

Through a Feminist Lens: What Do Feminist Online Spaces Look Like During a Pandemic?

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Abstract

This feminist research sought to describe feminist online spaces during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines based on the experiences of six feminist organizations. Central to its methodology is the online multimedia storyboarding, a customized method which involves the use of online tools such as a video conferencing application and an online collaborative bulletin board. The following themes were surfaced from the organizations' experiences with creating and maintaining feminist online spaces: motivating situations, activities for internal members of the organization, activities for the larger community or the public, people with access to the spaces, underlying values, and ongoing concerns. From these, two models were formulated. The process model captured the development of feminist online spaces at the start of the pandemic, one year into the pandemic, and in the near future - both in terms of the organization's operations as well as the scope of their community of concern. The conceptual model proposes that feminist online spaces during the COVID-19 pandemic are an integration of responses to gender issues brought about by the pandemic, the increasing power of the Internet at a time of physical mobility

restrictions, and the decreasing boundaries between offline and online spaces. This study highlights the role of feminist online spaces in social transformation during the pandemic and beyond, and the need for a stronger appreciation for them from feminist organizations, the development sector, and policymakers in the government.

Keywords: feminist online spaces, online multimedia storyboarding, COVID-19 pandemic, feminist organizations, creative methods

Introduction

Since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in January 2020, Filipinos have not only lived with the fear and confronted actual risks of contracting the novel coronavirus. They have experienced socio-economic as well as physical and mental health problems and concerns given the climate of uncertainty, decreased access to resources, and sudden immobility caused by the nationwide community quarantine (Albert et al., 2020; Coronel, 2020). People's right to express critical views on the government's approach to the pandemic has also been threatened most markedly with the militaristic approach of enforcing the community quarantines as well as the passage of the Anti-Terror Law (Sajor, 2020). These threats led to further shrinking the spaces within which people could move freely.

The gendered aspects of this new social context have also been documented.¹ Cutting across communities, for instance, are job and income losses amid piled up expenses for basic necessities. In fact, one year after

¹ See for instance: The Gender and Development Network's (2020) collection of news articles and critical reports, *Feminist Responses to COVID-19*, available at <https://gadnetwork.org/gadn-resources/feminist-responses-to-covid-19?fbclid=IwAR0mz6tfJbaHhkj7oMCn-HRZwlyRiA0zXj5U83Cgtv9EXei11e5S43RibKI>; United Nations Foundations (2020), Data 2x project, *COVID-19 Resources: Gender Data, Gender and Data*, available at https://data2x.org/resource-center/gender-and-data-resources-related-to-covid-19?fbclid=IwAR1USbu_CC8j2x3Js2uueiaWN5Mltt5AzI_MSDxHdSNsNBoz1vyRZBfYc4; and Care Philippines' (2020) Rapid Gender Analysis s, as part of an international situationer, available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Report-HQ-CARE-Philippines-Rapid-Gender-Analysis-COVID-19_.pdf

the lockdown in March 2021, only 34.5 percent of women aged 15 to 49 are in the labor force (PSA, 2021). Women are also noted to be more at-risk for infection given their overrepresentation among frontliners; particularly, among health workers, 75 percent are women (UPPI & DRF, 2021). At home, the gender dynamics is also affected as every member of the household is forced to stay in, and women often need to accomplish income and/or school work simultaneously with their unpaid care work (ABS-CBN News, 2021). Access to reproductive health goods and services is also threatened, with teenage pregnancy furthermore observed to be on the rise (UNFPA, 2020). Domestic violence has also been noted to increase (CNN Philippines, 2020); gender-based harassment against quarantine violators has been reported, such as the case in Angeles City where a local executive forced members of the LGBTQIA+ community to commit lewd acts as punishment for violating curfew hours (Rappler, 2020).

Along these challenges is resistance: feminist organizations and individuals, for one, continued to work to respond to the needs of their communities or create communities—and, given restricted physical mobility—the increasing significance of the Internet in these interactions are observable. From engaging in social media, creating community pages or publishing original content, to calling for donations to relief drives, setting up webinars, or launching campaigns such as against gender-based violence happening online and offline—people continued to find ways to ensure that gender issues are raised and addressed.

The phenomenon is not new; feminist online spaces were present even before the pandemic. Given the context of the pandemic in the country, these spaces gain importance. Their persistence is telling of the continued need—and the actual and potential role of online technology—for personal safety, social connection and collective action. As the entire country grapples with understanding, surviving, and recovering from the pandemic, turning a focus on feminist online spaces provides quite a learning opportunity.

Statement of the Problem

Feminist online spaces, serving as spaces of safety as well as resistance in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines, need to be

highlighted. In a time of uncertainty and seemingly endless challenges, taking a look at these spaces will provide, not only an opportunity to better capture people's experiences with the pandemic, but demonstrate a way forward from the current situation. Particularly, this research asks, "what do feminist online spaces look like during a pandemic?" It focuses on the experiences of feminist organizations who are integral in the creation and maintenance of these spaces during this extraordinary time.

Research Objectives

Specifically, this research will utilize online multimedia storyboarding (OMS) to analyze how feminist spaces are created and maintained online, based on the experiences of feminist organizations. Consistent with the changing landscape of gender studies, this research aims to contribute to the increasing call for a more nuanced, intersectional, and transdisciplinary approach to answering feminist questions. Ultimately, this research aims to promote the creation, enjoyment, encouragement and support for feminist spaces particularly during a pandemic, as well as highlight the powerful role of creative methods in feminist theory-building and practice.

Review of Related Literature

Previous literature on feminist spaces, including online spaces, provide a workable understanding of the nature and characteristics of these spaces. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, empirical studies focusing on initiatives that are locally-based or in the urgent context of the COVID-19 pandemic, have yet to be available. And while studies cited in this review have used a variety of data gathering methods including duoethnography, textual analysis, and photovoice, none have been found to attempt to use a method comparable to online multimedia storyboarding.

First, it comes with a recognition of the inadequacy or lack of spaces for women and gender nonconforming individuals. For instance, authors cite feminist spaces as responses to specific, as well as general experiences, of gender oppressive norms: a women's studies department as a venue

for reflection amid a culture of veiling (Zubair, 2017); a ‘yarn-bombing’ class on feminist praxis to challenge the false dichotomy of private and public spheres and women’s relegation to the private sphere (Boon & Pentney, 2017); and women-only ‘noise making performances’ as a way to claim public spaces (Lelea & Voiceslesu, 2017).

Second, feminist spaces may exist as separate spaces or as part of larger, public spaces. On one hand are spaces created by such groups as the Girl Army, a “separatist digital community [that aim[s] to provide marginalized users with safe spaces in which to speak freely, seek support, and organize action against injustices faced outside the group’s boundaries” (Clark-Parsons, 2017, p.3); and the transnational feminist networks, who are younger feminists organizing themselves separately even from the larger (and older) social movements to have more space for decision-making and organizing (Hunt, 2017). In contrast are spaces created by groups such as China-based group Gender Watch Women’s Voice, who use the attacks they receive online as article material to initiate public discussions on common misconceptions on gender (Han, 2018) and thus also serve to engage larger spaces rather than keep their space closed off to the general public.

