

# #Mediatization: Heeding the call for mediatization studies in Asia\*

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## Abstract

In a milieu where technologies heavily mediate the environment and processes of everyday life, a cultural phenomenon that Sonia Livingstone described as the “mediation of everything,” scholars are encouraged to heed the call for more mediatization studies. The mediatization approach integrates the institutionalist and social-constructivist perspectives in critically analyzing the changes in both media and communications, on one hand, and culture and society, on the other hand. Reflecting on my past research works applying mediatization theories, I highlighted the value of the mediatization approach through its dialectics: Technological and social; Literal and symbolic, material and semiotic; Descriptive and critical; Objective and subjective, quantitative and qualitative; and Meso and micro levels. In the end, I also surfaced some criticisms of the mediatization approach, which, I argued, prove to be its strength in enabling researchers to keep pace in studying a highly mediatizing Asia and in indigenizing or Asianizing communication research and theorizing.

*Keywords: mediatization, research agenda, communication research, Asianizing theory, education*

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## Understanding Mediatization: Mediatization of Everything

Sonia Livingstone popularized the call for mediatization studies through her ICA 2008 Presidential Address, which was also published in a 2009 issue of the *Journal of Communication*: “the mediation of everything.” This concept emerged from the increased interest in understanding what Roger Silverstone (2002) called the “technological intrusion into the conduct of everyday life” (p. 761) and Nick Couldry described as the “intensification of media influence in social life” (Lievrouw, 2009, p. 314). Modern life and its facets are now richly contextualized in a heavily mediated world. Building on these bodies of scholarship, Livingstone (2009) argued that scholars could no longer analyze spheres in society—such as politics or familyhood—without a media-centered perspective. Several scholars have since offered other terms for this cultural phenomenon, such as mediatization, medialization, mediazation, remediation, mediatic turn, media logics, and transmediation. However, all of them are in consensus that emerging mediation scholarship now looks into the rejection of a strictly linear transmission model of media effects, the remediation of old media and face-to-face communication, and the emergence of convergent technologies and culture. Moreover, Livingstone (2009) sees mediation as a paradigm that avoids media-centrism and is instead informed by a rather dynamic mediated environment and processes.

Early scholars involved in mediation scholarship include Jose Martin Barbero, John B. Thompson, and Roger Silverstone, the last of whom is considered to be the father of mediation studies. Silverstone (2002; 2005) understood the concept of mediation as a dialectical process resulting from media’s introduction and embeddedness in everyday modern life: it is both technological and social, and it is literal and symbolic. Mediation is technological as mass and mediated communication technologies use, shape, and even determine their social interactions and meanings. However, it is the social actors and their interrelations in communicative practices—from an individual to an institutional level—that make sense of and appropriate these technologies and meanings through their own engagement. Furthermore, mediation is also literal and symbolic. As communication machines, gadgets, and devices become embedded into everyday practices, they have also been transformed as symbols and rituals taken for granted in the construction, circulation, and reconstruction of meanings in social life. In this circulation of technologies and meanings, the discourse of the system and life-worlds begin to emerge.

Silverstone’s social-constructivist approach to mediation aligns with one of the two main traditions recognized in the study of mediation. The second tradition, on the other hand, follows a more institutionalist perspective,

which was developed by Stig Hjarvard (2004; 2008). Whereas the social-constructivist tradition looks into how various media (or media in general, or the combination of all media in society) construct our interpretation of social and cultural reality, the institutionalist perspective conceptualizes media as a social institution in itself. As such, media logics are adapted by other social institutions (like politics or religion) and, in turn, exert influence and corollary impacts on these institutions (i.e., the mediatization of politics or religion). Media logics are defined as the various organizational and technological formats, modes of presentation, or *modus operandi* of the media, as embodied in their formal and informal rules. The institutional analysis of social institutions brings mediatization on to a meso-level.

