

# At Home Elsewhere: The Transnational Kapamilya Imaginary in Selected ABS-CBN Station IDs

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In this era of globalization, “transnational television” has become pivotal in mobilizing cultural representations on a local and global scale. Transnational television expands its contours on a global scale and re-creates a sense of home by bringing “home-grown” programming to diasporic communities. ABS-CBN, an information and entertainment multimedia conglomerate in the Philippines, represents the operation of transnational media. Through its flagship The Filipino Channel (TFC), ABS-CBN is able to reach audiences worldwide via cable, satellite, online and mobile, and through its international subsidiaries and affiliates. Framing transnational television as a “field” in cultural work or practice, this paper critically inquires the reproduction of various capitals and misrecognition of symbolic violence and legitimization of social structures and profit-making in a globalized culture. Through an investigation of selected ABS-CBN Christmas Station IDs as a symbolic form in the media field, mediation of capitals—symbolic and network capital – is celebrated in transnational *Kapamilya* experience and interplayed with ABS-CBN’s quest to serve the Filipino worldwide.

**Keywords:** *transnational television, symbolic reproduction, symbolic violence, symbolic capital, network capital*

## Introduction

Globalization has transformed the television industry and culture. Globalizing media industries, deregulatory policy regimes, the multiplication and convergence of media formats, and the fragmentation of media audiences—particularly national audiences—impact television content, structure, and consumption (Tay & Turner, 2008). While globalization impacts the reconfiguration of content, structure and consumption, Chalaby (2005) proposes the rise of “transnational television” as a result of “expansion of hundreds of cross-border TV channels that occupy transponder space on communication satellites that can beam a signal across a whole continent” (p. 1). With trans-border TV channels such in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, South Asia, Greater China and Latin America, majority of cross-border TV channels are pan-regional in scope and serve regional and diasporic groups living beyond their geographical contours (2005). These channels that “air home-made television programmes and even adapt international feeds to local taste as a form of localization” (p. 2) operate on what Sinclair (2005) refers to as “geocultural regions” or “regions not solely defined by

its geographical contours but also [...] by commonalities of language and culture” (p.196) Through broadcast of international channels on regional basis, alliances with local partners occurs (Chalaby, 2005), or even “[...] produced in more than one place” (p.9).

Transnational television operates within the umbrella of commercial global communications. As Barker (1997) suggests, while global television implies the “various configurations of public and commercial television that are regulated, funded and viewed within the boundaries of nation/states and/or language communities” (p.27), transnational television, a second meaning of the term global television, “refers to television which in its technology, ownership, programme distribution and audiences operates across the boundaries of nations-states and language communities” (p.27). And as transnational television participates in the flow of worldwide discourse and cultural representations, the pursuit of profit becomes the primary goal (Barker, 1999), resonating the aim of global media corporations of increasing of the out-of-home market revenue in the total turnover (Chalaby, 2005). It is also paired with the sales of technological hardware such as satellites and TV sets (Barker, 1999), and even with internet, hence, redefining access of home-grown programs through technological capital. This expansionist and dynamic production of new commodities and markets becomes the logic of capitalism in the production and reproduction of a consumer culture on a global landscape.

In the 21st century, television broadcasting has become only one of the options for distribution of TV content, alongside cable, internet downloads, online video streams and DVDs (Meikle & Young, 2008). And with the convergence of media platforms such as telecommunications, information technology and electronic media, television production and consumption is reconfigured (Tay & Turner, 2008). As Tay and Turner suggests, “we no longer talk about ‘television’ as if it were a singular entity [...]” (p.72). In synch with the transformations of operations of television broadcast media is the heightened fragmentation of the mass audience. With multiplicity of choices provided by Cable TV, internet downloads, previews, or BitTorrents, “in the post-broadcast era [...] minority of the audience watches the free-to-air channels addressing the national audience while the rest are watching subscription services-many of them originating in other countries entirely” (p. 74). Meanwhile, the proliferation of new media technologies and intense convergence of accessible technologies enable audiences to consume and create broadcast content (Meikle & Young, 2008). It also leads to the imagination of the nation from multiple and intersecting communicative platforms (Tay & Turner, 2008). Hence, a convergent and networked media environment plays a pivotal role in transnational broadcast circulation and consumption. In the Philippines, the reconfiguration of the broadcasting

industry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century-operations, content, and consumption-reflects through local commercial channels such as with ABS-CBN (Alto Broadcasting System-Chronicle Broadcasting Network).

