The Iconic Images of the Philippine Press Identification Card in Metro Manila

by Shirley P. Evidente

The media have been bestowed power that earns them either public trust or the ire of the government. Considered the fourth estate, they have been integrated into the institutional system of checks and balances. The press ID represents the people behind the media and their power. This study then identifies the iconic images of the press ID and the factors, circumstances, or situations that have led to the formation of that iconic image. Conducted in Metro Manila, research findings show that the press ID has served purposes other than identification. These other uses and attributes were categorized into prestige, material or economic, safety and convenience, and functional purposes.

Background

The Philippine Constitution protects the freedom of the press. Article 3, Sections 4 and 7 of the Bill of Rights of the 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines clearly state:

> Section 4. No law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech, of expression, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances.

> Section 7. The right of the people to information on matters of public concern shall be recognized. Access

to official records, and to documents and papers pertaining to official acts, transactions, or decisions, as well as to government research data used as basis for policy development, shall be afforded the citizen, subject to such limitations as may be provided by law. (The Philippine Constitutional Law., n.d.)

With such freedom, the media seem to have bestowed upon themselves power that either earns them public trust or the ire of the government. Article 2, Sections 24 and 28 of the 1987 Constitution purport this when it stated that:

Section 24. The State recognizes the vital role of communication and information in nation-building.

Section 28. Subject to reasonable conditions prescribed by law, the State adopts and implements a policy of full public disclosure of all its transactions involving public interest. (The Philippine Constitutional Law, n..d.)

Filipino journalist Armando Doronila (1990) said that political liberty was established ahead of economic development in the Philippines. Such development, according to him, has determined the character of the Philippine media, their role in shaping national events, and their relative independence from political authority.

The United States helped institute democracy in the country. Several institutions were put in place – popular elections, legislature, an independent judicial system, an independent civil service, and free press. Doronila highlighted this precedence on the building of political institutions while the colonial economy remained agricultural because it defined the political role of the press.

Historical Background

Historically, the first news messengers were the town criers. Other than Tomas Pinpin's efforts in journalism, occasional newsletters traditionally existed in the islands. These were the *Hojas volantes* or flying sheets, since they were passed from person to person to guarantee mass readership. The existence of the flying sheets dates back to 1779 and carried the title *Al Publico*. "These sheets acted as town criers for the Spaniards in the islands" (Lent, 1974: 68). Notably, even though the flying sheets had existed intermittently for 50 years, it was only in 1811 that the first real newspaper was issued – *Del Superior Gobierno*.

Looking back at the earlier background of the media even before the Americans came, the Philippine press already had a tradition of liberalism influenced by the European Enlightenment (Doronila, 1990). The press was associated with the Filipino nationalist movement which sought political reforms for the colony under Spanish rule.

In February 1889, *La Solidaridad* was published. As the revolution's mouthpiece, it sought "to work peaceably for social and economic reforms, to expose the real plight of the Philippines, and to champion liberalism and democracy" (Lent, 1974: 76). Though published in Spain and smuggled into the country, the writers of *La Solidaridad* used pseudonyms to avoid arrest. Among these writers were Jose Rizal, Marcelo H. del Pilar, Mariano Ponce, Andres Bonifacio, Pio Valenzuela, and Graciano Lopez-Jaena, a young lawyer. During the first nine months of *La Solidaridad*, Graciano Lopez-Jaena edited the paper while in exile in Spain. Seven months after *La Solidaridad*'s first publication, Lopez-Jaena passed the paper's editorship to Del Pilar, "who left his family in the Philippines, went to Spain and literally gave his life for *La Solidaridad*. During the next years he put the newspaper out despite personal starvation and illness. The paper closed shop on November 15, 1895, and its editor died early in 1896" (Lent, 1974: 76).

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Forty-five days after, Katipunan, a secret society of rebels, put out its one and only issue of another revolutionary newspaper. Villadolid (2006: 8) says, "Unnoticed by the Spanish Colonial government was the ever-growing number of native Filipinos or *indios* working for the Spanish newspapers and printing press." This initiated the secret layout of the Katipunan paper, ***Kalayaan***, when Andres Bonifacio and Emilio Jacinto met in secrecy with the *indio* "staff members" during their meal breaks.

It was also during the time of the Katipunan when newspaper writers still did not want to reveal their real identities. Mojares (1943: 13) says, "***Kalayaan*** carried the name of Marcelo H. del Pilar as the editor and was - in an attempt to mislead the authorities – datelined Yokohama. The secrecy was necessary since the Katipunan was an "illegal" organization and was battling for the formation of a national counter-consciousness and for a general uprising against the Spanish rule". When the reforms were not realized, the Philippine Revolution in 1896 ensued. It was during this period when the political nature of journalism was seen, as Filipinos struggled to emancipate themselves from the oppressive rule of Spain.

When the Americans established democratic institutions, the nationalist movement shifted their struggle from revolutionary means to the political arena (Doronila, 1990). Notable as well was the lack of support of the American for the Filipinos' desire for political independence. Newspapers and periodicals were hostile towards it. Presumably, the Americans may have viewed that Filipinos would have been satisfied with the civil liberties assured in the Bill of Rights of the American Constitution which was integrated into the Philippine Bill in 1902 and again in the Jones Law in 1916 (Taylor, 1927).

When the Japanese came, the Filipino press went underground. "Within two weeks of the Japanese take-over, most editors were interned or chased into the hills and all publications, except those which the Japanese planned to use for their own purposes were disbanded. In fact, only the TVT chain and one of

Ramon Roces' magazine chains were allowed to function" (Lent, 1974: 84). Hidezo Kaneko, who would later become the executive editor of Manila Sinbusya Company, explained that "these publications were published 'solely for the benefit' of the Japanese state" (Lent, 1974: 84). Meantime, under the censorship of the Propaganda Corps of the Army, *Manila Tribune*, *Taliba*, and *La Vanguardia* came out regularly.

The publication control of TVT and *Liwayway*, taken over by the Japanese military administration, were placed in the hands of the Osaka Mainichi Publishing Company on October 12, 1942. Lent (1974: 84) adds, "Theoretically, self-censorship was then in effect, although official censors of the Department of Information still checked the copies nightly." The Board of Information was another censoring organization created in January 1941 by President Jose P. Laurel. This organization resides on its policy "to control, direct, supervise, and coordinate all information and publicity to the government" (Lent, 1974: 84).

Amidst these censoring organizations, people still received alternative sources of news. Several Filipino *Simbusya* editors made it sure that the articles would have something to "read between the lines." In addition, there was a strong guerilla press during this time. Lent (1974: 84) adds, "The hill-fighting guerillas issued their own periodicals to boost public morale, to warn against Japanese collaboration and to fight the Japanese in any way possible." Most of these publications were circulated in an 8 ½ x 11-inch mimeographed paper and were edited by guerilla journalists. A person was sentenced to death if caught in possession of a copy of any of these publications.