Although the traditions have their share of differences, they both reject the concept of technological determinism. More recently, there has been a move to integrate the strengths of the two traditions and the distinctions between mediation and mediatization as forwarded by Andreas Hepp (2013; also Couldry & Hepp, 2013). Hepp (2013) suggested a convergence or consensus in using the term “mediatization,” defined as “a concept used to analyze critically the interrelation between changes in media and communications on the one hand, and changes in culture and society on the other” (p. 619). In operationalizing mediatization in communication research, Hepp posited the concept of communication figurations to provide a link across the micro, meso, and macro levels of mediatization. These communicative figurations consist of four instances:

First, the *constellation of actors*. Second, a *thematic framing* that serves as action-guiding topic. Third, their *forms of communication*. And Fourth, the *media ensemble* or the entirety of the media through which or in which a communicative figuration exists. (Hepp, 2013, pp. 623-624)

## **Moving from Children’s Media Ecology to Mediatization of Childhood**

My “love affair” with mediatization started when I was developing my dissertation proposal while applying for my PhD program in 2016. For my doctoral study, I wanted to pick up from my experience taking part in the UNICEF’s Child Friendly Cities (CFC) Research Initiative in 2011. In this research, I observed that studying child-friendly environments involved mainly looking at child spaces as physical, geographical spaces wherein a child is located. After ending the project, I became inspired to explore how else child-friendly spaces may be investigated to include the mediated and virtual environments that children and youths engage in and through.

At that time, the more popular framework that intersected children and the media was Neil Postman's (1970) "Media Ecology," described as a symbolic ecology consisting of complex messages that affect people's way of thinking, feeling, and behaving. This view of media as possessing the characteristic of inciting human and social changes was earlier proposed by Marshall McLuhan, with his theory of Technological Determinism and the concept of The Global Village (McLuhan, 1964). I felt that the limitation of this perspective is that it sees an ecology where an "external" media has a kind of causality to humanity.

Fast forward to my acceptance at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and my first day of classes; Prof. Francis Lee shared with us his syllabus for our theory class, and tasked us to discuss the topic assignments for our class presentations. At the end of the syllabus, I saw the term "mediatization," which was supposed to be an emerging research project or paradigm in communication research. I immediately volunteered to take on the topic for the class presentations. This led to my deeper study of the theory and research approach and then, eventually, to the refreshed and updated understanding of media ecology, which became the theoretical anchor not only for my dissertation, but for many more studies after that.

## **Applying the Mediatization Approach**

Applying the mediatization approach to various communication phenomena allowed me to appreciate its dialectics:

### **Technological and social**

Silverstone (2002) describes the mediatization approach as both technological and social. Media and technologies are said to shape social interactions and meanings, while individuals and institutions make sense of and appropriate these technologies through their own consumption and reception. Meanwhile, Hepp's operationalization of mediatization breaks down the identification of the communication ensemble to illustrate how technologies provide affordances to change cultural practices. These communicative practices, in turn, show how individuals domesticate technologies to serve their purposes.

In my study of gay men and their mediatized initiation of relationships and place-making in the Philippines (Solis, 2021), I found that dating apps like Grindr allowed people to find partners online, but other apps, like Tinder and Facebook, which initially only allowed the search of heterosexual matching, were appropriated by gay men to facilitate search for other men. In this study, I particularly examined the changing practices of gay men in the Philippines when initiating sexual or romantic relationships through

the use of modern communications technologies. Dating websites like PlanetRomeo and mobile dating applications like Grindr have supplanted the need for conventional face-to-face meeting places, making gay men more mobile in their quest to find romantic or sexual partners. Given these observations, I went on to explore how gay men's practices of and places for relationship initiation have changed over time, vis-à-vis the development of emerging media. Informed by Andreas Hepp's (2013) operationalization of mediatization, the study investigated three concerns: gay men and their typology of relations, their media ensemble, and their forms of communication in meeting other men. In terms of the typology of relations, informants recounted that the connections they sought online and/or in social spaces could be clustered in three main categories with some variations therein, namely, for sexual relations, for romance, and for friendship. Whereas some informants initiate sexual encounters both online and offline, others might prefer looking for casual dates that could potentially progress to serious love or partnership. Others also initiate encounters with fellow gay individuals, with whom they could go out for social events that may or may not be specific to gay life.

The media ensemble and forms of communication by gay men to initiate romantic or sexual encounters had also changed. Prior to the digital turn, initiating gay relationships was characterized by "offline" social networks and appropriated physical spaces. Over time, gay men initiated sexual or romantic encounters through communication technologies such as landlines, print advertisements, tabloids, and mobile phones. The rise of social networking websites in the mid-2000s also contributed to the growth of venues through which gay men could meet other gay men online. While websites exclusive to the gay community were established, popular social media and mobile communication apps such as Facebook, Twitter, and WeChat were also used to initiate romantic and sexual connections. While informants in the study were able to distinguish the physical/social spaces from the mediated spaces, there was also an acknowledgment of the blurring of the boundaries and the hybridity of these spaces. "Place-making" in this case, was no longer constricted to a material component of a physical or virtual space. Gay men were able to actively negotiate their physical social spaces in a predominantly heteronormative society, while becoming more adept in the language of emerging new and media technologies. However, the extent to which the mediatization of gay encounters could empower gay men remains complicated by the discreet nature of gay cruising despite digital developments, as well as the corporate machinations in place that take advantage of the growing pink economy.

