



# DIGITAL PUBLIC PULSE

Mapping the Digital Landscape  
of Philippine Politics

# Digital Public Pulse

An interdisciplinary research collaboration that inquires about the intersection of **digital publics**, **social networks**, and **media convergence**.

The project examined the **networks**, **conversations**, and **interactions** of users in Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube related to the 2022 Philippine General Elections.

# Digital Public Pulse

Who are the influential actors in election-related discussion on digital media?

How do they talk about the elections on social media?

# Mapping the 2022 election landscape on the digital public sphere

We monitor actors and how they communicate their interests and agendas online.

Our findings are not representative of the Filipino population, but a manifestation of the social relations among different members of society on digital media.

**The research is a characterization of the interplay of social processes online that shape political discourse, not a dipstick of public opinion.**

# We monitored election-related public posts on social media, specifically, Facebook, Twitter (now X), and YouTube.



**Social network analysis** to examine influential actors in online media



**Topic modeling and sentiment analysis** to examine top-line conversations in digital spaces



**Machine learning and manual coding** to classify actors online



**Textual analysis** to characterize online conversations about politics



# Key findings

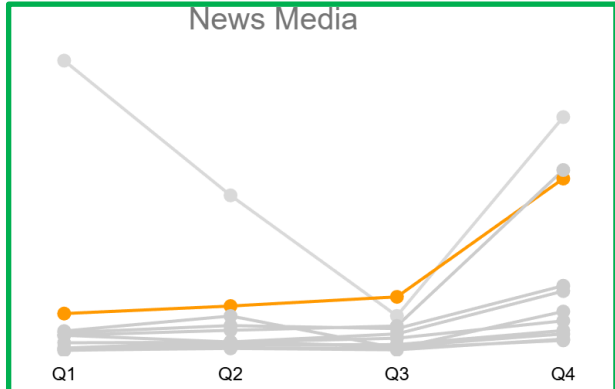
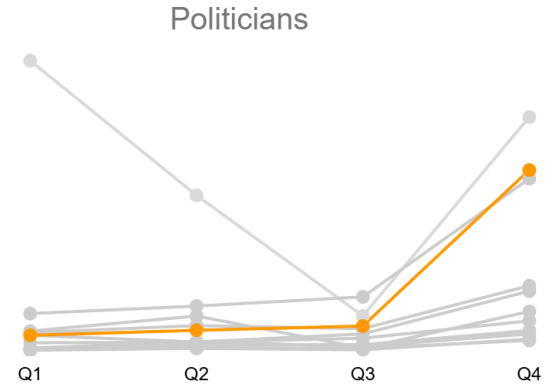
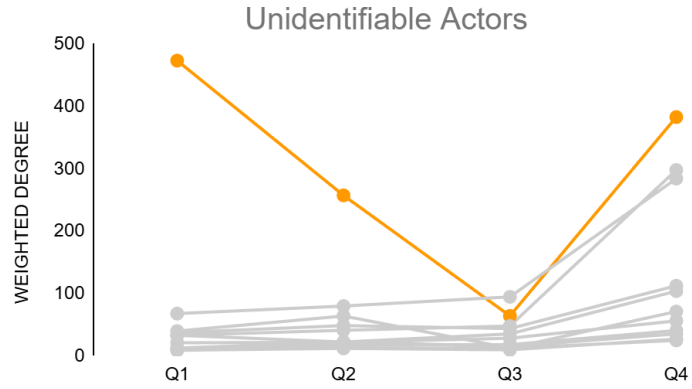
Election online networks

## KEY FINDING 1

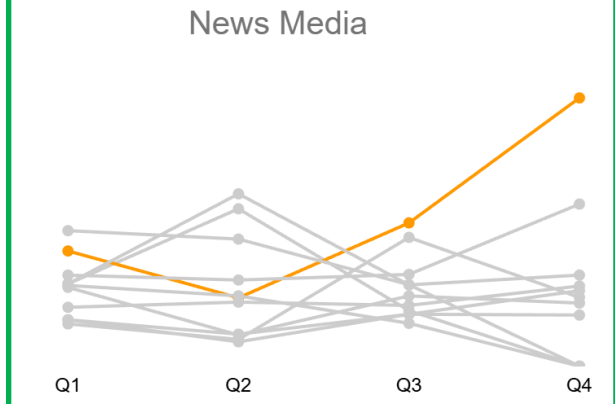
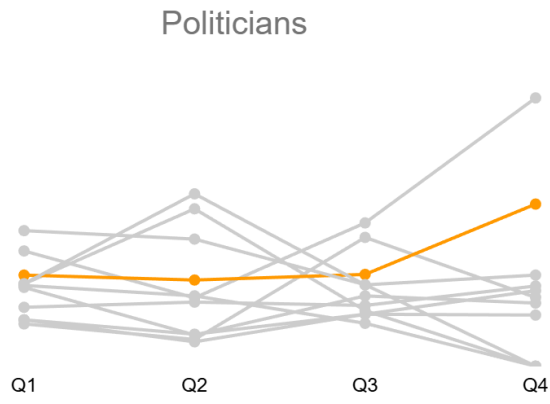
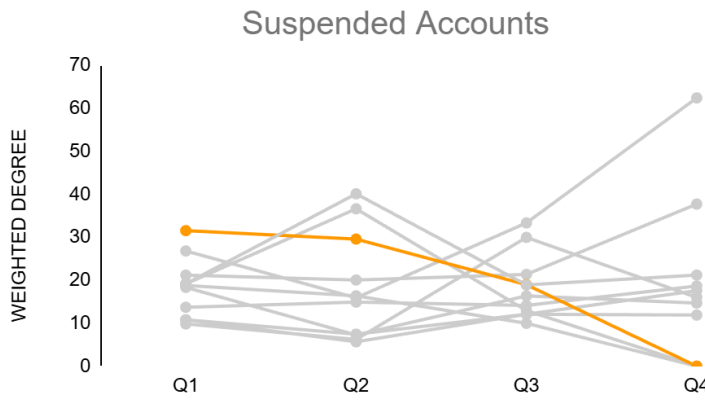
# Fluctuating prominence of mainstream media

- Mainstream media is still a dominant actor in digital spaces
- Their gatekeeping function is bypassed by politicians and other political actors
- Partisan communities engage with partisan sources rather than mainstream news

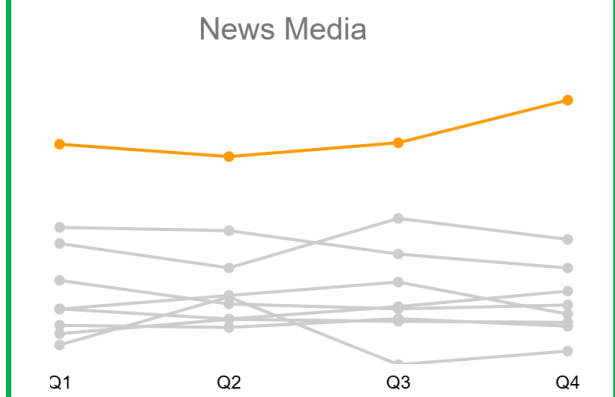
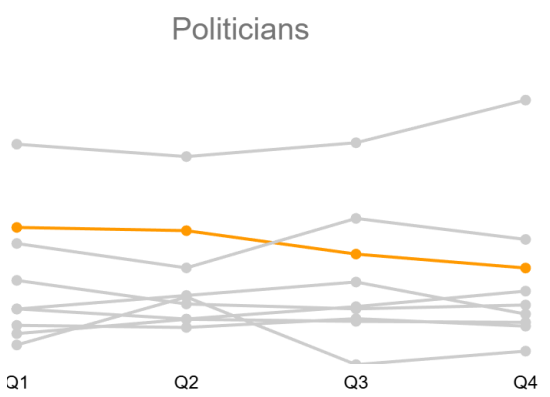
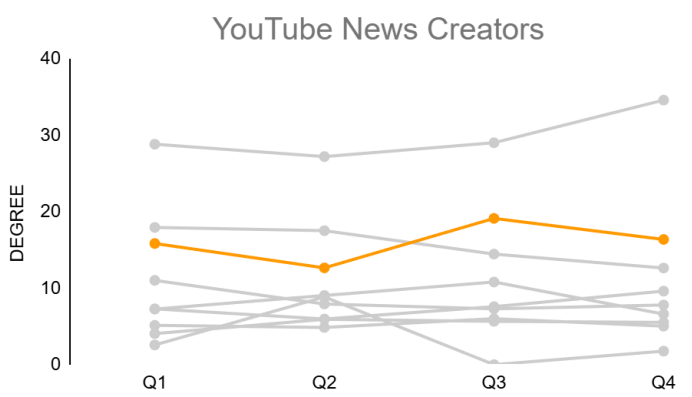
# Facebook



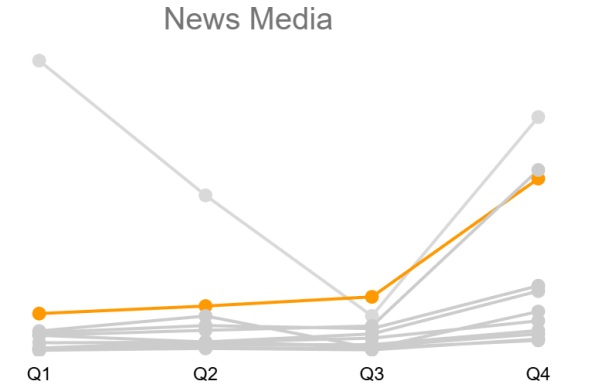
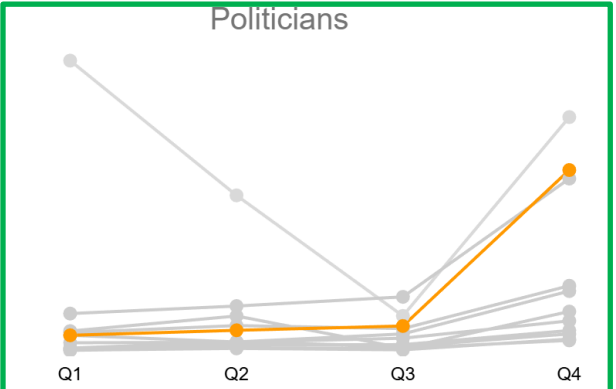
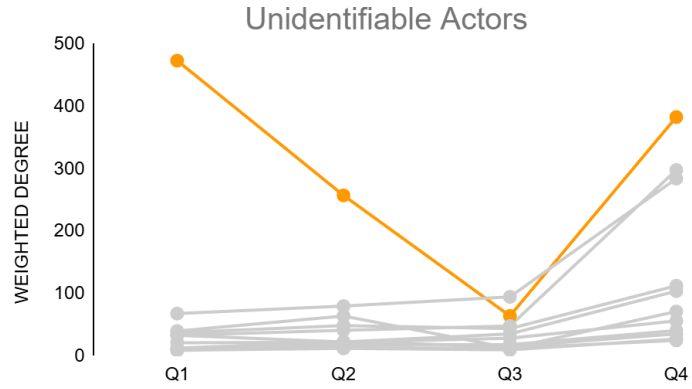
# Twitter



