

Filipino Diasporic Identity and Space as Mediated by ABS-CBN News Channel

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ABSTRACT

The history of the Filipino diaspora has been traced back to 1565 and this phenomenon has prevailed until present times, leading to the creation of multiple cultural identities and communities. Hence, there is a constant need for media to expand and evolve through the advancing accessibility of media platforms and the globalization of content. This article, anchored in Daniel Dayan's *Media and Diasporas* (1997) theory, seeks to provide a better understanding of diasporic media content as well as its corresponding influence on Filipino diasporans by delving into the current state of the Filipino diaspora, media penetration and ownership, the diaspora's lived and imagined experiences of the homeland, and the construction and negotiation of diasporic identities as mediated by ABS-CBN News Channel (ANC) content. The findings show that ABS-CBN News Channel plays a vital role in the representation and transmission of cultural and social consciousness which affect media reception, intrapersonal and interpersonal engagements, and identity construction of the diasporic audience. Also, the channel is able to sustain cultural affiliations through providing relevant information that elicits involvement among its audience. However, a notable lesson is that people's perceptions are more likely to create an impact on one's identity and ABS-CBN News Channel contents are merely mediators. Individuals and communities reform online and offline culture as they contribute and validate information and serve as extensions of the media outfit. This symbiotic relationship between diasporic media, the audience, and the public space supports the need for the production and distribution of diasporic content.

Keywords: diasporic media, Filipino diaspora, identity and space, identity construction

INTRODUCTION

The Filipino Diaspora: A Background

Diaspora is generally described as the dispersion of any people from their original homeland. Individuals in transit share and recreate identities, practices, and cultural anchors with the communities they encounter (Regis 2013, 9). The creation of a diaspora is a result of actors who create identity frames through social and political mobilization, and this social collectivity sustains the diasporans' national, cultural, and religious identity through their constant ties with a real or imagined homeland (Jobe 2018, 10). The history of the Filipino diaspora has been traced back to the Spanish colonization in 1565 and, after Martial Law was declared in the Philippines in 1972, more Filipinos were encouraged to work abroad to remit their salaries back to the Philippines to help strengthen the economy. This happened when the following terms were introduced to and normalized in the Philippine vocabulary – first, Overseas Contract Workers (OCWs), and later, Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) (Rodis 2015).

Filipino migration has and continues to render an integral part of the Philippine social and economic reality (Aguila 2015, 56). The Philippines has been the largest single country of origin of labor migrants in Asia, and the motivations for migration range from leisure and studies to employment (Asian Development Bank 2018). The estimated number of Overseas Filipino Workers who worked abroad during the period of April to September 2020 is at 1.77 million, with the majority coming from Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon, popularly known as *CALABARZON*. This comprises 18.5 percent of the total OFW population, followed by Central Luzon, Western Visayas, and National Capital Region (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020). Having seen the breakdown of Overseas Filipino Workers per region in the Philippines, it is important to note the level of density per destination country. For the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, the top three countries are the United States of America, Republic of Korea, and Japan. For member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the top three are Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. Lastly, the top three Gulf Cooperation Council Countries are Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar (Asian Development Bank 2018).

In terms of the Filipinos' digital penetration, the Philippines tops the rank of countries that use social media via any device, with an average of 4 hours and 15 minutes each day on social media, and the Internet, with an average of 10 hours and 56 minutes (Chua 2019). These statistics show the level of importance that connectivity has among Filipinos. As compared to the media consumption behavior of individuals who watch television, social media have presented a platform that elevates the individuals' visual experience because of their portability and accessibility. ABS-CBN News Channel (ANC) is the Philippines' first 24/7 news and current affairs channel. It is comprised of fourteen programs for news and sixteen programs for current affairs and lifestyle. It continues to be one of the most influential

news organizations globally with its scope expanding to the social media sphere, with over two million followers on Facebook and five million followers on Twitter (ABS-CBN News Channel n.d.). The program utilizes social media platforms that enable it to post real-time updates and garner real-time audience sentiments and engagement. This phenomenon validates the diminishing importance of national borders given the growing global linkages among actors, as facilitated by new media and the Internet, as well as the increasing significance and essentiality of diasporic media (Karim 1998, 1; Verhulst 1999, 29).