## **Literal and symbolic, material and semiotic**

Silverstone (2002) also propped that the mediatization approach is both literal and symbolic. In my study of the mediatization of transnational familyhood and the migration imaginary of left-behind children, I was able to break down mediatization not only in terms of the media and technologies used for transnational communication between the migrant parents and their left-behind children, but also the media representations that surround these social actors. I argue that there seems to be an increasingly positive view on migration among left-behind children, that is due to improved communication and “co-presence” among transnational families, together with favorable media representations of labor migration. Growing up with this new migration imaginary, left-behind children also now desire to migrate and work abroad, and the state takes advantage of this wider neoliberal mediatized infrastructure, co-opted by state-run communications and media to groom left-behind children as the “future” of human labor exportation in this neoliberalist global enterprise.

In my study titled *Intensive care: Mediatized parenting and the circulation of transnational family care between Hong Kong and the Philippines* (Solis, 2023a), I explored the mediatization of transnational family care between the migrant parents in Hong Kong and their left-behind children in the Philippines. Drawing on the mediatization framework as popularized by Hepp (2013) and the concept of care circulation in a transnational familyhood context as defined by Baldassar and Merla (2014), this study posed the research question: How is transnational family care mediatized? The data was collected through interviews with a total of 20 migrant parents in Hong Kong and their 25 left-behind children in the Philippines, and was analyzed through the four modes of care exchange as proposed by Fresnoza-Flot (2009) and Horn (2017), namely, gifts, cross-border mobilities, remittances, and transnational communication. Findings revealed that these four modes of care exchange have been highly mediatized in the past, particularly in the last decade. Migrant parents make use of digital applications to coordinate gift-giving, which is the most appreciated mode of care especially for younger left-behind children (Solis, 2023a). Mobile wallet applications help migrant parents facilitate speedier delivery of money gifts, while social media applications allow children to show their gratitude either privately or publicly to their parents (Solis, 2023a). The relatively close distance of Hong Kong and the Philippine’s capital, online booking options, and a no-visa requirement for tourists also allow convenient and affordable visits for its transnational families (Lowe, 2013), making it easier for migrant parents to envision realistic options of providing physical presence for their left-behind children. Remittances, seen by parent-interviewees as the ultimate testament

to their sacrifice, have also been made easier, cheaper, and more convenient due to mobile phone applications (Solis, 2023a). Their left-behind children also complement this mediatized remittance by sending chats or video calls to remind their parents of events such as birthdays, graduations, sports activities, or tuition payments, all of which require monetary compensation (Solis, 2023a). Finally, transnational communication has become more open and embodied. Despite the occasional disruptions due to work or school obligations, communication is more affordable and accessible, in contrast to the era of postal mail and landline telephones that were the dominant form of communication prior to the digital turn (Solis, 2023a).

Beyond these findings, the study also highlights another mode of care circulation among transnational families: mediatized parenting (Solis, 2023a). Migrant parents can now make use of the communication technologies available to them to practice their parental roles remotely and have a closer monitoring mechanism of their children. Migrant parents may make use of applications to monitor whether their left-behind children have already finished doing chores in the household, and even monitor their screen time. Parents may also help their children with school assignments through short messages or extended video calls with them, and both parties may initiate this contact. Ultimately, findings from the study contribute to the mediatization research paradigm by providing a communication perspective to the Philippines' labor migration phenomenon. The study calls for the provision of communication infrastructures, affordable services, and other social protections that ensure accessible, if not free, communication for transnational families across geographical borders.

In a follow-up study on the mediatization of the migration imaginary of left-behind children, which is currently under review for journal publication, I argued that in a mediatized milieu, media and communications, both through its technical (transnational communication improving co-presence) and semiotic (representations of migration as sacrifice and social mobility) processes, usher children to grow up with a positive view of migration and develop the same desire to enter labor migration as their parents (Solis, 2023b).