However, as soon as the Japanese forces were driven out, the liberal traditions of the press resurfaced. Lent (1974: 85) continues, "The large pre-war newspaper dead, any newspaper editor, reporter, proofreader or advertising solicitor who could dig up a Platen press and a box of type could put out a newspaper – and they did."

It is within these historical accounts that history professor Ricardo Jose of the College of Social Science and Philosophy (CSSP) of the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman, believes when the Philippine press ID was first used. According to him, the American period marked the launch of press agencies in the country. He added that after the World War, the Philippines already had an accreditation system with journalists bearing IDs. He adds, "This was when the newspapers really became important as economic institutions. It was also the time when finding information was a great challenge to journalists. Consequently, it was not totally called press ID before. It was merely referred to as the newspaper's ID or the agency's ID." Jose describes the agency's ID as an object that only bears the major elements in an identification card - picture of the reporter, his/her name, ID number, and the name of the newspaper. The authenticity of an ID varies based on the journalist's contract with the agency. Jose confirms that it is actually the agencies that issue the ID, some of which came from news organizations such as United Press, Associated Press, *Time*, and *Newsweek*.

Figures 1, 2, and 3 are examples of old press IDs issued. Figure 1 is a 1928 duplicate copy of Lee Hills' old press card from Cleveland. Lee Hills is a "consummate newspaperman and former Missouri Journalism student" (Missouri School of Journalism, n.d.). Figure 2 is a 1964 campus press ID from a college radio at the University of Connecticut. Figure 3 is the press ID of Pachico Seares, editor-in-chief of *Sun.Star Cebu*, which was issued in 1962.

Ellen Alfonso, a Philippine National Library researcher, and history professor Dr. Gil Gotiangco of the UP CSSP, agree with Jose's analysis. According to them, it may be assumed that the press IDs first existed in the country during the post-war era since members of the press were afraid to identify themselves during the war due to persecution by colonizers.

Figure1. 1928 U.S. Press ID of Lee Hills. Retrieved October 3, 2008 from http://journalism.missouri.edu/calendar/history-04-18-1995.html

Figure2. Old U.S. Campus Press IDs from the University of Connecticut. Retrieved October 3, 2008 from http://www.freewebs.com/whus/

Figure3. 1962 Philippine Press ID. Courtesy of Pachico Seares, editor-in-chief of *Sun.Star Cebu*.

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From the 1950s to the early 1970s, media ownership reflected the pattern of concentration of wealth in agriculture and the modern industrial sector. Lent said:

> Most of these newspapers, in turn, are owned by large business complexes in the Philippines; Soriano companies have the *Herald*, the Lopezes have interest in the *Chronicle*, Valencia groups secretly have the *Evening News*, Araneta had the *Weekly Graphics*, and the Menzis, the *Bulletin*. Only the Roces-controlled media are recognized as independent of wealthy corporations. (This includes both Joaquin Roces' *Times* complex, and brother Ramon Roces' magazine empire). (1971: 88)

This transformation expanded the financial resources of the newspaper proprietors. It also came to reflect the diverse political and economic interests of the proprietors or those pressure or political groups they supported.

In addition, during the democratic period (1946-1972), the relationship of media with government was clearly defined and firmly established. The government conceded that media be owned and controlled by private entrepreneurs as it was deemed the best way to maintain independence and perform as a social and political critic. Lent states:

> The new breed were immoderate in language and statement, but it was the natural immoderation of those who had suddenly been set free. They erred in the service of truth, not lies... There was censorship by the U.S. Army... But military censorship was soon eased out and finally lifted, then it was open season and good hunting for politicians. (1971: 86)

Along this framework, Doronila said that the media developed into an institution that was described as the fourth estate, a recognition that it was part of the institutional system of checks

and balances. He also posited that the press gained more power when the newspaper owners were permitted to also hold franchises to operate TV and radio stations, something that was unheard of even in the advanced industrial democracies at that time. All these factors provided the environment which nurtured the political, adversarial and confrontational traditions of the media during the democratic period.

Under his regime, Ferdinand Marcos put the newspapers under the control of his wealthy political cronies. Villadolid said that,

> The mainstream media from 1972 to 1985 were mostly owned by Marcos family members or close friends. Any journalist who went to work for these media clearly understood that the owners expected him/her not to publish or broadcast anything offensive or damaging to their interests, especially those of their masters in Malacañang. (2006: 49)

As a consequence, most newspapers became pro-government organs without having to change the ownership structure or without state takeover of the media. Television channels 9 and 13, and broadsheet *Daily Express* were largely owned by Roberto Benedicto, a close friend of Marcos since his college years at UP Diliman. Benjamin Romualdez, Marcos' brother-in-law, owned the *Times Journal* group. Marcos' close friend, Hans Menzi (also a senior military aide), owned majority stocks of Bulletin Publishing Corporation.

This situation, however, did not stop underground papers from being printed and circulated. Villadolid said:

> The first groups to challenge authoritarian controls on society and its media sprung from churches and universities. Compared to the big national dailies and broadcast stations that had been silenced, these media groups from churches and schools were like mosquitoes,

easy for the oppressors to swat away. They came to be called the Mosquito Press or the Alternative Media. (2006: 41)

When democracy was restored under the Aquino administration, the structure of private ownership of the media was retained but became critical of pro-Marcos media. With the new political context emerged new issues about government-media relations. The media found difficulty drawing the line between "negative" and "responsible" criticism. Furthermore, Doronila noted that the issue facing the Filipino journalists today is not whether they enjoy freedom of the press, but it is how they exercise freedom.

The Philippine Press and the press ID

Related to exercising freedom is the use of the press ID. The press ID is what identifies the media personnel. Media outfits and networks issue media company IDs to their in-house writers, reporters, and production staff on the basis of employment. Media organizations have set their own regulations and restrictions in the issuance of the ID.

The National Press Club (NPC) is a professional and social organization of journalists in the Philippines that started in 1952. NPC imposes strict guidelines for the application for their organization ID. These are the following:

The applicant must be a publisher, regular member of the editorial staff or a correspondent of a well-established newspaper or magazine of general circulation which shall have been publishing continuously for at least one year prior to the filing of his application for membership, a staff member or a correspondent of a similarly well-established news agency, or a regular staff member of the news department of a well-established

radio and/or television network directly involved in the gathering and/or writing of the news. Said network must have a daily news broadcast and must have been in operation for at least one year. A former journalist, a former regular member of the National Press Club or any person working in professions allied to the newspaper medium is eligible to be an associate member. A person who has rendered outstanding contributions to the promotion of the Philippine press may be elected as honorary member. Publishing houses, advertising and public relations agencies and allied establishments shall be qualified to enter as company members. And lastly, a journalist whose newspaper, magazine or publication is published or circularized outside the metropolitan area can join the club as an out-of-town member. (National Press Club, n.d.)