LITERATURE REVIEW: MEDIA AND DIASPORAS

Modes of communication evolve with technological and human advancements. Given the expansion of globalization and glocalization, consumption of media is an essential factor in nurturing culture and identity, as well as mobilizing individuals to create a certain action. Shared aspects of individual ideals and identities, which are reflected by diasporic media, create and strengthen a community whether it be physical or virtual (Andersson 2019, 158). Media, regardless of their forms, play pivotal roles in how migrants negotiate the potential bearing of their movement and space. The connections facilitated in the digital space are able to address the challenges of the physical realm and allow a sense of personhood and shared identity to proliferate. These challenges are subject to the diasporans' cultural, educational, professional, and socio-economic backgrounds, differential levels of media access, and varying migration motivations, intentions, aspirations, and expectations. New media are able to capture the effects of a digitally enhanced cognitive or imaginary mobility through acting as enablers of unmediated and mediated experiences (Lim et al. 2016, 2). It is evident from previous studies that diasporans utilize different media platforms and devices not only to obtain information and data, but also to create a space where they are able to merge concepts and ideologies with their current and imminent circumstances. Global tribes are seen to increasingly shape economic and cultural identities, and these are highly dependent on situated knowledge, ethnographic experiences, and complex webs of political negotiations on which people etch their self-narratives. Media continuously expand the diasporic public spheres to the extent of enabling new conversations between those in transit and those whom they leave behind; and these virtual spaces help re-establish relationships and communities detached by the process of geographic movement (Karim 1998, 13).

Knowledge transfers reinforce the character of transnationalism through providing a link between the home and host countries as well as the cycle of knowledge, skills, capital, and technology that migration entails. However, diasporans are still bound by environmental and cultural factors such as support from the home country or acceptance from the host country which affect their level of stability and influence the onset and sustainability of their transfer. Successful identification and collaboration will help motivate diasporans to continue their involvement with the home country (Siar 2011, 88). Cultural

proximity to a local language, culture, history, and values are also integral in media and products that cater to diasporans (Jan 2009, 68). Media, being central to the provision of globally distributed cultural or symbolic resources, exercise a distinct power and level of influence to their users in the cultural sphere. This is due to the media's correlation to said cultural sphere, such that the development of the human capacity and the advancement of a civilization shapes and to some extent dictates the production and distribution of works and commodities being utilized by diasporans (Jan 2009, 72).

Identity media plays a complementary role in transmitting filiation alongside cultural and social undertakings and movements. In terms of production, it is vital to determine whether the context of the main content is based on independent identity constructions or streamlined by the influence of dominant entities (Dayan 1997, 92). With this context in mind, are media platforms able to present content respective of the diasporans' autonomous identity regardless of the constraints exerted by their current locus? Contemporary reconstructions and conscious reappropriations of identity include, but are not limited to, production and distribution of ethnic news and audiovisual tapes, formation of religious and cultural groups, creation of inter-diasporic networks with religious or political objectives, and communication in general.

METHODOLOGY: THE FILIPINO DIASPORIC SPACE

Prevalent market behaviors, technological advancements, media coverage, and Western ideologies influence the creation and negotiation of identity among Filipino diasporans. This article aims to better understanding how these interrelated variables are construed by diasporans situated in the top destination countries from the three intergovernmental organizations; namely, the United States of America, Malaysia, and Saudi Arabia. Based on the available literature on the Filipino diaspora, the main research gap is primarily located in how the diasporans' media consumption, specifically of ABS-CBN News Channel content, has translated to their cultural association given their geographical space. Since most of the previous studies focused on the diasporans' perspectives and imagined communities through media use, this study helps address how local media content caters to the cultural needs of the Filipino diasporans, why Filipino diasporic identity and space influence the framing, production, and distribution of content, and why ABS-CBN News Channel is vital in the construction and negotiation of the Filipino diaspora's identity.

Diasporas mobilize media through specific use of platforms, creation of genres for niche markets, and development of community media for targeted audiences – and these make the interconnectedness of the different platforms inevitable. These multi-webbed identity media allow a wider flow of communication in public spaces; however, they are only as influential as the reception of their audience (Verhulst 1999, 32). The transmission of identity construction depends on the acceptance and

adaptation of the actors based on their niche or the majority of users. The study's framework shows the application and dynamic interplay of the three correlated variables: public space, minority and majority media, and audience (see Figure 1).

