+ hashtag #HerYürüyüsümüzOnurYürüyüsü [Every Parade of Ours is a Pride Parade] that was used to voice collective frustration against the suppression of LGBTQ+ events and public assembly in Turkey (see Kilic, 2021).

Today's transnational LGBTQ+ political action is enormous and complex. Once disjointed and isolated, advocacy has coalesced into a monumental movement connected by shared struggles and collective aspirations. Despite tensions within the movement (see Ammaturo, 2016; Belmont & Ferreira, 2020; Peterson et al., 2018; Silva & Jacobo, 2020; Stageman, 2017), commonalities have allowed LGBTQ+ advocacies from the North and South to coordinate actions and borrow from each other's strategies as they advance local, regional, and global LGBTQ+ issues. The transnationality of LGBTQ+ action has also accelerated the diffusion of LGBTQ+ norms, enhancing the chances for progressive policies at the local level. Transnational LGBTQ+ advocacy will continue to evolve and adapt as new issues arise in an increasingly volatile and uncertain geopolitical landscape.

This brief overview of transnational LGBTQ+ advocacy through the decades is far from an exhaustive account of global movements and was never intended to be such. Rather, we aim to illustrate how various disparate initiatives that started in the West have diffused and led to the co-construction of modern transnational LGBTQ+ movements. Moreover, by briefly looking at the setbacks, triumphs, and context, we provide a backdrop to superimpose (at least thematically) LGBTQ+ hashtag activism,

highlighting the similarities, differences, fluctuations, and progress of past, present, and future LGBTQ+ collective action.

Philippine LGBTQ+ movement:
Status, transnational inspirations, and parallels

The Philippine LGBTQ+ situation represents an anomaly because of its many contradictions (Yarcia et al., 2019). Despite the persisting stigmatization of homosexuality in the country, recent research indicates that Filipinos generally agree with the social acceptance of homosexuality. What they cannot agree with, however, is its morality, or lack thereof. Enduring homonegativity and rejection of homosexuality based on moral grounds have contributed significantly to the present struggles (e.g., discrimination, stigmatization, challenges related to mental and sexual health, socioeconomic inequality, and lack of state-wide legal protection against discrimination and abuse, among others) of the Filipino LGBTQ+ community (Abesamis & Siddayao, 2021; Cornelio & Dagle, 2019; Labor et al., 2022; Madula, 2016; Manalastas, 2013). It is within this context that LGBTQ+ movements in the Philippines have evolved.

The Philippine LGBTQ+ movement shares many commonalities with the broader global LGBTQ+ initiatives, such as its gender and human rights agenda and struggles for equality (Manalastas, 2013). The short-lived "Kakasarian" (of the same gender) that sprung during the 1970s represents one of the earliest attempts to promote gay rights in the country. Though Kakasarian failed to kickstart gay activism in the Philippines, advocacy groups such as AIDS service group The Library Foundation (TLF), The Lesbian Collective, and LGBTQ-oriented campus organizations such as UP Babaylan, FEU Sigma Homo Epsilon or the Society of the Homosexual Encounter, and PRO-Gay Philippines would pick up where Kakasarian had left decades prior and established the earliest calls for gender rights advocacy (Cardozo, 2014). By 1994, PRO-Gay Philippines would commemorate the 25th anniversary of Stonewall while simultaneously calling for gender equality and protesting the Value Added Tax program (Evangelista, 2017). The following year, gender-related bill proposals would appear for the first time on the legislative agenda (Yarcia et al., 2019). The first Manila Pride parade would kick off in 1996, which Paradela (2019) described as the first coming together of the Filipino LGBTQ+ community. Labadisos (2019) also described Manila Pride as a "collective effervescence"—a unity of emotions and solidarity that bind participants into a collective demand for gender equality and rights. Today, Manila Pride remains an important resource for local LGBTQ+ advocacies in promoting gender-based rights and intersecting the LGBTQ+ agenda with other relevant local and global

issues such as environmental activism, resisting authoritarian-fascist advances, calls to end impunity, reproductive health, AIDS advocacy, and critiquing religious dogmatism and bigotry (Evangelista, 2017; Lago, 2018; Lapeña, 2010). The successes of Philippine LGBTQ+ advocacies also inspired similar Pride Parades in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Delhi, and Colombo (Garcia, 2008). Although legal protection remains out of reach, the Philippine gay rights movement successfully established Ang Ladlad, the first political party to represent LGBT interests in the Philippine national elections (Bernardo, 2015; Benedicto, 2022; Cardozo, 2014; Coloma, 2013). Ang Ladlad would also mark the digital turn of LGBTQ+ organizing in the country when it established an online presence through its not-defunct website. Since then, digital technologies have become part of Filipino gender-based collective action. The explosion of social media in the last decade has become instrumental for the Philippine LGBTQ+ in constructing the Filipino LGBTQ+ movement by 'creating nodes of identification, belonging, and support, symbolizing resistance to oppressive power sources for LGBTs' (Soriano, 2014). They have also become an important resource for Filipino LGBTQ+ youth. It also gives us a glimpse into the exportation of LGBTQ+ activism and ideas from offline to virtual spaces by the 21st century. While new communication technologies enrich and take LGBTQ+ activism in new directions, they also maintain, sustain, and reproduce trends and ideas that began before the emergence of new media. These include how LGBTQ+ movements organize, connect with their public, and frame LGBTQ+ advocacies.

Philippine LGBTQ+ activism has borrowed many themes, tropes, and tactics of LGBTQ+ movements in the West, modifying and adapting them to fit the local context (Austria, 2004; L. Garcia, 2008; Labor & San Pascual, 2022, 2023; Soriano, 2014). Collaborating and exchanging with LGBTQ+ groups operating in different territories has given local actors and brokers important transnational resources and models that have since been adapted to resonate with the Philippines' unique situation. Today, Philippine LGBTQ+ groups are at the forefront of Philippine activism, calling not just for gender equality and legislative protection for the local LGBTQ+ population but addressing other grievances such as the country's pandemic response, human rights abuses related to the drug war, and shrinking democratic spaces among others. Likewise, LGBTQ+ rights groups have also been active in demanding justice and redress for members of the LGBTQ+ community who had been victims of abuse and violence, such as in the case of Jennifer Laude.

Tracing the development of LGBTQ+ advocacy in the country serves to contextualize local LGBTQ+ activism online. These turning points are also

important signposts through which we can link present initiatives to the past, reflect on the progress of the Philippine LGBTQ+ agenda, and ponder its shortcomings. In many ways, online activism through hashtags imbibes the same spirit of its offline predecessors: equality, acceptance, and human rights for all identities while simultaneously incorporating both familiar and new intersectional issues. These cycles of progress and setbacks are also crucial in understanding the nuances of online LGBTQ+ activism and how it continues to be shaped by pressures offline and online.

Framing LGBTQ+ On and Offline Messages

This research rests on the premise that communicators frame messages they send to others; hence, it is important to discuss how message framing is used to participate in the communication process. Discourse frames are underlying narratives that guide public discourse about an issue (Labor et al., 2022). In a sense, frames pre-pack information influence how people interpret facts, arguments, and visuals. They impact LGBTQ+ advocacy by providing focus, salience, emotional response, and public opinion (Labor & San Pascual, 2022). The Gay and Lesbian Against Defamation (GLAAD) and the Movement Advancement Project's (MAP) "The Art and Science of Framing an Issue" identified three types of communication frames in LGBTQ+ campaigns (GLAAD & MAP, 2008). The frames, labeled as deep frames, issue-defining frames, and surface messages, define social issues, including LGBTQ+ advocacy. These frames vary in how they position and highlight LGBTQ+ messages, with deep frames usually resonating with core values and beliefs on justice, freedom, humanity, etc. Deep frames have been prominent in LGBTQ+ messaging, such as in the gay liberation movement of the 1963-1979 protest cycle. As Valocchi (2005) showed, gay liberation movements embraced the "gay-is-good" frame, which appealed to gay people to see themselves in a better light, sexual liberation, heterosexism, and oppression-is-everywhere collective action frames. Beyond highlighting the salience of discussing LGBTQ+ issues, these collective frames also showed the tensions, diversity, creativity, and contradictions within LGBTQ+ movements (Valocchi, 2005). Frames such as civil rights, equality, and discrimination (Copeland et al., 2016), vulnerability, violence, and assimilation (Cabosky, 2014), and sameness, kindness, and acceptance (Chan, 2018) are discursive examples that flow from the frames identified above.