### **Interrogating Capitals in the Media Field**

At the core of transnational television operations are the produced and circulated media texts. These texts flow and are consumed from different communicative platforms such as traditional and new media. Referring to the operations of television as cultural work, these media texts are embedded with discourses that emerge around programming and messaging (Fiske, 1987). Linking discourses to the theory of symbolic violence of French social philosopher Pierre Bourdieu, discourses serve as indirect cultural mechanisms of order and social restraint (Jenkins, 2002). Cultural mechanisms contribute in the “maintenance and reproduction of existing social structure of domination” (Garnham, 1993, p.179). The maintenance of the social structure is informed by “the internalization of social structures in the habitus as cognitive structures or classificatory scheme that operate below [...] discourse” (p.179). It is said that two processes are involved in the perception of the real world and the behaviour based upon the perception: “(1) the cognition of reality as constructed within the internalized classificatory system, and (2) the act of misrecognition whereby this classificatory schema is seen as necessary [...]” (p. 179). Along the process of misrecognition, symbolic violence thrives on the imposition of systems of symbolisms and meaning upon groups or classes, “in such a way they are experienced as legitimate” (p.104) and obscuring power relations that permit successful imposition (Jenkins, 2002). The process of legitimization occurs via misrecognition or “the process whereby power relations are perceived not for what they objectively are but in a form which renders them legitimate in the eyes of the beholder” (p.104). Hence, as what Garnham (1993) states, “For Bourdieu, social contradiction is simply dissolved into a unified classificatory scheme that always leads to the misrecognition of social contradiction and thus reproduction of the given social reality.” (p.182).

The media, as a producer of cultural work, constitute a “field” or “a structured system of social position-occupied either by individuals or institutions-the nature of which defines the situation of their occupants” (Jenkins, 2002, p.85). It is “a “field of struggles” in which agents’ strategies are concerned with the preservation or improvement of their positions with respect to the defining capital of the field” (p. 85). Social position “stand in relationships of domination, subordination or equivalence (homology) to each other by the virtue of access to [...] economic capital, social capital (various kinds of valued relations with significant others), cultural capital

(primarily legitimate knowledge of one kind or another), and symbolic capital (prestige and social honour)” (p. 85). Individuals are also shaped by *habitus*, “which only exist in, through and because of the practices of actors and their interaction with each other and with the rest of their environment [...]” (p.85). In some ways, as embodied in individual agents and acquired through experience, *habitus* is shaped by influences in the operation of the field.

By critically exploring media texts in relation to education and social reproduction in Bourdieu’s symbolic violence, it is argued that the media, as one of many fields in society, can “reproduce culture in all its arbitrariness [...] and the power relations that underwrite its own operation” (Jenkins, 2002, p. 105), through pedagogic action. As Jenkins (2002) suggests, “pedagogic work, and its results, are a substitute for physical constraint and coercion; it is produced out of by pedagogic authority and subsequently reinforces it” (p. 107). Through the operations of pedagogic authority, “the misrecognition of culture as arbitrary and bestows upon it the taken-for-granted quality of naturalness” (p. 107). Meanwhile, integral in the field is the *illusio*. From the word *ludus* or the game, *illusio* serves as a *doxa* or belief in the game of the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992): “Players agree, by the mere fact of playing, and not by the way of a ‘contract,’ that the game is worth playing” (p. 98). Thus in the field, symbolic violence is misrecognized and the process of cultural reproduction creates social structure.

In the contemporary and global society, “a new form of power stems from the extension and elaboration of the mobility field” (Elliott & Urry, 2010, p.10), the “network capital”. Drawing from the mobilities paradigm and from Bourdieu’s proposed forms of capitals, John Urry (2007) proposes the concept “network capital” as a “subjectless, communications-driven and information-based” (p.11) form of networking enabled through engagement with different mobility systems—mobile and computer networks—towards communicative mobilities. As what Elliott and Urry (2010) suggest, “the more the society is organized around the value of ‘circulation,’ the greater the significance of network capital with the range of capitals available within the society” (p.19). It is through network capital that geographically dispersed individuals such as migrants venture into mobile lives, wherein notions of co-presence is mediated and the process of information storage and retrieval of data occur in transient places (Urry, 2007). Nevertheless, in the transnational operations of the broadcast industry and transnational arrangement among migrants, network capital serve as a potent capital, allowing access to technologies and infrastructures that circulate texts and meaning.