Diasporic space represents the geographical and virtual spheres of diasporans. The diasporic space establishes the current media stability and acceptance of the diasporans, as well as the context of the media content they seek (Dayan 1997, 97). The diasporic space also influences the news stories featured by media platforms and the diasporans' process of identity construction. Given the influx of minority media content that diasporans consume, the study focuses on ABS-CBN News Channel's articles, videos, and social media posts that connect the diasporans with their homeland. These platforms set the tone for the diasporic space and provide the context that facilitate diasporic identity construction.

Filipino diasporic identity construction, which involves self-identity and collective identity, is the distinct disposition of diasporans manifested in their mindsets, behaviors, practices, norms, attitudes, social inclinations, and media use (Lim et al. 2016, 2). These factors determine the diasporans' level of intrapersonal and interpersonal involvement with the homeland. The transmission of diasporic identity construction is influenced by the audience's definition of self, based on their social identity given the environment, prevalent culture, available media platforms, and degree of structural stability (Dayan 1997, 96). Communities are important to the core of the Filipino diaspora and identity media as these represent a support system the diasporans go to for self-rediscovery. These communities also set the tone for the diasporic space and fortify ABS-CBN News Channel's purpose of content creation, given the media platform's audience-centric approach.

The study employed an explanatory design to identify and assess vital factors that created an impact on societal and individual processes and norms. The first method of data collection was a structured interview with ABS-CBN News Channel's media production team. The questions covered the interpretation of the diaspora's specific lived space, perception of the Filipino diaspora, and objectives of content. These criteria helped identify the diasporic space and identity that influenced the framing of diasporic content in contrast with the main objective of the media platform. The second method of data collection was a relational content analysis of three of ABS-CBN News Channel's contents that were framed and produced for the Filipino diaspora situated in the top destination countries; namely, the United States of America, Malaysia, and Saudi Arabia. This established the messaging that the media platform produced which set the context of the succeeding data collection and the patterns indicative of the research questions. Lastly, semi-structured interviews with six Filipino diasporans aged 23-45, were conducted in 2020 to interpret the target audience's personal identification, perception of the diasporic materials featured in the study, and application of information to their own sustained identity construction. The questions covered the definition of a community to determine the

respondents' different motivations, level of involvement, and preferences. The methodology ascertained how the transmission of consciousness, through cultural materials, helped further identity construction as a coping mechanism given the change in the diasporans' disposition and, at the same time, fortified the creation of niche content that aims to reflect identity anchors.