Third, feminist spaces involve the continuing process of creation, negotiation, and change. This process holds true whether in the context of conducting research as it relates to the researcher’s reflexivity (Williams & Drew, 2019); in the experience of a music festival such as Ladyfest, where organizers learned and adapted from their mistakes (Lelea & Voiceslesu, 2017); as well as in homing blogs where women both present traditional gender roles as well as push the boundaries of the ‘private sphere’ where women are expected to be confined (Jäntti et al., 2017). Clark-Parsons (2017) furthermore explains that feminist spaces are “living concepts that require constant maintenance, rather than closed objects with fixed but unspoken principles” (p.18). She forwards the use of ‘safer spaces’ instead of just ‘safe spaces’ as well, to highlight the relational nature of these feminist spaces to larger spaces.

Fourth, these spaces require time, labor, material and other resources in their creation and maintenance. Conceiving, designing, managing, and sustaining feminist spaces—for instance, mediating online forums or

organizing women, launching hashtag campaigns or putting up gender advocacy centers—involve the use of resources. All the cited studies in this review have demonstrated the various resource demands of the undertaking from the part of the organizers as well as participants.

In sum, feminist spaces, including those online, are motivated by the inadequacy or lack of spaces for women and gender nonconforming individuals; they range from more separated or exclusive spaces to one that involves and directly engages a larger public; they are continuous processes directed by reflexivity; they involve hard work and conscious care. This present study intends to build on these points which formed part of the data collection process. Hopefully, literature on feminist online spaces is enriched by situating it in the current context of the pandemic in the Philippines.

Conceptual Framework

Three key concepts guide this study: feminism, online, and space.

First, *feminism* is defined as a political theory and social movement that challenges patriarchy, in its many forms and as it interacts with other systems such as capitalism, in order to create a more just and equitable society. As a theory, it provides a perspective for analyzing social realities, envisioning futures, and creating strategies for social change; and as a movement, it captures the agency and collective strength of women and gender nonconforming individuals in achieving social change.

Secondly, this study appreciates *space* as a concept describing a network of interactions as they occur and unfold in specific points in time and place and as they are connected to further and larger similarly dynamic networks. This is informed by Knopp's (2007) explanation which emphasizes the socially constructed nature of space: "Envisaged by critical geographers as shaped through processes of power/knowledge, space is theorized as fluid, multiple, and always in the process of being made and unmade" (as cited in Self & Hudson, 2015, p. 222). As Massey (1994) also summed, space refers to "the broader network of relations and processes that connect places with each other" (as cited in Staeheli & Martin, 2020, p. 141).

Spaces can be particularly feminist. This is the case with the earlier and continuing practice of women-only safe spaces, defined in a study by Lewis et al. (2015), as spaces where women feel “safe from misogyny” (p.5) as well as “safe to become fully human” (p.7). Emphasized in such spaces is the act of claiming spaces as well, which is interpreted by Staeheli and Martin (2020) to mean having access to and being able to exercise agency within these spaces. Feminist space can also be more of a vision: “that [which] supports, celebrates, and advances all identities, specifically marginalized identities” (Nicolazzo & Harris, 2014, p.6)

Lastly, *online* is meant simply as the Internet—the global network of computers enabling real-time communication—and thereby a kind of space itself. In fact, consistent with how geographers define space, some authors compare online space to the physical (Easter, 2018) as well as public spaces (Clark-Parsons, 2017; Eagle, 2015) in that it involves the construction of social identities and relations and of meaning-making in everyday life. Particularly as a subject of feminist inquiry, it is taken to be a site of multiple discourses on gender.

‘Feminist online spaces’ is thus initially taken as a variation of ‘feminist spaces,’ carrying its essence of being experiences as well as visions of spaces of safety for and celebration of women and gender nonconforming individuals but furthermore as it interacts with the Internet. Figure 1 attempts to capture this conceptualization.

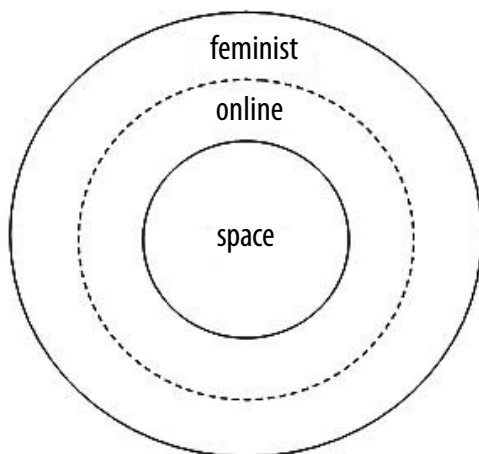


Figure 1
Preliminary Conceptual Framework of “Feminist Online Space”

Given the COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines as the specific context of this study, this framework is expected to further develop as it will be informed by the data. As the findings and discussion later show, this expectation was affirmed.

Methodology

As a feminist research, this study is founded on the observation that knowledge production is political, and that social realities from the vantage point of women and gender nonconforming individuals are still marginalized or subjugated from the mainstream/ malestream. More particularly, feminist standpoint theory, which guides this study, holds that knowledge is produced from various social positions (i.e., standpoint) and that a person's experiences as a gendered being results in a distinct perspective. In pursuit of strong objectivity, it therefore privileges the standpoint and lived experiences of women and gender minorities (Leavy & Harris, 2019). The researchers specifically sought to surface the experiences and perspectives of women and gender nonconforming people as organized communities, in an effort to bring to light the ways in which they collectively continue to promote gender equity and justice in the midst of a global pandemic.

Consistent with its emphasis on multiple readings of realities based on one's standpoint, feminist standpoint theory also calls for transparency on the worldviews of the researchers and the ways in which they influence the knowledge they produce (Hesse-Biber, 2014). In this regard, the researchers are clear about their subjectivity as self-identified feminists. And still as feminist research guides them, they are keen on the need for self-reflexivity, or the conscious consideration of the ways they may influence the research process. As will be discussed in a later section, for instance, a key feature of the research process was the continuous validation of data, analysis, and interpretation with the research participants.

In keeping with the non-imposition of a universal truth that needs to be discovered using standardized data gathering methods, and given the mobility restrictions of the pandemic limiting and discouraging face-

to face interactions, the researchers decided to be creative in their data gathering methods. Following the broad definition of creativity as “the process of creating something from elements that already exist by putting them together in a new way” (Kara, 2015, p.11), the study understood and implemented creative research as the process of combining and modifying existing data gathering methods such as photo elicitation and focus group discussions with other modalities such as the arts and online technologies in ways that would yield useful answers to the research question. A custom-designed creative method called online multimedia storyboarding that used online tools and incorporated techniques from found footage documentary and improvisational theater was used to gather and interpret data with the research participants.

Data Gathering Process

The study used online multimedia storyboarding (OMS) in order to capture the multimodal experience of online spaces during the pandemic. OMS is a combination of asynchronous and synchronous activities that were mostly implemented within the span of two months using online tools such as Zoom, a video conferencing application, and Padlet, an online collaborative bulletin board. These activities include: (1) an orientation; (2) multimedia text collection with output sharing and discussion; (3) narrative elicitation via improvisational theater; (4) storyboarding with output sharing and discussion; and (5) validation of key findings. Participants were given one to two weeks to finish the multimedia text collection and storyboard activities on their own. Afterward, group sessions to share and discuss the outputs were scheduled. Figure 2 is a summary guide of OMS that was sent to prospective participants before the orientation to help them visualize the whole process before committing to the study. Changes were made to the initial design particularly in the storyboarding activity where improvisational theater was added to the process to make the storytelling process more dynamic and engaging.