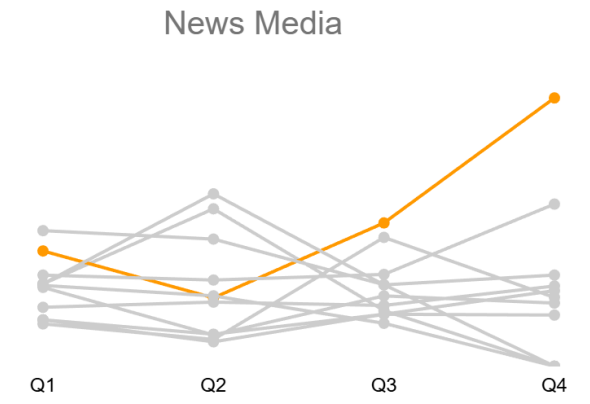
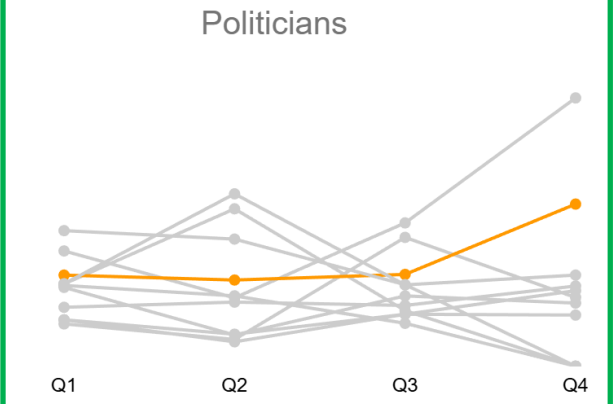
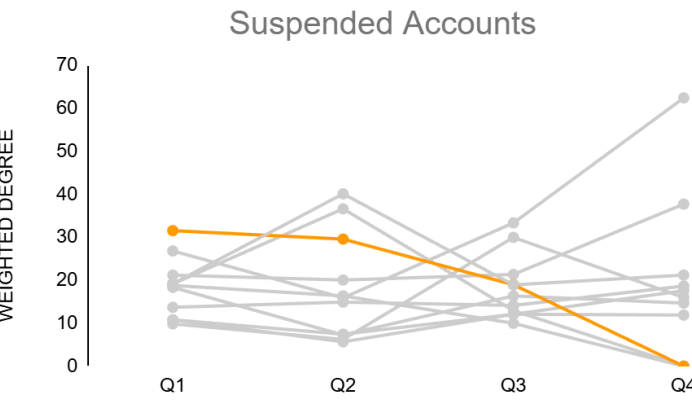
# YouTube



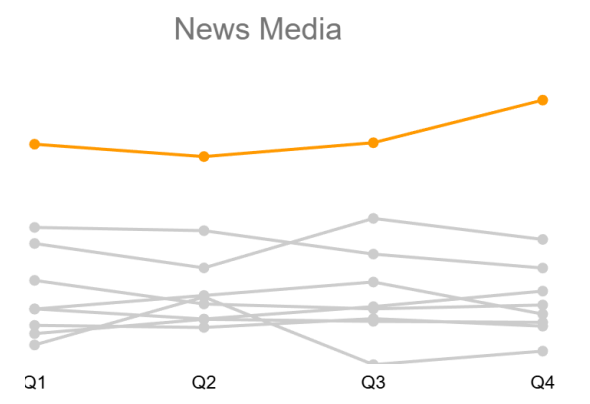
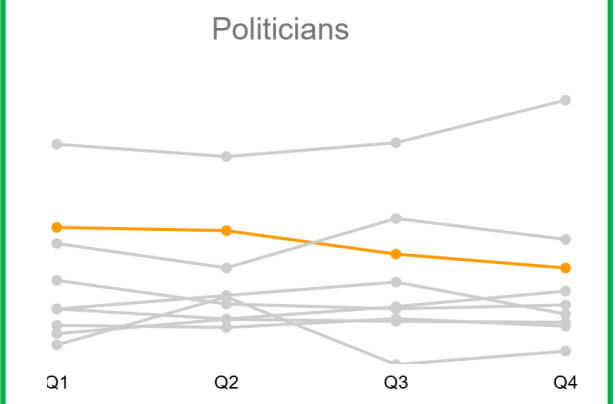
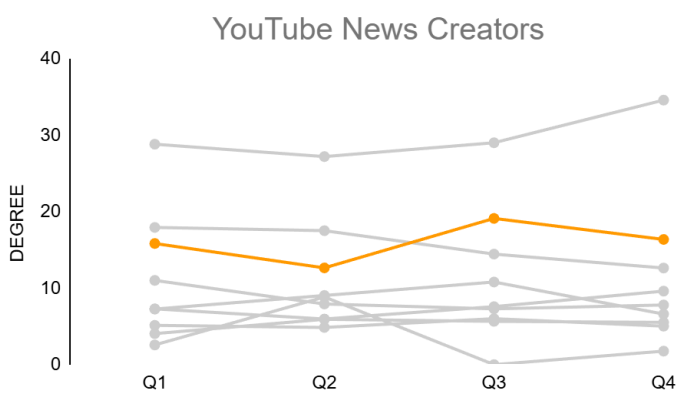
# Facebook