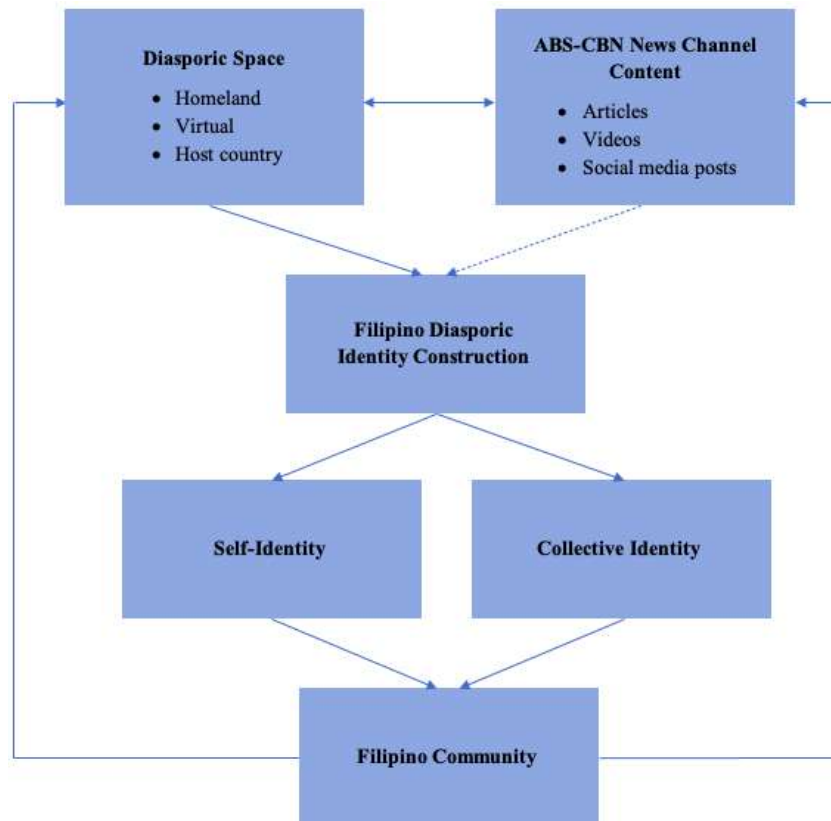


Figure 1: Conceptual model of Media and Diaspora. Source: Daniel Dayan (1997).

FINDINGS

Facilitating Diasporic Consciousness

Diasporic media produces and distributes content reflective of different identity allegiances which are manifested in the form of language, territory, traditions, and cultural expressions (Tsagarousianou 2004, 61). Based on the interview with ABS-CBN News Channel's News production team led by its Production Head, Bryant Macale, they strive to provide local cultural content for the news stories to be culturally sensitive and contextually accurate for their audiences, as well as their respective lived and imagined experiences. Media plays a vital role in the creation of cultural unity, which is essential in building individual and community ties (Andersson 2019, 153). ABS-CBN News Channel continues to

offer various stakeholders and cultural minorities a space where they can discuss the realities and issues that affect them and the manner in which they live out their daily routine. Based on analyzing audience feedback, there is a constant demand for information about the country – this ranges from relevant events and important or trending personalities and key opinion leaders to the country's global standing. Conveying concepts embedded in the public's lives is vital to media production and drives viewership (Andersson 2019, 153).

To tap the pulse of the local and global communities, ABS-CBN has bureaus, reporters, and correspondents situated around the world who gather insights. In terms of the treatment of content creation and communication, the program delivers information as is, and allows sufficient leeway for its audience to analyze and adapt to it. The existence of an active and constant engagement between ABS-CBN News Channel and the Filipino communities confirms that diasporic media create and strengthen communities by reflecting the shared aspects of individual ideals and identities, which then balance the demand and supply of information (Andersson 2019, 153).

ABS-CBN News Channel's production team acknowledges that the shift to digital tools has made the program more accessible and convenient especially for Filipinos abroad. Hence, the diasporans' lives and social sphere are simultaneously localized and transnationalized with media use, creating glocal realities where local practices and cultures thrive (Lim et al. 2016, 4). In the interview, Macale emphasized the importance of eliciting conversations on the issues that Filipinos face on a daily basis given the relevance and the possible learnings from each engagement. The viewers play an active part in the news production agenda which makes online media an essential factor in developing culture and identity, and inciting action among individuals (Andersson 2019, 156).

Filipino diasporic identity and space heavily influence the framing, production, and distribution of ABS-CBN News Channel's content since the public's interest and participation are essential factors in the entire process. During pre-production, story leads are based on issues talked about by niche communities; then audience insights are assessed based on the standard news values and validated through testimonies from individuals with first-hand experience of the issue. This ensures that the story angles in the final output are accurate, distinctive, and engaging. For post-production, the audience engagement with the content from the media outfit, as well as their feedback, are considered for succeeding news stories to ensure the content's relevance among the target audience. These salient points affirm that identity media, which in this study's case are represented by ABS-CBN News Channel, are only as influential as the reception of their audience (Dayan 1997, 97). The program provides contextually accurate content through utilizing the appropriate language, narratives, media channels, and community engagement. This is in line with how media promotes the reinforcement of social constructions and identity with their socializing functions (Andersson 2019, 153).

ABS-CBN News Channel Online as a Cultural Tool

This study features three diasporic media materials from ABS-CBN News Channel posted in 2020 and framed for the United States of America, Malaysia, and Saudi Arabia. The main criteria for the selection of the materials were the main subjects for the viewer's personal identification, the space of the subjects, and the link between this space and the homeland.



Figure 2: Content for the United States of America. Source: ABS-CBN News Channel's Facebook page.

The entertainment article posted on Facebook with an embedded YouTube video was to showcase the Filipinos' world-class talent (see Figure 2). It featured the journey of two Filipino contestants – from how they won the contest in the noontime variety show *Showtime* to how they conquered a bigger stage on *America's Got Talent*, a show where amateur performers present their acts to judges and a live, home-based audience. The video touched on the topic of nationalism as the subjects mentioned they were proud of their Filipino roots despite their current stay in the United States of America.