Early gay and lesbian movements relied heavily on messaging that framed gay and lesbian rights as human rights (Paternotte & Seckinelgin, 2015; Thoreson, 2008). Currier (2011), Harrison and Michelson (2017), and Johnson (2012) have noted that LGBTQ+ issues, such as same-sex unions,

face little resistance when these are written as human rights issues. The human rights frame has also been used to empower sexual minorities in the Global South (Chan, 2018; Chua, 2020). Harrison and Michelson (2017) pointed out that LGBT advocacy groups have already started to focus their messages on emotional appeals such as love, affection, and familial ties when talking about LGBT issues such as same-sex partnerships and LGBT families. For example, a GLAAD campaign in 2015 chose to highlight LGBTQ+ couples and allowed them to speak openly and candidly about their loving relationships.

Another notable example is the "It Gets Better" (IGB) Project initiated by Dan Savage and his partner Terry Miller on social media to respond to the spate of youth suicides in North America attributed to homophobic bullying (Asakura & Craig, 2014). The first video, posted on YouTube, was intended to inspire hope among LGBTQ+ youths through the central message that life eventually improves. The said work was criticized for romanticizing bullying and resilience among LGBTQ+ youth (see Goltz, 2013; Hawkins et al., 2018; Johnson, 2014; Meyer, 2017;). Michaelsen (2017), however, argued that despite the criticisms of the IGB project, it has been successful in providing emotional support even though people converse with strangers online. The sameness frame is another example of emotional framing. Using the "we-are-same-as-you" treatment, LGBTQ+ advocacies highlight similitude to generate empathy and support from the 'majority' public (Cabosky, 2014; Chan, 2018).

In the Philippines, message and discourse framing is integral to LGBTQ+ advocacy as it influences public perception and mobilizes support and action (Soriano, 2014), combat misconceptions and prejudice (Labor & San Pascual, 2022), and tailoring-fitting messages for both LGBTQ+ individuals and cis-hetero allies and audiences (Labor & San Pascual, 2023). Coalitions of LGBTQ+ organizations, advocacies, support groups, and allies have also utilized message frames online and offline to communicate various LGBTQ+ issues that emphasize equality, protection, and guarantee of civil liberties.

Hashtag activism

One of the ways to frame messages in mediated spaces is through hashtags. X hashtags are tools for organizing and disseminating information designed to contextualize and link messages within both micro and macro-social frameworks (Brock, 2012). Tweets become coherent messages that indicate in-group and out-group connections that enable discourses that support or contest sociopolitical realities (Clark, 2016; Coleman, 2021). Hashtag activism manifests offline and online engagement (Fang, 2015),

setting an agenda for various cyber and community-based organizations and institutions (Olson, 2014). It is part of digital activism that provides voices to marginalized groups (Fang, 2015) who want opportunities for self-representation (Mwaura, 2019).

Hashtags also have discursive power. These enable opportunities to negotiate meanings (Coleman, 2021, Florini, 2014; Harp et al., 2018). Hashtags can be powerful disclosure mechanisms facilitating participation in local or global issues (Crisostomo, 2020; Deal et al., 2020; Karahanna et al., 2018). On a worldwide scale, the discursive power of the hashtag is seen on the scale of its use, especially on the networked frames of hashtag messages about global crises through #refugee and #refugeecrisis (Siapera et al., 2018). In the past, hashtags such as #LoveisLove (Lipták & Prónay, 2020) have been studied to characterize the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals who are facing discrimination and violence, identify frames that promote the ideas of equality and commitment, and common experiences that challenge prejudice and promote the presence of the LGBTQ+ community.

In the Philippines, the use of hashtags among LGBTQ+ individuals and groups contribute to knowledge formation, attitudinal challenge and change, and even behavioral reshaping (Labor & San Pascual, 2022). Further, the power of collective mobilization using X has also been felt in the Philippines using #BabaeAko. X's hashtag airs sentiments about social issues and campaigns for a cause, stores information, and magnifies participation (Alingasa & Ofreneo, 2021). These cited research used various methods to analyze LGBTQ+ hashtags, such as sentiment analysis to understand emotional cues in the posts, network analysis to identify actors and acts, and discourse analysis to examine dominant discourses in conversations.

As the LGBTQ+ rights movement took a transnational turn in its efforts to mobilize and mainstream calls to action for the LGBTQ+ community, digital media has created a space for local movements to converse with world politics and vice versa. This can be seen through hashtags in social media platforms such as X, which has organized activism in cyberspace. While there is increasing scholarship on LGBTQ+ discourses in online and offline contexts, there is a need to further study the growing LGBTQ+ movement in the Philippines as a transnational movement, particularly in an era of digital media. This study offers insights on how hashtag activism and online discourses can contribute to social advocacy and movements.

Research Methodology

The researchers collected public tweets about the Metro Manila Pride March's (MMPM) 2021 staging using X's Full Archive Search Application Programming Interface (API). The theme for the event, "SULONG,

VAKLASH! Sama-samang pag-aklas ang ating lunas" [Forward, Vaklash! To strike as one is our solution], articulated by the MMPM organizers, underscores the event's roots in activism aimed at advancing LGBTQ+ and other minority rights (Lariosa, 2021). All public tweets that used #SulongVaklash was scraped through API. In our analysis, we modified the usernames by providing alternative usernames to de-identify users. Tweets originally in Filipino were translated into English, except for the screen-capped ones. The tweets captured in the screenshots were from prominent brands, NGOs, public figures, and all public entities.

Additionally, the analysis was confined to tweets from public profiles that employed the hashtag, while tweets from private accounts were systematically excluded. The timeline for the data collection was from May 31, 2021, which marked the launch of the digital campaign, to June 30, 2021, the last day of the Pride Month celebration in the Philippines. Location-based data were used to identify tweets specifically coming from users based in the Philippines. Moreover, the researchers held an assumption that each unique username comes from a unique user. From the 5,322 tweets collected, we randomly selected 1,200 tweets from unique users across the Philippines by assigning a random number to each tweet in the dataset and sorting them using the Microsoft Excel random number function.

To analyze the data, inductive thematic analysis was used to determine how the different X users could manifest their idea of pride celebration. The researchers utilized open and axial coding to determine the thematic categories. In deciding the open codes, we analyzed 100 tweets, focusing exclusively on the texts and excluding the images and videos. Upon completion, we discussed any discrepancies, arrived at reliable and acceptable axial codes, and used these codes for the initial thematization of the data set. Moreover, we employed selective coding to match the core categories to the theoretical constructs of the study. Lastly, we organized the tweets into the final four core categories that emerged during the intercoder reliability process.

We are a team of communication scholars who are all members of the LGBTQ+ community. Our shared experiences and identities intersect with the goal of the pride march, which provides us with deeper insights into global and local pride celebrations and influences our interpretive lens during the analysis. This collective standpoint was valuable in identifying the nuances in language and expressions found in the Filipino celebration of Pride Month.

Results and Discussion

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and as the country continued to limit its mobility, the Metro Manila Pride (MMP) made sure to advance its causes using digital processes. The virtual pride celebration showcased various arts, performances, solidarity speeches, and other creative expressions. Various Philippine-based government institutions and non-government organizations participated and were proud rainbow community members. X users used the hashtag to support the pride celebrations and appropriated it. The analysis reveals that *#SulongVaklash* tweets are framed as (1) a glocal identifier of pride as a protest, (2) a way to mainstream LGBTQ+ issues and causes, (3) a call for intersectional solidarity, and (4) a critique of rainbow capitalism. These findings thematically document the tweets' framed content and discursive nature.