## The Dreamwork of Transnational Imaginaries in Philippine Media Text

The approach in unpacking misrecognition of symbolic violence by the media as a field is contextualized in selected scholarly works in the Philippines. Following Althusser's definition and looking into narrative imperialism in the Rory B. Quintos movie *Anak* (2000), Raymundo (2011) introduces the concept of "transnational imaginaries" or as "discourses that normalize and naturalize the exploitative conditions of the neo-liberal globalization" (p. 551). Coming from a similar approach in interrogating media texts, Raymundo (2005) analyses ABS-CBN's *Global Pinay*, a segment in *Magandang Tanghali Bayan*, and argues how the show legitimizes cross-fertilization as a result of the symbolic labor of migration and elides the necessity of export labor. It is in this framing that entertainment may elide the issues of misrepresentation, reducing the economic to the cultural (Raymundo, 2005). As Raymundo puts it, "By constantly reminding viewers that TV shows are produced for their entertainment-thereby reconstructing and/or reproducing particular tastes and judgments as to what constitutes entertainment-the autonomy of the cultural field is asserted from its economic condition of possibility" (p.16).

Misrecognition of symbolic violence also manifests in discourses of political or economic relations or free trade, weaving media representations to cultural and embodied experience of migration in a global society. Tadiar (2003) proposes "fantasy-production" or

in an attempt to think of these imaginary dimensions of political economy, that is, of structures of production and power on national as well as international scales. It names a socio-symbolic logic or dreamwork obtaining in the organization of the international community and the scenes of its exchanges (the affairs of the world market and international relations. (p.29)

In a book entitled *Domestic Bodies*, Tadiar (1997) identifies the dominant dreamwork that facilitates migration in the Philippines. While female Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) have become the new industrial slaves, a symbolic field of fantasy production operates by branding the OFWs as *bagong bayani* or "modern-day heroes," symbolizing the slaves becoming the object of sacrifice in saving Philippine economy. The ideological dreamwork upholds political and economic hardware despite the construction of the female worker or "domestic helper" (DH) as both feminine and non-human (dehumanized), as proven in reports on physical and mental brutality. As Tadiar (2003) puts it, "The violence which brings Filipina domestic helpers to the fore as the representative figures of the diasporic population is both the

physical violence inflicted on the domestic helpers' bodies and the violence inflicted on the hegemonic nation as it envisions itself" (p.127).

Transnational imaginaries and fantasy-production resonate the illusion in cultural work that mediates and downplays symbolic violence. While both are manifestation of how power is exploited in the process of cultural reproduction, creating domination and subordination in social structure, both also interrogates the complexities of representation in pedagogic work and legitimization of various capitals. Drawing from a preview of how transnational television sits in the operations of global and networked commercial communication and how operations—the advent of online television (TFC Now) and mobile applications (TFC.tv)—manifest in the ideological dreamwork of neo-liberal desires through media texts, this paper critically explores the cultural representations of the transnational legitimization in selected ABS-CBN Christmas Station IDs. Three of these IDs are identified to confront the imaginaries in depicting the transnational Filipino family life in the era of globalization and greater networked mobilities: (1) 2010: *Ngayong Pasko Magniningning ang Pilipino* [This Christmas the Filipino Will Sparkle] (Ramos, 2010); (2) 2011: *Da Best ang Pasko ng Pilipino* [The Filipino Christmas is the Best] (Ramos, P., Gonzales, P., & Saliendra, 2011); and (3) 2012: *Magliliwanag ang Mundo ng Kuwento ng Pasko* [The World Will Brighten through the Story of Christmas] (Ramos, P. & Gonzales, P., 2012).

### **The Kapamilya Channel: From Local to Global**

ABS-CBN is an information and entertainment multimedia conglomerate in the Philippines. The company produces a wide array of entertainment and news programs that are on free-to-air television via its Very High Frequency (VHF) TV network, Channel 2, and its Ultra High Frequency (UHF) TV network, Studio 23, along with regional networks nationwide (Villanueva, 2011). It has also nine channels on cable TV – ABS-CBN News Channel or ANC, Cinema One, Lifestyle Network, Myx, Balls, Velvet, Hero and DZMM Teleradyo (Villanueva, 2011). The company produces and distributes film and music via Star Cinema and Star Records respectively, and has business interests in glossy magazine publishing, property management, cable and satellite television services, merchandizing and licensing, and a lot more (2011). ABS-CBN uses Kapamilya as its main slogan and has also a global presence through its flagship channel The Filipino Channel (TFC), launched by ABS-CBN International in 1994 in San Francisco, California (Inquirer.net, 2014). TFC reaches a significant populace in the United States, the Middle East, Europe, Australia, Canada, and Japan via cable, satellite, online and mobile, and various international subsidiaries and affiliates. TFC

particularly calls its audience “Global Pinoy.” As of 2011, TFC had over 2.47 million subscribers worldwide (Valisno, 2012).