The video WATCH: Former 'Showtime' contest champs wow 'America's Got Talent' was posted on the June 18, 2020 and garnered over 2,949 reactions, 63 comments, and 469 shares on Facebook. The sentiments were then categorized into: (a) association with local media network ABS-CBN, i.e., the main platform that posted the article and where the main subjects first had their claim to fame; (b) skepticism because of the show format, with a few comments mentioning that the show was biased toward Americans as compared to foreign contestants; (c) lived experience, where commenters mentioned their identification with the main subjects; (d) nationalism, where comments revolved around praising the talent and perseverance of Filipinos in general; this alludes to the mindset where the success of one is the success of all; and (e) blocked comments, which were sentiments not aligned with the guidelines set by the social media platform.



Figure 3: Content for Malaysia. Source: ABS-CBN News Channel's Facebook page.

The identified concepts of interest, which were cross-checked with the other two materials, are: (a) sense of identity; (b) sense of community; and (c) lived experiences. All these were present in the material through the actual video clips from the show, real-life story from the main subjects, and sentiments from the viewers. The attributes of the aforementioned concepts were generally positive, as they helped foster a common goal or mindset within a wider group of individuals. Some of the references that validated this were the overall identification with being Filipino, association with similar beliefs, and sharing of knowledge and experience by the main subjects and viewers.

The entertainment article, posted on Facebook with an embedded Instagram video, featured Carmen Soo, the key opinion leader and a former ABS-CBN actress from Malaysia, as an international collaborator vouching for the renewal of the ABS-CBN Network franchise (see Figure 3). Her statement included a glimpse of her experience of working on a project with the network and how it has positively portrayed the Philippines and Malaysia to one another. She also added that through globalization, the network provided a semblance of home to Filipinos in the Philippines and abroad, and acquired the interest of foreign fans with its wide range of shows. She then mentioned that the network has provided pivotal information and entertainment to its viewers regardless of race and location. The article also shared statistics on the network's distribution of content worldwide – they have distributed over 50,000 hours of content, with their programs airing in about 50 territories (ANC 24/7 2020).

The video WATCH: Carmen Soo attests to ABS-CBN's international reach, calls for franchise renewal was posted on July 8, 2020 and received over 2,187 reactions, 124 comments, and 19 shares on Facebook. The sentiments were categorized as follows: (a) involvement in diasporic media, which showed that people who saw the article were interested in watching shows that featured the main key opinion leader in the article; (b) lived experience, where commenters used the reality of people losing their jobs as an example of one of the adverse effects of the shutdown of the franchise; (c) opposition to the main topic or main message of the material, where commenters merely discredited the main key opinion leader's sentiments on the topic; (d) support for the main topic or message of the material, where commenters expressed their admiration for the key opinion leader for actually saying her piece about the renewal of the franchise; (e) government-related sentiments, which started discussions on the Philippine government's stance on the renewal of the franchise; (f) blocked comments, which were sentiments not aligned with the guidelines set by the social media platform.

The concepts of interest were present in the material through the statements and comments from the key opinion leader, statistics from the media company, and comments and reactions from the viewers. The attributes of the concepts were a mix of positive and negative reception which resulted in a discourse among a wide group of people who had contrasting perspectives about the topic of the article. Some of the references of the concepts were identification with being Filipino, association with similar beliefs – whether pro or con, and sharing of knowledge and experience.

The context of the current events article, posted on Facebook with embedded video clips from the news reports, showcased some Overseas Filipino Workers in Saudi Arabia who were distressed due to the ongoing pandemic (see Figure 4). The video showed a group of ten (10) Filipino skilled workers who were picking garbage since they were laid off and were not provided basic social benefits by their employers for about four (4) months. Upon the virality of the video, government agencies such as the Philippine Overseas Labor Office, Department of Labor and Employment, and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration have intervened and provided immediate yet unsustainable relief including arrangements for repatriation. The Overseas Filipino Workers were then interviewed in Teleradyo's *Lingkod Kapamilya* segment where the news team probed their current situation; and the Overseas Filipino Workers were able to send a message of reassurance to their loved ones on air.

