Glocal intimacies: Theorizing mobile media and intimate relationships

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Abstract
This article develops the concept of "glocal intimacies," capturing the role of mobile media in how people enact and reconfigure their increasingly global experiences of social relationships. It establishes the two foundational assumptions of this concept: the interplay of local and global cultures and the transformative role of mobile media. It then identifies the three key dimensions that characterize glocal intimacies: digital access, contextual localities, and sociotechnical dynamics. To provide empirical flesh to how these dimensions intersect, it comparatively discusses two ethnographic projects on privileged Filipinos and their mediated familial and romantic relationships.

With the increasing innovations in and access to information communication technologies (ICTs), mobile media have become ubiquitous for many people across the world. Despite continued asymmetrical access and use, these technologies have transformed how individuals experience socially entangled intimate relationships (Arora, 2019). Mobile media have intensified their links to the global, broadening their imaginaries and practices of social intimacies, like the familial and the romantic. These technologies have also simultaneously allowed for their local connections to flourish, enabling various reconfigurations of everyday intimacies.

This article furthers the concept of "glocal intimacies," which captures mobile media's role in how people enact and reconfigure their increasingly global experiences of social relationships (Cabañes & Uy-Tioco, 2020). It emphasizes that technologies have been central to people's attempts at navigating intimate relationships that are entwined in both global and local cultures. Building on Robertson's (1994) notion of "glocalization," the concept pays attention to "the

simultaneity and inter-penetration of what are conventionally called the global and the local—or in more general vein—the universal and the particular" (Robertson 1994, p. 38). Glocal intimacies highlights how this "simultaneity" and "inter-penetration" manifest in mobile-mediated relationships. It also nuances Robertson's thesis by recognizing that in the Asian region particularly, the local results from the region's negotiations with global forces from its colonial past and post/neocolonial present. The concept underscores that notwithstanding the homogenizing influence of global modernity, local everyday life strongly persists in Asian social intimacies.

This piece first delves into the theoretical foundations of glocal intimacies. It engages with the literature on the hybrid character of social intimacies, situated as they are at the intersection of global and local cultures (see Bhambra, 2009; Lowe, 2015). It explores how this hybridity plays out in imaginaries and practices of mobile mediated familial and romantic relationships. The piece also connects with literature on how mobile media have transformed social intimacies (see Hjorth & Lim, 2012; Madianou & Miller, 2012). It highlights how the popularity of mobile technologies has normalized the seamless interaction of the global and the local in people's everyday relationships and, consequently, its attendant opportunities and tensions.

The piece then identifies three dimensions central to the process of enacting and reconfiguring local ties and global relationships: digital access, contextual localities, and sociotechnical dynamics. These dimensions foreground how everyday relationships that unfold in the hybrid spaces of mobile media are emblematic of the complex rationalities of globalization. To anchor these concepts empirically, the piece discusses mediated familial and romantic intimacies in the Philippines. This country is significant because, first, its contemporary intimacies are shaped by its colonial past and post/ neocolonial present (Mulder, 2013). Its imaginaries and practices of familyhood and romance have been shaped by its history of negotiating with Spanish and American colonization as well as the ongoing negotiation between a dominant West and a rising Asia. Second, the Philippines has been called "text messaging capital of the world" and the world's "most social country" (Kemp, 2021). There, mobile technologies have become central to the maintenance of people's intimate relationships, especially for overseas Filipinos who constitute 10% of the country's population (Commission on Filipinos Overseas, 2021).

The concept of glocal intimacies provides a lens to assess how the character of mobile mediated relationships emerges from the intersection of people's access to the digital, negotiations with distinct manifestations of hybrid relationships, and diverse ways of harnessing technological affordances. To illustrate its usefulness, we apply it to two ethnographic projects that embody the possibilities of and tensions between global modernity and local everyday life: cosmopolitan elite migrants using mobile media to navigate their many ties between the homeland and land of settlement and upper middle-class professional women

using dating apps and other mobile technologies in search of global and modern relationships.

Before we go into greater detail about our two projects, we flesh out in the next two sections the assumptions that underpin our conceptualization of mobile mediated glocal intimacies. We begin with our contention that such social intimacies cannot be understood apart from the broader historical and cultural contexts within which individuals enact them. For this, we engage with the scholarship that attends to the manifestation of hybrid cultures in doing family and romantic relationships generally and in the Philippines specifically. We then move on to our second contention that mobile media have been transformative for glocal intimacies because of how they have entrenched the entwinement of local everyday life with the global. We draw on extant work about the everyday affordances that mobile media offer for enacting and reconfiguring local ties and global relationships.