#SulongVaklash *as a glocal identifier of pride as a protest*

The use of #SulongVaklash embodies the spirit of glocal pride, a term combining global and local pride celebration elements. The use of the term *sulong* [forward] signifies the contribution of the Philippine pride celebrations to the worldwide fight for human rights, expressed through a sense of moving forward with the global movement. The Philippine online Pride march allowed LGBTQ+ members and their allies to use X to celebrate pride marches' unified and universal value. Tweets about pride marches' history, essence, and goals dominated the virtual platform. On the one hand, the *#SulongVaklash* enabled participants to converge with LGBTQ+ individuals worldwide to recollect the starting point of gay liberation. In the tweets below, X users explained how and why the Pride celebrations existed. They pointed out how Masha Johnson and the Stonewall uprising were catalysts of gay liberation and how these events were important milestones for online protest and celebration. Most tweets during the celebration pointed out the need to revisit the catalyst of the gay rights movement to remind participants that protests are political and not merely performative.

> Yung history ng pride ay tungkol sa struggles ng LGBTQ+ community. Yung simbolo ng rainbow flag ay pagdisplay ng kontribusyon at meaning ni Marsha P. Johnson at lahat ng baklang aktibista. [The history of pride is about the struggles of the LGBTQ+ community. The symbolic rainbow flag is proudly displaying was given its life and meaning by Marsha P. Johnson and all the gay liberation activists] #FearlessLGBTQUnite #Pride2021 #SulongVAKLASH -X User 15

Ang stonewall ay result ng inhumane police forces laban sa queer people of color. Yung bulok na pulis ay di na bago. [The Stonewall Uprising was a result of the inhumane treatment of police forces towards the queer people of color. The rottenness of the police is no longer new] #PrideIsAProtest #SulongVAKLASH #ACAB #PulisAngTerorista #OustDuterte -X User 22

Indeed, as the samples have shown, mediated platforms like X serve as powerful enabling environments for LGBTQ+ individuals to share facts about the community (Cavalcante, 2018; Yang, 2018) and pour out their opinions about the need for pride celebrations (Adamczyk & Liao, 2019; Duguay, 2016). LGBTQ+ individuals participating in the online Pride use X to converse with different audiences to reinforce visibility and connections through collective recollection (Adamczyk & Liao, 2019; Campbell-Foster, 2017).

On the other hand, tweets that contained the hashtag also referred to the local value of pride marches for LGBTQ+ members. The use of the bakla term "vaklash" is a reference to the Filipino term baklas (break off) and to the English term backlash, a strong or violent reaction, usually to a social or political change. As indicated in the sample tweets below, there is a need to continue calling for freedom and equality in the Philippines, as the SOGIE Equality Bill has been derailed for over twenty years. Many participants strongly supported the bill since it was a pressing issue during the Pride celebrations 2021. Our findings suggest that most tweets talk about such a pressing issue and that the LGBTQ+ community in X supports the call to pass the bill.

LET US FIGHT TO FREE US ALL FROM OPPRESSION! ✊🏽🏳️‍🌈 Kahit na may pandemya, patuloy na ilaban ang karapatan at ang inaasam na kalayaan [Despite the COVID-19 pandemic that dampens our pride celebration, we will continue to fight for our rights and desired freedom.] Rights for LGBTQ now" #Pride2021 #SulongVAKLASH #SOGIEEqualityNow -X User 35

Celebrating with #SulongVAKLASH #Pride for #LGBTQ in #Pilipinas. Ang hayaang mamuhay ay hindi nangangahulugang may pagtanggap. [Tolerance is not acceptance.] We have rights in our constitution. Isabatas ang aming karapatan. [We demand that these be honored

by legislation.] Equal rights to all" #SOGIEEqualityNow -X
User 47

What is also important to point out in these glocal tweets is their multilingual nature and appeal. The clever use of Filipino and English in the original tweets reflects the code-switching habits of Filipinos, which is a multilingual reality that allows Filipinos worldwide to celebrate together. As the LGBTQ+ movement took a transnational turn, code-switching from the local language to universal English emphasizes how social media facilitates borderless interactions between local and world politics.

Digital technologies like social media are vital in the continuous discussion of the universal human rights agenda, including LGBTQ+'s political participation and visibility (Karppinen, 2017), the creation of shared communities (Ng, 2017), the enlargement of queer affinity spaces, the development of participatory engagement among LGBTQ+ individuals, and the continuous bridging of individual and collective identities (Gee, 2004). Just as the internet solidified connections between disparate and geographically scattered LGBTQ+ movements, social media solidified global conversations about LGBTQ+ issues (Vickery, 2016).

#SulongVaklash as a way to mainstream LGBTQ+ issues and causes

Using #SulongVaklash facilitated conversations about mainstream LGBTQ+ causes and concerns in the Philippines. Tweets recognize the value of pride as political protests and emphasize the call to the end of discrimination and oppression. Visible in the tweets are calls for the recognition of trans rights and the call to end all gender-based violence and discrimination. As indicated in the samples below, the LGBTQ+ community is alarmed by the country's consistently high record for trans murder. Hence, these tweets about the subject have consistently been present in the days when the data was collected. Sentiments about the Pride being a radical protest that should demand the recognition of transwomen as women and join the call for all forms of gender-based violence have surfaced during the celebration.

Pride is a radical political protest! Pride is a fight! Pride is a protest! Fight! Transwomen are women #Pride2021 #ShareWithPride #SulongVAKLASH #LongLiveTheQueers #TransRightsAreHumanRights #PassADBNow #SOGIEEqualityNow #FreeAllPoliticalPrisoners #OustDuterteNOW -X User 56

HAPPY PRIDE MONTH, MGA BADETTE !! 🤜🏳️‍🌈 Dahil sa ating sama-samang pag-aklas, isulong natin na wakasan ang lahat ng uri ng gender-based violence at diskriminasyon. [Through our collective movement and cumulative efforts, let's join together to end all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination.] #SulongVAKLASH because we are gays, we are not 'gays only'! Truee?! #PrideIsAProtest #PrideMonth2021 #Pride2021 -X User 68

X users also used the hashtag to call for action for marriage equality. The tweets recount how the country and the community should advocate for marriage rights. As indicated in the sample below, X users demand the recognition of marriage as a union between two humans. There is also an emphasis on marriage as a right rather than a privilege that some members of Philippine society have to enjoy.

Marriage equality now! Pantay-pantay sa mata ng Diyos. [All are equal in the eyes of God]" #Marriagerights for all #SOGIEEqualityNow #SulongVaklash -X User 78

Ang Pride ay pagbibigay karapatan sa #LGBTQ na gustong magpakasal! [Pride is giving rights to #LGBTQ who want to marry!] Ang pantay na karapatang magpakasal ay hindi pribelehiyo ng iilan [Marriage equality is a right and not a privilege.] Marriage is right of all" #Pride2021 #SulongVAKLASH -X User 89

It is important to note that the community is not alone in its fight. During the online celebrations, cisgender allies also supported the community members. Some tweets mentioned that allies are one with the LGBTQ+ community and that they join the fight against any invalidation of any member of the community. These tweets add to the weight of the call for action to recognize and legalize LGBTQ+ rights. They stated that they are one with them in calling for freedom and that they are also resisting the bullying that LGBTQ+ individuals are experiencing.