The video was posted on the 18th of June 2020 and has garnered over 766 reactions, 184 comments, and 76 shares on Facebook. The sentiments were categorized into: (a) empathy, where commenters shared their concern and well wishes for the Overseas Filipino Workers to overcome their distress; (b) call for government action, where commenters shared their suggestions on and requests for more government intervention; (c) lived experience, where commenters related the affliction of the Overseas Filipino Workers to the social realities happening in the Philippines and shared their actual situations to provide more perspectives to the discourse; (d) conversation starters, which included tagging of peers and sharing of supporting documents; (e) flak on the subjects, where commenters questioned the decisions and disposition of the subjects in the material; (f) flak on the government, where commenters questioned the capability of the government to address the situation; (g) flak on the network, where commenters challenged the network to help the subjects directly apart from the media coverage; and (h) blocked comments, which were sentiments not aligned with the guidelines set by the social media platform.

The attributes of the concepts were a mix of positive and negative reception, and these helped foster a common goal or mindset within a wide group of people. Some of the references of the concepts were identification with being Filipino, association with similar beliefs, and sharing of knowledge and experience.

The different materials analyzed had commonalities and a certain template in terms of their framing, production, and distribution. English was the main language used especially when international entities or ideals were featured. However, if the news was about the *masa*, i.e., the mass Filipino population, the articles were written in Filipino. This was possibly to emphasize the message of the material or to reach a wider market more fluent in said language. The materials were not only framed to elicit a certain behavior, response, or mindset but also to start a discourse among people with similar or contrasting beliefs. It can be said that the materials were not completely unbiased because they were produced in a way that favored certain ideals. This can be associated with McCombs and Shaw's (1972) agenda

setting theory, which states that media have the ability to influence their audience's perception on issues since it dictates the accessibility and presentation of information. Hence, emphasis is made on aspects the media platform wants the audience to engage with – space, time, and position are taken into account. To expound, the article for the United States of America was framed positively – to highlight the Filipino talent abroad; the article for Malaysia was framed in favor of one side of the topic, which supports the renewal of the media franchise, and did not feature the opposing side; and the article for Saudi Arabia was more of a call to action to help the Overseas Filipino Workers in need. Headlines, therefore, have to be concise and sharable in order to create an impact among the readers upon exposure. The posts were available on different platforms – on the main ABS-CBN News Channel website as well as on their social media accounts – and the material posted on social media was more transparent in terms of the audience traction and it provided more space for the audience to express their sentiments about the topic and engage with people who were involved in discourse. ABS-CBN News Channel provided a quintessential platform that lessens perceived and actual space between its audience given its complex flow of information and communication.



Figure 4: Content for Saudi Arabia. Source: ABS-CBN News Channel's Facebook page.

Given that ABC-CBN News Channel content is globalized, the program can enhance cultures through accommodating preferences of its target audience and creating a clear and relatable sense of what's happening in one's disposition (Grigorescu and Zaif 2017, 71). The materials performed a significant role for the Filipinos in their homeland, as well as for those in the diaspora who seek to retain and strengthen their connection with people and concepts they associate with. These media contents, which promote the creation of imaginary homelands, strengthen the diasporans' idea of nation (Regis 2013, 14). In terms of the audience's image of home, ABS-CBN News Channel content is deemed as means for diasporans to retain connectivity with their homeland for it emanates nostalgia and gives them the impression of being close to home. News and current events are deemed as an extension of the Filipinos' culture and collective identity. ABS-CBN News Channel, providing real-time updates on events happening worldwide, serves as a manifestation of the Filipinos' roots and sense of nationality. It also elicits involvement among the individuals given their level of consideration in the content and information they are exposed to.

The content featured by ABS-CBN News Channel establishes a sense of community and promotes engagement from as simple as liking the post to sharing the same or opposing belief with other people on the comment section. The behavior and feedback from the viewers were highly influenced by the theme of the content. For entertainment articles, like the material for the United States of America, since it featured a positive trait of the Filipinos, the reception and engagement were mostly positive. However, if the entertainment article had some sort of political agenda, which is the case of the article for Malaysia, even the slightest hint of an editorial bias resulted in both positive and negative reception. As for current events, these tended to prompt more engagement and nationalistic sentiments from the viewers and evoke a common objective.