The hybridity of social intimacies

A key anchor in our conceptualization of mobile mediated glocal intimacies is that social intimacies are entangled in hybridity. Thus, the first set of literature we engage with enables us to identify the concrete manifestations of this entanglement in the lives of Filipinos. It helps characterize this entanglement's distinct articulations that have emerged from the Philippines' postcolonial context and that have become central to how people imagine and practice familial and romantic relationships. We then consider how these hybrid social intimacies extend into people's experiences of mobile mediated glocal intimacies.

Before focusing on the Philippines, we first establish how social intimacies are entangled in hybridity. This refers to the condition that emerges from the dynamics between two heuristically separate but empirically connected cultural logics (Bhambra, 2009). One is the global culture of so-called "Western modernity," constituted by homogenizing forces driven by the logics of neo/colonialism, neo/imperialism, and, contemporarily, neoliberalism. The other is local culture, expressed by the vernacular logics of one's "imagined home." Paying attention to hybridity sensitizes us to the complex interplay of how local cultures are influenced by global culture and, simultaneously, how global culture is continually challenged by the persistence of local cultures (see Tomlinson, 1999).

We are particularly concerned with how people's imaginaries and practices of social intimacies are at the intersection of global and local cultures. Instructive to unpacking this is Lowe's (2015) approach to intimacy as a world historical condition. She points out that global culture is dominated by the Western bourgeois form of intimacy, that is, conceptions of familial and romantic relationships characterized by the assumed realities of individual interiority, right

to private property, and freedom of choice. Lowe (2105) underscores that while the West has sought to export this kind of intimacy to the rest of the world, it is also the same rest of the world that has allowed for such an intimacy to emerge. Thus, modern intimacy is borne out of empire, slavery, and capital.

As we attend to the interplay between the global and the local in the context of Filipino social intimacies, we follow Lowe's (2015) approach, identifying the influence of global culture as Western modernity and its homogenizing ideas of familyhood and romance. We also point out how the contemporary articulation of this global culture in postcolonial Philippines is both influenced by and influencing traditional ideals of familial and intimate relationships.

Because our empirical cases are about socio-economically privileged Filipinos—the elites and upper middle classes who constitute only 5% of the Philippines population (Albert, 2018)—it is important to note that those in the higher strata of the country have a distinct experience of hybridity. Relative to their compatriots, they tend towards a more heightened cosmopolitan sensibility of social intimacies, since "[t]heir frame of reference is not simply the Philippines, but also Spain, Europe and America" (Hau, 2017, p. 2). This sensibility stems from their historically close political, and sometimes blood, ties with the foreign rulers during both the approximately 350 years under Spain and approximately 50 years under the Americans or their Chinese-Filipino merchant migrants-turned-national elite heritage (Mulder, 2013). In the postcolonial period, this orientation is continuously reinforced through practices like heavily consuming Western popular culture, spending holidays in Europe, and sending children to top Anglo-American universities.

That said, socio-economically privileged Filipinos also continue to subscribe to local traditions surrounding social intimacies, particularly those that reinforce their status in the Philippines. This is not to reject global logics in favor of local logics. It is instead about using local logics to reconfigure global logics to their advantage (Laforteza, 2015). On one hand, their adherence to local traditions belies their need to sustain belongingness to Filipino society because of their cognizance that "they have relatively little visibility as a national group among the global elite" (Hau, 2017, p. 9). On the other hand, they continually negotiate between the global and the local because to differentiate themselves from their compatriots they "claim to [have] master[ed] the codes [of the global] and mediate the financial, cultural, and symbolic flows that come from the outside" (Hau, 2017, p. 2).

Regarding familial intimacies, our specific concern is about how hybridity is manifested with the way privileged Filipinos negotiate with filial piety, an ideal virtue that figures strongly in many East/Southeast Asian cultures. This refers to a duty that involves enduring respect, love, and support for one's parents (Dai & Dimond, 1998). In Filipino culture, this stems from the value of "utang na loob" or

an unpayable debt of gratitude for the people who birthed you and cared for you as a child (Medina, 2001).