Notable is this media organization's intention to screen journalists. Up to the level of honorary members, it aims to protect the integrity of the media profession in the country, with the objective of avoiding partisan agenda and political leaning.

In the same manner, the Philippine Press Institute (PPI), a non-stock, non-profit national association of newspapers with 94 member-organizations/publications, has also set requirements on issuing ID cards. The applicant has to be a PPI member, and membership in the institute is by publication or organization. Regular memberships are reserved for newspapers and newsmagazines published for general circulation, while associate memberships are for organizations and publications that are other than newspapers.

The Office of the Press Secretary (OPS) has "the primary policy planning, programming, and coordinating entity of government for the conduct of a relevant and effective information and communication program" (Office of the Press Secretary, n.d.). The OPS has several bureaus and agencies attached to it. One of these is the News and Information Bureau, which is further

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subdivided into four offices, such as the Media Accreditation and Relations Divisions, where the International Press Center (IPC) falls under.

> IPC accredits foreign and local media whose IPC identification cards help them to cover individual officials and to enter events that are open for coverage. Although there has been some criticism from foreign advocates of Press Freedom, the arrangements that the IPC has made, including their helping foreign media to get their working permits from the Bureau of Immigration and Deportation, their helping them in the event that they have to deal with the policy on coverage matters and facilitating the entry of equipment through the NAIA has been favorably accepted and even endorsed by the foreign media who are working here." (Philippine Press Institute, n.d.)

Even foreign journalists and visiting cinema and television groups for professional purposes are required to secure appropriate accreditation from IPC. This further complicates government–media liaison in the Philippines.

Consequently, the different media organizations have also set rules on processing ID card applications. For the OPS, an applicant must submit: a letter of endorsement from the applicant's agency or office; five byline articles (print and broadcast journalists) or pictures (photographers); an accomplished IPC form; synopsis of news, script or film documentary; letter of assignment; list of crew and equipment; recent photos; and copies of passport with approved visa. The processing takes five days, and the ID is valid for a year.

Meanwhile PPI requires an applicant to submit their membership application online or through fax. The application forms are made available for download from their website in portable document format (PDF) and Microsoft (MS) Word files.

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The data entries in the application forms are confirmed and verified, after which ID processing ensues (Philippine Press Institute, n.d.).

The processing of the NPC ID requires the applicant to present a recommendation letter from either the publisher of the newspaper or magazine, or the president of the radio or television network. The applicant is also required to fill out a membership form, wait for screening by the Committee for Membership and Board of Directors' Approval, and pay a membership fee of PhP 1,200.00 (National Press Club, n.d.).

Through the press ID, the identities of the journalists are confirmed. "IDs are like a 'rite of passage' – a legitimizer of your identity" (T. Jazmines, personal communication, August 2008). This is so since the media ID also connotes historical and socio-cultural affiliations. "When people see you as a member of the media, as precious IDs hang on your necks, you radiate some kind of power and authority" (E. Cena, personal communication, August 18, 2008). In addition, John Nery, senior columnist and editor of *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, recounts from someone's personal experience this observed radiation of power:

> "There was a man I know, who was being abducted in a gasoline station when a journalist rushed out of that gasoline station's grocery and showed her press ID and said, *"Press ako! Ano bang nangyayari dito?"*[I am from the Press! What is happening here?] When she said those words, the three male abductors ran off..." (J. Nery, personal communication, August 25, 2008)

In a statement that was posted on the Internet, the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) recalled two separate encounters by journalists who did not, at that time, have their press IDs with them and "were grossly violated by members of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) Law Enforcement Department (LED) and an officer of the Olongapo regional trial court branch 72". In the story, "Jeff Tombado, an

ABS-CBN stringer, was savagely manhandled and treated like a criminal by no less than the head of the SBMA LED, Col. Virgilio Tolentino, and a few other members of his unit". The statement tells of the incidence:

> At about 4 p.m. of that day, Tombado was within the vicinity of the LED Headquarters inside the Subic Bay Freeport Zone having been sent there by the ABS-CBN news desk to take video footage of the façade of the building where the haul of shabu was reportedly kept. It was here where Col. Tolentino and his men accosted him and demanded that he immediately stop taking footage. When Tombado refused to stop, one of Tolentino's men, who was in civilian clothes at the time of the incident, demanded that he produce an ID card to verify his identity and media affiliation. Tombado explained to the LED officer that he could not show his ID because he has still not been issued one by ABS-CBN because he had only recently started working as a stringer. The heated exchange went on for several minutes and Tolentino and his men approached them. Tombado repeatedly told the officers to verify his identity and affiliation by calling ABS-CBN, but they refused. Tolentino then pounced on Tombado, yanking the video camera away from him, while other LED officers with Tolentino twisted Tombado's arms behind his back and ganged up on him. One of the LED officers even pulled out a gun. (National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, 2008)

Another incident that involves *Philippine Daily Inquirer*'s then newly hired reporter Robert Gonzaga also came across the same disdain from a government officer when Sheriff Leandro Madarang of Olongapo City Regional Trial Court branch 72 demanded his ID while he was doing his job as a reporter. The NUJP statement further states:

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Madarang insistently asked for Gonzaga's name and media affiliation, which the reporter had already given Madarang by way of introduction before he asked the sheriff his questions. When Gonzaga explained that he did not have an ID because he was newly hired by the Inquirer, Sheriff Madarang turned his back on Gonzaga. Gonzaga then offered his celfone to Madarang so he could call the Inquirer Central Luzon desk to verify his identity, but Madarang waved away the offer and refused to engage the reporter any longer." (National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, 2008)

As media people go about their jobs – exercising their profession, freedom and power – there have been occasions when the media ID has been used for purposes other than for identification. The Philippine press ID, apart from being only an identification card has also become an access card to certain events, locations and circumstances. Rizaldy Naguit, chief station manager of DZMM Public Service said: *"Ako kasi hindi gumagamit nito although iyong mga ilang kasama ko nakikita ko ginagawa nila iyon. Iyong pambara sa pulis kapag hinuhuli. Sinasabit kasi ito sa sasakyan e. Ginagawang display."* [I don't use this, although I see my other colleagues do it. This is used as something to prevent the police officers from apprehending you. This is hung on vehicles like something to display.]

There are also cases of *hao siaos* – people who fake their identities and present themselves as professional journalists. They are usually the stereotyped people who carry notebooks and cameras and wear vests and big press IDs that are, at times, as big as certificates. "They just gatecrash so they are able to cover the event and get the freebies, if any" (T. Jazmines, personal communication, August 2008).