The Filipino Diaspora as a Communicator

Based on the interviews with Filipino diasporans, they traverse through different spaces on a daily basis; hence, media and communication are vital factors for them to survive and thrive in their current disposition. This was evident in the imagined space they create when they consume diasporic media which eliminates physical boundaries. One of the respondents commented, "Media [content] makes me feel like I'm still in the Philippines," and another mentioned, "It's my comforting fill of home." ABS-CBN News Channel's ability to penetrate both online and offline spheres as well as local and global contexts enables it to reflect the diasporic experience, pave the way for complex discourse, and elicit viewer action (Andersson 2019, 153). This symbiotic system brought about by ABS-CBN News Channel's adaptation of globalization and glocalization promotes the creation of more glocal realities that cater to niche audiences; and at the same time, provides a common ground for fundamental discourse (Lim et al. 2016, 3).

The three identified spaces were (a) homeland or a place of identification and origin; (b) online or a virtual sphere that is neither the physical and conceptual spaces but mediates both; and (c) host country or place of the diasporans' current disposition. The online space, which mediates the diasporans' involvement with their homeland and host country, plays a vital role in how the diasporans conduct their daily lives. This is a dimension where diasporans can retain a common or preferred disposition that is not subject to physical changes (Andersson 2019, 163). The respondents deemed social media as an extension of their self and identity, as mentioned by one of the participants, "[Consuming news on social media] reminds me of who I am, what I know, and what my culture is." It was their media platform of choice, and it also influenced their intrapersonal and interpersonal behaviors in a sense that they adjusted their actions and assessed when to engage in discourse based on the social atmosphere. This strengthens the outlook that media constantly develops relationships and communities (Karim 1998, 6; Verhulst 1999, 31). ABS-CBN News Channel has paved the way for complex narrations, exchanges, and contestations of experiences, ideas, and ideals (Crang et al. 2003, 439; Siapera 2014, 177). The diasporans shared their sentiments and interacted with individuals coming from different places, since the contents are within their virtual space.

Filipino diasporans constantly reconstruct their identities given the changes in their environment and the information they consume on a daily basis. As for some of the prevalent effects, the study categorizes these under self-identity and collective identity. Self-identity is the intrapersonal scope consisting of psychological benefits, reinforcement of values and beliefs, and deduction of social cues and interaction. Having a strong sense of self-identity and creating a virtual space where they can continue living their roles as Filipinos help them cope with their current disposition and address their cognitive dissonance and sense of guilt. Collective identity is the interpersonal scope consisting of engagement with communities, adaptation to diverse communication patterns, and obtaining a sense of belonging and rapport to deal with homesickness. Such is brought about by consuming diasporic content that provides a common ground and topics of interest which, in turn, helps them build and maintain communities. A notable instance mentioned during one of the interviews was the creation of government-recognized Filipino communities abroad in order to assist and provide company to newcomers since this helped lessen the feeling of being displaced and having no one to rely on. Common experiences and interests, which stem from culture and history, enable diasporans to create and reinforce a community that helps them cope with their current disposition and create an impact on their life, values, and identity construction (Andersson 2019, 158; Verhulst 1999, 31).

The respondents considered ABS-CBN News Channel as a helpful tool and media outlet since they get updated even if it is not real-time – they simply caught up and engaged with conversations around the topic. Based on the pattern of behaviors they raised during the interviews, the process of media reception was more complex. The diasporans consumed news, mostly through ABS-CBN News Channel. However, their choice of media channel depended on their state of mind because they

anticipated the psychological and behavioral effects that the information would have on them. They analyzed the content and then internally either proved or refuted the information they had acquired. Being updated with the news helped them become more mindful of their situation – there is a certain sense of guilt which results in them questioning themselves and their current disposition due to the viewpoint that they have escaped the harsh realities their loved ones continue to face in their homeland. They committed a corresponding intrapersonal action, and re-evaluated their pre-existing beliefs and related this to their current state. Some of the examples mentioned during the interviews were cancelling of plans, wanting to be alone, and planning courses of self-beneficial action. They extended or passed on the information to the community. In this study, the diasporans act as both the receiver and the sender of content and this is attributable to their sense of responsibility to their homeland and fellow Filipinos. Most of them retained communication with the homeland to strengthen their family link and avoid the prevalence of a communication gap. This gave them a sense of relief and satisfaction. Hence, sharing content that they can relate to was of utmost importance.