### **Descriptive and critical**

While the mediatization paradigm enables the descriptive approach of outlining the communication ensemble and corresponding communicative practices across time, it also, essentially, allows a critical perspective of the technological and cultural changes in society. In my study of the cultural changes in gay men's dating and sexual cultures, I was able to show the emergence of the concept of "play" among gay men who initiate relationships

for love, sex, or dates (Solis, 2022). Play means that gay men are now able to engage with multiple options, enjoy negotiating personas and sexual encounters both online and offline, and explore pleasures in unconventional forms of sexual activities. This has led to a sense of nostalgia for the traditional identity of the *bakla* and practices of *pagliligawan* as gay identity and practices have shifted due to the globalized nature of online cruising and the acculturation to Western ideals. For instance, the notion of pursuing and being pursued in *pagliligawan*, which emphasizes the emotional dimensions of the interactions more than the outward manifestations of maleness or femaleness, is being bypassed and even scorned for being too “female” in online dating.

In my study “Now Dating on Steroids: Play and Nostalgia in the Mediatization of Gay Cruising in the Philippines” (Solis, 2022), I aimed to understand how the emergence of new communication technologies and the changing communication behaviors of gay men within and through online and offline spaces reveal the practice of gay cruising in the Philippines. Informed by Hepp’s (2013) mediatization approach, this study explored two concepts in mediatized cruising by asking the following questions: 1) How does mediatization afford the practice of play in gay cruising; and 2) How does nostalgia occur among these gay men who now cruise in a mediatized environment? (Solis, 2022). Data was collected through focus interviews with 36 informants using a combination of email questionnaires and personal interviews. Data revealed that the gay cruising landscape has changed over time. In contrast to the sedentary nature of former desktop-based Internet dating apps, emerging communication technologies allow gay informants to be more mobile and the nature of “play” has changed accordingly. Gay informants may travel to places in search for unique matches or utilize several accounts or apps on their smartphones at a time. Meanwhile, the breadth of applications and websites exclusively for gay dating allow for a range of experiences beyond conventional practices. There is also a sense of play that permeates from branding oneself on gay apps. Gay informants tend to either create personas that highlight certain aspects of their lives or even feign a personality that would be received favorably by potential matches. Furthermore, gay informants also make use of such apps to organize unconventional sexual encounters, such as group sex, and casual relationships, and chemical sex.

This emerging communication landscape is different from the one experienced by my older gay informants, who had engaged in courtship prior to the arrival of geosocial dating apps (Solis, 2022). Now, in an intensively mediatized milieu, the practice of exchanging phone numbers has been eliminated and the geographical criteria of traditional courtship have been

surpassed, in favor of a speedier means of online cruising. Growing into this networked society of globalized ideologies, these Filipino millennials have imbibed a “Westernized” or more casual take on dating and sexual encounters (Labor, 2020). Several informants expressed their longing to revisit their inner psychospiritual self and a nostalgia for traditional Filipino courtships, such as *panunuyo* or *pagliligawan*; this could be interpreted as my informants’ way of questioning the dominant Western ideology of what is gay, and even desiring or reclaiming their indigenous *bakla* (Solis, 2022). Ultimately, the study found that there is a mediatized turn in gay cruising, identity, and practices in the Philippines, from playing with multiple options, negotiating one’s offline and online personas, and exploring unconventional forms of sexual activities. At the same time, the nostalgia felt by my gay informants make evident a continuous renegotiation of their identity as gay men amid a modernizing and globalizing world. Using the mediatization approach for this study, I emphasized the critical aspect of mediatization, using the lens to unpack the hegemonic, neoliberal ideologies that sustain the White gay ideal, patriarchy, and the neoliberal and capitalist media market for the global gay.

### **Objective and subjective; quantitative and qualitative**

Methodologically, Bolin (2016) emphasized the integration of both the objective and subjective sources of data for mediatization studies. Quantitative research methods would be used to gather objective set of data, which would provide the techno-historical basis for mediatization: the media ensemble across a time span. Meanwhile, subjective data generated through qualitative research methods would provide the social constructivist basis of mediatization: the social actors and their context-based communicative practices, as well as their perceptions on the consequences of these communicative practices.