# Twitter



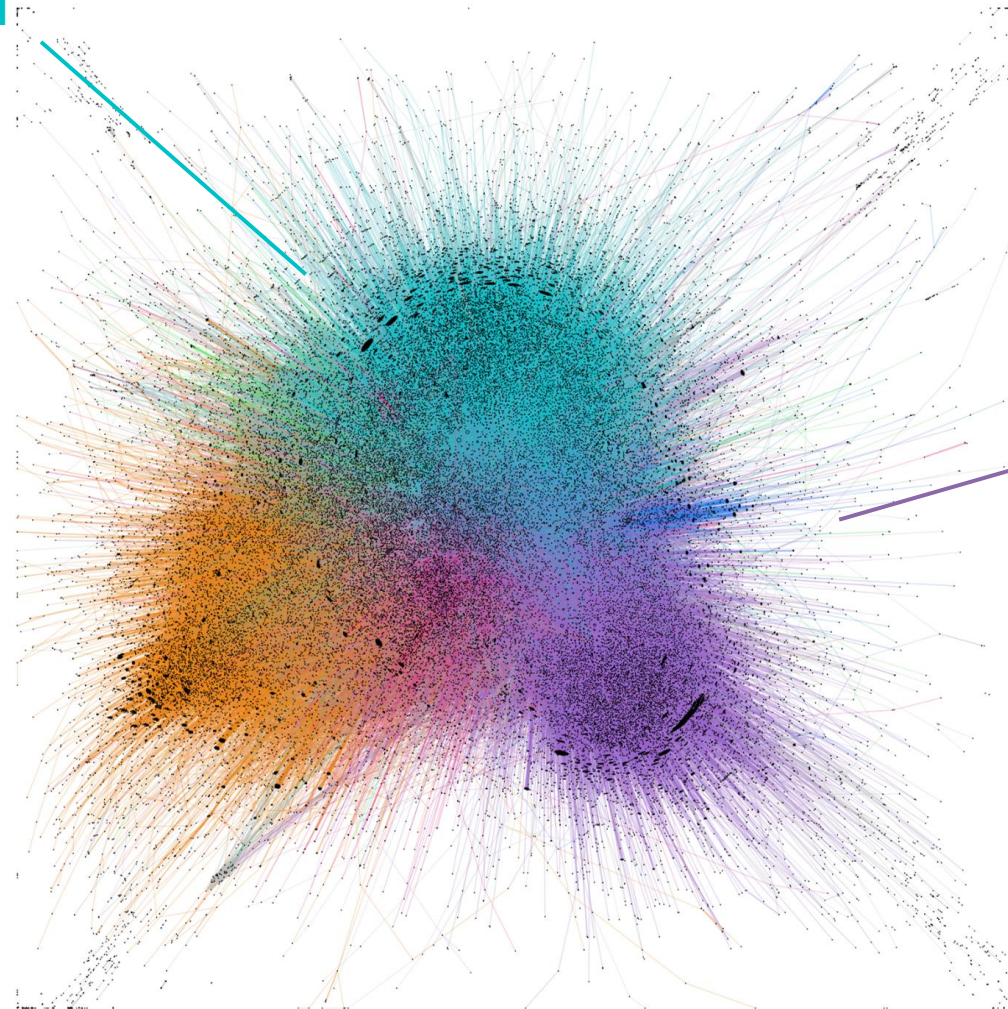
# YouTube



C1 Accounts and news  
media aligned with  
Bongbong Marcos and  
Sara Duterte

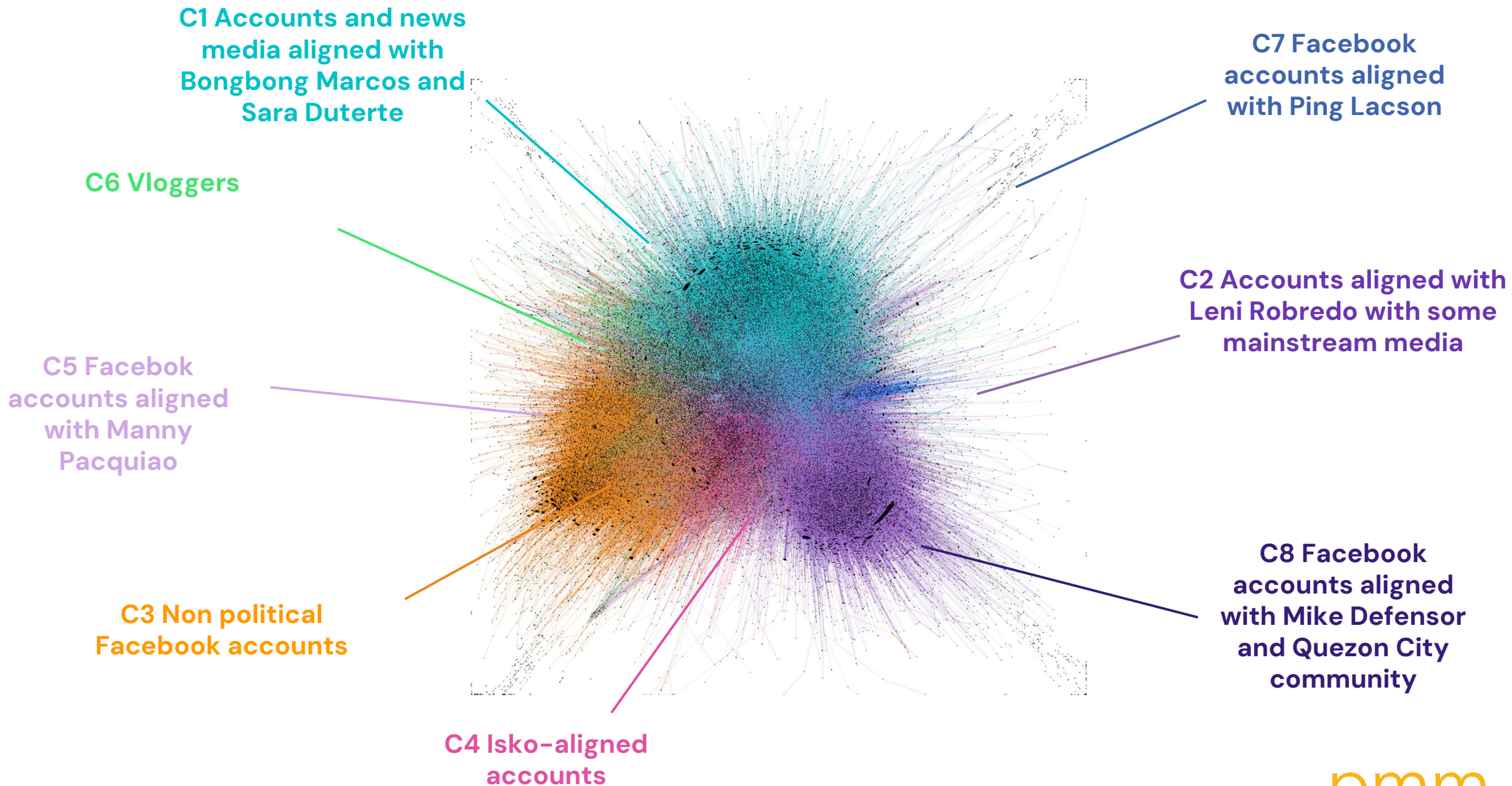
# Facebook sharing network

February to May 2022



C2 Accounts aligned with  
Leni Robredo with some  
mainstream media

Note: Clusters numbered based on size (Cluster 1 as the biggest)



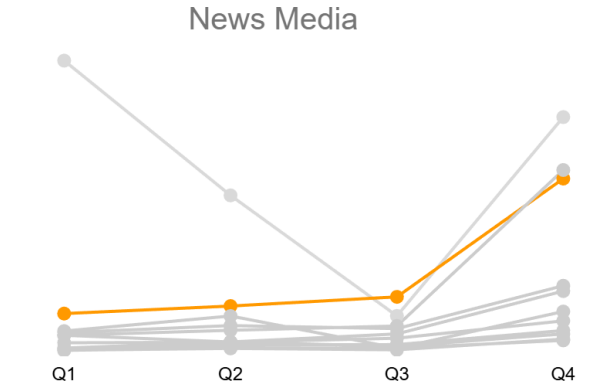
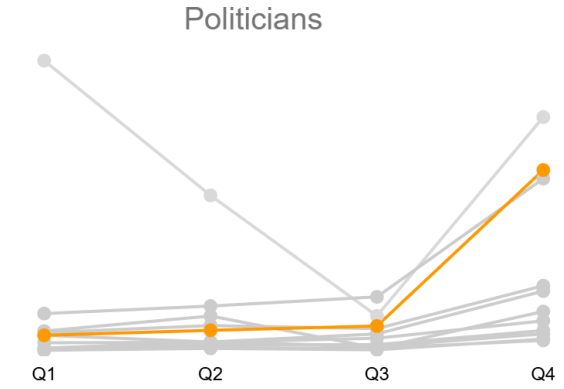
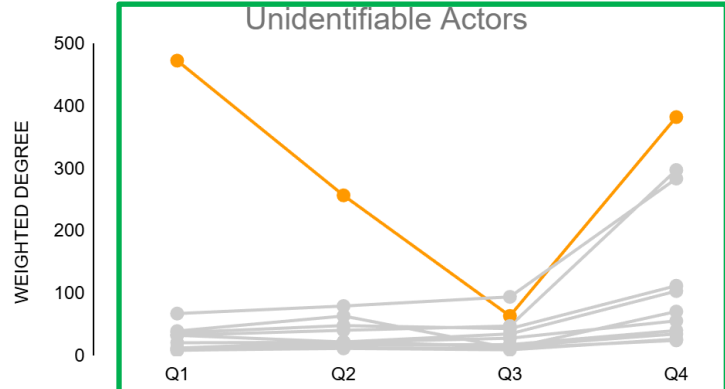
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## KEY FINDING 2

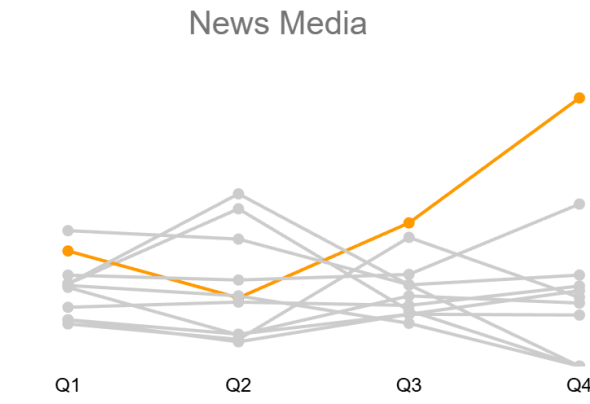
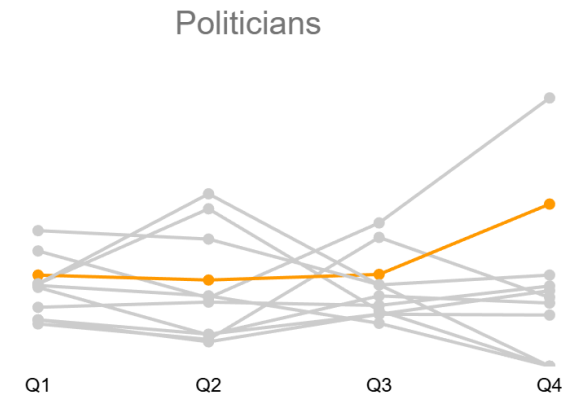
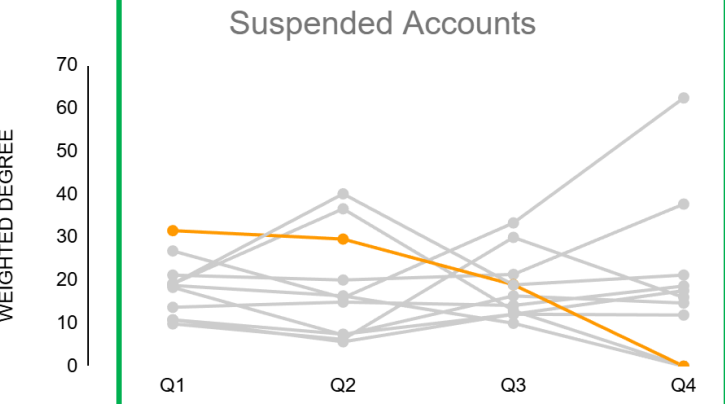
# Emerging political intermediaries

- Influencers, content creators, ordinary users, 'gray actors', and native social media pages become influential in shaping the election discourse online
- They use their knowledge of the platform to frame social issues, promote partisan narratives, and launch political attacks

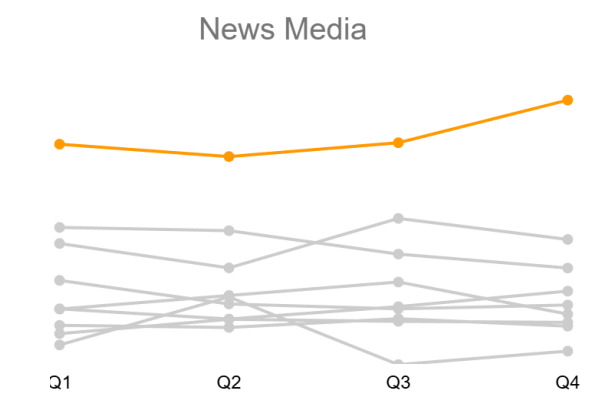
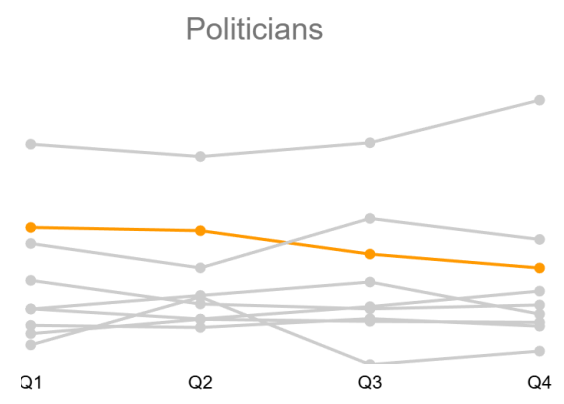
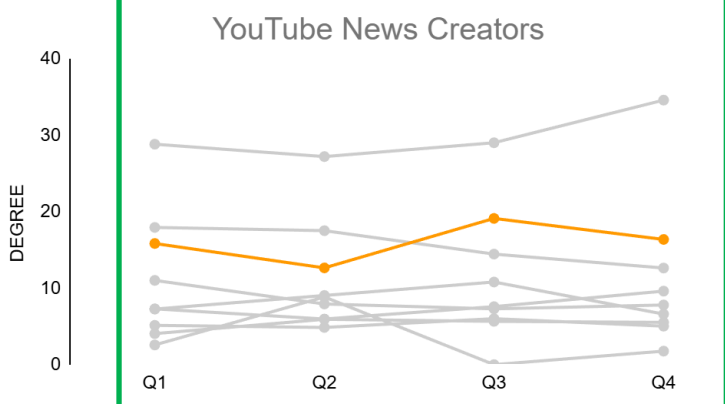
# Facebook