Bravely for AND with them. Happy pride month! 🏳️‍🌈 Kasama ninyo ako hanggang makuha ng komunidad ang paglaya! [I am with you till we achieve the community's freedom! #SulongVAKLASH #PrideMonth #PrideMonth2021- X User 92

happy pride to all my lovely queer people out there! Gusto ko lang ipaalam na ako'y isang ally at mahal ko kayong lahat! [I just want you all to know that I am your ally and I love you all so much!] 💗 Let's all resist together and fight for equality! 🏳️‍🌈 #Pride2021 #SOGIEEqualityNow #SulongVAKLASH -X User 100

Further, the Pride celebration also witnessed support from various established institutions and organizations. *#SulongVaklash* has also been used by representatives in the Philippine Congress, government and non-government organizations, educational institutions, and artists. Tweets from Sarah Elago, a member of the House of Representatives, the Gabriela Women's Party, a recognized party-list in the country, and the Commission on Human Rights, an independent constitutional office, supported the month-long pride celebration (e.g., posting support statements, encouraging attendance to Pride events, posting online explainers). They mentioned how they will continue to fight for human rights and advocate for anti-discrimination and marriage equality. These forms of support translate to increased visibility and recognition since the government acknowledges and celebrates the community. It can also encourage other institutions and organizations to support the celebration, thus encouraging broader recognition that will normalize LGBTQ+ identities. Tweets like these can also spark conversations that help create a more emphatic public and, thus, mainstreaming LGBTQ+ issues in the public discourse.

Further, student organizations like the University of the Philippines Babaylan, the Polytechnic University of the Philippines' Catalyst, and the University of the Philippines Los Baños Perspective have posted their support to the causes of the community. Their message is clear: students know that the Pride celebrations are ways to call for unified actions toward realizing the community's needs. Such advocacy and call to action from student formations add a collective dimension in pushing the LGBTQ+ causes inside and outside universities.

More than its function of information organization and sharing mechanism (Brock, 2012), the tweets under the hashtag *#SulongVaklash* exhibit how hashtags also surface social issues and narratives of a specific group. As Adamczyk and Liao (2019) explained, hashtags have become enduring and ubiquitous markers for today's social movements. Further, when students, student-led organizations, and other institutions support online Pride celebrations, it paves a more welcoming and inclusive environment for the LGBTQ+ community by highlighting the issues its members face. As such, it emphasizes allyship through mainstreaming

Figure 1
"HAPPY PRIDE ✊ #sulongVAKLASH"

Sarah Elago #LabanKabataan
@sarahelago

HAPPY PRIDE ✊ **#sulongVAKLASH**

12:07 AM · 6/27/21 · Twitter for Android

53 Retweets **18** Quote Tweets **2,123** Likes

Figure 2
"RIDE WITH PRIDE"

Gabriela Women's Party
@GabrielaWomenPL

✨RIDE WITH PRIDE✨

In the face of intensifying attacks against our sovereignty & the LGBTQ+ community, we continue to fight back and show our Pride!

Let us reclaim our waters and our space this June 13, in #RideWithPride!

#SulongVaklash
#AtinAngPinas
#Pride2021

Note: Figure 1 is an X post titled "HAPPY PRIDE ✊ #sulongVAKLASH," posted last 27 June 2021. Congresswoman Sarah Elago gave this form of support to the online pride celebration.

Note: Figure 2 is an X post titled "RIDE WITH PRIDE," posted last 10 June 2021. This is Gabriela Women's Party's support for the online pride celebration.

the issues and inequalities experienced by LGBTQ+ individuals. In this sense, hashtags also bring collective sentiments to life and ensure public engagement (Dhiman, 2023).

## #SulongVaklash as a call for intersectional solidarity

Using the hashtag also reinforced the need to see Pride observances as ways to showcase the intersectional nature of LGBTQ+ advocacy, which encourages solidarity from and with other sectors and social issues. Intersectionality refers to the relational nature of social categories that contributes to the overlapping and interconnected systems of oppression (Crenshaw, 1989). Simply put, an individual's experience of discrimination and inequality does not exist in isolation but is in conjunction with the wider structural and systemic issues. As such, the tweets included in *#SulongVaklash* also discussed the visibility of other disenfranchised

Figure 3
"Gender Expression Sexual Orientation"

Figure 4
"The University of the Philippines' Statement on Pride 2021"
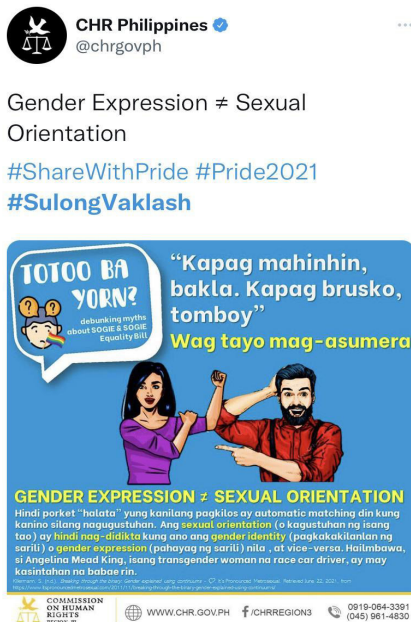
Note: Figure 3 is an X post titled "Gender Expression Sexual Orientation," posted last 30 June 2021. This is the Commission on Human Rights Philippines's support for the online pride celebration.
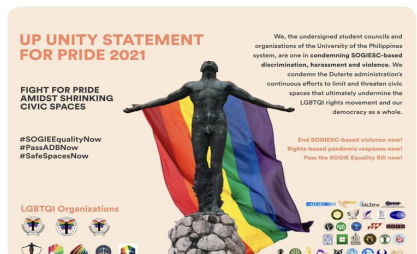
Note: Figure 4 is an X post titled "UP UNITY STATEMENT FOR PRIDE 2021" by UP Babaylan. This post provides a link to a Facebook post that details the statement of UP-based organizations about the Pride Celebrations.

groups. Although the tweets do not explicitly mention intersectionality, a close reading of the discourse of the message would reveal those online pride events symbolically free community members across social class, nationality, racial identity, disability, age, and education. By highlighting the Filipino cultural expressions "sulong" and "vaklash", the discussion on the unique struggles of LGBTQ+ Filipinos within their social and economic contexts has been highlighted, too. The tweets also reminded us that inequalities exist within the community, and the community must fight these.

> Binuksan ko ang X ko para lang dito. Nais ko makarinig ng voices from the grassroots ng community. [Opening my X to the public to say this. I hope to hear more voices from the grassroots of the community.] Less of the privileged bourgeoisie. 🏳️‍🌈🏳️‍🌈🏳️‍🌈" #SulongVAKLASH 🏳️‍🌈🏳️‍🌈🏳️‍🌈 #Pride2021 -X User 50

Ang danas ng mga badeng ay hindi kaiba sa danas ng ibang miyembro ng marginalized sectors ng ating society. [The struggles of the LGBTQ+ community should not be isolated from the struggles of the other marginalized sectors of the society.] Hindi dapat hinihiwalay ang laban ng SOGIE Bill sa ibang problema tulad ng mas malaking sahod, atbp. [We should not separate the fight for the SOGIE Bill from the fight for higher pay, etc.] #PSPlumaLitSchool #ArtistsFightBack #SulongVAKLASH -X User 21
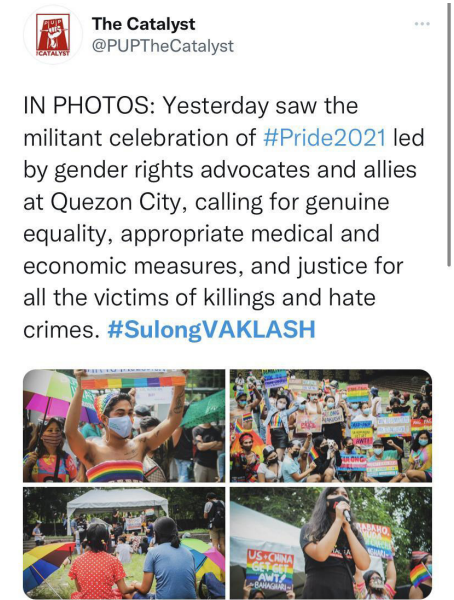
The tweets provide evidence of the reinforcement of a relational discourse between the LGBTQ+ rights advocacy and other human rights

Figure 5
"Militant celebration of #Pride2021"

UPLB Perspective
@uplbperspective

CULTURE | The heteronormative orientation of our society does not genuinely accept the LGBTQIA+ community — a society free from discrimination and fear remains a superficial idea.