Figure 2
*Initial OMS Summary Guide Distributed
to Prospective Participants*

OMS was inspired by research methods, namely, Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997), where participants capture photos based on prompts; and interpretive focus groups via storyboarding (Redman-MacLaren et al., 2014), where data is collectively interpreted by the participants by

creating a storyboard. Film and theater techniques were integrated into the method. Instead of asking participants to capture photos, they were instructed to get existing multimedia texts (e.g., video, photo, audio clips, feature article, screenshots, Web links, etc.) to fulfill the prompts, reminiscent of the system used in found footage documentary films. To generate key narrative events for the storyboard, the participants were asked to role-play with the aid of an improvisational theater facilitator.

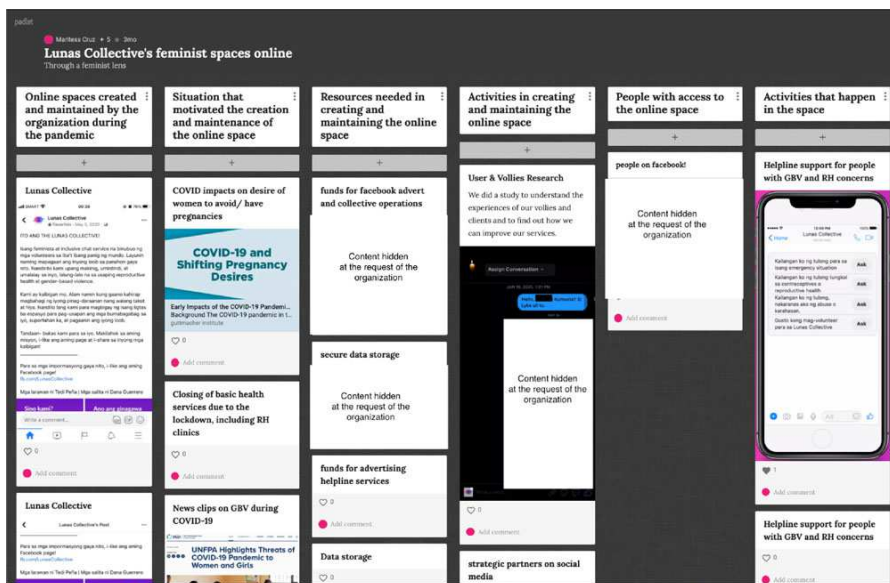


Figure 3
Screenshot of One Participating Organization Lunas Collective's Output From the Multimedia Text Collection Activity

Prompts for the multimedia text collection were based on the findings from the review of related literature. The findings were: (1) online spaces created and maintained during the pandemic; (2) situation that motivated their creation and maintenance; (3) resources needed; (4) production and maintenance activities; (5) people with access to the space; (6) activities that happen in the space. The researchers put the prompts on the Padlet boards before distributing them to the participants. Figure 3 is a

screenshot of Lunas Collective's board where they gathered and organized multimedia texts for the given prompts. During the orientation, the participants were told that they can upload any form of media they want. They were also encouraged to put titles and descriptive texts to their uploads. The reaction and comment feature of Padlet were turned on so that participants can view and comment on each other's boards. After two weeks of data gathering, the organizations individually presented



Figure 4
*Collective Output of the Organizations
From the Storyboarding Activity*

their boards to the other participants then joined the researchers in drawing out themes from the sharing. The completed boards end up with roughly the same media composition—social media content, various screenshots of online platforms they use, and Web links pointing to videos, images, and articles. Through this set of activities, the study was able to generate data on the specific elements present in creating and maintaining feminist online spaces.

For the narrative elicitation, the participants were grouped into pairs and instructed to create characters who must interact with each other. Each pair acted out improvised scenes situated in three different time periods: at the start of the pandemic; one year after the pandemic; and the near future. In order to test the feasibility of the method, the researchers and the improvisational theater facilitator ran the scene building exercise among themselves. During the actual activity, themes from the improvised scenes were generated by the researchers and validated by the participants. It was immediately followed by the storyboarding activity where the participants were asked to populate the themes with input sourced from their individual Padlets during the multimedia text collection activity. Figure 4 is a screenshot of the Padlet board containing all the themes and inputs from the three time periods. Due to time constraints, completing the input for the storyboard was given as an assignment. A separate session for discussing the collective output was scheduled where the participants, grouped into pairs, were assigned to process data and share insights on each time period. Through this set of activities, the study was able to generate data on the process of creating and maintaining online spaces over the course of the pandemic.

The study used thematic analysis on two sets of data. One set came from the multimedia text collection; and the other, from the storyboarding activity. Each set was assigned to a researcher. The first step was the transcription of the Zoom recordings of the videos and the content of the Padlet. All data items were then examined, and representative parts of the data were used as the basis for initial codes. The researchers checked and gave feedback on each other's work. Themes were then generated from the codes and data relevant to the themes were collated. The fit of themes against the initial codes and all the data items were examined. From the themes,

diagrams for a process model and conceptual model were produced. After the researchers checked each other's models for coherence and consistency as well as distinctiveness from each other, the definition, label, and narrative for each theme were refined. These themes include *feminism online*, *online spaces*, and *feminist spaces* for the conceptual model and *remote work-set up*, *communities of care and safety*, *gender advocacy hub*, and *expanded touchpoints* for the process model. Data interpretations provided by the participants during the activities served as guides in generating the codes and themes, especially for the process model. Finally, extracts were selected as examples in producing the write-up.

Research Participants

Representatives from feminist organizations, who were recruited by tapping the existing networks of the researchers, served as the participants of the study. To be invited, the organizations must: (1) carry a feminist agenda; (2) be founded before or during the pandemic; and (3) have remained active during the pandemic. The study strived for diversity in its selection of participants by looking for organizations that are different from each other in terms of year of establishment, geographical base of operations, stakeholders, and focus area. Below are the six organizations that joined the study:

- Young Feminists Collective (n.d.) is “a community of like-minded young women that began simply as a support group for fellow feminists but quickly grew into an active platform for advocacy and collaboration on feminist issues”;
- Mindanao Pride (n.d.) is “a non-partisan organization composed of a diverse group of gender equality advocates, members of the LGBTQIA+ community and allies, and human rights activists who are staunch supporters of justice, equality, and freedom”;
- Lunas Collective (n.d.) is “a volunteer-powered helpline in the Philippines, supporting survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) or violence against women (VAW), and people who may have concerns about family planning”;

- Youth Voices Count (n.d.) is “a regional network of young LGBTQI individuals in Asia-Pacific working on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), SOGIESC, Youth Empowerment, and Human Rights issues”;
- Foundation for Media Alternatives (n.d.) is “a nonprofit organization in the Philippines seeking to democratize information and communication systems for citizens and communities”; and
- Center for Women’s Resources (n.d.) is “a non-stock, non-profit, non-government institution that provides research, education and training, advocacy, publications, library, and data banking service for and about women”.