Neal Cruz, in his As I See It column article titled "Don't Coddle Fake, Irresponsible Journalists" published in ***Philippine Daily Inquirer*** (September 1, 2008), argues about the legitimacy of hao siaos in Philippine journalism and makes a wake-up call to

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government. He states, "First of all, we must realize that there are two kinds of journalists, the legitimate practitioners and the rogue ones." Notable is Cruz' comparison of journalists with police officers and rebels. Moreover, he elaborates that one's claim as a journalist gives the person importance and influence since distinction between the legitimate and fake journalist is blurred by ignorance.

Cruz cites an ongoing hao siao setup:

> One tabloid publisher even has turned one of the airport offices into his private one where he conducts his smuggling activities. This is known to almost all at the airport and it is to the discredit of the current airport officials that they have not stopped this reprehensible practice until now. They have pretended to be blind to what everybody else can see.

In extreme cases, hao siaos capitalize on popular programs in the media industry such as GMA 7's *Imbestigador.* According to Mike Enriquez, vice president for radio operations and news anchor of GMA 7, there was one instance when hao siaos posed as production staff for the TV program *Imbestigador* and asked for money from people. Enriquez's team filed charges and these people were sent to jail (M. Enriquez, personal communication, August 2008).

Thus, the feasibility of curtailing hao siao practices is possible but tolerated only. As GMA 7 said, "freedom in the hands of those who want the freedom without the responsibility degenerates into a callous license. So much so that libel and calumny in the tabloids and the radio commentaries are rife (most radio commentators are block-time buyers who must get their own sponsors and advertisers to survive, and the libel they commit go unnoticed because they are not printed" (Cruz, 2008).

In perspective, it seems that power has also been conferred to the press ID as a consequence of the power and freedom that

the media personnel enjoy. With this in mind, it would be noteworthy to look at the image of the press ID and how it actually got conferred such "power."

In an interview with PPI executive director Jose Pavia, the press ID has no difference from other IDs. He believes that a press ID does not guarantee the public's extra respect. On the contrary, Carlo Carongoy, a TV reporter in RPN-9, believes that press IDs are similar to military and police uniforms. He added that those who wear an ID, at present, are those who are not from the popular media industry. He cites that as opposed to military and police officers who are always required to wear their uniforms, journalists do not necessarily have to wear their IDs (uniforms). "Look at the famous Sandra Aguinaldo and others – they need not wear their press IDs because they are already known by everyone."

Carongay asserts his personal view that the press ID is not the most powerful object that a member of the press may possess; it is, for him, the camera. He added that just as he learned from his former boss, Ben Tulfo, everything is caught on camera. *"Sa camera, kapag mali ang ginawa mo, huli ka; kapag tama ang ginawa mo, bida ka!"* [With the camera, if you did something wrong, you are caught; if you did something right, you're a hero!]

In a nation where the masses are strongly affected by the tools and shaping of the media, it is often a question of ethics whether journalists hold themselves responsible for the effects of their actions or take certain practices as only a matter of course.

This study shows that through time, the press ID has evolved from a mere identification issued to a media employee to a tool of manipulation paraded in exchange for something.

As the masses became aware of the capabilities of the mass media and the power it wields, the press ID has been given the same amount of attention and authority, such that people give way to its presence or even aspire to have the same control, or at the very least, a piece of the pie. While some media practitioners might shrug this off as a trend or one of those things people outside the media will do to gain some leverage, it is noteworthy to observe

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how national press IDs are for sale in Recto, Manila, and how even international press IDs can be obtained through the Internet, for a fee of course, depending on the degree of "authenticity". One of these sites that may provide press ID wanna-bes is www.pressid.com. For only $20.00, a person can have access to press conferences, sporting events, interview opportunities, and other media events. With a membership-flexibility plan ranging from one to five years, the press ID can allow its owner to avail of quantity discounts for news organizations. The website poses numerous advantages for an individual who obtains their press ID.

This apparently has triggered the marketing value of a press ID internationally. Those who are not well-informed about the professional value of the ID may easily be lured, for a few dollars, to obtain such. Although it must be noted that:

> While it is common for authoritarian regimes to use state security as an excuse for controlling or closing media, there is a widely held view in democracies (and demonstrated in public opinion surveys) that there are some legitimate limits to media freedom. The issue arises because of the potential attributed to the media to either 'harm' society by causing conflict and disorder or to benefit society by assisting in essential processes of maintaining order and the integrity of the society. (McQuail, 2000: 145)

Reported cases of abuse in relation to the press ID have tainted the image of media. Certain measures might be taken so that such misuse and mishandling would be penalized. It is also part of the media's responsibility to protect the people from abuses committed by the very watchdog they respect and trust. In perspective,

> The concept of 'public interest' is both simple and also very contested in social and political theory. As applied to the mass media, its simple meaning is that the media

carry out a number of important, even essential, tasks in a contemporary society and it is in the general interest that these are performed and performed well. It also implies that we should have a media system that is operated according to the same basic principles governing the rest of society, especially in relation to justice, fairness, democracy and current notions of desirable social and cultural values. At the minimum, we can say that it is in the public interest that the media do not cause social problems or extreme offence. But the idea of a public interest involves positive expectations as well as certain restrictions and forms of accountability. If we have a clear idea of what the 'public interest' is in a given case, then we have then basis for an appropriate 'normative theory' that will spell out what ought and what ought not to happen. (McQuail, 2000: 142)

Problems and Objectives

Review of Related Literature

A look at the historical background of Philippine media would reveal that the events in history played a role in shaping the character of the Philippine media today. The paper by Amando Doronila (1990) titled "Media and the Democratic Development in Asia: The Philippine Case" examines the historical background of the press and their phases of development. He also looked into the character and ownership structure of the press and the role of media in national development and strengthening of democracy. Doronila points out that in the Philippines, with its history of colonial conquest, the political rights were established before economic development. Given this, the press established

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a political nature and gained some sort of power in the process. While the other countries envy the so-called press freedom, with the Philippine press dubbed as the "freest in Asia," there are issues on how journalists and other people exercise that freedom.

Meanwhile, Brian Dexter M. Medija (n.d.), in his online article "Dissecting the Philippine Mass Media Today," analyzes the social and political role of the media. He points out that its political role includes its duty as an information disseminator, its responsibility in creating and reflecting public opinion, and its function as a watchdog of the government. On the other hand, the social role includes the role of establishing pop culture, the task of building a nation, and entertainment.

While he also points out the liberties the press enjoys, he points out that it is not absolute. Moreover, much is yet to be desired from their roles. All these power bestowed on the media has led a lot of people to question their credibility and quality of exercising that power, as there have been reports of inaccurate and irresponsible reporting, corruption, and other issues.

Medija's article is useful in looking at the role of media in society and why it acts the way it does. This complements Doronila's paper, which presents a historical background of the media. Together, the two articles present a social and historical context for this research.