For the Philippines' elite, the influence of global culture is seen in their desire to live a modern life, wherein they can set their own path. This is bolstered by how parents often send their children to the best schools, allow them to experience independent living, and enable them to maintain their own financial assets (Simbulan, 2005). At the same time, the persistence of local culture is palpable in the lives of these elites. Alongside dreams of a modern life are expectations that they continue perpetuating the social, economic, and even political interests of their high-status families (Miralao, 1997). These might include taking on responsibilities in the family enterprise, "doing family" in ways that accede the wishes of one's parents, and providing emotional care to elderly parents.

Meanwhile, for romantic intimacies, our concern centers on how privileged Filipinos—and Filipino women particularly—negotiate hybridity vis-à-vis their dating practices. On one hand, they are cognizant of the so-called "confines" of Manila's dating scene, which pertains to the imagined ideal relationship to which privileged Filipinos are supposed to conform (De Leon, 2017). They see the importance of toeing the social fault lines strongly demarcated by the Philippines' entwined hierarchy of race and class, as these contribute to maintaining their high social status in this postcolonial society (Hau, 2017). But the women also resent these "confines" that hinder their desire to be financially and sexually independent individuals, imposing instead a vision of traditional intimacy premised on heteronormative marriage as a "life-long commitment of total conjugal intimacy and self-giving" (CBCP, 1997, p. 544).

On the other hand, even if the Philippines is at the margins of contemporary globalization, its urban residents—especially in Manila—are intensely connected to transnational flows of global media (Tadiar, 2016; see also Kim 2011). These contribute to orienting privileged Filipino women towards Western culture's emphasis on modern love (Illouz, 2012). Central to this ideal is individual choice as crystallized in one's selection of intimate partners not framed by familial expectations or social scripts, but by attraction based on physical desirability, autonomy, and emotional well-being. Also important to this ideal is an ethos of "erotic pluralism" and "ethical tolerance" that goes beyond traditional heteronormativity (Giddens, 1992). For the women, the desire to explore dating foreign men stems from a racial hierarchy that they themselves have formulated. They position Western men at the top because they believe that these men appreciate their "financial independence, interest in other cultures, and more liberal sexual expressions" (Collantes & Cabañes, forthcoming). However, they are also cognizant that having relationships with foreigners opens them up to the pernicious stereotype of being just like the "bar girls" or "gold diggers" from the sex industry (Angeles & Sunanta, 2007).

Mobile media and the transformation of intimacies

A second set of literature we build on is about how mobile media have transformed social intimacies. These works anchor our point that mobile mediated glocal intimacies magnify the entwinement of the global and of local everyday life. For one, they have established that mobile technologies allow people "to be intimate across distances of time and space" (Raiti, 2007, p.1). With the increasingly rapid development and spread of technologies such as the mobile phone, people have been able to connect to distant others ever more quickly and cheaply. As Martin and Rizvi (2014) point out, mobile media have enabled the blurring of the boundaries across different locales, so that the interpenetration of the "here" and the "there" has become a constant feature of intimate relationships. However, while they emphasize that central to the feeling of connection is simultaneity, we contend that this connection is sustained whether people's mediated communication is temporally synchronous or asynchronous. As individuals now literally carry the dynamics of the glocal "in their pocket" (Liew, 2020), mobile media open them up to thinking in more expansive ways, across "technological, geographic, psychological, physical, and temporal differences" (Hjorth & Lim, 2012, p. 478).

The privileged Filipinos in this piece usually experience mobile technologies as polymedia, defined as an "integrated environment within which users exploit contrasts within media to manage their relationships" (Madianou & Miller, 2012, p. 55). Having access to such rich polymedia environments means that elite and upper middle-class Filipinos can amplify their ability to engage in and to aspire for transnational cosmopolitan lives. This makes them distinct from most of their compatriots, who are constrained by their limited access to the digital (Uy-Tioco & Cabañes, 2021).

The key transformation in the social intimacies of privileged Filipinos ushered by their polymedia access is their experience of a relatively sustained feeling of being connected, despite time and space separation. Familial and romantic relationships can be "lifted out of immediate interactional settings and stretched over potentially vast spans of global timespace" (Moores, 2000, p. 106). Concretely, mobile media are used to communicate across a multiplicity of platforms that then become woven together into a seemingly seamless web of "connected presence" (Licoppe, 2004). Alongside this active communication, privileged Filipinos can also engage in mediated forms of phatic communication meant to foster a reassuring feeling that one is just always around, therefore creating a constant feeling of "ambient co-presence" (Madianou, 2016). They can be "both everywhere and nowhere, simultaneously home and away" (Hjorth, 2005, n.p.).