Ethical Considerations

As feminist research actively seeks to address the power differentials between the researchers and the researched (Hesse-Biber, 2014), several ethical considerations were made in the current study. The participants’ informed consent to participate in the research was sought before the start of the research, and continuously, as the data gathering proceeded. The data gathered were kept confidential, accessible only to the researchers and a transcriptionist. Validation was integrated in every part of the research; the final draft of the writeup was furthermore presented to them for final feedback. The permission of the participants to cite the names of their organizations in the writeup and to identify them as their organizations’ representatives was also sought.

Particularly sensitive to the pandemic situation, the study actively sought to integrate care practices in the conduct of the research by keeping the synchronous sessions under three hours, assigning labor-intensive activities such as multimedia text collection and storyboarding as self-paced tasks, providing detailed guides and instructions, and actively seeking out and addressing the concerns of the participants. Primary worries raised were security over the data that will be shared by the organizations and the possibility of triggering trauma among the participants as feminist organizations often deal with distressing issues such as gender-based

violence. The former was addressed by allowing the use of stock images and videos as well as enabling password protection on the respective Padlet boards of the participants. For the latter, trauma-informed protocols were put in place starting with the provision of a primer on basic psychosocial support to the participants and the research team. In a time where everyone's physical and mental health is always at risk, the study further pushed the boundaries of transforming the research space as a care space through the addition of improvisational theater in order to bring some measure of enjoyment to the participants while simultaneously fulfilling the data gathering objectives of the research. During validation, participants expressed their surprise that such methods could be used in generating scientific findings. One feedback provides a good summary of this response to the research design:

We've been trying to get yung mga yung mga communities ganon pero minsan nahihirapan kami sa methods hindi naman kami nagiging masyadong creative, or in a way, hindi masyadong patient. Kapag gusto naming ng information, tinatawagan lang. Hindi siya nagiging ganitong participatory level talaga, na parang you really get the insights, you really engage, you really spend time with them ... That's something na ma-aadopt din namin sana. (We've been trying to get to the communities but we sometimes experience difficulties with methods. We don't get to be creative, or in a way, we're not patient enough. When we want information, we call them. It's not like this where it's really participatory, parang you really get the insights, you really engage, you really spend time with them ... That's something that we want to adopt.)

Findings and Discussion

This section presents the participants' experiences with creating and maintaining feminist online spaces, as organized into themes. This is followed by the process and conceptual models of feminist online spaces. The process model captures the development of feminist online spaces at the start of the pandemic, one year into the pandemic, and in the near future

—both in terms of the organization’s operations as well as the scope of their community of concern. The conceptual model proposes that feminist online spaces during the COVID-19 pandemic are an integration of responses to gender issues brought about by the pandemic, the increasing power of the Internet at a time of physical mobility restrictions, and the decreasing boundaries between offline and online spaces.

Experiences With Feminist Online Spaces

The data gathered from the research participants’ stories can be grouped into the following: 1) Motivating situation, 2) Internal activities, 3) Public activities, 4) People with access to the spaces, 5) Resources, 6) Values, and 7) Ongoing concerns.

Motivating situation. All of the organizations were motivated by the need to respond to the various gender issues that their communities experience and the need to ensure everyone’s safety from the COVID-19 virus. For Foundation for Media Alternatives and Center for Women’s Resources, using digital technology and the Internet for some of their activities is already common; they did have to adjust to working more fully online from home and with their community partners. Youth Voices Count and Mindanao Pride, meanwhile, were more used to the arrangement; they had primarily worked online given the diverse geographic locations of their members. As for Young Feminists Collective and Lunas Collective, their very inception was more proximate to the onset of the pandemic when working online was indispensable. In the case of Lunas Collective, their identity is tied to the online space as an emergency resource offering help during the lockdown. Across these organizations is the recognition that gender issues—from loss of livelihood to gender-based violence—worsened or took on new forms during the pandemic.

Internal activities. The organizations conducted a variety of activities for their community partners or service users. These activities could be one-time projects that responded to specific emergency needs such as conducting relief drives for the hardest hit by the pandemic or fundraising activities for those that lost income during the pandemic. These could also be the same programs that the organizations ran pre-pandemic

such as research, education, and campaigns, which were migrated online. In some cases, activities took on a blended character, such as when organizers—while strictly following health and safety protocols—still had to go to their communities for coordination.

Distinctly, the organizations took care to mind their own needs during such a challenging time. Caring practices ranged from organizational development activities, such as the digital training that Center for Women's Resources and Foundation for Media Alternatives conducted for its staff; to the promotion of self-care among each other, such as the '*kalat*' or intimate story-sharing sessions that Mindanao Pride does among themselves. Relationships across organizations also surfaced as one of support, whether as participants of the same campaign, as partners in the same project, or as sources or facilitators for funding and other needs. Among the research participants, for instance, Youth Voices Count had been a funder for Mindanao Pride's projects; while Young Feminists Collective and Lunas Collective had also participated in the same webinars and campaigns.

Public activities. Depending on the nature of activities, different people have access to the spaces that the organizations created online. For instance, Young Feminists Collective created a community page whose contents are accessible to all who are interested to join. They also have a core member messaging group for the consistently active participating members. This practice is observable in the other organizations that did not start out as a support or care group among their core members as did the Young Feminists Collective. All of them also maintain an online public presence that offers information and resources, and conduct activities that anyone may access, such as webinars, therefore providing ample space for greater public participation. The more 'backend' processes of these activities remain accessible only to the core members or staff of the organization.

People with access to the spaces. The organizations vary in terms of the gender identity of those they allow among their core members and among their larger community or 'public'. The Center for Women's Resources, for example, are clear that their main audience are grassroots women. Thus, their main audience are considered by the organization

when deciding on which issues are taken on, as well as in designing and managing their activities. They place focus on ensuring these women's very access to digital technology and Internet connectivity. For Lunas Collective, they offer their counseling and referral services to any victim-survivor of GBV and anyone who wants or needs reproductive health information. The nature of their operations, however, allow them to cater to these service users, be they women, gender nonconforming individuals, or cisgender men, individually. Meanwhile, Mindanao Pride is clear about the necessity of creating and maintaining safe spaces for the LGBTQI+ community in its membership and activities. There are minimal safe spaces that are currently available for them whether online or offline.

Resources. When it comes to resources, the organizations require material, social, and human resources in creating and sustaining their feminist online spaces. Software applications—from the free to the paid—are among these resources, with Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google, and Zoom as samples. These platforms entail the need for digital gadgets and equipment, as well as electricity and Internet connectivity. Far from being divorced from in-person organizing, feminist online spaces were also facilitated by social networks including funders, partners, and allies; financial resources; and human resources. The organizations emphasized how crucial their time, skills, and commitment are in what they do, and in how they are able to help others as well as support each other.

Values. The values underlying these experiences are also clear. One observes commitment, perseverance, and willingness as part of a larger feminist advocacy. Young Feminists Collective, which was originally formed as a support group among friends, went out of their way to organize donations for marginalized groups during the earlier days of the pandemic. Towards efficiency and effectiveness, the expertise, flexibility, dedication, and reflexivity among the organizations were apparent. Mindanao Pride, for instance, also raises the issue of unequal access to digital technology and the Internet across income groups and geographical areas, and looks for ways to keep working with their community partners for remote and online activities. Towards fellow members, there is a consistent sense of the need for confidentiality, pleasure, as well as care. One of the activities of the Foundation for Media Alternatives earlier in the pandemic, for

instance, is exactly how self-care is necessary and possible even at a very difficult time. And towards others beyond the organization, there was openness, partnerships, and collaboration. Center for Women's Resources noted, for instance, how they are able to reach more partners and participants, even those out of the country, more easily as they hold these activities online.