ABS-CBN has evolved from a purely broadcasting business into a multimedia content and distribution conglomerate. It reflects the expansionist production of new commodities and markets in a globalized consumer culture. ABS-CBN International ventures into a line-up of non-media services that address the need of Global Pinoy such as online retail of home-grown products (Starry Starry Store), cargo forwarding (Star Kargo), phone and online remittance (MyRemit), and even a rechargeable phonecard (Sarimanok One). Media and non-media products help the Global Pinoy to not only cope with homesickness, but also strengthen connections between overseas Filipinos and home. These products capitalize on the cultural practice of the Filipinos abroad, in relation to Pertierra’s (2012) description of the “Philippines as a paradigmatic example of the aporia of globality” (p.113), or of Filipinos remaining attached to their roots despite the obligation or compulsion to leave their home.

Apart from producing entertainment and informative programming on a local and global scale, ABS-CBN has been using Station IDs. In its basic form, Stations ID or Station Identification is a branding mechanism that helps identify broadcasting materials of television networks or radio stations. ABS-CBN produces Station IDs that represent the season in the Philippines: *tag-init* (Summer Season), *tag-ulan* (Rainy Season) and *Pasko* (Christmas). These IDs are star-studded and festive, using the music video as format, and are aired locally and globally through TFC.

### **Romancing the Global Pinoy in the Kapamilya Dreamwork**

Christmas is one of the exciting times of the year for the Filipinos. It is also an opportunity for overseas Filipinos to go back to the Philippines and be with their loved ones. The reunion of once-fragmented families during the yuletide season is enriched by gift-giving, travels and family activities, that in some ways compensate for the separation that is brought about by migration. ABS-CBN or the Kapamilya Network annually launches a Christmas Station ID to mark the yuletide season in the Philippines. The first Christmas Station ID, *Isang Pamilya, Isang Puso Ngayong Pasko* [One Family, One Heart This Christmas] aired in 2002 and focused on the act of reaching out to selected institutions in the Philippines. Since then, these stations IDs have evolved to become festive, creatively shot, and star-studded. One need not wonder that that the glossy production is obviously supported by a hefty budget. Celebrities are shot in intimate and festive moments with ordinary people, mostly children. The incorporation of celebrities in these IDs provides an important *lingua franca* and acts as focal point for imagined or virtual communities around the world (Van Krieken,

2012). While dramatic narratives and sometimes upbeat music intertwine in the music video, themes of collective gift-giving, religiosity, Filipino values, and collective national sentiment are highlighted to appeal to the Filipino psyche. With its yearly launch, the ABS-CBN yuletide station ID has become one of the components of Christmas that Filipinos locally and abroad look forward to. To date, the station IDs can be watched via television and online through ABS-CBN's YouTube Channel. It can also be shared via online networks or use of hashtags as shown in 2011 (*#DaBestPasko*) and 2012 (*#KuwentoNgPasko*).

In selected ABS-CBN Christmas station IDs, it is the desire or longing for “union” and “connectivity” that most images depict. These visuals seem to showcase the social cost of migration and settle it with the celebratory vibe of finding happiness via being with the Kapamilya or the network or perhaps with real family. Through subscription to TFC and the network's wide array of operations to reach out to the needs of the overseas Filipinos, the staging of “broken homes” as a byproduct of migration is resolved through the interplay of symbolic capitals that are highly aspired in global culture.

In the 2010 ABS-CBN Christmas Station ID, representations of OFWs are praised “to shine in the world” or *magniningning ang Pilipino saan sa mundo*, as the lyrics of the song suggest. Using the theme *Ngayong Pasko Magniningning ang Pilipino* (Ramos, 2010) the station ID takes pride in the Filipinos who make the country “succeed” in the global arena. Apart from integrating representations of OFWs such as caregivers and teachers, the ID pays tribute to Arnel Pineda, team Philippines (Host Cup Winner, 2010 Homeless World Cup), and the UST Singers (2010 Choir of the World – Luciano Pavarotti Trophy).