Read: bit.ly/pride2021-quee…

#SulongVAKLASH
#STPride2021
#PrideMonth

uplbperspective.org

Figure 6
"UPLB Perspective's statement on the Philippines' pride celebration"

The Catalyst
@PUPTheCatalyst

IN PHOTOS: Yesterday saw the militant celebration of #Pride2021 led by gender rights advocates and allies at Quezon City, calling for genuine equality, appropriate medical and economic measures, and justice for all the victims of killings and hate crimes. #SulongVAKLASH

Note: The Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) official student publication, The Catalyst, posted photos of gender rights advocates who went to the streets despite the lockdown. The militant celebration in Quezon City was a counterpart to the online pride commemorations.

Note: Figure 6 is an X post by UPLB Perspective, the University of the Philippines Los Baños official student publication. The post links the publication's statement on the Pride celebrations in the Philippines, highlighting the lack of acceptance of the LGBTQIA+ community in the country.

issues (Chan, 2018; Chua, 2020; Dhiman, 2023; Labor & San Pascual, 2023; Paternotte & Seckinelgin, 2015; Thoreson, 2008). As such, there is a recognition that support for LGBTQ+ rights is also a support for universal human rights; hence, the continued call for solidarity across sectoral lines. The hashtag, therefore, facilitates building a more inclusive online space where individuals recognize the community's diversity and creates a space where everyone feels welcome to participate. Furthermore, the discussions have served as the springboard for broader conversations about intersectionality, where online spaces created by hashtags could be used to discuss issues faced by LGBTQ+ Filipinos at the intersection of various social identities.

As the tweets do not specifically reference intersectionality, the specific needs of the community that faces marginalization based on race, class, or disability are not directly addressed (Murthy et al., 2016). Further, the online nature of #SulongVaklash limits its reach to those already connected to online activism. Hence, a conversation with those at the grassroots level might not happen. We, as advocates of LGBTQ+ causes, believe that #SulongVaklash is a crucial move and stepping stone towards advocating for intersectional rights within the Philippine LGBTQ+ community (Labor & San Pascual, 2023). This discourse of intersectional solidarity creates an avenue that is thoughtful and contextual to the more significant systemic issues that contribute to issues affecting the experiences of the LGBTQ+ community and other marginalized sectors.

#SulongVaklash as a critique of rainbow capitalism

Some tweets criticized the seemingly capitalistic way of celebrating Pride by critiquing rainbow capitalism. Rainbow capitalism refers to corporations capitalizing on Pride celebrations by promoting LGBTQ+ imagery for profit, with little to no genuine commitment to push for LGBTQ+ rights (National Women's Law Center, 2023). Although the tweets under the hashtag do not explicitly reference rainbow capitalism, users commented that some business owners had hijacked the Pride to enrich themselves, adding to the diluted value of the celebration. The tweets contained reminders that the community must be constantly aware and vigilant in calling out LGBTQ+ members and organizations not to be deceived by these capitalistic tendencies.

> Karamihan sa atin ay nakikita pa din ang pride na kabaklaan. [Majority of people still see pride as a mere celebration of queerness.] Huge companies keep on milking the community with pride-themed what-so-evers, and we still

have a long way to go. Ang pride ay protesta, [Pride is a protest.] #sulongVAKLASH – X User 82

Dealing with #SulongVAKLASH #LGBTQIA #Pride: Pride should be continuously challenged. Kailangan natin tignan yung mga sumusulong nito [We need to look at those who support it.] Corporates use #Pride as a catchphrase not as a way to support the cause. Genuine support now! -X User 71

The tweets above emphasize a rejection of the inauthentic performative allyship by corporations. The samples above subvert corporate messaging by subtly pushing back against the commercialization of Pride. By verbalizing the community-driven celebrations and the local traditions that come with Pride over corporate branding, X users have created a space and a platform to discuss and critique instances of corporate participation in Pride celebrations and hold them accountable for their commitment to LGBTQ+ rights beyond performative gestures. Further, the emphasis on the celebratory nature of the online events may be more inclined toward discussing cultural expression than the involvement of corporations in Pride marches (Coleman, 2021). Also, the hashtag itself may be co-opted by corporations for marketing purposes, diluting its critical component.

Conclusion

This study examined the #SulongVaklash hashtag as a lens into online Pride celebrations. We found that the hashtag effectively combined global solidarity (Olson, 2014; Fang, 2015) with local identity (Labor & San Pascual, 2023), embodying the spirit of glocal pride (Brock, 2012). #SulongVaklash became a platform for celebrating LGBTQ+ identity, fostering community building, and potentially critiquing performative involvement in Pride. Using the hashtag among LGBTQ+ members, cisgender allies, government agencies, non-government organizations, and academic organizations in educational institutions promotes a discourse of cohesion. The Philippines' 2021 online pride celebration was indeed a space for the formation of cohesive action and, at the same time, a venue for critiquing members of the community, its allies, and non-supporters about the misrepresentation of what pride stands for (Clark, 2016; Coleman, 2021).

The findings show that while #SulongVaklash might resonate with a certain segment of the LGBTQ+ community, particularly those comfortable with the use of online spaces and with flamboyant self-expression, this could leave out those who identify themselves differently or prefer a more understated approach. Further, while using X may evoke participation across individuals from various parts of the country and the world, this also

creates a barrier to engagement for those from remote areas or the diaspora. Simply using the hashtag without engaging in other forms of activism is a dangerous side to using the hashtag. It may lead to shallow engagement if users primarily use it for aesthetics and online performance. Hence, there is a need to utilize #SulongVaklash as a springboard for action, as a space for raising awareness, and to build the LGBTQ+ community. Combining the hashtag with offline activism, utilizing it to promote resources, volunteerism, and engaging legislators are necessary actions that necessitate its value. In the case of #SulongVaklash, we found that X users become part of deep conversations about LGBTQ+ causes that enable them to move beyond rhetoric and practice offline activist work through volunteering in LGBTQ+ organizations, donating to relevant causes, and joining solidarity programs that support SOGIESC bill awareness, advocate for anti-discrimination ordinances in various communities, cities, and provinces.

Further, the hashtag's potential to advocate for LGBTQ+ intersectionality has been enabled. For one, even without the explicit mention of intersectionality, #SulongVaklash can spark conversations about the diverse experiences of LGBTQ+ Filipinos. Online spaces, particularly social networking sites like X, have become important arenas for 21st-century activism and politics. While traditional forms of protesting remain powerful communicative practices and means for collective political action, digital activism through hashtags enhances the existing repertoires of LGBTQ+ organizing by transgressing the limitations of the picket and bringing a new dynamism to LGBTQ+ social movements. Also, centering on the terms sulong and vaklash, the hashtag is a starting point for acknowledging the unique needs and contexts of LGBTQ+ Filipinos. The utility of the hashtag leads to discussions about how intersectionality plays out within the Philippine social landscape. The diffusion of digital technologies into social movements through #SulongVaklash has allowed activism to take on a new set of features and scope (Greijdanus et al., 2020), which can be seen in the different settings where Filipino LGBTQ+ movements occur. Hashtags are also fluid and adaptable. The conversations around #SulongVaklash can evolve to encompass a wide range of LGBTQ+ experiences. As more Filipinos in the Philippines and abroad participate, the online space can become more inclusive.

This research has shown that it fosters a sense of community building and shared identity among Filipino LGBTQ+ individuals online. Such a form of solidarity can be a powerful force for advocacy. Additionally, the hashtag has celebrated Filipino LGBTQ+ identity and cultural expression and may even have countered often-Westernized narratives surrounding Pride. The hashtag enabled and kept online conversations about the Pride celebration,

visibly leading to further progress for LGBTQ+ rights conversations and actions.