Ma. Rebecca R. Arcega (1998), in her undergraduate thesis titled "The Image of Journalists in the Philippine Cinema," studies the image of journalists projected in the Philippine films. She recognizes that the media is an important force in society. In her study, it came out that the media are always present when there is a crime or disaster, and that they seek to find every detail – sometimes even using various tactics just to obtain the information needed. They were also presented as catalysts to implementation of law and justice as the oppressed and powerless can seek their help. She concluded that the media are can be either a hero or a headache, as presented in the films.

The study becomes a reference point for this study, as both materials looked into the images of the journalists – this research embodied by the press identification card.

Another undergraduate thesis written by Claudette Agatep (1992) entitled "Professional Ethics and the Filipino Reporter: A Case Study," looked into the extent of professionalism among Filipino reporters. She conducted a survey of reporters from *Philippine Daily Inquirer, Philippine Star* and *Malaya*. She used three measures for public accountability. These are: attitudes toward bribes, choices given and ranking of sets of choices, and attitude towards management policies. In her study, she found out that 57% of her respondents showed lack of professionalism towards bribes while they have good professionalism with regard to the choices and the attitude towards management policies. Similarly, this study looks into the professionalism of Philippine journalists through the function and use of the press IDs.

In an article titled "Identification, please" by Raymond Tribdino (2002) in the *Manila Times*, he points out the various functions that the ID, in general, has served in Philippine society. He points out that sometimes it has become an "amulet against conformity to traffic rules." He added that in other cases, it has become a symbol of power over authority. To others, it has become a way out of official business standard transaction processes and regulations.

This newspaper article, while brief in the discussion of the identification card, gives an idea of how the identification card serves other purposes beyond merely identification.

As this study will look into the iconic image of the press ID, a study that presents an analysis of other objects will be useful. Betsy Cullum-Swan and P.K. Manning (n.d.) in their study "Codes, Chronotypes and Everyday Objects" made use of semiotics in their study of an everyday object as the t-shirt. In their study, they pointed out that objects are "no less shaped and given reality than social relations." They made use of a qualitative method of study and relied on observations gathered on the streets of several

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university towns, tourist areas, and souvenir shops in Chinatown in San Francisco and the French Quarter of New Orleans.

For their analysis, they did three tasks. The first task entailed identifying the system and the fundamental units or syntagms. The second task involved sorting out five associative contexts or paradigms that organize the meaning of those identified units. Finally, the third task was to discuss the shirt with seven codes that organize both units and paradigms.

The authors suggested that the changes of the meaning of the t-shirt as a sign vehicle. Those changes in the coding also indicated changes in society. From being a useful private undergarment, the t-shirt evolved to become a publicly displayed physical sign vehicle carrying representations and representations of representations. The authors further pointed out that the shirts "publicly transmit messages about one's self, status, lifestyle, and attitude/s to life, as well as wishes to be known as. They display what one is not, and may call out for validation of one's unfulfilled desires."

This study of an everyday object such as the t-shirt proved useful as semiotics is seen at work. Like the t-shirt, the ID is very much an everyday object. Like the t-shirt, the press ID has carried representations and representations of representations. Moreover, society and social relations have shaped representations and representations of representations.

Framework

Theoretical

The researcher chose Klaus Bruhn Jensen's Social Semiotics Theory as a major part of the framework as it allows the consideration of both the critical and cultural aspects of the problem. Although perceived as idealist in nature, the theory was able to pin down the relation of communication science to cultural studies as it shares a common focus on audience activity and the more important goal of bringing to light how audience members process and make sense of media messages.

Moreover, Jensen continued to point out that there is much to be gained from both qualitative and quantitative research, and that the combination of the two methods could yield very significant data. He approached developing his theory as he sought a middle ground between older deterministic theories and assertions that audiences have the choice, free will, and capability to interpret media content individually. Jensen wrote:

> Increasingly, mass media serve to structure a day in the life of Western, urbanized societies, as they represent institutions in the political, economic and cultural spheres of society as continuous points of reference for everyday routines. Thus, listening to news on a (clock) radio when waking up is a way of linking up with the temporal structure of, and the latest events in, community and nation. Next, a newspaper read over breakfast is, among other things, a guide to planning leisure activities later in the day. As one goes to work, a walkman or car radio may create a customized media environment which fills the gap between two well-defined contexts of home and work.... In each case, mass media contribute to the process of semiosis which sustains the everyday of individuals and reproduces the institutions of the social collective. (Jensen, 1995: 68-69).

One very important central argument in this theory is that a majority of routine and daily living is focused on semiosis, or the process of interpreting and using signs. Every individual has the ability to perform this process, largely depending on his current

knowledge of semiotics, or sign systems, built up and stocked through past interpersonal and mass communication. It is said that whenever we interpret the sign systems in our everyday lives, whether in various or specific social environments, we are also contributing to shaping or being shaped by our interpretations. Likewise, this shaping is mutual, reflexive, and attributive. Jensen attributes this perspective on semiosis to American philosopher Charles Pierce, who articulated a reflexive view of the relationship between sign systems and human communities. For example, the existence of sets of words defined in various ways allows us to label and make sense of action. The existence of these sign systems encourages certain actions and discourages others. If situations are sufficiently ambiguous, we might need to create new signs or apply existing signs in creative ways in order to interpret what is going on. But once these signs are created, they become the structure that determines future action (Baran, 2000).

Jensen goes on further to share the desire to develop a perspective of mass communication that is not only comprehensive, but also encompasses all levels of analysis, from individual to societal. He articulates the relative power of media as a channel that allows meaning to flow within human communities. In the same way, in as much as media participates in reproducing social practices and institutions, it does not necessarily have the power to control these same practices and institutions. It is said that to be able to understand the power and role of mass media, one has to understand how media participates in, affects, and influences the reproduction of discourses, practices, and institutions.

The importance of semiosis is central to this theory, and thus, the researcher aims to ascertain the direct relation of the impact of signs to the simple, yet manipulative tools, of mass media. As media evolves, changes, changes back, and yet continues to evolve everyday, we may see the relation the iconic images presented in relation to the initial signs of basic mass communication. Meaning is attributed mass communication

discourses and practices with reference to the social framework which they correspond and attend to (Baran, 2000).

The ideas of Roland Barthes also prove useful for the study. Barthes draws an important distinction between what he refers to as different orders of signification. The first order is the iconic sign. In the second order of signification, there is a whole range of connotations. The second-order signification is also what Barthes refers to as myth. He points out that this myth arises from experiences we have had association we have learnt to couple with signs. Furthermore, he points out that such connotations cannot be independent of the culture we live in and within which our sign systems operate. He even identifies a third-order signification, which he points out is a matter of the cultural meanings of signs. These cultural meanings derive not from the sign itself, but from the way that society uses and values the signifier and the signified. Meanings are drawn from the stock of images, notions, concepts and myths which are already available in the culture in a particular context and at a particular time. In Barthes' view, the function of myth is to legitimize bourgeois ideology. Its function is to present a "reality" which serves the interests of the bourgeois in such a way that the values incorporated in that "reality" appear to be quite natural, taken for granted, common sense (McQuail, 2000).