Continuing concerns. The organizations' concerns include the safety, security and privacy within online space; adequate access to online space—including access to Internet connection, availability of the required equipment, or the know-how necessary for navigating digital technology or online space. This know-how includes knowing the language and the different dynamics and demands of online spaces when it comes to social interactions. Clearly, there is a technological side to online spaces that requires specific technical knowledge and skills, and possibly, a different mindset as well. The challenge of sourcing funds and finding partners for advocacies, programs, and projects are also carried over to online spaces. Moreover, in the context of the pandemic and lockdowns, having to work from home has entailed cancellations of previously planned activities as well as a major adjustment from the part of the organizations in how they now need to continue their work.

Feminist Online Spaces in the Time of the Pandemic: A Process Model

Through the themes generated from the three time periods in the storyboarding activity, the study was able to map the evolution of the feminist online spaces over the course of the pandemic in terms of the systems created out of these spaces and the meanings that the organizations confer on them. The process model affirms Clark-Parsons' (2017) definition of feminist spaces as "living concepts" that are always evolving. The researches envision this model and the accompanying discussion of the gains and challenges experienced by the organizations as a practical and accessible tool that anyone could use in creating and maintaining feminist spaces online. Possible users are development organizations with gender programs, new feminist formations, or established feminist organizations that want to leverage online spaces for their work.

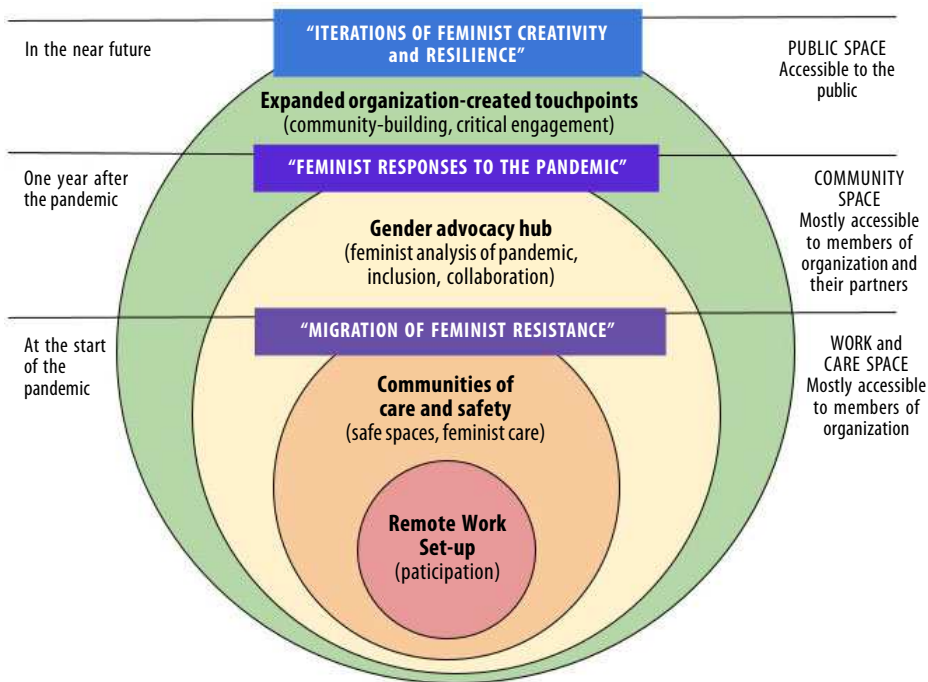


Figure 5
A Process Model of Feminist Online Spaces in the Time of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The organizations tend to define feminist online spaces in terms of online-based systems that they created and maintained during the COVID-19 pandemic, some of which are more prominent in a specific time period than in others. In addition, they frame these systems as an inevitable and necessary response to the situation as part of feminist activism. At the start of the pandemic, systems created online were the *remote work-set up* where participation of all team members are ensured and *communities of care and safety* are turning their work space into safe and caring spaces. These spaces are mostly available to members of the organization. A year after the pandemic, the organizations have successfully set-up *gender advocacy hubs* informed by a feminist analysis of the pandemic and principles of inclusion and collaboration with their stakeholders and partners. In the near future, the organizations imagined

feminist online spaces as systems that will serve as *expanded touchpoints* accessible to the larger public and that will enable the organizations to expand their communities and continue their critical engagement with the government and other social institutions. The corresponding meanings that they attach to these systems are *migration of feminist resistance*, *feminist response to the pandemic*, and *iterations of feminist creativity and resilience* respectively.

These online-based systems each contain participants, online tools, activities, and underlying values that allowed feminist organizations to fulfill specific objectives such as daily operations, networking, ensuring the well-being of its members, and community building among others. It was evident that organizations mostly prioritized developing or recalibrating online systems for their internal operations at the start of the pandemic then moved towards leveraging online spaces to serve their communities and causes as they adapted to the situation. With this model, feminist online spaces could be defined as the process of creating and maintaining Internet-based systems for carrying out feminist political actions through the application of feminist principles and values in various operational areas of the organizations at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. The following discussion elaborates on these findings along with the challenges experienced and lessons learned by the organizations as they create and maintain these spaces.

At the Start of the Pandemic

At the start of the pandemic, feminist online spaces came to mean as a *migration of feminist resistance* from offline to online through *remote work set-up* and *communities of care and safety*. A participant described the drive of feminist organizations to continue despite the constraints of the pandemic: “... *we are prepared na i-continue yung pinaglalaman kahit may pandemya na. But again, may mga restriction. Pero yung spirit of resistance ay nandoodon pa din yun, nga lang ginamitan ng bagong strategy para hindi lang ma-limit.*” (We are prepared to continue fighting even with the pandemic. But again, there are restrictions. The spirit of resistance is still there but we used a different strategy to overcome the limitations.)

The remote work set-up allowed organizations to migrate offline operations activities such as meetings, organizing events, coordination, advocacy work, and networking without the need for close physical interaction through the use of online applications such as Google Drive, Zoom and Facebook messenger and social media platforms such as YouTube and Facebook. The remote set-up even allowed organizations to launch new initiatives. Lunas Collective, which started operating only during the pandemic, undertook the task of migrating the provision of reproductive health services and support for gender-based violence online. Youth Voices Count, relying on virtual meetings and group chats for communications, launched two new projects at the start of the pandemic, whilst Mindanao Pride held two public events via Facebook Live.