Extant work on mobile media have identified their affordances for sustaining different kinds of connections for particular social intimacies. For cosmopolitan elite migrants navigating their ties between the homeland and land of settlement,

these technologies allow a negotiation of the contradictory processes of connection and separation. Despite physical distance, mobile media afford the feelings of "perpetual contact" (Katz & Aakhus, 2002) and "permanent connection" (Licoppe, 2004), enabling them to take part in family events and familial obligations of care (Baldassar & Merla, 2014). But while the "always on" (boyd, 2012) aspects of mobile media allow them to "do family," it can also result in tensions that need to be managed by digital media tactics (Cabalquinto, 2018).

For upper middle-class Filipino professional women in search of global and modern relationships, mobile media affordances allow them to instantiate more transnational and cosmopolitan connections. Take for instance the combined control over availability and locatability technologies offer (Schrock, 2015). This allows them to more easily prioritize status proximity over spatial proximity (Westcott and Owen, 2013); they value seeing and being seen by foreign partners with a romantic disposition closer to theirs and seek to avoid the more traditional locals of Manila who literally surround them. That said, mobile media affordances also expose these women to the risk of meeting non-cosmopolitan Westerners. It is after all a problematic occidentalist assumption that these men are necessarily better than non-Western men, as they can map onto the women their problematic imaginaries of exotic and desirable Asians (Tsunokai et al., 2014).

Methodology

As indicated in the introduction, the two cases we bring together in this article are from two ethnographic studies that draw on purposively sampled in-depth interviews (Creswell, 2013). The data about how cosmopolitan elite migrants use mobile media to navigate familial ties across the homeland and the land of settlement was generated from 15 in-depth interviews conducted in 2015 and 2018 to 2019 with Filipinos in the Metropolitan Washington D.C. area (Uy-Tioco & Cabalquinto, 2020).

Meanwhile, the data on upper middle-class professionals in search of global and modern relationships came from life story interviews and dating app walkthroughs done from 2017 to 2019 with 15 middle-class millennial Filipino women in Manila (Caban~es & Collantes, 2020). Following the ethical guidelines approved by our respective institutions, we have changed the participants' names and altered identifying information in this piece to ensure their anonymity and protect their privacy.

By discussing both cases under the rubric of glocal intimacies, we contribute to the project of comparative approaches to media user ethnographies, which go beyond a fixation with ever-greater contextualization (Livingstone, 2003). In assessing the projects side-by-side, we get beyond the "space and time-bound limitations on the generalizability of our [media] theories, assumptions, and

propositions" (Blumler et al., 1992, p. 3). This then enables us to draw broader patterns and insights that cut across our case studies.

The common thread that allowed us to tie together the data from our projects was that both sought to situate the media and communication practices of privileged Filipinos in the broader context of their everyday lives (see Gillespie, 2005). In re-analyzing the data sets, we focused on the continually influx contours of the participants' mediated intimacies across time and space as well as cultural differences. We also zeroed in on the dialectical relationship between mobile technologies and social intimacies, unpacking the complex dynamics of how each of these forces transformed the other.

Our discussion of these two groups is meant to be emblematic, rather than representative, of how glocal intimacies manifest in the lives of privileged Filipinos. We take their stories to be indicative of the socio-technical dynamics that are afoot. In our analysis, we heuristically match our cases to represent two particular income clusters in the Philippines (Albert et al., 2018) (see Table 1). We designate the cosmopolitan elite migrants as rich and the "middle-class" millennial Filipino women as upper middle income to upper income.

Table 1. *Case studies and their income clusters* Adapted from Albert et al. (2018).

Case studies	Income cluster	Indicative Range of Monthly Family Incomes (for a Family Size of 5 members) (in 2017 prices)	Percentage of population
"Middle-class" millennial Filipino women	Upper middle income	Between PHP66,640 to PHP114,240	3.6%
	Upper income (but not rich)	Between PHP114,240 to PHP190,400	1%
cosmopolitan elites	Rich	At least PHP190,400	0.4%

Dimension 1: digital access

Central to whether and how people are able to imagine and participate in the contemporary globalization of relationships is their digital access. This dimension refers to the connection that people have to the Internet that is premised not only on their socio-economic standing, but also on the kind of telecom infrastructure available in their location.