The representation of the OFWs in the 2010 Christmas Station ID is a mediation of symbolic capital that particularly “romanticizes” the transnational experience to “heroization,” in particular, the feminization of labor. The symbolic capital—the prestige and honor as an OFW who gives a better life to one's family while contributing in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)/ Gross National Product (GNP) of the country—erases the social cost of migration to families. The teacher in the station ID, who is a mom, represents the feminization of labor in the Philippines. In the opening shot of the ID, the woman looks pensive as snow embraces her and soon is integrated in a stage play that she has managed. By aligning the symbolic capital of the teacher to the other Filipinos who make the country proud, the violence in migration is erased—such experiences as starvation, beating, insults, and even murder of OFWs (San Juan, 2011), OFWs opting to work abroad for a longer period in order to pay off their debts (Asis, 2005), hunger for emotional bonds and intimacies among

children in transnational families (Parreñas, 2001), or the irony of having to escape from domestic violence and gender stratification in the home country. In fantasy production, the monetary benefits of working overseas are celebrated while slavery is downplayed to appear as a refurbished technology of social relations supporting post-industrial and expropriation of surplus value (Tadiar, 2003).

The symbolic capital in the 2010 Christmas Station ID reduces the economic discourse into purely cultural. This elides the phenomenon of dependence on sending low-wage labor to developed economies. As Parreñas (2001) argues, as economies of first world countries denationalize, domestic helpers come in and low-wage labor is in high demand in more-developed nations. In terms of renationalization of politics, immigrants are used as “scapegoats” for the economic displacement by the middle-income workers in the deindustrialization of the economy (Parreñas, 2001). In the case of the Philippines, the neocolonial dependency of the nation contributes to the lack of capabilities to enforce its sovereignty rights and safeguard the welfare of OFWs (San Juan, 2011).

### **At Home, Whenever, Wherever: Mediation of Transnational Kapamilya in a Networked Society**

The organization and dynamics of family life in the context of the transnational Filipino family in the 21st century has become networked and on-the-move. As family members move out from their locality and constitute the “ethnoscape” or “the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other moving groups and individuals” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 33), they consume information via “mediascape” or the “distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information such as newspapers, magazines, television stations, and film-production studios” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 35) or adopt new communication technologies such as mobile phones in connecting back home (Cabanes & Acedera, 2012; Madianou & Miller, 2012; Parreñas, 2005; Thompson, 2009; Uy-Tioco, 2007). These practices re-create home in a foreign land, articulating a major dilemma of globality because “home” is permanently elsewhere (Pertierra, 2012) or networked families (Eliott & Urry, 2010). Engagement with digital technologies enable absent presence, wherein even transnational members of the family are able to participate in daily decision making for their families (Pertierra, 2006). Hence, pivotal to building and experiencing home elsewhere is the proliferation of miniaturized, privatized and digitized devices that provide multimodality and compress temporal and spatial relations. These multiple affordances of digital communication technologies enable family life to be conducted at-a-distance and involve a spectrum of

choices for family members to be visible and invisible in communication flows (Urry, 2007).

The 2011 ABS-CBN Christmas Station ID *Da Best ang Pasko ng Pilipino* (Ramos, P., Gonzales, P., & Saliendra, M, 2011) symbolically articulates the transnational Filipino family life in the global and networked society. In a networked society, material organization of time-sharing social practices occur through flows—images, sounds and symbols—enabled with micro-electronics-based information and communications technologies that disassociate spatial proximity and the performance of life's everyday functions (Castells, 1996). Luke (1996) suggests that media and communication technologies such as softwares detraditionalize practices or rituals by engineering and pluralizing the reinterpretation of the world. Meanwhile, Thompson (1996) proposes “de-localization” as detraditionalization. He argues, “traditions are uprooted and refashioned in ways that enable them to be re-embedded in multiple locales and reconnect territorial units that exceed the limits of face-to-face interactions (p. 94). This is sustained through communication technologies that renew traditions and appropriate mediated symbolic forms.



**Figure 1.** Image shows the staging of mediated co-presence via use of mobile phone. Screen grab from the 2011 ABS-CBN Christmas Station ID. Retrieved 14 July 2014, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=naLFMp8A1go>. Copyright 2011 by ABS-CBN. Reprinted with permission.

The 2011 Christmas Station chronicles the preparations made before Christmas by the transnational or dispersed Filipino family members. The preparations are shown in the Philippines and elsewhere. Apart from using a hashtag *#DaBestPasko* that conveys online shareability, the Station ID's song is sung by Maria Aragon, a ten-year old YouTube sensation, together with the University of the Philippines Concert Chorus. A standout in the ID is the re-staging of the transnational Filipino experience. The first image uses split screen to convey time-space compression and piece together separated Filipinos. A visual of a woman using her mobile phone prompts the re-staging of mediated co-presence (Figure 1). Relatively, the imagery in some ways complement ABS-CBN's proposition in selling phone and online

remittance services (MyRemit) and rechargeable phone card products (*Sarimanok One*) that extend beyond its broadcasting business.