Very much related to these ideas are Michael Foucault's ideas on discourse. For him, we can understand how knowledge develops by examining the discourse a society deems as acceptable. He claims that discourse "is made up of a limited number of statements for which a group of condition can be defined" (Foucault, 1972: 116-117).

As such, ideas may evolve into knowledge by simply fitting into the discourse. Furthermore, discourse joins power and knowledge, and its power follows from our casual acceptance of the "reality with which we are presented." Discourse is created and perpetuated by those who have the power and means of communication.

Discourses are about what can be said and thought, and also about who can speak, when, and with what authority. Discourses embody meaning and social relationships; they constitute both subjectivity and power relations. Discourses are "practices that systematically form the objects which they speak" (Foucault, n.d.).

Thus, the possibilities for meaning and for definition are preempted through the social and institutional position held by those who use them. Meanings, thus, arise not from language but from institutional practices, from power relations.

Also useful to the research is Clifford Geertz use of the *thick description*. Thick description is explained as the difference between the observed versus the experienced. It is a term coined by Geertz to describe the layered, rich, and contextual description of an event or social science. For Geertz, ethnography is by definition "thick description" – an elaborate venture "*in*." He examined the action of winking and how one must move beyond the action to both the particular social understanding of the "winking" as a gesture of mind of the winker, his or audience, and how they construe the meaning of winking action itself. "Thin description" is winking. "Thick" is the meaning behind it and its symbolic import in society or between communicators (Geertz, 1973: 5-10).

Figure 4 illustrates an Integrated Model of Power Dynamics In Media Iconology. The media, being the watchdog of society and its separate constituents, wield a certain power entirely unique that sometimes transcends the freedom they enjoy.

Conceptual

The signification relationship always requires three elements to take place: the *sign* (or signifier), the *object* (or signified), and a third element called by Peirce, the *interpretant*. In other words, there is no automatic connection from significant to signified: it is the interpretant who connects the sign to its object. (Moriarty, 1996)
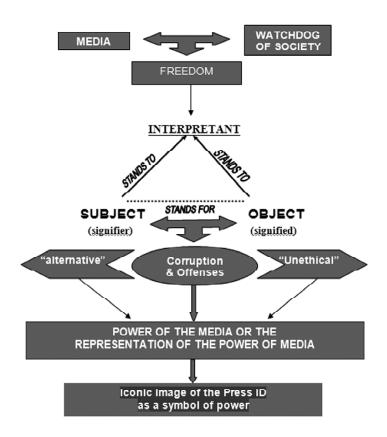
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Figure 4. An Integrated Model of Power Dynamics in Media Iconology (Palileo-Evidente, 2008)

This has, at least, two important implications. First, a sign always requires interpretation; there is no absolute fixed connection between the sign and its object. Second, a sign is meaningful only for an interpretant that has to interpret it.

With that, the objects that can be signified by signs are not restricted to physical things. A sign can represent everything – and it can also represent another sign. Through this, Peirce considers that every sign participates, more or less, of the nature of icon, index, and symbol. It can be illustrated that the press ID card can be a social convention as it represents power (symbol), the picture

resembles that of a person and the company logo (icon), but it is also causally connected with that person through the physical process of ID card production (index). From this semiotic point of view, we can then consider a press ID as a symbol made of signs, and we can observe this articulation of modes of signification in it.

As with the other estates, media is also prone and susceptible to corruption and offense. It does not take a practitioner long to discover that outside the bind of ethics are acts and practices that others would term "alternative" and others would coin as downright unethical.

In a society where the shapes of media strongly affect the masses, it is a recurrent question of ethics: whether media men completely hold themselves accountable for the effects of their actions or take certain practices as a matter of course. Certainly, it is worthy to study how the power of the media, or the representation of the power of the media, to be more specific, has led to the formation of the iconic image of the Philippine press ID as a symbol of power.

Operational

The press ID is an everyday object that journalists possess and use. As it is, it serves to identify the journalists as members of the specific media organization they work for. The study looked into the press ID and the iconic images formed as the media men use the press ID in and out of their jobs. The researcher sought to present a profile of the sign systems that exist, that built up and stocked through the various interaction and communication in society.

Applying Barthes' different orders of signification, the press ID, the laminated card, is the iconic sign, the first order. In the second order of signification, consists of the connotations or the attributes associated to the press ID Barthes even adds the third order of signification, where the cultural meanings of the

press ID come in. This refers to the meanings that arose from the way society uses and values the signifier and signified.

Identification is the process of using an identifier to connect to a stream of information constituting a person's identity or membership. Identifiers are used to give identities to individuals – for example, to legitimize somebody as a legal resident, or as taxpayer, or as practitioner of a certain profession.

"In a semiotic sense, personal identifiers can be seen as symbols relating to the referents of the multiple identities that individual may experience in the society" (Beynon-Davies, 2004: 2).

In this paper, the researcher also applied the Peircean Semiotics as an empirical backbone for considering the importance of an identifier. According to Charles Sanders Peirce, a sign is "something that stands to somebody for something in some respects or capacity", and "a sign is an object which stands for another to some mind" (Moriarty, 1996: 1).

This very important "stands for" process is the point where meaning is generated both through encoding by the source (production) and decoding by the receiver (reception) – and this relationship is the focus of the process of interpretation. The importance of interpretation is apparent in the definition given by the semiotician Umberto Eco, who further defines a sign as something that is interpreted (Moriarty, 1996).

Drawing from Foucault's ideas on discourse, all these meanings associated with the press ID are formed through discourse and observed power relations. Meanwhile, drawing from the Geertz concept of thick description, the researcher looked into both the observations and experiences of several media people regarding the use of the press ID and how the ID is used for purposes other than identification.

Methodology

The researcher used the descriptive approach to study the image of the Philippine press ID. She used both qualitative and quantitative methods. For the quantitative method, the researcher used the survey. For the qualitative methods, she used the interview and observation (journal writing).

Variables and Measures

In this research, the researcher gathered information regarding the following concepts: power, image of the press ID, its implication based on the image of the mass media, and the implications of all these to the role of mass media in society.

Units of Analysis

For the study, the researcher looked at the conceptions of and experiences with the press ID of various media personnel limited only to broadcast, TV, and print industries within Metro Manila.

Sample

This study started in 2003 as an academic research for the completion of an Master of Communication major in Broadcast Communication degree at the College of Mass Communication, University of the Philippines Diliman. There was a total of 54 survey questionnaires collected in 2003. In 2006, result assessment was conducted. Additional 66 survey questionnaires were gathered from Metro Manila. Purposive sampling was used. In both survey collections, the respondents were people who use the press ID — the media personnel (members of the media from radio, print, and TV). The sample was composed of journalists who are new to the field and those who have been in the field for a long time already. It was not easy getting hold of these media personnel, thus, the choice for purposive sampling.