As discussed earlier, the more polymedia-rich people's communicative environments are, the more options they also have in selecting specific mobile technologies for enacting and reconfiguring specific kinds of social intimacies (Madianou & Miller, 2012). In many global South contexts, however, the infrastructure tends to create uneven access (Arora, 2019). And in the Philippines, this has given rise to a contradictory situation (Uy-Tioco & Cabañes, 2021). Those who are most dependent on mobile-mediated communication for glocal intimacies tend to have a relatively low-quality digital connection, constrained by the economic costs of going online. This is exacerbated by how they have little means to circumvent the limited, intermittent, and "good enough access" of the country's telecom infrastructure (Uy-Tioco, 2019). Meanwhile,

those who are least dependent on these technologies for their relationships tend to have a relatively high-quality digital connection. Although they are unable to completely elide the limitations of Philippines telecom, they have the resources to mitigate these, if in differing degrees.

Included in those who have most to gain in access vis-a`-vis the Philippines' telecom infrastructure are Filipino elite migrants who live in the global North. Because they have high-speed connections and top-of-the-line technologies and cost and accessibility are not concerns, their choice of platforms and technologies are driven by their social and emotional considerations (Madianou & Miller, 2012). But as they engage with family in the Philippines, they must also contend with the good enough access afforded by the country's telecom infrastructure, which results in laggy mobile video and voice calls. Since elite Filipinos are mobile and can travel and visit loved ones in the homeland or meet in another country for vacation, this unreliable and irregular access becomes a minor inconvenience with minimal consequences on their transnational relationships. Overall, mobile media allow them to "live their lives together across distance" (Baldassar & Merla, 2014), fostering glocal intimacies despite infrastruc- tural limitations of the homeland.

The abovementioned dynamics are exemplified by the experiences of Marga, a 52 year old in Washington, D.C. who is mother of two college-aged children. It had become a routine for her to call her parents through the messaging app Viber as she drove to work in the morning while they, in the Philippines, would have just finished eating dinner. While she could count on reliable service on her end, this was not always the case for her parents. Since these were mundane daily calls, interrupted conversations could simply be continued later in the day or in the next morning's call. Furthermore, Marga and her extended family have various group chats on Viber where they communicate asynchronously at their leisure. Beyond the glocal intimacies afforded by digital media, she also regularly visits the Philippines and family members would also visit her in the US. Thus, although familial relationships are enriched by mobile media, elite Filipinos like Marga are less dependent on technological mediation.

Meanwhile, the digital access of upper middle-class profes- sional Filipino women can be described as "aspirational" (Arora & Scheiber, 2017). For them, an elite level of access is attainable, but not always sustainable. Even if these professionals' economic capital is significantly less, they can still afford the latest mobile technologies and spend on higher end fixed postpaid mobile plans. Because doing so can mean spending beyond their disposable income, they tend to be more strategic in their choices about access. Some opt to rely on a mix of prepaid credits and the free, if spotty, public access options common urban lifestyle hubs like malls and coffee shops. Others subscribe to postpaid plans but would make sure that these come bundled with high-quality smartphones that can be useful across their many socialities, including the romantic.

The professionals' experiences of the globalization of romance also take on this aspirational character. Compared to the elite migrants, they need to rely more on mobile media to enact and reconfigure their social intimacies. An example is Fatima, a 31 year old strategic planner in Manila who is in a long-distance romantic relationship with an American man she met on the dating app Bumble. For her, this relationship is valuable because it materializes a kind of intimacy not bound by the strictures of conservative Philippine capital city. Fatima's polymedia-rich digital access allows her to imagine a long-term future with the man, preferably beyond the prying eyes of Philippine society. Her limited disposable income means, however, that it takes months to save up for airfare and accumulate vacation leaves so she can be with her partner for a decent period of time. To get through the time in-between, she and her partner rely on text chats and video calls to keep connected. This involves enduring the intermittent but repeated connection issues that are a familiar feature of mobile communication in the Philippines. Because neither Fatima nor her partner can travel the world freely and regularly like the elites, they must make do with the mediated romance available to them.

Dimension 2: contextual localities

Because glocal intimacies emerge from the interplay of the homogenizing global culture from the West and of the persistence of diverse local cultures, what gets to be designated as the "local" becomes crucial to people's experiences of the globalization of relationships. As such, the dimension of con- textual localities is about what people consider as the local— ranging from where they physically are to an "imagined homeland" (Ang, 2003) or an "imagined community" (Anderson, 1983)—and how they negotiate with its distinct entanglement with the global.