# Twitter

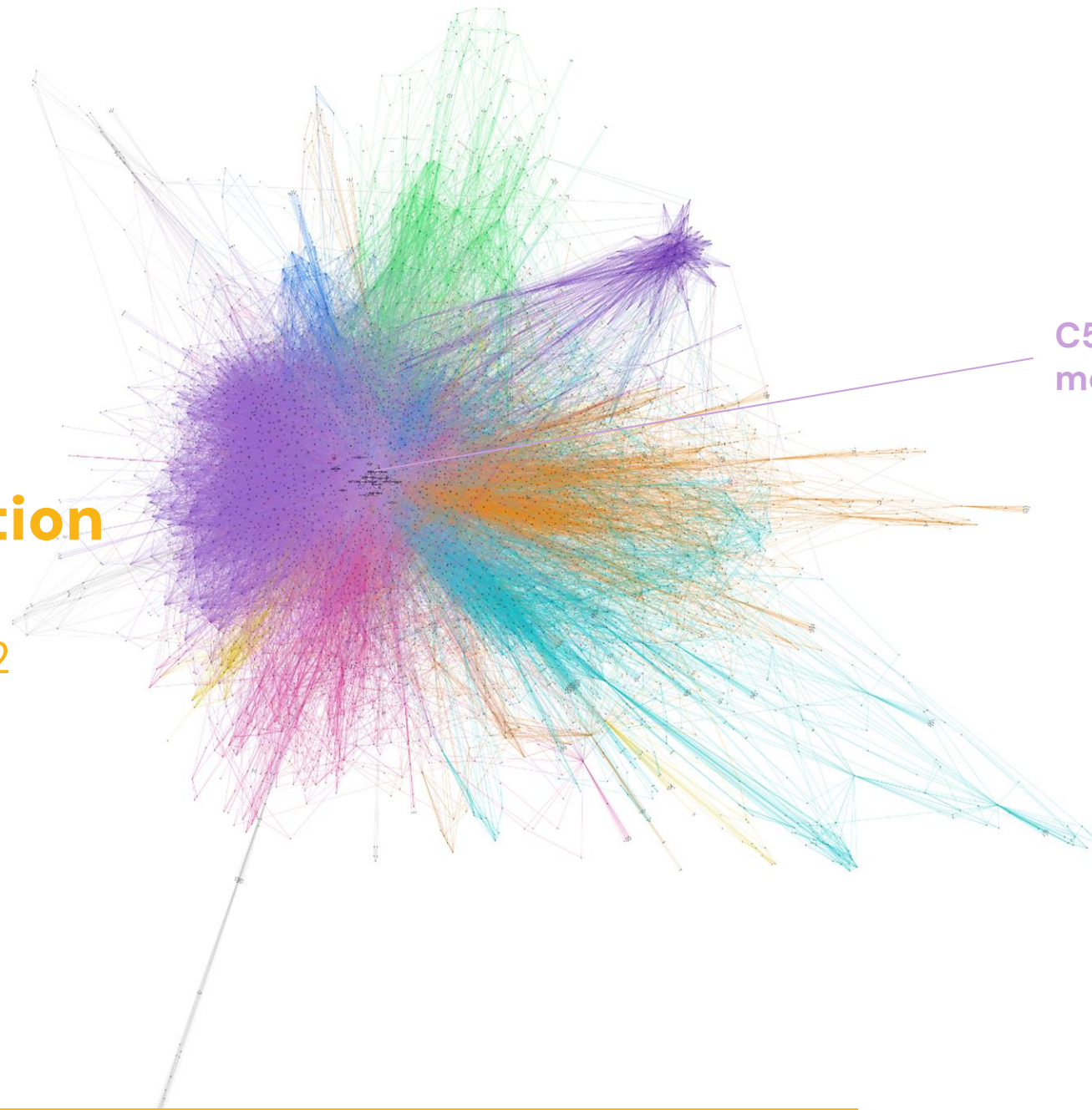


# YouTube



# YouTube Recommendation network

February to May 2022



C5 Mainstream news  
media

Note: Clusters numbered based on size (Cluster 1 as the biggest)

**C7 Political opinion videos and Entertainment vlogs**

**C2 Marcos Jr./Duterte aligned media sources and hyperpartisan channels**

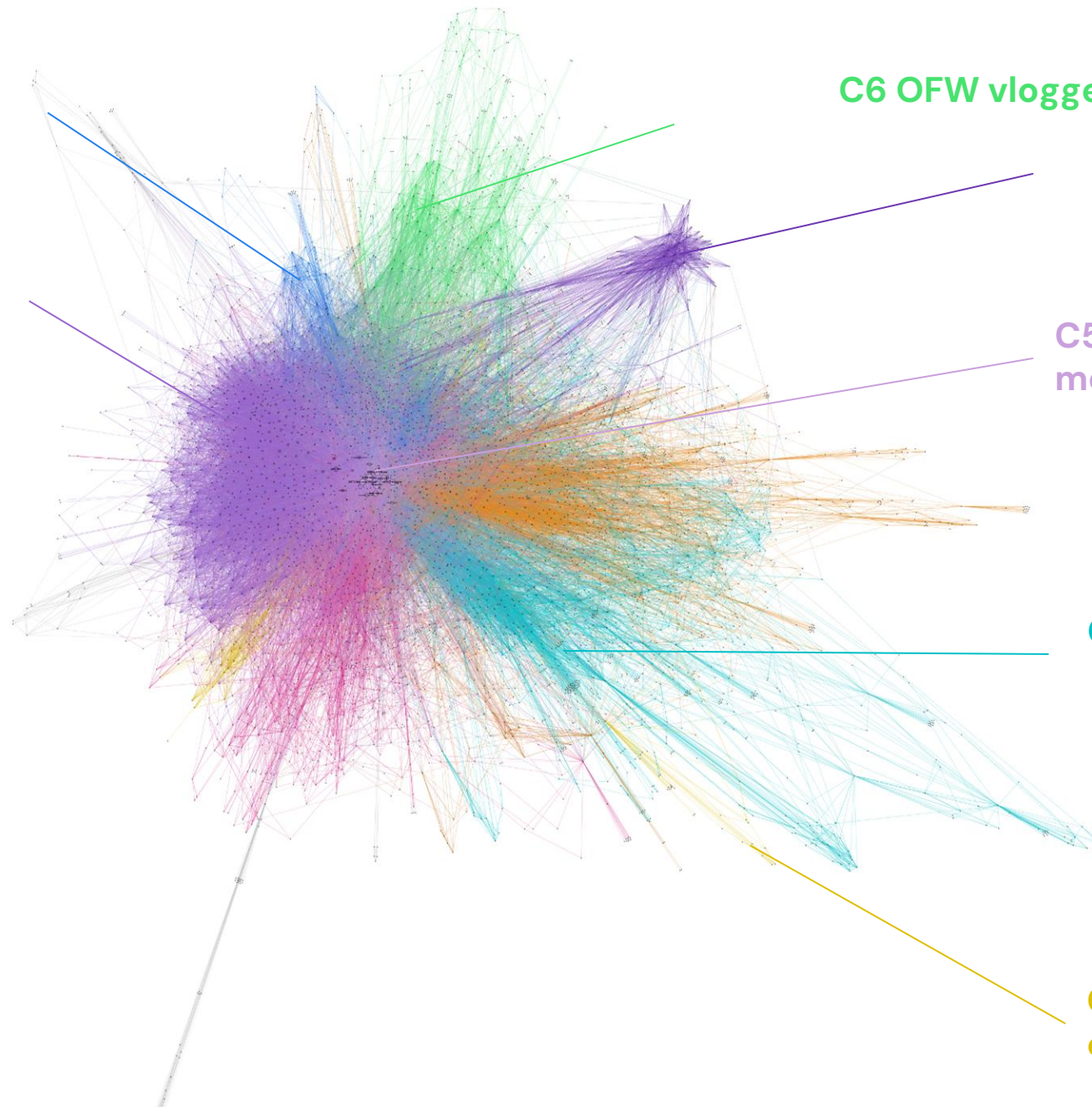
**C6 OFW vloggers**

**C8 Political opinion videos, webinars, gaming & sports**

**C5 Mainstream news media**

**C1 DepEd/electoral process tutorial channels**

**C9 PNP-AFP cluster**



**Note: Clusters numbered based on size (Cluster 1 as the biggest)**

# PINAS INSIDER



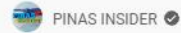
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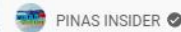
LAGOT! LENI NILAGLAG NG DATING NPÀ? |  
SMARTMATIC GAGAMITIN NG NPÀ PARA MANAL...  
78K views • 3 months ago



Matatandaang isiniwalat mismo ni Pangulong Duterte at senador Ping Lacson na ayon pa sa kanilang intel ay napasok na ng npa ...



BISTADO! ISKO MORENO GINAMIT ANG 203  
BILLION ESTATE TAX ISSUE NI BBM PARA...  
43K views • 3 months ago



Tinawag na fake news ni Bongbong Marcos ang pahayag kamakailan ni Isko Moreno na mayroon di umanong mahigit dalawang ...



HALA! MATAPOS SABIHING MAGNANAKAW AT  
WALANG BOBOTO KAY BBM | PACQUIAO...  
12K views • 3 months ago



Manny Pacquiao kahihyan ang inabot matapos nitong sabihing bobo lamang ang boboto kay Bongbong Marcos na di umanoy ...