However, the remote set-up also stirred ambivalence, particularly when it came to funders and grassroots communities. While the organizations were grateful for the funding support, there were worries over the reception of funders to the changes in the implementation of projects that were committed pre-pandemic: *“So we have to talk to the funders na ay ito yung kasalukuyang sitwasyon sa Pilipinas. Na may ongoing lockdowns na kanya-kanya pang ano we don’t know how to deal with this. Basta may ganon eh, may mga apprehensions na baka kung sa funders side, baka anong tawag dito, baka lumiit yung budget or hindi tanggapin yung panibagong proposal . . .”* (So we have to talk to the funders that this is the current situation in the Philippines. That there are ongoing lockdowns where each one is on their own and we don’t know how to deal with this. There are apprehensions that the funders will cut the budget or reject new proposals. . .). A storyboard caption further revealed the challenges of organizations when dealing with funders for projects conceived in the “new normal.” *“The demands of funders can be difficult at times, with only little adjustment to the pandemic situation.”*

While the remote set-up allowed the organizations to continue their work, the limited accessibility of online spaces was a consistent source of concern among the participants: *“Siguro dahil ano marami sa mga org na to gusto ng maka-build ng grassroots na constituents. Or meron na pero gusto pang palaguin lalo, nagkaroon ng apprehensions kasi baka madisenfranchise yung mga ‘yon. Baka may mapag-iwanan sa pagshishift ng*

mga bagay online.” (Maybe because many of these organization want to build or expand their grassroots constituency, there is an apprehension that they could become disenfranchised. That they would be left behind by shifting online.)

As the pandemic and the online spaces became threats to the well-being and safety of women and LGBTQIA+ individuals, there were deliberate efforts to ensure that feminist online spaces serve as communities of care. Feminist spaces were considered as a hub where staff, partners, advocates, community partners, and services users can come together to receive and provide care. There were different ways in which the organizations deployed care in their communities. One way was by calling upon advocates to provide services and relief during the pandemic. Examples are the Lunas Collective helpline, which relied on volunteers to provide support services on reproductive health and gender-based violence; and Youth Voices Count, which partnered with other groups to implement relief operations to PLHIV and LGBTQIA+ communities affected by the pandemic.

Activities happening in feminist online spaces also demonstrate a dual emphasis on promoting care and safety for the internal staff while also extending care outside the organization. Young Feminists Collective, originally conceived as a space to promote the well-being of its members, was compelled to expand its care space. One caption in their input to the collective storyboard described this development: “But as the pandemic and the lockdown got longer and longer, we expanded what we did and because of the restrictions, we discovered that a lot of online, sexual harassment, or even other types of abuses, started to become a bigger problem.” Check-ins became a regular agenda in the staff meetings of Mindanao Pride while planning ways to support LGBTQI+s affected by the pandemic. Consistent with their advocacy in the field of digital rights and safety, Foundation for Media Alternatives put up measures to promote the digital safety and security of their staff through the use of safe communication platforms. At the same time, they actively promote self-care as part of feminist movement building. Lastly, the Center for Women’s Resources conducted a safety assessment of online tools following a Zoombombing incident while setting-up offline touchpoints where partner

communities can attend online activities. The risks that are specific in online spaces have underlined the need to rethink boundaries in these spaces in order to ensure that they remain safe.

One Year After the Pandemic

A year after the pandemic, the organizations came to define feminist online spaces as *feminist responses to the pandemic* and took the form of *online gender advocacy hubs*. The spaces provided a collaborative place where the organizations could continue their operations and work with other advocates and communities to tackle the impact of the pandemic from a strong feminist perspective. As one participant puts it: "...ang daming mga nangyari, *ang dami ding ginawa ng mga organization in response to the pandemic*. (... many things happened, the organizations did a lot in response to the pandemic.) Parang to encapsulate it parang there is no pandemic can ever stop organization to or feminist organization to fight for against discrimination, inequality and violence."

As gender advocacy hubs, feminist spaces online became a place (1) to engage the public, partners organizations, and the community; (2) of critical engagement and action vis-à-vis government response to the pandemic; and (3) for collaboration and resource-sharing.

As a place to engage the public, partners organizations, and their respective communities, online spaces became a venue to hold public events such as webinars and community dialogues, which were often live-streamed via Facebook. The chat services of social media platforms served as touchpoints where constituents and the public would reach the organizations. Mindanao Pride reported an increase in the number of LGBTQIA+ individuals seeking help via the Messenger chat feature of their Facebook page.

"*Gobyerno, wer u?*" was one of the questions posed in the storyboard. As places of critical engagement and action vis-à-vis government response to the pandemic, online spaces served as a platform to monitor government policies and to initiate measures to address government inaction on gender and sexuality issues. For instance, the Center for Women's Resources held regular learning sessions on women's and people's issues called Pandemic Tales Series via Facebook.

Lastly, as a place for collaboration and resource-sharing, online spaces served as shared workspaces and venues for activities with volunteers, other organizations, and partner communities; and repositories for a wide range of resources such as IEC materials, blog articles, and social media content. As operating in online spaces became the norm, new forms and levels of relationship were created among and within organizations. For example, Lunas Collective observed a flexible engagement with its volunteers with the recognition that these volunteers “cannot and will not stay with us all the time so recruitment is always ongoing.”

Staying true to the principles of feminist organizing, in particular, care, safety, and inclusion, within the limitations of online spaces is an ongoing challenge for the organizations. They struggle with the limited physical interaction in online space: “... *showing care through online spaces, parang it's a struggle kasi chat ganon. Minsan hindi mo nakikita, hindi mo rin nararamdaman. So yung ganong aspeto mahirap siyang i-translate na kapag dito sa mga online spaces as compare kapag nakikita mo talaga yung tao.* (... showing care through online spaces is a struggle because it is through chat. Sometimes, you don't see, you don't feel [people] so that aspect is hard. That aspect is hard to translate in online spaces compared to face-to-face interactions.)

Nurturing empathy is another difficulty due to the lack of physical presence and anonymity in online spaces: “... *iba yung nakikita mo yung tao. Iba yung nakikita mo siya bilang bilang tao hindi isang name in your screen. Hindi ko alam kung ano, challenge na i-bridge yung parang parang ano separation that way para makita yung isang tao as a human being not as someone who antagonizes your idea.*” (... it's different when you see the person. It's different when you see them as a human being and not just a name on your screen. I don't know, it's a challenge to bridge that gap in seeing a person as human being and not someone who antagonizes your idea.)

One year after the pandemic, ensuring meaningful inclusion continues to be a challenge due to the digital divide, especially in geographically isolated and disadvantaged (GIDA) areas. Partnerships with grassroots communities was a strategy employed by some organizations as a solution. One participant, however, raised the difficulties

of providing comprehensive safety protocols to these partners: “*Ang hirap mag create ng protocol . . . like what the government do. Like after mo mag field, mag 14-day quarantine ka, parang ganun lang, parang instructions lang sa amin. Pero we don’t have the capacity to na ipaswab sila, i-link sila sa mga, even the connection with the health organizations . . .*” (It’s hard to create protocol . . . like what the government do. You quarantine for 14 days after you do fieldwork, that’s our only instruction. We don’t have the capacity to provide swab tests or to link them with health organizations.) During the validation session, it was also emphasized that accessibility concerns not only encompass access to Internet services, but also, the capacity of marginalized sectors such as persons with disabilities to participate in online spaces.

In the Near Future

What is the future of feminist online spaces? For the participants, the spaces would come to mean as *iterations of feminist creativity and resilience* by serving as *expanded touchpoints* for their organizations, and by extension, their causes. This vision and determination are fueled by the strength displayed by the organizations during the pandemic: “*. . . clear din yung hindi lang resilience kundi yung tatag or decisiveness nung organization na mag continue na mag rely sa sarili, mag-empower ng mga sarili, para suportahan yung kanilang endeavors.*” (. . . it is not only their resilience that is clear, but their decisiveness to continue their self-reliance and self-empowerment to support their endeavors.) The organizations were mindful of two specific scenarios: 1.) the Philippines being way behind in terms of information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure and 2.) most marginalized sectors being served by the organizations have little to no Internet access. However, the experiences of the organizations during the pandemic transformed online spaces as viable entry points and central operations hubs to further their activism. This situation is in contrast to the previous contentious status of activism. happening in these spaces compared to physical spaces in contributing to the transformation of society towards gender equality and empowerment.