Earlier, we talked about how privileged Filipinos tend to position themselves as the mediators between global Western culture and the Philippines' postcolonial culture (Hau, 2017). As a consequence, they often find themselves reconfiguring their locally rooted ties to enact more globally oriented relationships. While they find themselves maintaining their subscription to traditional Filipino familyhood and romance, they also participate in what they perceive to be more modern and cosmopolitan intimacies. For the participants in both of the cases in this article, this is experienced as a double burden.

Mobile media has heightened the ability of transnational migrants to lead bifocal lives (Rouse, 1992) where the everyday is a continuous navigation of two worlds: the physically embodied life in the US and continued mediated local ties in the Philippines. As mobile media allow for more social activities to take place digitally, people are increasingly able to take part in rituals, traditions, and events previously unavailable to them. While the connections are welcome, this can also cause additional burdens and tensions to "doing family" from afar leading to an "asymmetrical mobile intimacy" (Cabalquinto, 2018). Inasmuch as the glocal intimacies with family are desired, mobile media also highlight the complexities of

navigating bifocal lives as local Philippine life intrudes more into everyday life in the US. This has been the experience of Sandy, a 46 year old Filipino researcher working in Washington, DC.

While Sandy lauds the benefits of mobile media keeping contact back home, she gets frustrated when the family chat group is used to coordinate local ongoings she is not part of or when she's being asked to weigh in on issues that do not directly concern her. Although she likes being in the loop, she also would like to live her own life, saying, "That's why I left!" At the same time, she must contend with feelings of guilt that she is not there for her aging parents, knowing that she is hurting their feelings when she does not reply to a text message or answer a call right away. Although essential for transnational families, the "always on" characteristic of digital media also presents burdens of being thrust back into familial and social obligations that migrants thought they had left behind.

For the upper middle-class professional Filipino women, their use of dating apps and other mobile media is geared towards finding romantic intimacies with non-Filipino men. This is driven by a hope that unlike local Filipino men, foreigners will be more modern and cosmopolitan in their outlook (Saroca, 2012). But even in those instances when they are able to engage in such intimacies, they often still find themselves addressing local expectations not just about couplehood, but also about cross-cultural relationships (Cabañes & Collantes, 2020). An exemplar is Cathy, a 29 year old medical doctor based in Manila.

Like the other professionals, Cathy started using Tinder and Bumble because she wanted to explore a world beyond the repetitive dating rituals of middle-class Manila. She was getting tired of going on dates that followed the same script of no intimacy until the third meeting and expectations for women to follow traditional sexual norms. Cathy says she is lucky that she hit it off with a Belgian man who became her long-term partner. She adds that she is doubly lucky because her parents are atypically open-minded about her having a relationship with a foreigner, even when Filipino society has historically branded such women as "sluts" and "gold-diggers" no matter their economic standing (Collantes & Cabañes, forthcoming). These have helped her sustain a long-term half-together half-apart relationship with her partner. Since Cathy's partner moved in with her in Manila however, they have found themselves keeping their living arrangements discreet. Although her parents do not mind, she is conscious that they might become fodder for gossip in still-conservative Manila. Cathy explains, "I'm not ashamed of it, of course not. But I also just want to live a quiet life."

Dimension 3: sociotechnical dynamics

Although we describe mobile media as transformative for people's experiences of the globalization of relationships, we do not mean this in a techno-determinist sense. This is why we posit that the third key dimension of social intimacies is sociotechnical dynamics. This pertains to the key affordances of mobile media

technologies that individuals deploy while reconfiguring and enacting their local and global ties. In our discussion of the literature, we identified some key technological affordances. We particularly underscored how these allowed people to be constantly connected despite time and space separation (Moores, 2000). Regardless of whether their mediated communication was synchronous or asynchronous, they experienced the interpenetration between the "here" and "there" as well as other locales (see Martin & Rizvi, 2014). However, it is also important to emphasize that the impact of mobile media on social intimacies is also shaped by how users deploy them while negotiating with their life contexts (Miller et al, 2016).

The affordance of mobile media that seems to be most central to the social intimacies of privileged Filipinos is how their polymedia-rich environments simultaneously connect them to the global and the local. The technologies that open them up to modern relationships also keep them tethered to their traditional local ties. The net impact of this is that mobile media tends to entrench the double-burden experienced by these people.