# USAPANG BALITA



USAPANG BALITA TV

SUBSCRIBE



DEBATE NAPUNTA SA PANINIRA KAY BBM ANG  
PLATAPORMA / ISKO, LENI, LACSON, CARPIO...  
56K views • 3 months ago



U-B News PH is about selected video clips of latest news, speeches and interviews of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, and a news ...



ITO PALA ANG HUMAHAMON NG DEBATE KAY  
BBM / PACQUIAO / LACSON-SOTTO...  
53K views • 3 months ago



U-B News PH is about selected video clips of latest news, speeches and interviews of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, and a news ...



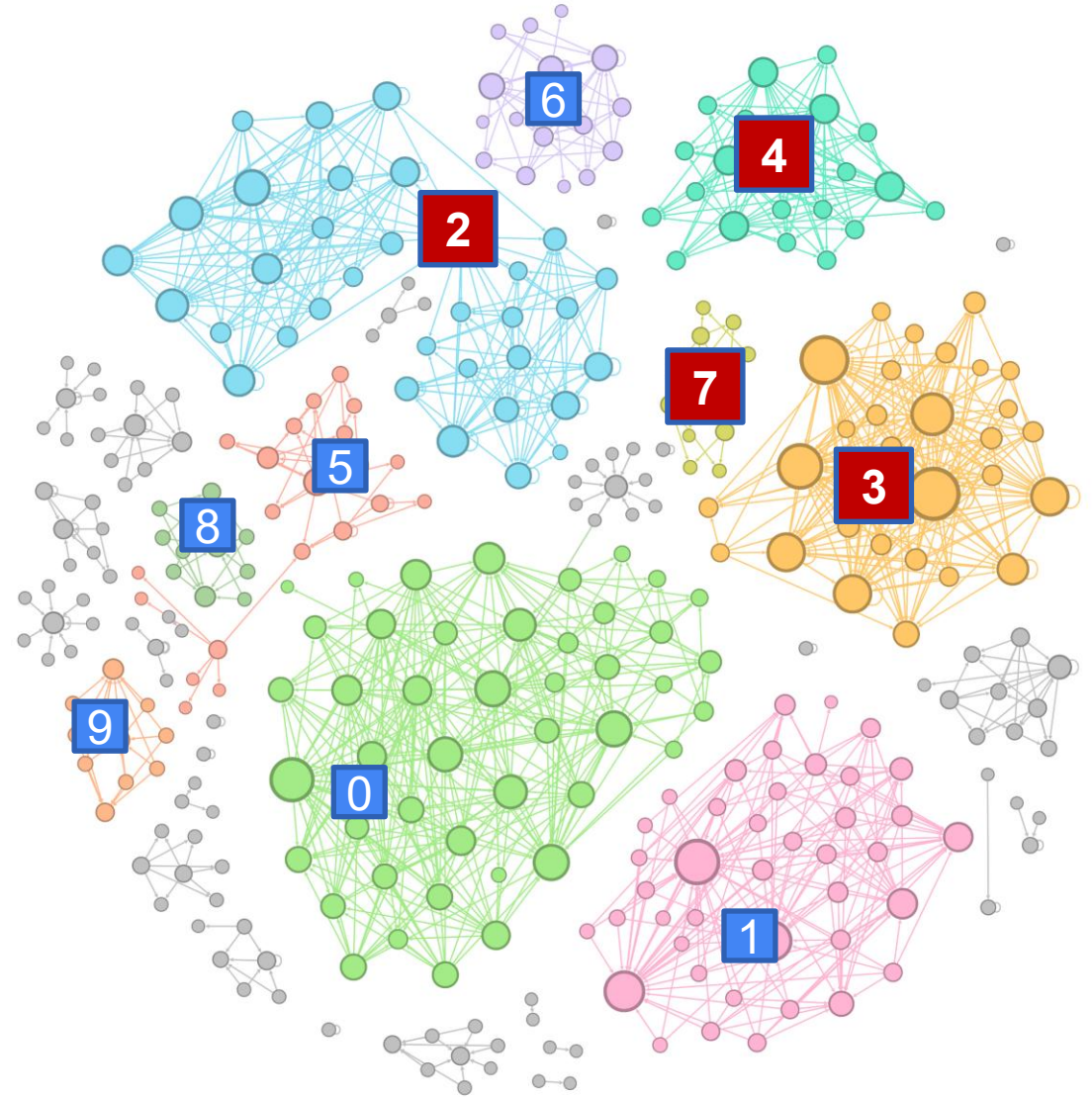
ANAK NI ROBREDO NA SI TRICIA HULI NG  
NETIZENS SA PANINIRA KAY BBM / KA TUNYING...  
87K views • 2 months ago



U-B News PH is about selected video clips of latest news, speeches and interviews of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, and a news ...

# Facebook coordinated inauthentic behavior network

These **'non-political' actors** have also formed a distinct community within the election, ranging from 'hugot' pages, meme accounts, to entertainment, gaming, and vlogging accounts.

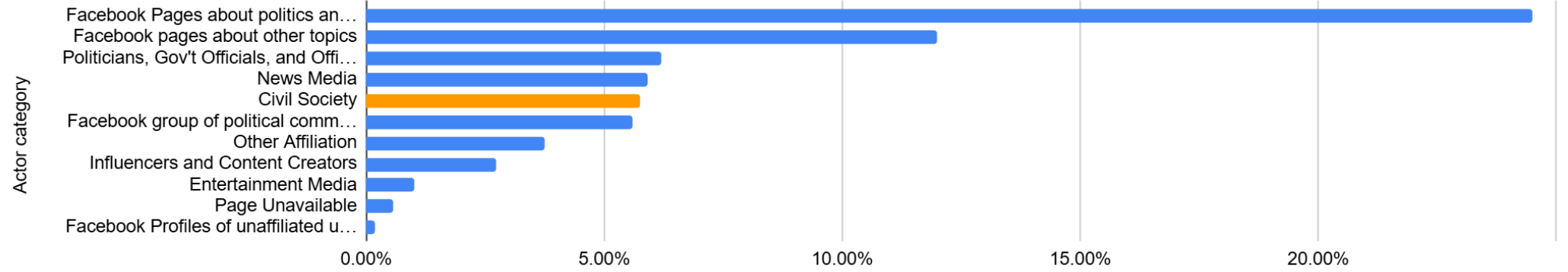


### KEY FINDING 3

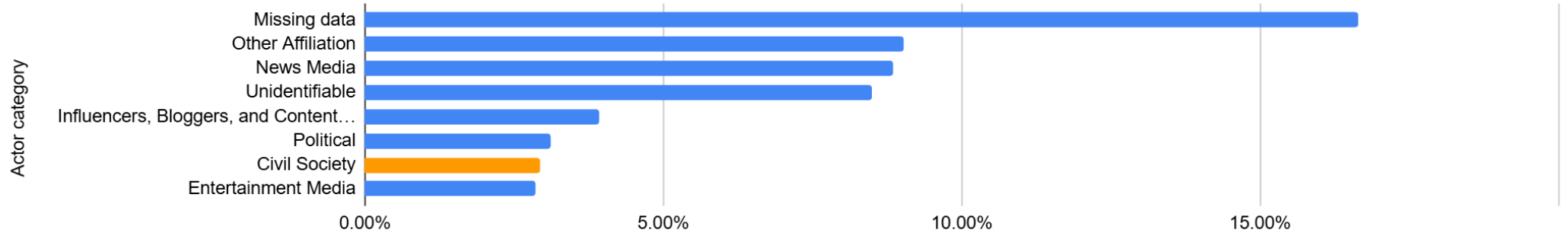
# Civic politics superseded by celebritized politics

- Entertainment personalities, media, and fandoms have become powerful and visible figures in digital media that bridge political disinterested audiences to political affairs
- Limited presence of civic organizations and progressive groups