**Figure 2.** A series of images portray the incorporation of mobile devices in the Christmas dining table that re-stage mediated family co-presence. Screen grab from the 2011 ABS-CBN Christmas Station ID. Retrieved 14 July 2014, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=naLFMp8A1go>. Copyright 2011 by ABS-CBN. Reprinted with permission.

The ID also shows united family members in the Christmas dining table through engagement of each member in digital devices such as laptops, computer and tabs (Figure 2). This is initiated as the girl puts the gadgets one by one on the dining table. The parents sit and the each family member overseas joins in through mobile devices. As a symbolic form, the ID mediates a network capital that reconfigures the transnational Filipino family dynamic and organization in the era of globalization and mobilities. While the articulation of a network capital encapsulates the expansion of ABS-CBN as a media field from a domestic commercial channel toward a global or transnational network that caters to Filipinos worldwide, the representation of network capital is domesticated in the family's ability to re-stage the Christmas celebration via the multimodality of communication technologies. The family is able to be “virtually present” through access and manipulation of portable devices. With the celebratory representation, network capital serves as an *illusio* to legitimize the perks of migration and elide inequality in mobile device engagement such as appropriate facilities and infrastructure, employment or economic conditions, and gender (Parreñas, 2005), or familiarity with technologies and personal interest (Pertierra, 2012). Through presenting images in connected presence via use

of mobile devices such as laptops, mobile phones, and tablets, the perils in the process of capital accumulation by the dominant in a neo-liberal context are downplayed.

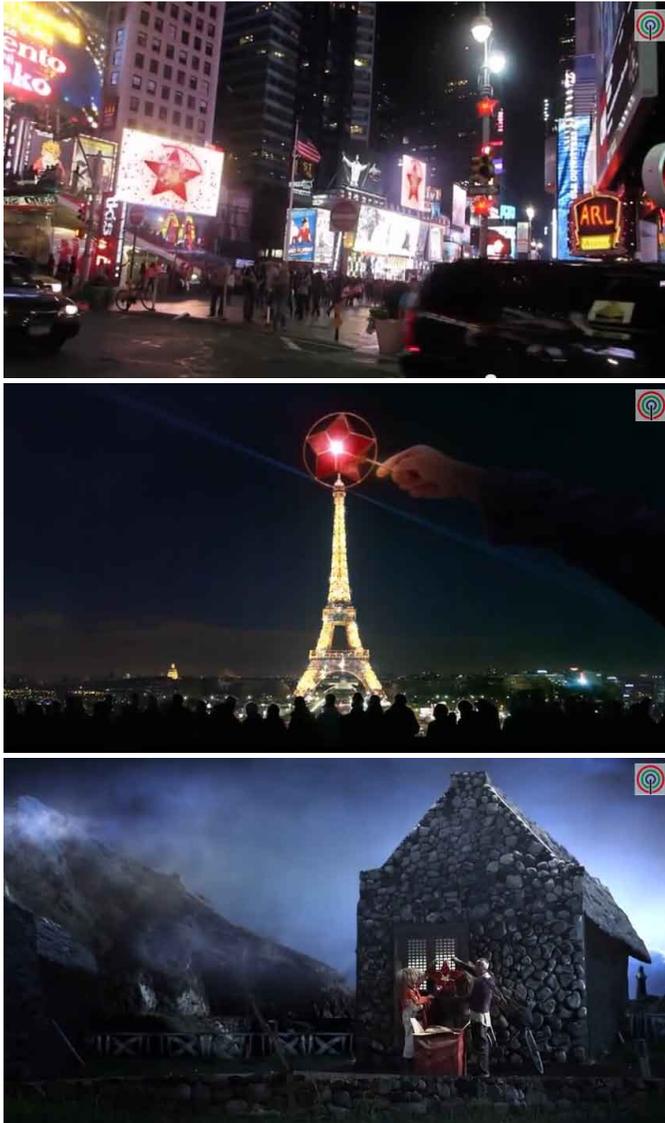


**Figure 3.** Images show a series of Kapamilya celebrities blending in with intimate, private and familial moments of Filipinos. Screen grab from the 2011 ABS-CBN Christmas Station ID. Retrieved 14 July 2014, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=naLFMp8A1go>. Copyright 2011 by ABS-CBN. Reprinted with permission.