The said impact is particularly notable when elite migrants are faced with aging parents in the homeland, and their need to perform filial piety tugs them back home. Through platforms such as Viber and WhatsApp, care from a distance has become easier and more convenient. Elite migrants are able to connect regularly with their parents, sustaining "intergenerational ties via media as a ritual communication to accomplish the filial obligation" (Nedelcu & Wyss 2016, p. 209). Mobile media also allows for "tighter microcoordination" (Ling, 2004) among dispersed family members allowing for familial tasks to be organized from afar.

Ronna, a 55 year old widow in Washington, D.C., communicates regularly with her parents and siblings in the Philippines through Viber, Facetime, and WhatsApp. She points out the preference for voice calls with aging parents, saying, "[W]hen you hear their voices, you can really tell how they are." This constant communication through mobile media became more urgent when her father was hospitalized as they were able to coordinate his care, talk to his doctors and caregivers, and make medical decisions together as a family. Despite being physically far away, Ronna has been able to perform her expected role as a caring daughter to aging parents. Just as family dynamics shape the way mobile media is used, these family dynamics are also shaped by the use of digital media (Lister et al., 2003).

Similarly, the upper middle-class professional Filipino women find that the same dating apps and other mobile media they use both dis-embed and re-embed them in the locality of Metro Manila. The dis-embedding happens when technologies allow them to construct "digital flyovers" (Cabañes & Collantes, 2020) that lift them above the middle-class dating strictures of the city and, consequently, make them feel readily connected to a more global and cosmopolitan dating scene. The re-embedding, however, is also something they

are cognizant about, noting that at some point, the realities of their ties to the local will undermine their self-constructed mediated connections to a world of modern romance. These women find themselves doing the double burden of trying to sustain their orientation to the global while keeping at bay their entanglements with the local, as experienced by Steph, a 28 year old advertising professional in Manila.

Because Steph has been on the online dating scene for some time, she has become more rueful about her experiences. On one hand, she continues to pin her romantic hopes on non-Filipino men, believing that there is greater hope in finding amongst them someone who is "liberated" and "not judgy." For Steph, it is valuable that dating and social media apps allow her to prioritize prospects for intimate connections on the basis of shared outlook instead of just shared geolocation. On the other hand, Steph acknowledges that the very same technologies that give her hope of a modern romance also open her up to encountering Western men who are racist and sexist. One stark example of her many harrowing experiences was a Skype video chat with a one Tinder match who, right from the opening shot, had the camera zoomed in on his exposed penis. In these instances, Steph finds herself hiding things from her family and friends. At their very best, they would be worried. And at their very worst, they would cast judgement on what she has been doing through mobile media.

Conclusion

This article furthered the conceptualization of "glocal intimacies," a term that captures the role of mobile technologies in how people enact and reconfigure social relationships at the intersection of global and local cultures. We began by establishing two foundational assumptions to the concept. One is that social intimacies—such as family and romantic ties—cannot be understood apart from the broader historical and cultural contexts of neo/colonialism, neo/imperialism, and, contemporarily, neoliberalism across the global North and the global South. Second is that mobile media have been transformative for glocal intimacies because of how they have entrenched the entwinement of local everyday life with the global and, equally so, the opportunities and tensions that come with such a condition.

Building on the above-mentioned assumptions, we identified three key dimensions that characterize how people experience glocal intimacies: digital access, contextual localities, and socio-technical dynamics. To provide empirical flesh to the intersections of these dimensions, we comparatively dis- cussed two ethnographic projects on the social intimacies of privileged Filipinos: cosmopolitan elite migrants navigating their many ties between the homeland and land of settlement and upper middle-class professional women in search of global and modern relationships.

Through the concept of glocal intimacies, we hope to have provided a lens sensitive to the nuances of the interplay between people's experiences of the intensifying globalization of intimacies and their use of increasingly ubiquitous mobile media. We do this by foregrounding (and not just incorporating) the importance of local cultures in the globalizing world that mobile technologies amplify. We also continue to emphasize the homogenizing power of a global culture rooted in the logics of Western modernity and its links to technologies. In understanding the increasingly normalized practice of people negotiating their mobile mediated social relationships, we cannot but be attentive to the diverse and distinct configurations of the global and the local, and especially in the context of the global South.

Acknowledgements

Data availability statement

The data underlying this article cannot be shared publicly to protect the identity and privacy of the individuals who participated in the study. The data will be shared on reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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