Several organizations identified responses that they considered as illustrations of self-reliance despite the inadequate response of the government during the pandemic. These responses are Foundation for Media Alternatives' online digital security training, Mindanao Pride's organizing activities amongst LGBTQIA+ communities and organizations, Center for Women's Resources' relief efforts for those affected by the pandemic and the typhoons that hit the country, and Lunas Collective's helpline services. At the same time, the organizations also expressed commitment to tackling social issues from a feminist lens and to remaining critical of the lack of meaningful government response to the pandemic.

By treating online spaces as touchpoints, the organizations hoped to retain and expand current partnerships with funders, regional networks, allied organizations, and advocates by maintaining online communication and information channels that were created during the pandemic such as group chats and web pages. At the same time, they also wished to expand the reach of their projects and services initiated as pandemic responses. For instance, Youth Voices Count's small grants program, IGNITE! Empowerment Grants, is expected to become a flagship program for the organization. Lunas Collective, on the other hand, wishes to bring the feminist care approach that they adopted in their online helpline service to offline settings.

With the expansion of the reach of the organizations due to increased activities in online spaces, the participants raised issues related to navigating power inequalities that bleed into online spaces and boundary-setting in feminist spaces. Emphasizing that online spaces are patriarchal and sexist, one participant shared that they are still having difficulties in claiming space for gender issues related to online spaces such as Internet governance. Another participant raised the agenda-setting power of counterparts from Western countries: "... we didn't understand why are they pushing this or like especially in the middle of pandemic. And also like why is this necessary ... it's more of like also considering the need especially that we're in developed countries so parang our needs and concerns right now are different."

The distinct risks in online spaces brought renewed vigilance among the organizations in keeping these spaces safe, at the same time that it

allowed them to extend their reach. However, the decision to open up or restrict access to their spaces always comes down to the agenda of the organization, a similarity they share with feminist organizations mentioned in the literature review. For example, Mindanao Pride remains exclusive to LGBTQIA+ individuals and organizations from Mindanao coming from an analysis that “for a very long time, Mindanao LGBTIQ voices were not heard.” Lunas Collective’s reproductive health and GBV services, on the other hand, is open to all. As constantly evolving spaces, boundaries in feminist spaces could also be subject to negotiation: “[May] mga activities na nag-dedebate kung do we open this to cishet men. Baka hindi ganun ka comfortable yung iba to share. *Baka parang pinaprioritize pa din yung needs nung women . . . Constantly nirerevisit yung tanong na yan everytime na may engagement.*” (There are activities where we debate whether to open to cishet men. Some may become uncomfortable in sharing. Maybe women’s needs are still being prioritized. We constantly revisit this question every time there is an engagement.)

Feminist Online Spaces in the Time of the Pandemic: A Conceptual Model

This research provided the opportunity to critically appreciate ‘feminist online spaces’ in the time of the pandemic as a concept. The figure below illustrates how feminism, the Internet, and space are interrelated, with in-between concepts distinguishable from each other, and with the pandemic as the larger context that determines each of them and thus the resulting interrelations between them.

‘Feminist online spaces’ can be defined as a point of convergence of these three concepts: *a socially produced and reproduced, fluid network of relations and processes created and maintained through a global communication system involving a network of computers motivated by the awareness of and advocacy against oppression of women and gender minorities.* With the COVID-19 pandemic as its context, feminist online spaces capture: 1) responses to gender issues due to the pandemic or as they persisted during the pandemic, and the need for new ways of working together on these issues; 2) the increasing use of the Internet and revealing the political issues involved therein; and 3) the agency that comes with creating and

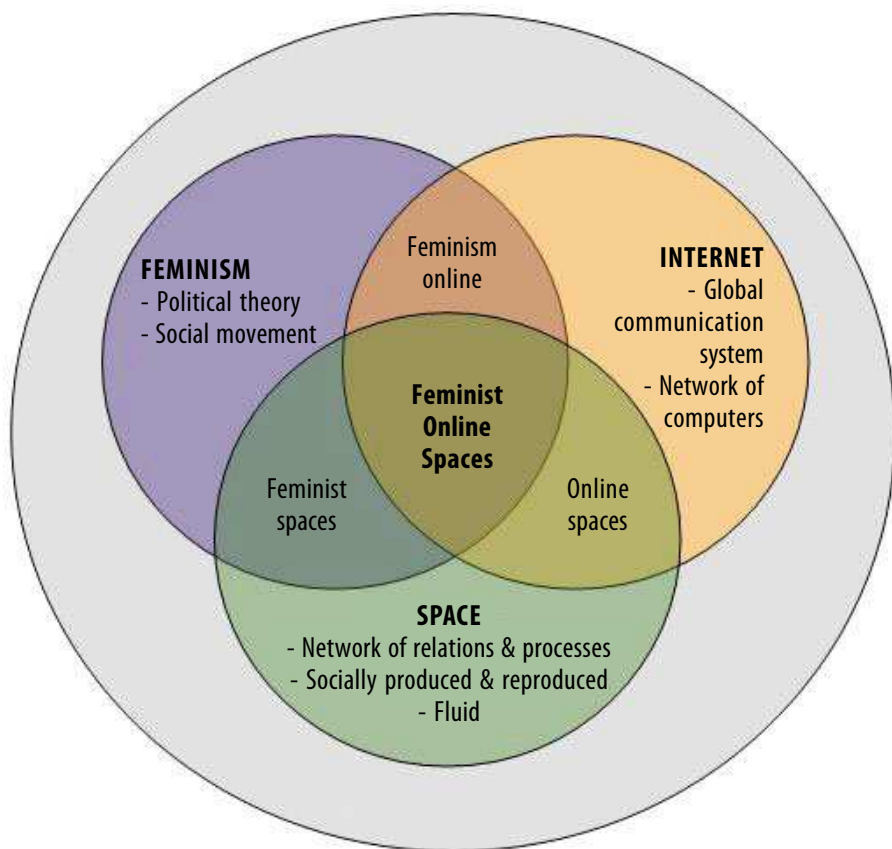


Figure 6

*A Conceptual Model of Feminist Online Spaces
in the Time of the COVID-19 Pandemic*

maintaining social spaces despite increased mobility restrictions and physical isolation. These findings depart from the original understanding of the study which centered on 'space', took feminism as a descriptor, and the Internet or 'online' as simply a kind of space.