For the interviews, the researcher conducted three batches of key informant interviews, with an average of 11 interviewees. All batches (2003, 2006, and 2008) represent all four media industries. The researcher asked for their views and experiences regarding the press ID. The interviewees were chosen based on their expertise in these media institutions.

For the journal writing, two members of the media from Metro Manila were asked to write down in a journal their experiences on the use of the press ID in 2003. One was Pong Olanday of RPN 9, who was then executive producer of various television programs for the network. The other is Joy Garcia, then segment producer for the News and Public Affairs Program *Brigada Siete* of GMA 7. Both are degree holders of Mass Communication. Both also have an average of 8-10 years of media experience. The researcher would have wanted to have more journals but only two were able to accommodate her. They were both from TV.

Instruments

For the survey, a one-page survey questionnaire was given to the respondents. It was composed of two parts. The first part asked for the personal profile of the respondents while the second part contained the survey questions. The questions were directed to the respondents' perceptions of the press ID and their experiences regarding the use of the press ID, All questions asked were open-ended.

For the interview, the researcher made use of an interview guide consisting of the questions to ask. Questions were similar to those contained in the survey.

For the journal, the researcher provided a journal guide or guidelines to the requested members of the media to help them in their journal writing.

Data Gathering Procedure

Members of the various media—TV, radio and print—from Metro Manila were asked to answer the survey questionnaire. Responses were tallied and summarized.

Interviews of journalists from Metro Manila were conducted to probe deeper into the answers gathered from the survey.

For observation/journal writing, two TV broadcast personnel from Metro Manila were asked to keep a journal of their experiences with the use of the press ID as they work. They were asked to do the journal for one month.

Time and Place of the Study

The researcher conducted her study in Metro Manila from March to May 2003. Data update was conducted from November 2006 to May 2007 and July to August 2008. Data gathering, consisting of journaling and distribution and collection of survey questionnaires, was done for a month. Another month was devoted to doing the interviews.

Method of Analysis

Summary tables and figures containing frequencies were generated for the survey results. The researcher looked into certain characteristics, such as years in the field and sex of respondents. Responses were compared among the various characteristics (field, years in the field, sex of respondents). The results were compared and contrasted using the constant comparative technique.

Limitations of the Study

The study studied the iconic image of the press ID in the Philippines and focused on Metro Manila. Thus, it presents the various perceptions and uses of the press ID among media practitioners. It does not discuss the ethics of the use of the press ID. The respondents and interviewees came from radio, TV, print,

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and online journalism. A small sample was gathered for the study. Time constraints and availability of media practitioners made it difficult to gather a bigger sample.

Profile of Participants

In the data, there were 120 survey respondents comprised of Metro Manila media personnel from TV, radio, and print. Figure 5 shows that 65 of them were male, while 45 were female.

In terms of field, Figure 6 shows the distribution of survey respondents as follows: 32 were from TV, 29 from radio and 32 from print.

In Figure 7, shown is the distribution of the number of years in the field of the respondents. Out of the 120 respondents, 41 respondents have worked in the media for more than 8 years, 32 have worked in the media for 4 to 8 years, and 35 have worked in the media in less than 4 years. Two respondents did not indicate the length of time he has already worked in the field.

Out of the 120 respondents, Figure 8 illustrates that 35 respondents used more than 10 press IDs, 31 owned 5 to 10 IDs, 32 used less than 5 press IDs, and 12 did not specify the number of IDs that they have owned.

In terms of educational attainment of respondents, Figure 9 illustrates that 85 were college graduates, 18 college undergraduates, and three did not finish college. The other three did not indicate their educational attainment.

Profile of Interviewees

The researcher conducted three batches of interviews, with an average of 11 interviewees. All batches (2003, 2006, and 2008) represent all four media forms. Most of them are in decision-making positions, several are on field coverage, and a good majority has had relevant experience doing media work for a good 5 to 10 years already. Several interviews were done as initial data gathering
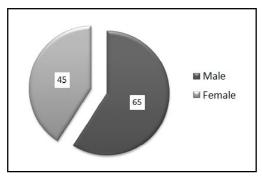
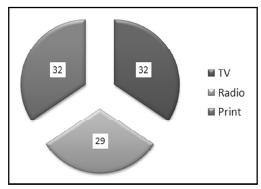Figure 5. Frequency Distribution of the Gender of Respondents

Figure 6. Frequency Distribution of the Field of Respondents

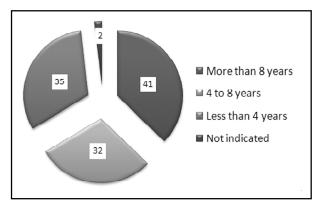Figure7. Frequency Distribution of the Number of Years in the Field

Figure 8. Frequency Distribution of the Number of IDs
Used by the Respondents

Figure 9. Frequency Distribution of Educational Attainment
of Respondents

procedure in order to have a grasp of the topic to be studied. Meanwhile, the others were used to follow up on some survey responses.

Journal

In 2003, the researcher also asked two people from the TV broadcast medium to keep a journal of experiences in using the press ID for a period of one month. One was Pong Olanday from

RPN 9 while the other one was Joy Garcia from GMA 7 News and Public Affairs Department (see Table 1).

Findings and Discussion

Table 1. List of Metro Manila Interviewees

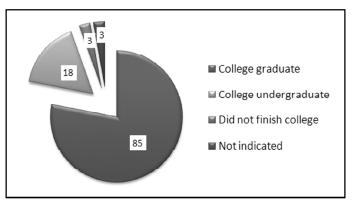| 2003 INTERVIEWEES	2006 INTERVIEWEES	2008 INTERVIEWEES
PRINT • Joel Cuartero, ***People's Journal***	**PRINT** • Aries Cano, ***Abante Tonite*** • Jan Escosio, ***Tumbok*** • Melvin Dineros Sarangay, ***Bandera***	**PRINT** • Tracy Cabrera, *National Press Club and* ***Police Files Tonight*** • Rose Conny, *International Press Center, OPS* • Emman Cena, ***Philippine Daily Inquirer (PDI)*** • John Nery, ***PDI*** • Jose Pavia, *Philippine Press Institute* • Ace Romero, ***Business World*** • Paolo Romero, ***Philippine Star****, Malacañang Press Corps*
RADIO • Benjie Liwanag, Jr., DZBB	**RADIO** • Rizaldy Naguit, DZMM • Edgardo Satira, DZRM	**RADIO** • Noel Alamar, DZMM • Katrina Golfo, DZRH • Lilia Tolentino, Sunshine Radio
TELEVISION • Marigold Haber, RPN 9 • Arnold Clavio, GMA 7 • GG Lualhati, ABS-CBN • Ma. Paz Santillan, ABS-CBN • Alvin Sejera, IBC 13 • Jay Taruc, GMA 7	**TELEVISION** • Emmagretha Francisco, ABC 5 • Steve F. Dailisan, GMA 7 • Jayson Bernard Santos, GMA 7	**TELEVISION** • Carlo Carongoy, RPN 9 • Paulo Freelance Capino, ABS-CBN • Mike Enriquez, GMA 7 • Julius Segovia, GMA 7 • Mariz Umali, GMA 7

When asked to give attributes of the press ID, the following were the most common responses: identification, easy access (to events, people, information, places, offices, etc.), to avoid traffic violation, privileges (free movies, etc.), to get respect, prestige, special treatment from other people, security, and power.