However, the study acknowledges the limitations of digital spaces in achieving full social change. The hashtag's focus on a specific cultural expression might potentially exclude certain segments of the LGBTQ+ community. Furthermore, slacktivism may happen without a keen understanding of the role of offline activism as a substantial component of hashtag activism. Organizers of Pride celebrations and LGBTQ+ individuals must be aware of digital spaces' perils and strengths.

Despite these limitations, the case of *#SulongVaklash* demonstrates the potential of digital platforms and online collective actions to create powerful discourses of protests. X offers a space for marginalized communities to connect, share experiences, and mobilize for change. The use of *#SulongVaklash* highlights the continuous evolution of activism in the digital age and communication and media research, and scholars need to continuously explore how online movements, particularly that of the LGBTQ+, can be leveraged to understand and bridge the gap between online mobilization and offline actions.

References

Abesamis, L. E. A., & Siddayao, K. V. (2021). Queering sexual education in the Philippines: Policy and program implications for Filipino LGBTQ+ youth. *Review of Women's Studies*, *31*(2), 1-28. https://www.journals.upd.edu.ph/index.php/rws/article/view/9101

Adamczyk, A., & Liao, Y.-C. (2019). Examining public opinion about LGBTQ-related issues in the United States and across multiple nations. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *45*(1), 401-423 https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-073018-022332

Alingasa, A. P. T. & Ofreneo, M. A. P. (2021). "Fearless, powerful, Filipino": Identity positioning in the hashtag activism of #BabaeAko. *Feminist Media Studies, 21*(4), 587-603. https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2020.1791927

Ammaturo, F. (2016). Spaces of pride: A visual etography of gay pride parades in Italy and the United Kingdom. *Social Movement Studies*, *15*(1), 19 - 40. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2015.1060156

Asakura, K., & Craig, S. L. (2014). "It gets better…but how? Exploring resilience development in the accounts of LGBTQ adults. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, *24*(3), 253-266. https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2013.808971

Austria, F. A., Jr. (2004). JUDING_GERZI ONLINE: Insights into the potentials of virtual communities on Yahoo! Groups in addressing the challenges of being gay in the Philippines. *Plaridel*, *1*(2), 21-48. https://doi.org/10.52518/2004.1.2-01

Belmont, F., & Ferreira, A. Á. (2020). Global South perspectives on Stonewall after 50 Years, Part II—Brazilian Stonewalls: Radical politics and lesbian activism. *Contexto Internacional, 42*(3)*,* 685-703. https://www.scielo.br/j/cint/a/jWNgTLc6RWmD4WHx3B9Lw3x/?lang=en#

Belmonte, L. A. (2019). The international LGBT rights movement: An introductory history. In Q. Jean & W. L. (Eds.) *The Routledge History of Human Rights* (pp. 448-466). Routledge.

Benedicto, B. D. (2022). Finding the rainbow, not the pot of gold: A transpinay's experience in the Philippine electoral system. *Alon: Journal for Filipinx American and Diasporic Studies*, *2*(1), 84–87. https://www.jstor.org/stable/48656855

Bernardo, D. Z. (2015). Failure to unravel success: The difficulties of ang ladlad LGBT party in gaining electoral legitimacy. In Samson, L. L. & Diaz M. P. (Eds.) *Filipino generations in changing landscape* (pp. 206-220). Philippine Social Science Council. https://pssc.org.ph/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Filipino-Generations-in-a-Changing-Landscape-FINAL-for-printing.pdf

Brock, A. (2012). From the blackhand side: X as a cultural conversation. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 56*(4)*,* 539–549. https://doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2012.732147

Buyantueva, R. (2020). Resource mobilisation and Russian LGBT activism. *East European Politics*, *36*(3), 417–444. https://doi.org/10.1080/21599165.2020.1740686

Cabosky, J. M. (2014). Framing an LGBT organization and a movement: A critical qualitative analysis of GLAAD'S media releases. *Public Relations Inquiry, 3*(1), 69-89. https://doi.org/10.1177/2046147X13519638

Campbell-Foster, J.E. (2017). *Cyberactivism and LGBT college students: utilizing the internet to engage in collective action* [Doctoral research study, Northeastern University]. Northeastern University Digital Repository Service. http://hdl.handle.net/2047/D20251598

Cardozo, B. (2014). *A "coming out" party in Congress?: LGBT advocacy and party-list politics in the Philippines*. [Doctoral Dissertation, University of California Los Angeles]. https://escholarship.org/uc/item/49v8j2wx

Cavalcante, A. (2018). Tumbling into queer utopias and vortexes: Experiences of LGBTQ social media users on Tumblr. *Journal of Homosexuality, 66*(12)*,* 1715-1735. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2018.1511131

Chan, P. M. (2018). Desexualizing sexual identity politics: The framing of pro-LGBT Christian organizations in Hong Kong. *Sexuality & Culture, 22* (4), 1452-1465. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-018-9537-z

Chua, L. J. (2020). *The Politics of Love in Myanmar.* Stanford University Press. https://www.sup.org/books/anthropology/politics-love-myanmar

Clark, R. (2016). "Hope in a hashtag": The discursive activism of #WhyIStayed. *Feminist Media Studies, 16*(5), 788–804. https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2016.1138235

Coleman, L. S. (2021). "We're a part of this city, too": An examination of the politics of representation of D.C. native via #DCNativesDay. *Social Media + Society, 7*(1)*,* 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120984446

Coloma, R.S. (2013). Ladlad and parrhesiastic pedagogy: Unfurling LGBT politics and education in the Global South. *Curriculum Inquiry*, *43*(4), 483–511. https://doi.org/10.1111/curi.12020

Copeland, L., Hasell, A., & Bimber, B. (2016). Collective action frames, advocacy organizations, and protests over same-sex marriage. *International Journal of Communication, 10*, 3785-3807. https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/4972

Cornelio, J., & Dagle, R. C. (2019). Weaponising Religious Freedom: same-sex marriage and gender equality in the Philippines. *Religion & Human Rights*, *14*(2), 65–94. https://doi.org/10.1163/18710328-13021146

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989*(1), 39-52. http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8

Crisostomo, J. (2020). What we do when we #PrayFor: Communicating post-humanitarian solidarity through #PrayForMarawi. *Plaridel, 18*(2), 163-196. https://doi.org/10.52518/2020-06crstmo

Currier, A. (2011). Decolonizing the law: LGBT organizing in Namibia and South Africa. In Sarat, A. (Ed.), *Special issue social movements/Legal possibilities* (pp. 17-44). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Deal, B-E., Martinez, L.S., Spitzberg, B.H. & Tsou, M. (2020). "I definitely did not report it when I was raped… #WeBelieveChristine #MeToo": A content analysis of disclosures of sexual assault on X. *Social Media + Society*, *6*(4)*,* 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120974610

Dhiman, B. (2023). Impact of social media platforms of LGBTQA community: A critical review. *SSRN*. http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4410280

Duguay, S. (2016). Constructing public space|"legit can't wait for# toronto# worldpride!": investigating the X public of a large-scale LGBTQ festival. *International Journal of Communication, 10,* 274-298. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/33502106.pdf

Evangelista, J. A. G. (2017). Mula sa kinaroroonang ideolohiya: Kontrobersya tungkol sa "Unang" pride march sa Pilipinas. *Saliksik E-Journal*, *6*(2), 1-1. https://ejournals.ph/article.php?id=13650

Eyck, M. T. (2021, May 21). *Pride 2021: Your guide to parades, parties, and virtual events around the world.* Skyscanner. https://www.skyscanner.com/tips-and-inspiration/pride-2021

Fang, J. (2015). In defense of hashtag activism. *Journal of Critical Scholarship on Higher Education and Student Affairs, 2*(1), 137-142. https://ecommons.luc.edu/jcshesa/vol2/iss1/10

Florini, S. (2014). Recontextualizing the racial present: Intertextuality and the politics of online remembering. *Critical Studies in Media Communication, 31*(4), 314–326. https://doi.org/10.1080/15295036.2013.878028