As it turns out, each of these concepts have gained distinct significance because of the pandemic, and from here, feminist online spaces can be better understood. First, feminist online spaces created and maintained by the participants showed that feminism had taken on a

distinct character given the kinds of issues that now confront women and gender conforming individuals. Furthermore, new ways of working together or taking action are demanded. For example, the Youth Voices Count took on the task of ensuring that their partner communities have access to the Internet, when this task was not their focus nor priority before. On the other hand, Foundation for Media Alternatives established a work-from-home set-up among their staff in order to continue working while minimizing the exposure to risks of COVID-19 infection and observing lockdown policies. Mindanao Pride's fund raising projects to offer relief for their communities similarly became a priority, since many of the communities' jobs and small businesses were affected by the lockdowns. Secondly, the role of the Internet, as well as its power, is emphasized during this pandemic. The very migration of almost all the operations of the participant organization to online space supports this observation. Most interestingly, Lunas Collective was conceived out of the resulting isolation and mobility restriction that worked against those that may be living with abusers at home, as well as those that need contraceptives and other reproductive health goods and services. Establishing a chat service was the most feasible way to reach these people without further endangering them. Thirdly, the appreciation of space also changed. Staring at screens and listening through speakers to communicate with others has both limited communication to the verbal, as Young Feminists Collective noted. It also enabled working with others across distances and different time zones, thus, expanding an organization's reach, as Center for Women's Resources shared.

This model also emphasizes feminist online spaces as related to, but distinct from, feminist spaces, feminism online, and online spaces. Feminist spaces may be offline. Among the participant organizations, for instance, Center for Women's Resources was mostly office-based in their operations before the pandemic. Often, they worked more directly with their community partners or carried out their activities and campaigns in person. Feminism online, on the other hand, may refer to specific activities that use the Internet solely as a resource rather than consider it a space. Finally, online spaces are not necessarily feminist; in fact, they are mainly dominated by patriarchal values. Foundation for Media Alternatives is

particularly working on to interrogate the dominance of patriarchy and change this reality. Many of the other organizations have increasingly become concerned about the issue as well. Not only do online spaces pose certain challenges to data privacy, for example, but they are also sites for online forms of GBV and other issues as well. As a point of convergence, feminist online spaces can also be taken as the enrichment of feminist spaces, feminism online, and online spaces. Furthermore, feminist spaces are expanded from the physical. Feminism online gains an interconnected character. Lastly, patriarchal values and norms in online spaces are challenged and changed.

Feminist online spaces as described in this study affirm the points from related literature regarding the character of feminist spaces. First, the task of creating and maintaining spaces comes from the reality that there is a lack or an inadequacy of spaces for women and gender nonconforming individuals in the first place, and the Internet thus providing the opportunity for continuing work at a time of limited physical mobility. Second, feminist online spaces can similarly focus on the need for safety for its direct members, as well as on creating a safer public in general. Third, the iterative nature of feminist spaces manifested across the timeline of the pandemic, with the organizations pushing themselves to know and do more as they navigate online spaces. And lastly, the need for various resources was quite evident.

Taking a particular turn from earlier conceptions of ‘safe spaces’ which tend to be more focused on the needs of direct members or clientele of a group or center, feminist online spaces during the pandemic also demonstrate greater concern for the general public. Intentions behind creating and maintaining spaces that are “safe from misogyny” (p.5) as well as “safe to become fully human” (p.7) (Lewis et al., 2015); and that “supports, celebrates, and advances all identities, specifically marginalized identities” (Nicolazzo & Harris, 2014, p.6) come more strongly with a view of the need to educate, serve, and otherwise involve or influence the larger public. Additionally, feminist online spaces during the pandemic are understandably not as divorced from offline realities. Cases of feminist activities online cited in related literature stated that there is greater focus on gender issues with the Internet per se as a technology. Following the

above model, this focus can be explained by the integration of the kind of feminism surfaced from the participants' experiences, which saw a continuity between personal and intimate realities with that of the more external and public realities that cannot be disregarded; the nature of the Internet which facilitates instantaneous communication and information sharing with the public; and with space affirmed as a something that is "fluid, multiple, and always in the process of being made and unmade" (as cited in Self & Hudson, 2015, p. 222), experiences with which can also be greatly varied as well as specific—all at a time of an urgent and disheartening national health crisis and political situation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Understanding feminist online spaces during the pandemic entails understanding the different concepts (e.g., feminism, Internet, and space) and their interface (e.g., feminism online, feminist spaces, online spaces, and feminist online spaces) while taking note of the impact of the context of the study (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic) on these interfaces. The latter could be understood by taking stock of the process of creating and maintaining online spaces including the sense-making process from which these spaces are understood by their authors.

The study affirmed the usefulness, and even the necessity, of a creative and innovative approach in examining a dynamic and complex subject of inquiry in a challenging research context. While the pandemic set restrictions in implementing research, it also provided opportunities to test the potential and limits of Internet-mediated methods. The creative methods and care practices employed in the study played a key role in the sustained involvement of the participants, which in turn demonstrated the feasibility of a remote participatory research design in feminist research. This model could hopefully open up opportunities for scholars with limited resources to reach previously inaccessible participant cohorts and to conduct research that cuts across boundaries. However, that certain sectors remain marginalized in online spaces due to various issues in access, should be a point of consideration in the design and implementation.

The pandemic was a significant push in the creation and maintenance of feminist online spaces given the rise of gender issues and amid mobility restrictions. What made these spaces possible was the reflexive resolve with which the organizations work for a feminist social transformation, which involved a sense of being part of a larger community that transcends physical boundaries. An important part of this reflexivity was an evolving awareness of contradicting realities in creating and maintaining online spaces such as wider reach but also exclusion due to uneven Internet access; increased collaboration, but also isolation due to remote interactions; and being at the receiving end of both support and impositions due to the power dynamics in the development sector. This reflexivity increases its relevance given that feminist online spaces also become more complex and responsive to the needs and purposes of the organizations the longer the pandemic demands their creation and maintenance.

Feminist online spaces in the time of the pandemic highlight as urgent the task of ensuring that online spaces evolve towards being more feminist. Shifting away from the patriarchal culture of binaries, hierarchies, dominance, and violence and becoming spaces that enable diversity, solidarity, social justice and communities of care is relevant now more than ever. Feminist individuals and organizations themselves may also need to more carefully consider the feminist online spaces they have initiated or of which they become part. What emerged from this study is the need to better surface and more deeply understand the gender issues within online spaces themselves, such as ‘Zoombombing’ in the way the Center for Women’s Resources experienced it, and other online forms of GBV, encounters which are bound to be more rampant. Organizations will also benefit from a stronger appreciation of the power of the Internet and how its design as a technology can determine people’s experiences—such as what information they receive, what activities they can do, and what interactions can result from engaging online - and what this could mean for the work they do. How online and offline spaces are increasingly and possibly irreversibly interconnected, with implications on community organizing, mobilizing, and empowerment—such as ensuring that communities are able to understand and experience digital and online

technology, as well as navigate, participate, and make decisions online with discernment—also need to be recognized. Supporting and initiating advocacies towards a more feminist Internet, as is one of Foundation for Media Alternatives' campaigns, is also all the more warranted.

This study particularly demonstrated the transformative potential of feminism as applied to online spaces amid a crisis situation. Feminist online spaces are a reality in the Philippines that will remain significant even beyond the pandemic. Towards the development of feminist futures, this would mean more directed effort from policymakers as well in terms of achieving universal access to the Internet, promoting feminist computer programmers and IT developers, and ensuring the privacy, safety and security of personal data online; supporting feminist advocacy in terms of flexible funding, and funding per se, as well as maintaining respect for feminist organizations' autonomy in setting their agenda, priorities, and operations; and supporting care spaces, promoting democratic spaces, and protecting human rights defenders.

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