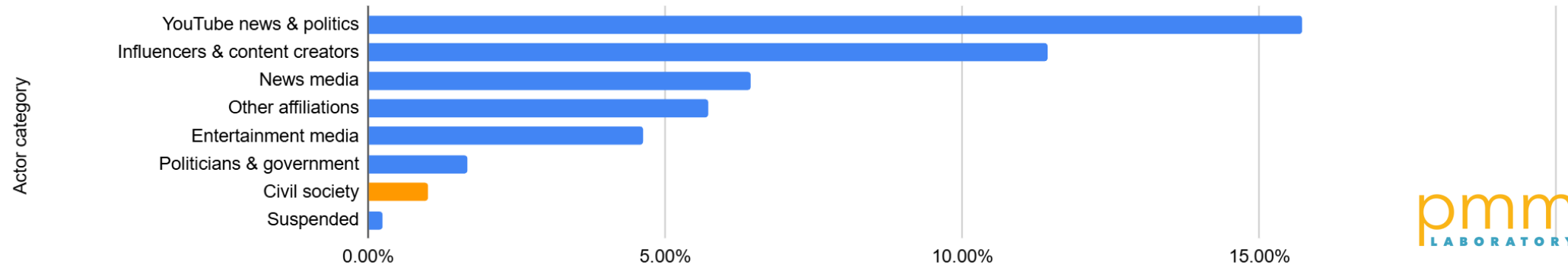
### Actor distribution on Facebook



### Actor distribution on Twitter

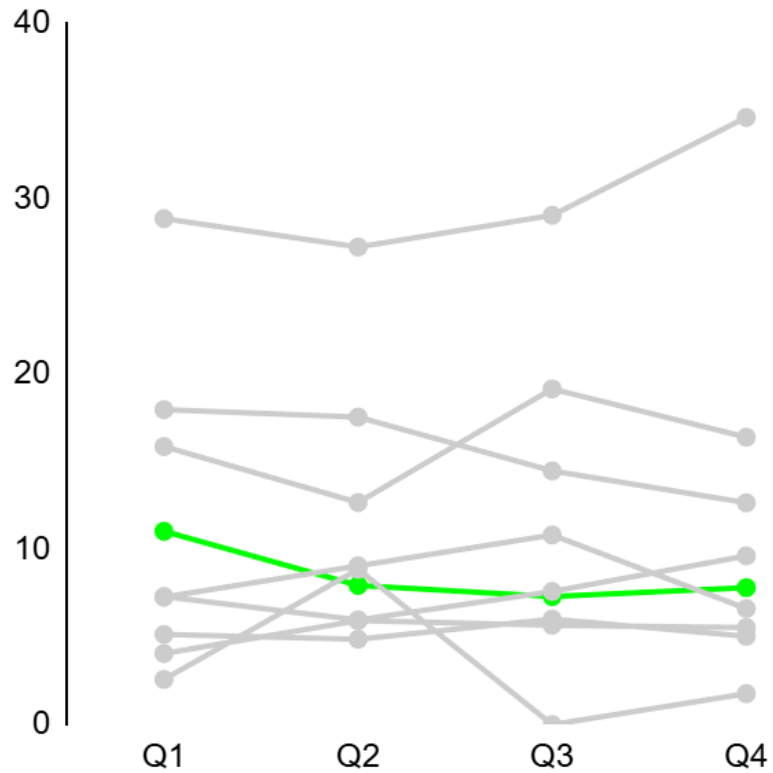


### Actor distribution on YouTube

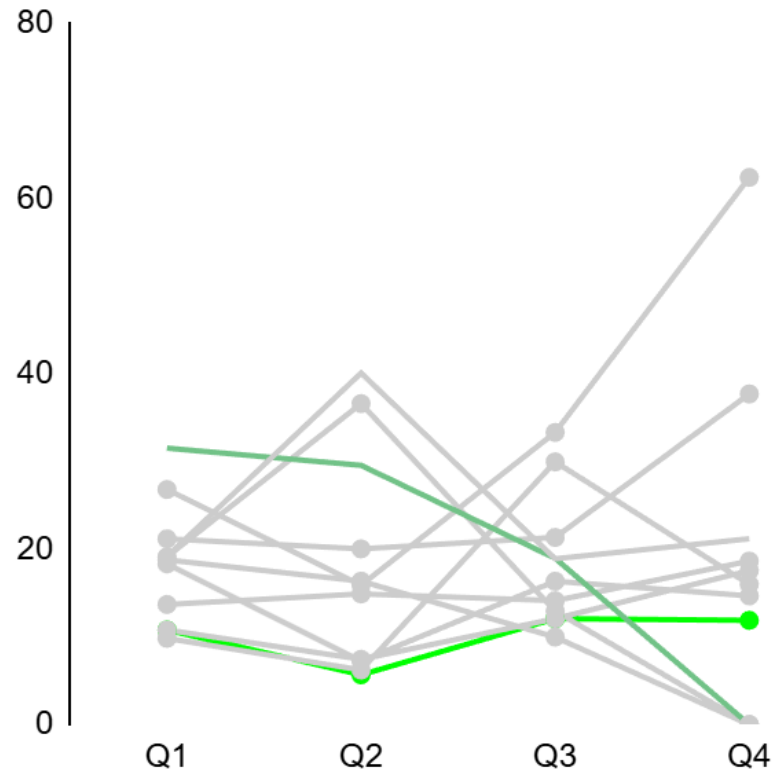


# Per quarter centrality of civil society actors across platforms

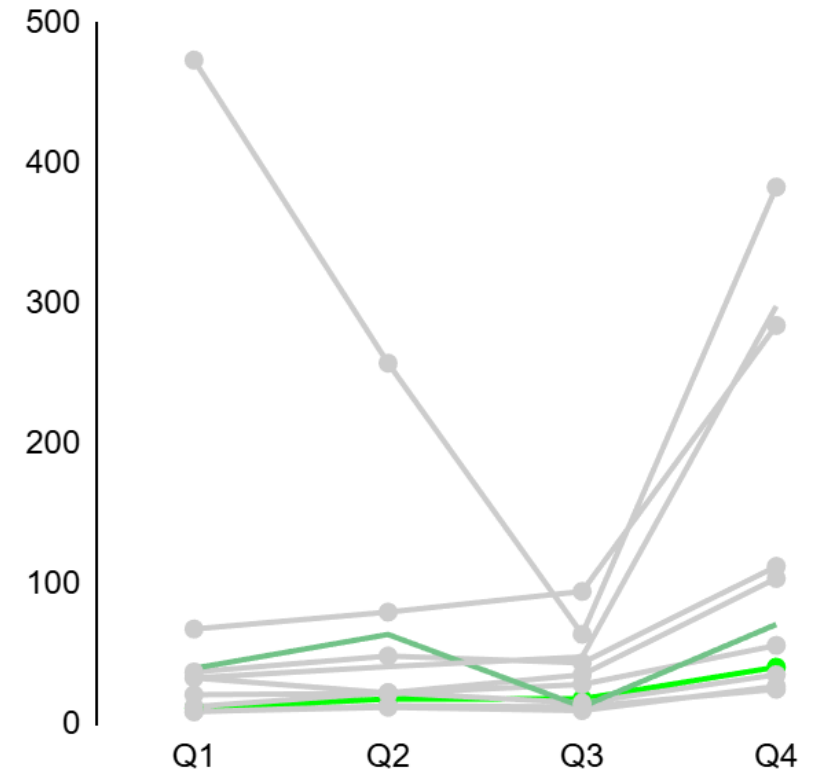
## Civil Society on YouTube



## Civil Society on Twitter



## Civil Society on Facebook



## KEY FINDING 4

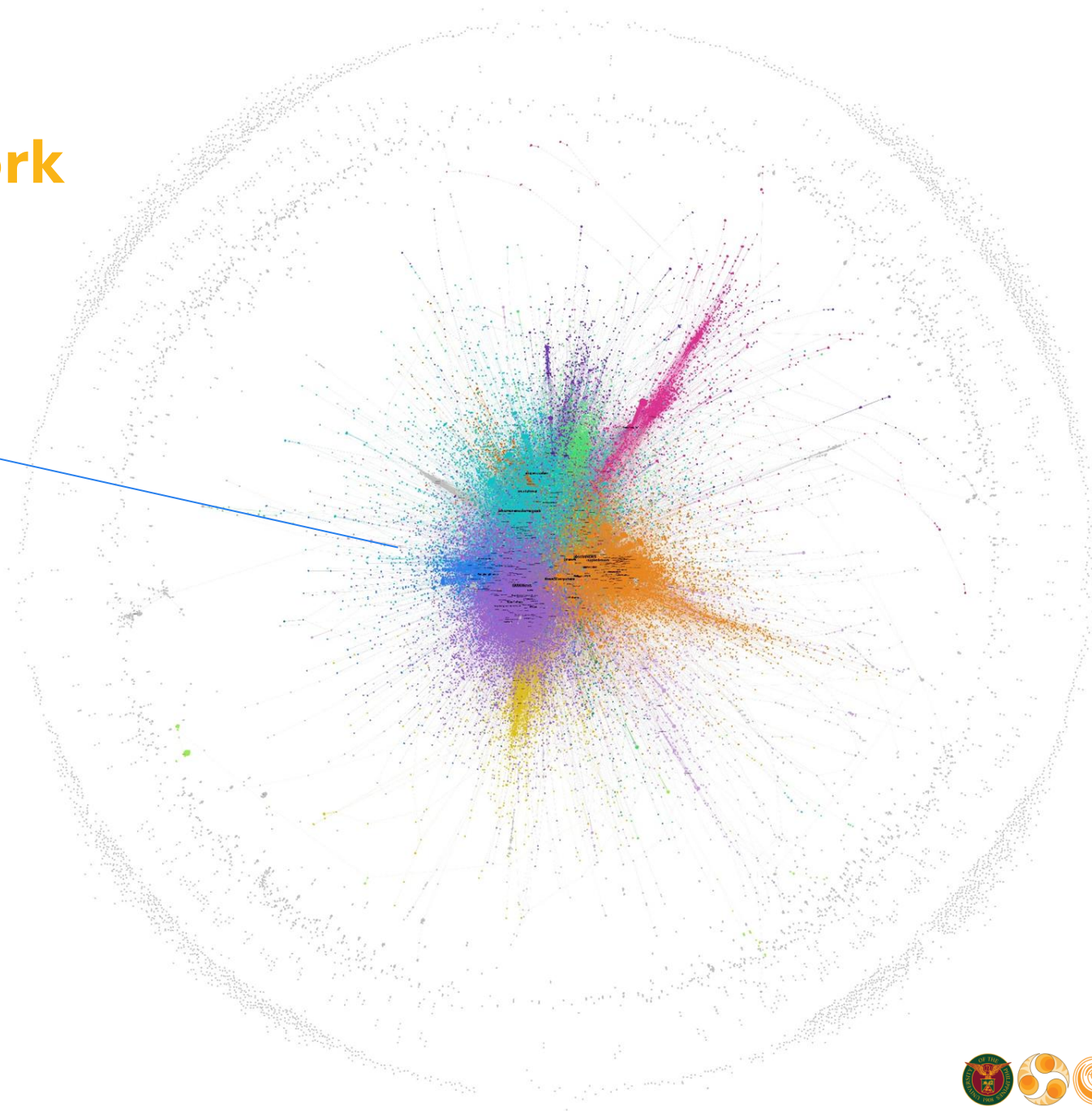
# Political turfiing by activating and consolidating communities

- Networked consolidation and activation of massive and multiple communities enables online political turfiing
- Accumulation of political capital online
- Strategic consolidation of existing communities and cultivation of new ones online