In exploring the mediatization of gay cruising in the Philippines (Solis, 2020), I was able to describe how gay cruising in the Philippines has been mediatized across history. Drawing from the stories of my 36 informants who come from a variety of social backgrounds, I interrogated how the interactions of the individual and the collective, within and beyond the technological affordances and the cultural and economic structures that constitute gay cruising, implicate to the wider cultural issues of gay identity and social emancipation.

Prior to the advent of the internet in the Philippines, my older informants recounted that gay cruising was highly dependent on their social circles or instant connections facilitated by temporal occasions such as social gatherings, dance parties, or out-of-town trips (Solis, 2020). The early 2000s

saw a surge in physical spaces that were either established or appropriated as a site for gay encounters, such as bars, higher-end gyms and saunas, and public spaces like malls or coffee shops. Eventually, gay men began using emerging communication technologies, such as the mobile phone and the personal computer, to initiate romantic and sexual encounters. The use of these “cruising technologies” were described by some informants as the primary cause of their increased sexual promiscuity. As access to cruising channels have increased, so too have the challenges that come with it, from the difficulty of developing solid connections with matches to the need to create a persona that could be marketable to gay men.

Furthermore, although the mediatization of gay cruising has allowed for a recognition and appreciation of a “spectrum of gayness” in the Philippines, it also brought several challenges to light. Mediatized cruising is constrained by tensions such as the perceived generational divide between younger and older gay Filipino men, the commercialization of sex and love, and the exploitation of Filipino gay men in a globalizing, neoliberal, and Western society. These tensions complicate the history of mediatized cruising in the Philippines. There are manifestations of human agency in my informants’ narratives, such as the use of different technologies, initiating multiple relationships, controlling one’s choice of partner, and learning to market themselves both online and offline. However, there is also evidence that these technologies may be affecting the multiplicity and superficiality of relationships, affording gay men to be sex-crazed, inciting an “instant” mentality, reducing gay men as markets, and technologies and physical spaces as apparatuses of capitalism and the Western-desired hegemony. The narratives of my informants underscore that the mediatization of gay cruising is a highly dialectical process, complicated by the intertwining of structure and agency, the bleeding of the physical into the virtual (and vice versa), and the interactions between the online and offline. Ultimately, the study calls for future studies that interrogate the mediatization of gay cruising through different lenses, and in doing so, capture the multiplicity of gay experiences in the Philippines.

### **Meso and micro levels**

As I have mentioned earlier, there are two traditions to mediatization studies. The institutional tradition brings mediatization to a meso-level while the “social-constructivist tradition,” such as the model of Hepp, is more interested in micro, everyday communication practices as lived by individuals in society. In my study of gay dating and sexual cultures (Solis, 2020, 2021, 2022), I looked at the micro-level communicative practices that led to agential and structural changes in gay culture overtime. Meanwhile in

my co-authored study on the mediatization of PLHIV care (Solis et al., 2024), we focused on institutional-level changes to derive policy implications in terms of the shifting landscape of Philippine NGO and healthcare work within the context of emerging media and social media logics, especially during the lockdowns of the pandemic.

In the study of PLHIV care, my co-authors and I used the mediatization framework to examine consequences of the embeddedness of communications and technologies in the healthcare for PLHIVs in the Philippines, from the perspective of the health service providers (Solis et al., 2024). We found that, particularly during the pandemic when health and wellness were challenged by mobility restrictions among others, the health sector relied heavily on technologies like online games, chatbots, publicity videos, cloud-based databases, and video conferencing to enact the care continuum for PLHIVs whose timely treatment was of essence. On an institutional level, we showed how media logics have reconfigured the practice of health provision for PLHIVs, such that communication and digital skills, aside from just the clinical skills, have become essential in the health professionals' prevention, testing, and treatment of HIV. This empirical approach of mediatization from the micro and meso levels allowed for the generation of narratives that may inform governance policies and measures to ensure the quality of life for PLHIVs in the country.

### **Criticizing Mediatization as Catch-basin Theory**

It is important to stress that mediatization, as a theory or approach, is not without criticism. Among its critics include David Deacon and James Stanyer (2014; 2015), who raised the problematic assumption of media and their media logic as innately powerful and as causal historical agents. While mass media institutions are seen in mediatization scholarship as primary drivers of change in the communication environment and practices in society, little attention has been devoted to mass media's allied institutions, including PR, advertising, and national and intergovernmental agencies (Deacon & Stanyer, 2014; 2015). Such a gap contributes to a narrow and media-centric understanding of mediatization and social change. Deacon and Stanyer's second critique looked into the limited understanding of historical processes to capture and explain causal change over time. Of the literature they reviewed, Deacon and Stanyer found a largely synchronous approach to mediatization research that had failed to empirically, systematically, and sufficiently capture the fundamental, multi-faceted, and long-term transformations posited by mediatization. Finally, they questioned the value added by the concept of mediatization. The term's poor design and imprecise definition lends it low discriminatory power and thus renders it

“a concept of no difference.” Its nebulosity as a concept makes it more blinding than guiding for communication and media scholars, who may consider it as only a mere “catch-basin” where any observations could be collected.