### A “Reel/Real” Kapamilya by your side

The Station ID also toys with the network capital idea via re-staging a transnational Kapamilya experience. This becomes possible by attracting subscribers to be with their favourite Kapamilya stars in their home by consuming television broadcast, whenever, wherever. This strategy that portrays togetherness supplement the operations of ABS-CBN as it ventures into online television (TFC Now) and mobile applications (TFC.tv) to reach Filipinos worldwide. One one hand, in the Station ID, celebrities symbolically represent ABS-CBN’s positioning as a home to top-rated shows and the country’s brightest stars. The latter’s presence is spread across the Station ID. As a symbolic form, the ID shows how these celebrities penetrate the social symbolic space of ordinary people—a space of lifestyles and symbolic groups (Bourdieu, 1990)—translating the concept of a Kapamilya as helpful and equal. Nevertheless, the distinction between celebrities and ordinary people are eroded in the Station ID by consuming Kapamilya shows, “integrating” a “reel” Kapamilya in the domestic space of a “real” family (Figure 3). This element of integration collapses the binaries of the dominant and the dominated or even the local and global yet the type of

cohesion between the dominant and the dominated becomes an “aspirational construct” or far from the actual. The conditions of the ordinary people are legitimized and a classificatory scheme is seen as necessary towards the continued operations of profit making by the media or the maintenance of the social structure.



**Figure 4.** A series of images show snapshots of recognizable landmarks abroad with the *Parol*. Screen grab from the 2012 ABS-CBN Christmas Station ID. Retrieved 14 July 2014, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSNMpMBDCGE> Copyright 2012 by ABS-CBN. Reprinted with permission.

The Kapamilya presence is used through the symbolism of the *parol* or Christmas lantern in the 2012 Christmas Station ID *Maglilivanag ang*

*Mundo sa Kuwento ng Pasko* (Ramos, 2012) (Figure 4). This symbolism taps into the national sentiment of camaraderie in times of crisis. It was in 2012 that Typhoon Bopha (Pablo) hit the Philippines and resulted in deaths and infrastructural damages. Thriving on the sentiment of the Filipinos, the Station ID pays tribute to the Filipinos who rolled up their sleeves to help their *kababayans* especially during the calamity: F/A Marionito Tiempo and the Sta. Lucia Fire Department of Novaliches, Quezon City. Celebrities were also recorded in the act of reaching out. Meanwhile, the Station ID uses the iconic *parol* in symbolizing the light of hope. As the song unfolds the lyrics “*dumarami ang mga tala tuwing Kapaskuhan*” [the stars multiply during Christmas], celebrities hold small *parols* and congratulate the rescuers (Ramos, 2012). Looking further, the Station ID introduces the *parol* to a global scale. While the iconic *parol* represents how the Filipino spirit shines despite calamities, popular landmark overseas are decorated with real and reel super-impositions of the *parol*. The presence of the *parol* in international spaces conveys an acknowledgment of the Filipinos who spread light across the globe. It also symbolically pays tribute to the resilience of the Filipinos during crisis. In a press release from ABS-CBN on its YouTube channel, film director John-D Lazatin suggested the idea of having orphaned kids during typhoon Sendong to design a *parol* as the Station ID centerpiece. Lazatin said that proceeds from the *parol* sales were donated to Sagip Kapamilya, the ABS-CBN Foundation which provides relief to communities of disaster (Enriquez, 2012). Additionally, drawing from encouraging Filipinos to share their stories during Christmas, ABS-CBN Charo Santos-Concio said in the ABS-CBN 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary World Premier Video, “*Kwento natin to*” [This is our story] doesn’t pertain to the story of ABS-CBN but rather the story of each and every Filipino. Philippine TV is a magical box that contains the colors of our collective experiences, emotions, dreams, imaginations, and all things that make us human and make us Filipino” (The Philippine Star, 2013).

Looking into broadcast network as a cultural work, the toying of symbolic capital or honor in helping out becomes an *illusio* in the media field. By paying tribute to the Filipinos, the media field capitalizes on national sentiment, individual heroization and the unsinkable Filipino spirit. Despite giving air time to Filipinos in the Station ID, the media creates its visibility by positioning itself as integral in facilitating humanitarian aid, enabling a deep embodiment of a supportive image in establishing its role in the cultural work of transnational or global consumerism. With its slogan “In the Service of the Filipino worldwide,” it is without a doubt that ABS-CBN has been committed in serving the Filipino worldwide through a wide range

of media and non-media products. However, in some ways, the operations of ABS-CBN and with what's shown in 2012 Station ID, serve as an autonomous field in the dissemination of products that privileges particular tastes overlaid with entertainment or cultural value. It seems that the representation of humanitarian aid is reduced to tributes and engagement of celebrities in honouring helpful Filipinos, and misrecognizing the causes of deaths and infrastructure damages in disasters such as the lack of disaster management or preparedness, as should be addressed in a broader political and economic context.