# Facebook sharing network

May to July 2021

C7 Marcos aligned accounts

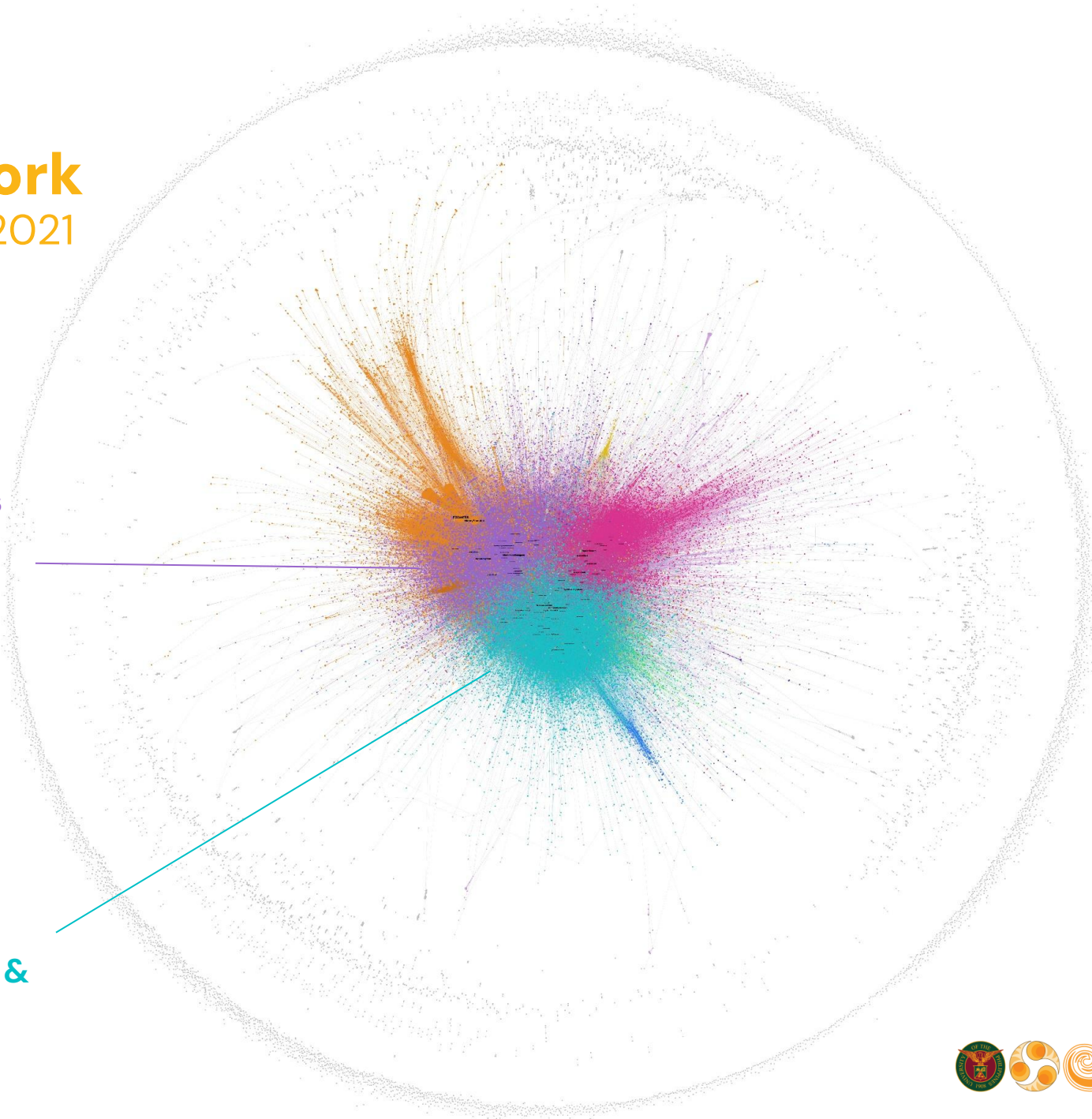


# Facebook sharing network

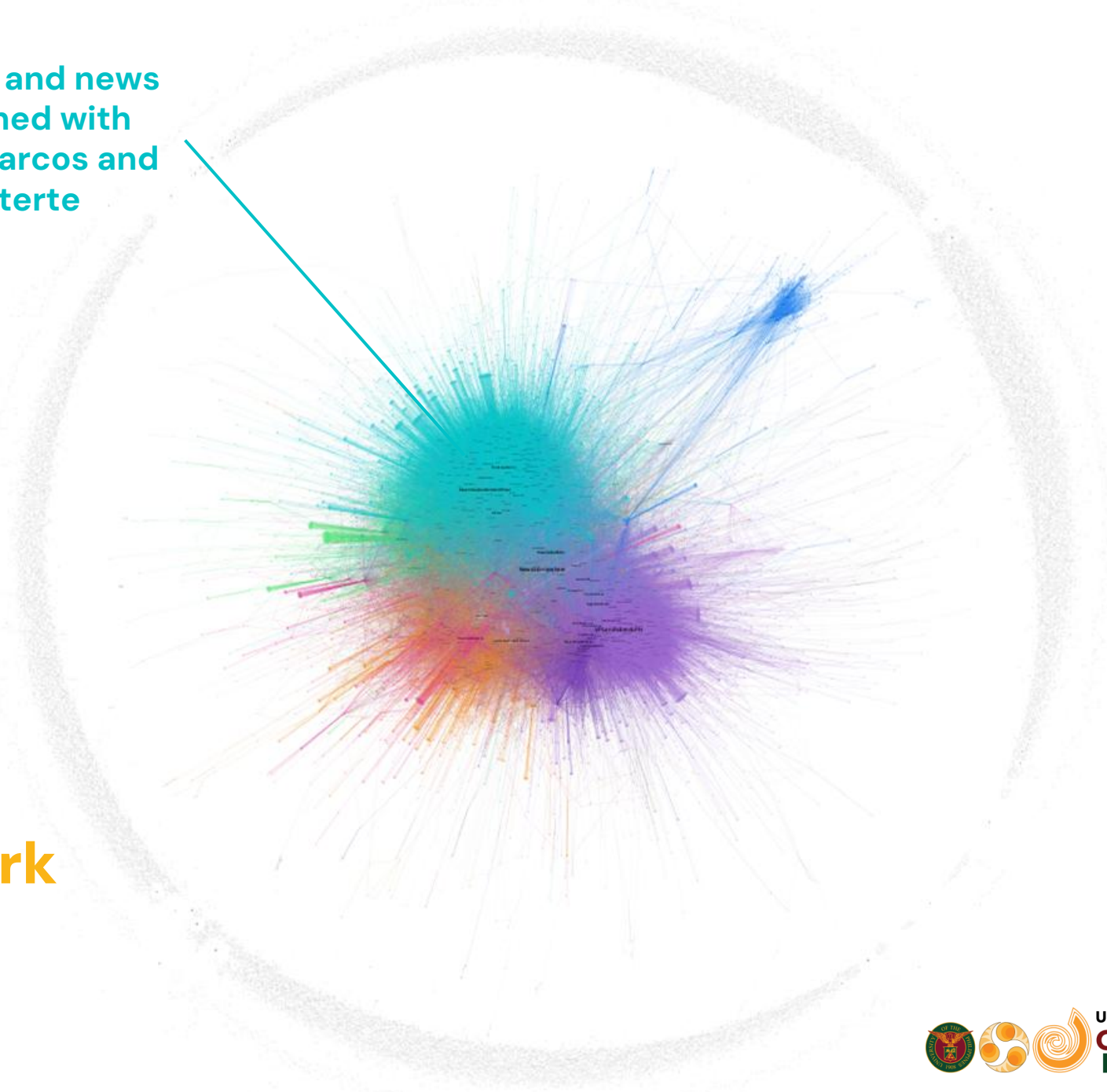
August to October 2021

C2 Facebook accounts aligned with Moreno, Lacson, and Rodrigo Duterte

C1 News media and Facebook accounts aligned with Marcos, Sara Duterte, Bong Go & Rodrigo Duterte



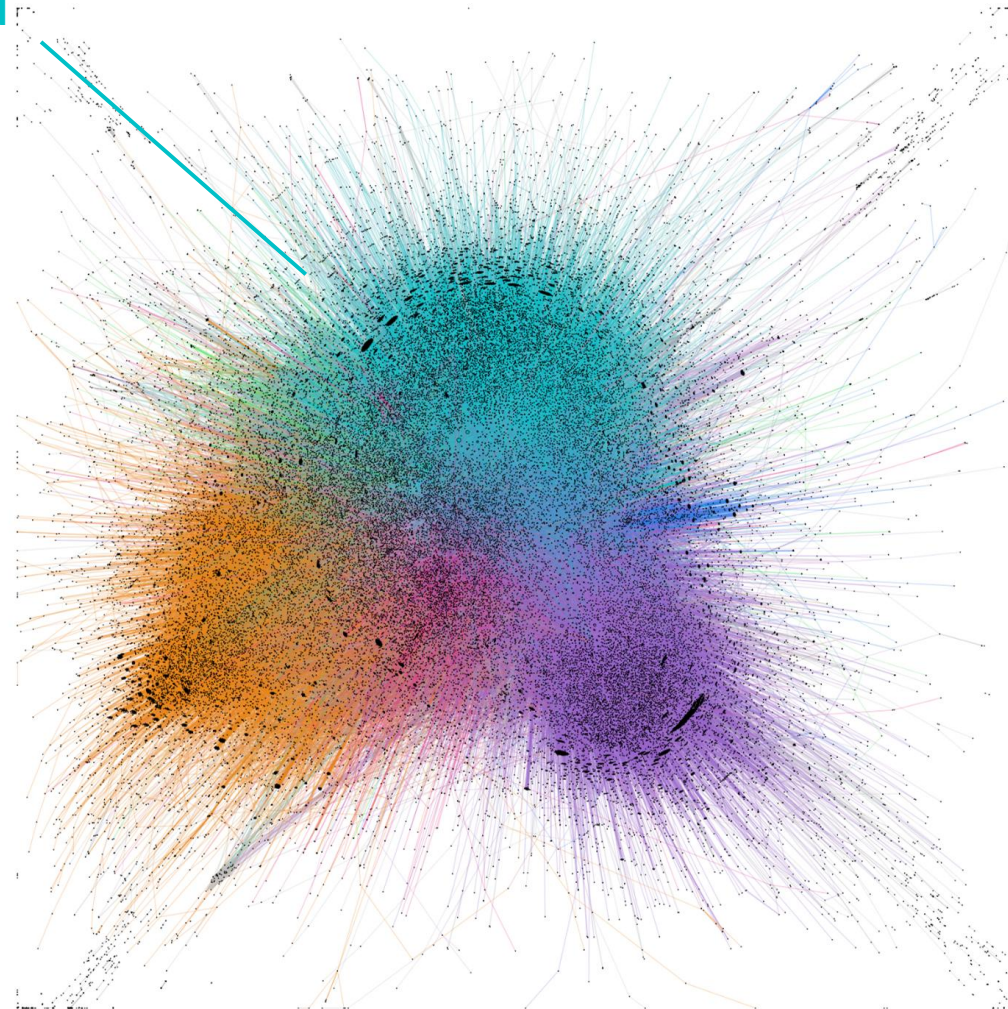
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# Facebook sharing network