They also built and nurtured collective identity among Filipinos from the same host country. Apart from sharing information with the homeland, diasporans also ensured that they contribute to discussions among their communities to give credence to their involvement in the group's welfare and solidarity. This helped them cope with the news and assess how they can do their part to help. These sentiments affirm that one's sense of community is rooted in a system of commonalities with the other members of their social circles (Andersson 2019, 158). Lastly, they reinforced their identity and belonging as Filipinos. As pointed out by one of the participants, "Filipino tayo na'san man tayo sa mundo." (Translation by the author: "We are Filipinos, no matter where we are in the world."). Apart from providing the facts, ABS-CBN News Channel content also provided a wider range of perspectives which helped the diasporans make better and well-rounded decisions. They valued that Filipino diasporic media have multiple platforms and a unified message regardless of the demographics of the market.

CONCLUSION

Some of the aspects probed into by the study are (a) community, a group of individuals with a common understanding and goals that provide emotional and physical support to each other; (b) communication patterns, which are the exchanging of ideas and concepts that differ depending on the communities; (c) engagement, which is the corresponding intrapersonal and interpersonal actions taken by diasporans based on the media they consume, communities they associate with, and communication patterns they practice; and (d) pursuit for reinforcement, which is process of validating an identity, belief, or pattern of behavior.

The transmission of cultural and social consciousness is facilitated by taking the audience demographics and psychographics into consideration during content creation (Regis 2013). ABS-CBN News Channel portrays a vital role in this process, especially in the digital space, as it produces a mix of independent and mainstream content based on the topic, territory, and desired audience feedback. Based on these audience-centric points, media help closed digital transnational communities to thrive apart from the interpersonal relationships and interactions that diasporans constantly strive to maintain (Lim et al. 2016, 4). The program sustains cultural affiliations through providing relevant information that support the need for diasporic content and elicit involvement among its audience. In relation to the theoretical analysis, the program has substantiated their cognitive, affective, and behavioral influences on its audiences given their high dependency of media content.

The diasporans' consumption of local media from the host country is mainly to know the current situation which may or may not affect them; while the main thrust of their consumption of diasporic media is to foster and nurture relationships. To some extent, the diasporans perform as an extension of ABS-CBN News Channel given that they recommence the relaying of information to their own circles. This behavior can be deemed as a vital factor in their identity construction and community involvement. This is consistent with how media are seen as merely enablers of self-articulation instead of a determiner of identity (De La Cruz 2005, 2). These data substantiate Dayan's (1997) theory, which states that individuals consciously and actively reconstruct their identities based on their media consumption and environment. This is manifested in their self- and collective identities divulged during the interviews conducted for the study.

The contexts that the program provides serve as mediating factors that have cognitive, affective, and behavioral influence on the audience's daily life and routine. To expound more on the different aspects, the cognitive influence focuses on how news stories provoke elaborate discourse and challenge the audience's pre-existing perspectives, the affective influence emphasizes how the program promotes a culture where individuals can openly discuss the issues they face on a daily basis with the intention of providing a reference for other people who may be affected by these as well; and lastly, the behavioral influence accentuates how media contexts are set in order to elicit a certain call to action for the viewers. This symbiotic relationship between the three identified indicators of the study – public space, minority and majority media, and audience – is evident on account of ABS-CBN News Channel's audience-centric news reporting hinged on cultural context, as there is constant action of reinvention from both actors and the media (Dayan 1997, 97).

In summary, ABS-CBN News Channel contents reinforce or refute the diasporans' pre-existing beliefs, provide contexts that help strengthen their intrapersonal and interpersonal identification, and serve as a call to action. As shown in the sentiments shared in the interviews and the sample content discussed, ABS-CBN News Channel reflected and prompted conversation on daily life experiences and

communication patterns which were relevant to diasporans through their audience-centric approach (Andersson 2019, 153). These findings validate the Media and Diasporas theory, which states that diasporans mobilize media to allow a wider flow of communication and transmission of identity constructions (Dayan 1997). However, a notable learning is that people are more likely to create an impact on one's identity and ABS-CBN News Channel content are merely seen as mediators.

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