### **Keeping Pace in a Highly Mediatizing Asia**

In the end, the criticism of mediatization as a catch-basin theory, for me, is actually proving to be its strength. The Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory has been highly criticized for being atheoretical: that needs and gratifications are never really exhaustive (Elliot, 1974). It is a catch-basin theory as well. But journal after journal continue to publish articles that use the U&G as a theoretical anchor—I, for one have recently published a U&G and risks study on mobile dating apps use in China in the *Chinese Journal of Communication* (see Solis & Wong, 2019)—precisely because it works as a catch-basin theory. Motivations are hard to pin down, especially in a society of complex psychographic, cultural, and social factors, that scholars are compelled not merely to exhaust motivations, but to understand them. Of course, it all depends on the research objective one sets out. But as for mediatization, in a milieu of rapid technological advancements where everything may be said to be mediatized, we need to keep up with these changes in order to uncover and understand the embeddedness of media and technologies in our life, if only so we may be able to live more humanely in the now. And so, if it means using a catch-basin approach, if only to be able to keep up with the changes of the mediatized milieu, mediatization may as well be the most useful model that scholars may take advantage of. As I always say in my classes, when teaching paradigms and theories, it’s not about what is the better theory over another; it’s about what is most useful in addressing your research objectives.

Moreover, mediatization as a catch-basin theory proves to be a valuable tool in indigenizing or Asianizing communication research and theorizing. Using Yoshitaka Miike’s (2006) concept of Asiaticity, understood to be placing “Asian values and ideals at the center of inquiry to see Asian phenomena from the standpoint of Asians as subjects and agents” (p. 5), we may appreciate mediatization more as an approach rather than an exhaustive and predictive theory. Miike (2003) proposed that the Global North’s preeminence in knowledge production is shown in three dimensions: (1) theoretical concepts and constructs, (2) research material and methodologies, and (3) otherization in theory and research. The dimension on theoretical concepts and constructs points to Asian researchers heavily relying on West-imported frameworks and their Asian cultures serving as mere empirical basis in an effort to validate extant Western theories. This

raises questions of whether Western-derived theories are truly relevant and useful for non-Western scholars as they are certainly culturally and even linguistically biased. Linking this to Miike's dimension on research materials and methodology as criticizing Eurocentric methodologies—driven predominantly by a quantitative paradigm and associated with the European values of control, persuasion, and dominance—we may use mediatization to expand methodological rigor in the study of the uniqueness and richness of Asian experiences and perspectives. These may also address the third dimension on otherization in theory and research, as this catch-basin approach encourages the diversification of perspectives in investigating communication despite the persistence of Western theories and methods. This generative approach of mediatization advances more frameworks and models that emphasize cultural specificity in theory development that is based on the unique and vast experiences and philosophies of Asia vis-à-vis the universal relevance of mediatization as a global phenomenon. It must be emphasized, though, that de-Westernization must be appreciated in conjunction with Globalization, as de-Westernization encourages “culturally particular concepts of communication” while globalization, at the same time, calls for a movement “toward a common space wherein transcultural synthesis can be debated” (Craig & Xiong, 2022, p. 3).

For instance, because of the socio-historical approach in mediatization studies, I was able to revisit the seemingly “being erased” identity of the *bakla* and the custom of *pagliligawan* in theorizing play and nostalgia in the midst of the shifting gay identities and practices in a highly globalized and mediatized society.

In closing, I am very excited to see the various ways that scholars from all over Asia view, understand, and apply mediatization in studying the world around us. There is so much more to do to contribute to the still-growing body of literature in this emerging research paradigm for media and communication research. Livingstone and Lunt (2014) tagged this call as #Mediatization, a call for scholars in communication to come up with empirically-based theorization as a response to the growing changes in media and communications and cultures in present society.

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## Note

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