## **Conclusion**

The transformative impact of globalization on transnational television creates a new logic of corporatist production of desire and fantasies. On an operational level, domestic channels such as ABS-CBN have penetrated the global platform with all of its broadcasting and non-broadcast services. Through cable, satellite, mobile and internet, and international affiliates, Filipinos worldwide are now able to connect to their homeland and to their left-behind families via subscription to home-grown programs or purchases of non-media transnational services such as cargo forwarding or international calls under the same media conglomerate. These services and their consumption are intertwined and deeply ingrained in the lives of the overseas Filipinos to re-stage home elsewhere. It is in this dynamic that the media network capitalizes on Filipino patronage as encapsulated by its inclusive slogan "Kapamilya" or, on the collective global scale, "Global Pinoy" and "In the Service of the Filipino Worldwide."

In its quest to serve the Filipinos worldwide with its informative and entertaining programs, ABS-CBN as a media field leaves trails of media discourse that embody its expansionist nature from going local to a global platform, realizing its goals in reaching and engaging Filipinos worldwide through media and non-media consumption. These media discourses are interplayed in symbolic forms that carry symbolic capitals or cultural representations and elide symbolic violence. Generally, ABS-CBN's strong positioning in the media market is translated in its slogan Kapamilya or Global Pinoy. By highlighting its bankable celebrities and its global reach, the notions of Kapamilya go beyond the branding of a broadcasting company.

Festive and nostalgic, selected ABS-CBN Christmas Station IDs contain imaginaries, fantasies, and neo-liberal desires. In selected Station IDs, the Kapamilya is able to infiltrate the private, domestic, and intimate lives of the Filipino family. In the 2010 Station ID, OFWs as modern-day heroes are celebrated. In the 2011 Station ID, the reunification of transnational families

through digital technologies is highlighted. And in the 2012 Station ID, the resilience of the Filipinos in times of crises is applauded. These IDs also erode the distinction between celebrities and ordinary people, integrating “reel” Kapamilya into the domestic space of the “real” family. While all of these cultural representations “celebrate” the Filipino people as individuals and as a nation, the cultural work serves as a mediating role that strengthens Kapamilya loyalty, but misrecognizes the complexity of social power relations via independent cultural work. In some ways, the physical and mental abuse that OFWs experience and even the lack of government accountability to its citizens in times of crises are conditions of inequalities that are misrecognized. It is in this mechanism that the media detaches itself from in-depth struggles in the social field by converting economic complexities to cultural entertainment.

Linked to the expansionist nature of transnational television as it taps geocultural regions with new channels such as online and mobile media, a network capital is reflected as well in the mediation of a transnational Kapamilya experience. On an operational level, ABS-CBN is now available via online television (TFC Now) and mobile applications (TFC.tv). And this resonates in the consumption of media texts in a stream of media choice. In the Station ID, a series of images portrayed transnationalism on a mobile and mediated co-presence that conveys forged fellowship via engagement with communication technologies. It is in this representation that the media field exhibits network capital that reconfigures notions of connected presence and the experience of domesticity in different places (Morley, 2000). The representation depicts fantasy of co-presence among geographically-dispersed Filipinos and it is only through consuming media that a unified transnational household arrangement can be achieved. As what Bacigalupe and Lambe (2001) suggest, “technologies fill a relational, emotional, and social void for families who have more than one country as their home” (p. 14). However, while images celebrate unification of family members during family celebrations, the imagery of a networked familial communication is limited. Not all Filipinos in the world may have the capacity and resources to access these mobile technologies that facilitate imagined copresence and communication at-a-distance. Dependent on resources such as time, objects, access and even emotions (Urry, 2007), network capital or engagement with digital technologies is informed by gender, age, ethnicity, (dis)ability and social class in a networked society (Castells, 1996).

Innovations in media technologies, media audience fragmentation, or deregulation policy regimes may continue to transform local media industries into transnational or global models. As this occurs, cultural representations in

media discourses are interplayed to naturalize imaginaries and misrecognize violence set in the global arena. In the context of the Philippines, transnational imaginaries disguised with entertainment value or cultural practices by the media in fantasy production penetrate and alter notions of home, connectedness, and even nationhood. In the strategy of a media conglomerate to expand and generate more profit in a global market, neo-liberal desires and fantasies are at play. This serves as a lifeline in cultural work that is primarily geared towards a globalized, networked, and consumerist culture.

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