Garcia, J. N. (2008). Villa, Montano, Perez: Postcoloniality and Gay Liberation in the Philippines. In Martin, F., Jackson P., McLelland, M., and Yue, A. (Eds.), *AsiaPacifiQueer: Rethinking Genders and Sexualities* (163-180). University of Illinois Pres. https://books.google.com.ph/books?hl=en&lr=&id=zPJLcaimDN8C&oi=fnd&pg=PA163&dq=Villa,+Montano,+Perez:+Postcoloniality+and+Gay+Liberation+in+the+Philippines&ots=PISjYuxCq8&sig=3fP2oKQDnBTz5tDub5COBmI1tBQ&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Villa%2C%20Montano%2C%20Perez%3A%20Postcoloniality%20and%20Gay%20Liberation%20in%20the%20Philippines&f=false

Garcia, L. (2008, December 8). *Manila beams with pride, despite debut of anti-gay protesters. December.* Fridae. http://www.fridae.asia/newsfeatures/2008/12/08/2168.manila-beams-with-pride-despite-debut-of-anti-gay-protesters#sthash.rOWaDqSM.dpuf

Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) and the Movement Advancement Project (MAP). (2008). *The art and science of framing an issue*. https://www.lgbtmap.org/file/art-and-science-of-framing-an-issue.pdf

Gee, J. P. (2004). *Situated language and learning: A critique of traditional schooling*. Routledge. https://blog.ufes.br/kyriafinardi/files/2017/10/Situated-Language-And-Learning.-A-Critique-of-Traditional-Schooling-2004.pdf

Greijdanus, H., de Matos Fernandes, C. A., Turner-Zwinkels, F., Honari, A., Roos, C. A., Rosenbusch, H., & Postmes, T. (2020). The psychology of online activism and social movements: relations between online and offline collective action. *Current opinion in psychology*, *35*, 49–54. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2020.03.003

Goltz, D. B. (2013). It gets better: Queer futures, critical frustrations, and radical potentials. *Critical Studies in Media Communication, 30*(2), 135-151. https://doi.org/10.1080/15295036.2012.701012

Harp, D., Grimm, J., & Loke, J. (2018). Rape, storytelling, and social media: How X interrupted the news media's ability to construct collective memory. *Feminist Media Studies, 18*(6), 979–995. https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2017.1373688

Harrison, B. F., & Michelson, M. R. (2017). What's love got to do with it?: Emotion, rationality, and framing LGBT rights. *New Political Science, 39*(2), 177-197. https://doi.org/10.1080/07393148.2017.1301311

Hawkins, B., Andalibi, N., & Haimson, O. (2018). Helpful information to whom? An intersectional critique of the 'it gets better project. *Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology, 55*(1), 825-827. https://doi.org/10.1002/pra2.2018.14505501133

Hekma, G. (2015). Sodomy, effeminacy, identity: Mobilizations for same-sexual loves and practices before the Second World War. In D. Patternote & M. Tremblay (Eds.), *The ashgate companion to lesbian and gay activism*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315613147

Heilman, G. (2021, June 27). Which US major cities are having a Gay Pride Parade 2021? *Diario AS*. https://en.as.com/en/2021/06/27/latest_news/1624762249_010271.html

i Martí, G. M. H. (2006). The deterritorialization of cultural heritage in a globalized modernity. notes & comments. *Journal of Contemporary Culture*, *1*, 92-107. https://dialnet.unirioja.es/revista/8165/A/2006

Inton, M. N. (2017). *The bakla and the silver screen: Queer cinema in the Philippines* [Doctoral dissertation, Lingnan University, Hong Kong]. http://commons.ln.edu.hk/cs_etd/30/

Jacolbia, J. (2021, June 1). *List: Celebrate Pride 2021 online with these activities, events*. Rappler. https://www.rappler.com/moveph/list-activities-events-pride-month-2021-philippines

Johnson, M. (2014). The It Gets Better Project: A Study in (and of) Whiteness — in LGBT Youth and Media Cultures. In Pullen, C. (eds), *Queer Youth and Media Cultures*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137383556_20

Johnson, T. (2012). Equality, morality, and the impact of media framing: Explaining opposition to same-sex marriage and civil unions. *Politics & Policy, 40*(6), 1053-1080. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-1346.2012.00398.x

Karahanna, E., Xu, S. X., Xu, Y., & Zhang, N. (2018). The needs–affordances–features perspective for the use of social media. *MIS Quarterly, 42*(3), 737–756. https://doi.org/10.25300/MISQ/2018/11492

Karppinen, K. (2017). Human rights and the digital. In H. Tumber & S. Waisbord (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Media and Human Rights*. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315619835

Khubchandani, K. (2016). LGBT activism in South Asia. *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies*, 1-5. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118663219.wbegss675

Kilic, O. (2021). Every Parade of Ours is a Pride Parade: Exploring LGBTI+ digital activism in Turkey. *Sexualities*, (26), 731-747. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1363460721106051

Labadisos, R. O. (2019). #LoveWins: A social discourse on the LGBT Pride march and Durkheim's collective effervescence. *The Mindanao Forum*, *32*(1), 23–43. https://journals.msuiit.edu.ph/tmf/article/view/52

Labiste, M. D. (2018). [Review of the book *Taking the square: Mediated dissent and occupation of public space*]. *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints*, *66*(2), 265-269. https://doi.org/10.1353/phs.2018.0024

Labor, J., Aseo, K., & Reyes, M.T. (2022). Ambivalences in cohesion and dissociation framing of labor migration in Philippine presidents' Labor Day speeches (1974 to 2016). *Humanities Diliman, 19* (2), 74-102. https://journals.upd.edu.ph/index.php/humanitiesdiliman/article/view/8803

Labor, J. & San Pascual, M. R. (2022). Online discourse framing LGBTQIA+ student activism in the Philippines. In P. Pain (Ed.), *LGBTQ digital cultures: A global perspective* (pp. 24–47). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003196457

Labor, J. and San Pascual, M.R.S. (2023). Pakikipagkapwa in the LGBTQIA+ movement for the enactment of the SOGIE Equality Bill. In P.Pain (Ed.) *Global LGBTQ activism: Social media, digital technologies, and protest mechanisms* (pp.143-162). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003395805

Labor, J., Samonte, C.J. and Bana, N. D. (2022). 'Othering within the gay dating community? Tensions in gender identity representations between Filipino gays and the bakla in mobile dating applications.' Journal of Asian Pacific Communication. https://doi.org/10.1075/japc.00094.lab

Lago, A. T. (2018, July 1). *Get the message: Signs that caught our eye during Metro Manila Pride 2018*. Rappler. https://www.rappler.com/life-and-style/arts-culture/206232-metro-manila-pride-2018-signs/

Lapeña, C. G. (2010, December 10). *One love: LGBT Pride March against AIDS*. GMA News. https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/lifestyle/content/208004/one-love-lgbt-pride-march-against-aids/story/

Lariosa, S. (2021). Sulong, Vaklash! Metro Manila Pride's 2021 theme shows that pride is still a protest. *The Philippine Star Life*. https://philstarlife.com/living/681820-sulong-vaklash-2021-metro-manila-pride-march?page=2https://books.google.com.ph/books?hl=en&lr=&id=zPJL caimDN8C&oi=fnd&pg=PA163&dq=Villa,+Montano,+Perez:+Postcoloniality+and+Gay+Libe ration+in+the+Philippines&ots=PISjYuxCq8&sig=3fP2oKQDnBTz5tDub5COBmI1tBQ&redir_ esc=y#v=onepage&q=Villa%2C%20Montano%2C%20Perez%3A%20Postcoloniality%20and%20 Gay%20Liberation%20in%20the%20Philippines&f=false

Liao, S. (2019). # IAmGay# What about you?: Storytelling, discursive politics, and the affective dimension of social media activism against censorship in China. *International Journal of Communication*, (13), 2316-2333. https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/10376