November 2021 to  
January 2022

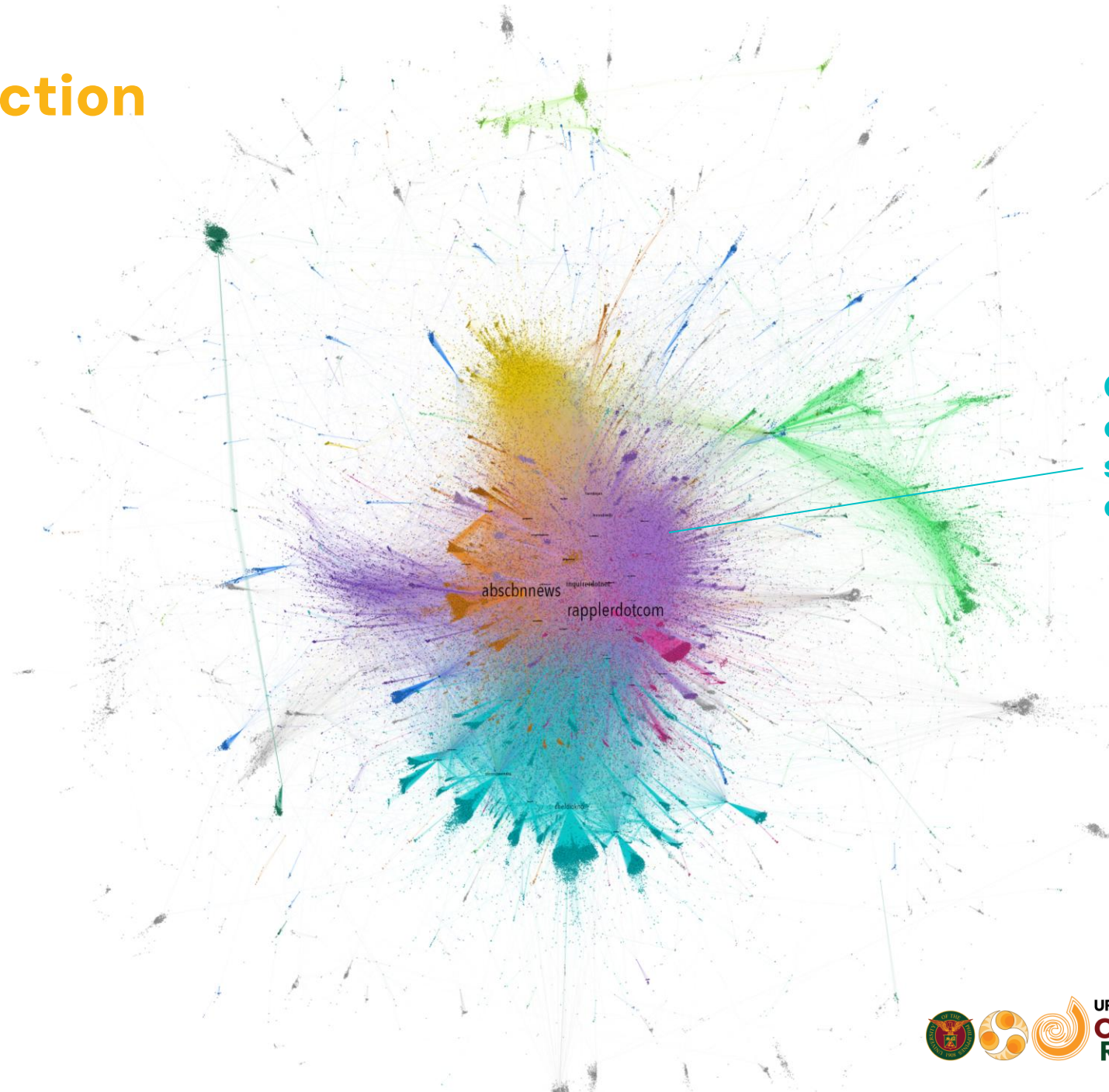
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Bongbong Marcos and  
Sara Duterte



**Facebook**  
**sharing network**  
February to May 2022

# Twitter interaction network

May to July 2021



C2 ISambayan, the opposition, opposition supporters, and opposition detractors

# Twitter interaction network

August to October 2021



C5 Leni-Kiko Tandem,  
Isko Moreno, and  
COMELEC

C1 Entertainment Media  
& Robredo supporters



# Twitter interaction network

November 2021 to January 2022



# Twitter interaction network

February to May 2022



C2 Mainstream Media and Robredo-related accounts

C4 COMELEC officials and Robredo-related accounts

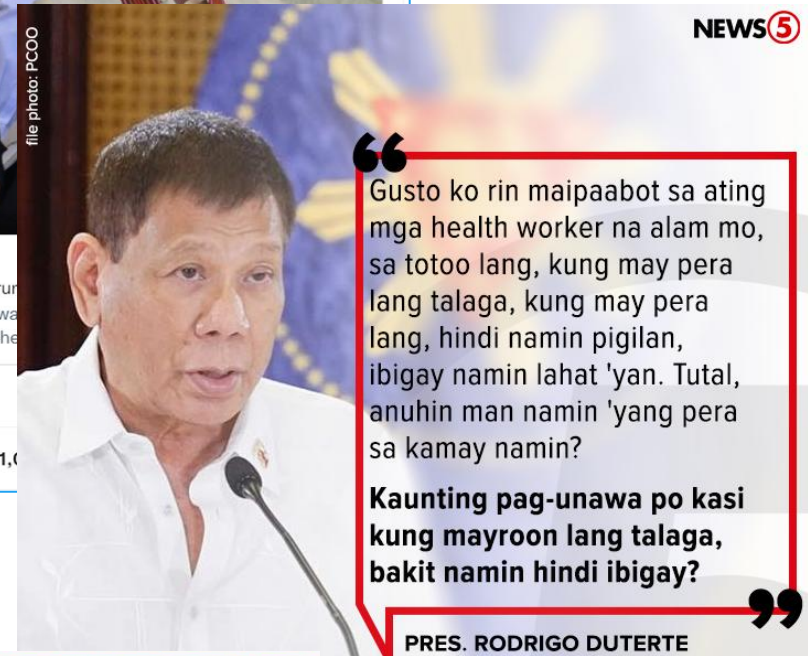
C1 CNN Philippines, Inquirer, and Robredo supporters

# Key findings

Election discourses



Personality-activated, in which electoral discourses focus less about issues, and more about personalities and people's chosen candidates.



Title: "JUST IN: BAKIT GANITO NA ANG NANGYAYARI NGAYON KAY BONGBONG MARCOS? LENI PACQUIAO ISKO NABIGLA"

**Proof-compelled, in which competency is based on evidence of action and legacy**

VP Leni Robredo is the President that we need  
#Halalan2022 🇵🇭

**HOW THE OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT SPENT P113 million for COVID-19 response**

- P68 MILLION** PPEs, COVID-19 testing kits, respirators, and ventilators donated to hospitals and individuals
- P65 MILLION** assistance to local government units (molecular laboratory equipment, relief for tricycle drivers, and the construction of an RT-PCR laboratory)
- P13 MILLION** free shuttle services and dormitories for frontliners, C&O operations, assistance for 151s, meals for volunteers and payment for frontliner dormitories, rental fees for buses
- P9.7 MILLION** expenses for COVID-19 operations, delivery/transportation relief items, additional workforce for COVID-19 operations
- P4.69 MILLION** rice distributed to families affected by COVID-19
- P4.05 MILLION** PPEs, thermal scanners, alcohol, disinfectant sprays, disinfectant, sanitizer foot press dispensers for use of OVP staff in C&O operations
- P1.14 MILLION** support for employees exposed to COVID-19 while on duty
- P934,389** hazard pay for regular employees
- P810,000** vegetables, rice and other foodstuffs for community kits
- P810,000** distribution of locally produced PPEs
- P810,000** hazard pay for contract of service employees
- P249,500** hazard pay for casual/contractual employees

3:03 PM · Jul 10, 2021 from Quezon City, National Capital Region  
iPhone

68 Retweets 5 Quote Tweets 277 Likes

COURTESY OF FACEBOOK/VP LENI ROBREDO

Ramdam na ramdam ko 'yung init ng suporta at pagmamahal

na ambag: lah...

**“Di naabutan ng mga kabataan.”**

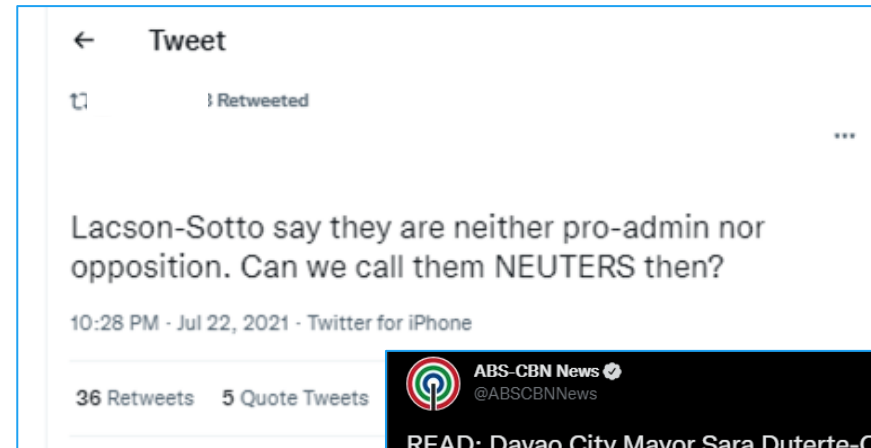
**“Dilawan sumira ng legacy ni Marcos.”**

**“Nagahanap ng paraan para i-disqualify si Marcos.”**

**“I-research niyo na lang.”**

**“Ginagawa nila ng paraan, maghahanap ng butas o problema. Tapos ilalabas nila para masiraan lang.”**

**Polarized and divided,  
where publics are only  
authorized to belong to  
only one of two poles of  
rather complex issues**



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## **Government**

constant review update of election-related policies;  
recalibrating media literacy curricula and programs

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## **Public**

consciousness about platforms and information they consume, and leveraging the connective affordance of platforms to demand accountability



# SCAN TO GET A FULL COPY OF THE REPORT

Jon Benedik Bunquin

Fatima Gaw

Julienne Thesa Baldo-Cubelo

Fernando Paragas

Maria Rosel San Pascual