Lipták L. & Prónay S. (2020). *Using controversial values in CSR communication – analyzing the Coca-Cola #loveislove campaign.* [Conference presentation]. 2020 European Marketing Academy Conference Online. https://www.efzg.unizg.hr/emacregional2020

Lustbader, K. (2018). LGBTQ heritage. *Change Over Time, 8*(2), 136-143. https://doi.org/10.1353/cot.2018.0012

Madula, R. (2016). Kuwentong buhay ng isang pambansa-demokratikong rebolusyonaryong bakla sa rehiyon ng katimugang Mindanao [A life story of a gay national-democratic revolutionary in southern Mindanao region]. *Humanities Diliman: A Philippine Journal of Humanities*, *13*(20)*,* 27-48. https://journals.upd.edu.ph/index.php/humanitiesdiliman/article/view/5160/4637

Manalastas, E. (2013). Sexual orientation and suicide risk in the Philippines: Evidence from a nationally representative sample of young Filipino men. *Philippine Journal of Psychology*, *46*, 1-1. http://www.tinyurl.com/y4z7h44j

Meyer, D. (2017). "One day I'm going to be really successful": The social class politics of videos made for the "It Gets Better" anti-gay bullying project. *Critical Sociology, 43*(1), 113-127. https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920515571761

Michaelsen, A. (2017). Feeling differently together: The It Gets Better Project as an unlikely intimate public of LGBT peers. *Emotion, Space and Society, 25*, 144-149. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2017.07.008

Mokhtar, M. F., Sukeri, W. A. E. D. W., & Latiff, Z. A. (2020). Social media roles in spreading LGBT movements in Malaysia. *Asian Journal of Media and Communication*, *3*(2), 77–82. https://doi.org/10.20885/asjmc.vol3.iss2.art4

Morris, B. J. (2017, July 21). A brief history of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender social movements. *American Psychological Association*. https://www.apa.org/topics/lgbtq/history

Murthy, D., Gross, A., & Pensavelle, A. (2016). Urban social media demographics: An exploration of X use in major American cities. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 21*(1), 33–49. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12144

Mwaura, J. (2019). [Review of the book *Digital identity and everyday activism: Sharing private stories*

with networked publics]. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, *2*(96), 1-3. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699019827003

National Women's Law Center. (2023). *The real costs of rainbow capitalism*. https://nwlc.org/the-real-costs-of-rainbow-capitalism/

Ng, E. (2017). Media and LGBT advocacy: Visibility and transnationalism in a digital age. In H. Tumber & S. Waisbord (eds.), *The Routledge companion to media and human rights*. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315619835

Olson, C. C. (2014). #BringBackOurGirls: Digital communities supporting real-world change and influencing mainstream media agendas. *Feminist Media Studies, 16*(5), 772–787. https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2016.1154887

Palatino, M. (2021). *Remembering Asia's first Pride march in Manila*. Global Voices. https://globalvoices.org/2021/06/11/remembering-asias-first-pride-march-in-manila/

Paradela, T. (2019, September 30). *Tracing the origins of the Metro Manila Pride march*. SPOT.PH. https://www.spot.ph/newsfeatures/the-latest-news-features/78298/history-of-pride-march-in-the-philippines-a4410-20190629-lfrm

Pascual, P. K. (2013). *LGBT Pride Month- more than just about street parties*. VERA Files. https://verafiles.org/articles/lgbt-pride-month-more-than-just-about-street-parties

Paternotte, D. & Seckinelgin, H., (2015). "Lesbian and gay rights are human rights": Multiple globalizations and LGBTI activism. In Tremblay, M. & Paternotte, D. (Eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Lesbian and Gay Activism* (pp. 209-223). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315613147

Peterson, A., Wahlström, M., & Wennerhag, M. (2018). Pride parades and LGBT movements: Political participation in an international comparative perspective. Taylor & Francis. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315474052

Roberts, M. W. (1995). Emergence of gay identity and gay social movements in developing countries: the AIDS crisis as catalyst. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political, 20*(2), 243-264. https://doi.org/10.1177/030437549502000205

Siapera, E., Boudourides, M.,Lenis, S. & Suiter, J. (2018). Refugees and networked publics on X: Networked framing, affect, and capture. *Social Media + Society, 4*(1), 1-21. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118764437

Silva, M. R., & Jacobo, J. (2020). Global South perspectives on Stonewall after 50 Years, Part I—South by south, Trans for trans. *Contexto Internacional*, *42*, 665-683. https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-8529.2019420300007

Soriano, C. R. R. (2014). Constructing collectivity in diversity: online political mobilization of a national LGBT political party. *Media, Culture, & Society, 36*(1), 20-36. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443713507812

Stageman, S. (2017). *Whitewashing of the stonewall riots* [Doctoral Dissertation, Western Oregon University]. https://wou.omeka.net/s/repository/item/5158Stein, M. (2019). *The Stonewall riots: A documentary history*. NYU Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv335kw15

Tan, M. L. (2001). Survival through pluralism: Emerging gay communities in the Philippines. *Journal of Homosexuality, 40*(3-4), 117-142. https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v40n03_07

Thoreson, R. R. (2008). Somewhere over the rainbow nation: Gay, lesbian and bisexual activism in South Africa. *Journal of Southern African Studies, 34*(3), 679-697. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070802259969

Thoreson, R. R. (2014). *Transnational LGBT activism: Working for sexual rights worldwide.* University of Minnesota Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctt1287njx

UNDP & USAID (2014). Being LGBT in Asia: The Philippines country report. https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/Philippines%20Report_Final.pdf

Valocchi, S. (2005). Collective action frames in the gay liberation movement, 1969-1973. In Johnston, H. & Noakes, J.A. (Eds.), *Frames of protest: Social movements and the framing perspective* (pp. 53-67). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. https://rowman.com/ISBN/9780742538061/Frames-of-Protest-Social-Movements-and-the-Framing-Perspective

Vickery, S. (2016). *Queer connections: Social media as a versatile tool of the marginalized Moroccan LGBT* [Unpublished manuscript]. School for International Training. https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/2522

Xinghui, K. (2021, April 24). Why Southeast Asia's LGBT community is finally coming out. *South China Morning Post.* https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/lifestyle-culture/article/3130704/why-southeast-asias-lgbt-community-finally-coming-out

Yang, Y. (2018). Bargaining with the State: The empowerment of Chinese sexual minorities/LGBT in the social media era. *Journal of Contemporary China, 28*(118)*,* 662-677. https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2018.1557943

Yarcia, L., de Vela, T. & Tan, M. (2019). Queer Identity and Gender-Related Rights in Post-Colonial Philippines. Australian Journal of Asian Law, 20(1), 265-275. https://ssrn.com/abstract=3488543

Endnotes

[1] Similar to Coloma (2013), the use of LGBT here is to reflect the 'specificity of the various subject positions of its major constituencies as well as the solidarity and collaboration within and across them, as embodied and enacted by Ang Ladlad as a national political party.'

Grant Support Details

About the Authors

JONALOU S. LABOR, PhD (jslabor@up.edu.ph) is an associate professor at the Department of Communication Research, UP Diliman College of Media and Communication. He is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Aarhus University School of Culture and Society in Denmark. Dr. Labor researches technology, society, and communication and has published on gender, communication, and technology.

CHRISTIAN JAYCEE SAMONTE (csamonte@up.edu.ph) is a researcher at an AI-driven market research company. He holds a master's degree in Speech Communication from UP Diliman, with research interests in political communication, gender, technology, and consumer insights. He is committed to transforming complex data into clear, objective insights that support informed decision-making.

EARL JAYNUS S. GUZMAN (ejsguzman@pup.edu.ph) is an assistant professor at the Department of Advertising and Public Relations, PUP College of Communication, where he teaches communication theory, media and gender, organizational communication, and copywriting, among other courses. Mr. Guzman also works as a copywriting consultant for Toy Communications Advertising. His research interests include gaming, communication, and gender.