Other answers given by both male and female respondents: immediate attention, credibility, recognition, pride, honor, public relations (PR) purposes, to influence people, to prevent impostors, for authority, and to gain public support (see Table 2).

In the date, it can be seen that the two top most common attribute identified by the respondents were easy access for both male and female respondents. The male respondents' attribution to identification is a far higher number than the female respondents for the press ID This was followed closely by the attributes: identification, avoid traffic violations, to get passes for events, privilege and prestige. Easy access, which topped the chart, refers

Table 2. Frequency of Attributes of the Press ID

Attibutes of the Press ID	Frequency	
	Male	Female
Easy access	25	25
Identification	26	14
Privileges	9	9
Authority	6	4
Respect	5	4
Security	5	5
Avoid traffic violation	5	7
Special treatment from others	4	4
Prevent impostors	4	4
Prestige	3	9

to access to places, resource persons and information for their stories and news coverage. Looking at the attribute of privilege, both male and female respondents associated it with the press ID Both also indicated traffic violation. Other than those attributes, the male and female respondents did not differ much in their views. More male respondents used the ID as for authority, while more female respondent used it for prestige. Other than that, there are no significant differences among male and female responses.

The attributes were compared in terms of field, number of years and number of IDs used. Security as a press attribute was given more weight by respondents who were already several years in the field than those media personnel who were new in the field.

The answers derived from the survey were reinforced by journal entries. Similar answers were found in the journal entries of the media men requested to write down experiences with the use of the press ID in their jobs. Specifically, these were the use of the press ID to avoid traffic violation, to gain easy access to government offices.

The respondents also prescribed proposals on measures to eliminate the misuses of the press ID Tables 3, 4, and 5 for TV, Radio and Print media respectively, shows the answers of this nature:

Table 3 shows that most TV journalists propose disciplinary actions to be most effective to eliminate the misuses of the press ID. A good number of respondents also proposed regulation by media organization KBP, NPC or PPI as highly effective for the purpose. Coordination with PNP is the third best proposal, while strict issuance and should not be worn outside coverage rank fourth.

As also shown in Table 4, the respondents from broadcast radio likewise regard disciplinary actions to be the most efficient way to eliminate the misuses of the press ID. However, for these respondents, strict issuance comes as a second priority, while regulation from media organizations closely comes third. The

Table 3. Proposals to Eliminate Misuses of the Press ID (Television)

Proposals	Frequency
Disciplinary actions	10
Regulation from KBP/NPC/PPI	8
Coordination with PNP	6
Should not be worn outside coverage	5
Legitimacy	4
Strict issuance	4
Elimination of *hao-siaos*	3
Proper orientation	2

Table 4. Proposals to Eliminate Misuses of the Press ID (Radio)

Proposals	Frequency
Disciplinary actions	7
Strict issuance	6
Regulation from KBP/NPC/PPI	5
Legitimacy	4
Should not be worn outside coverage	2
Proper orientation	2
Coordination with PNP	0
Elimination of *hao-siaos*	0

Table 5. Proposals to Eliminate Misuses of the Press ID (Print)

Proposals	Frequency
Elimination of *hao-siaos*	4
Disciplinary actions	3
Strict issuance	3
Should not be worn outside coverage	2
Legitimacy	1
Coordination with PNP	1
Regulation from KBP/NPC/PPI	1
Proper orientation	0

respondents also considered legitimacy over proper orientation and should not be worn outside coverage more important.

Respondents from print media view the variables similarly, although in varying priority levels. As illustrated in Table 5, respondents consider the elimination of hao siaos as top most priority in order to eliminate misuses of the press ID. Disciplinary actions, which made it top most priority for the TV and radio media respondents, is placed second along with strict issuance. Print media respondents put legitimacy, coordination with PNP, regulation from KBP, NPC, and PPI, equally important as the fourth in rank.

A number of respondents indicated the physical attributes of the press ID or the information that should be placed on the card when asked to give attributes of the press ID. Figure 10 identifies and situates these physical attributes.

Circumstances When ID was Used Other Than for Identification

When asked to cite circumstances when they personally used the ID for purposes other than for identification the following were
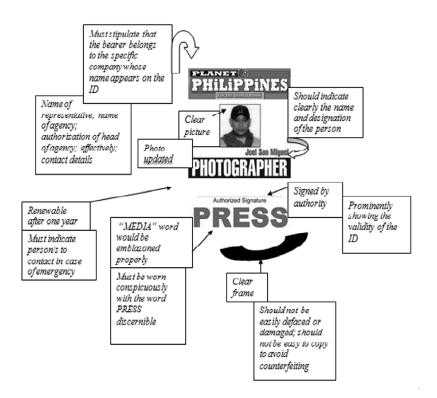
Figure 10: Proposals for Physical Information in the Press I.D. Sample press ID retrieved November 2008 from http://images.google.com.ph/imgres?imgurl=http://i.pbase.com/v3/32/574532/1/45788740.PPid.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.pbase.com/advancedgraphix/image/45788740&h=324&w=216&sz=33&hl=tl&start=1&usg=__D9DgIA0tOsfdoHXCZpASB4il-X0=&tbnid=U0Vx5-fzdRmxWM:&tbnh=118&tbnw=79&prev=/images%3Fq%3DPhilippine%2B%2522Press%2BID%2522%26gbv%3D2%26hl%3Dtl%26sa%3DG

the common answers: to avoid traffic violations, as pass for an event, to enter certain areas or premises, and for security (especially when covering risky or sensitive issues/events).

Other answers cited were: to gain priority in getting records of a court decision, to gain access to the office of Customs Commissioner, use of public libraries (waive fees), privilege parking of vehicles, to cross police lines, to get through a checkpoint, to get immediate attention, for exercising authority, as a gate pass, for access to a polling place, and to get discounts on public transportation.

Similarly, respondents identified common answers such as prestige, material/economic, safety and convenience, getting out of difficult situations, getting interviews, being able to enter functions/gatherings – when asked about the instances when the press ID was used other than for identification.

Table 6 identifies these circumstances. Other than for identification, the most common circumstances wherein the respondents used the press ID were to avoid traffic violations (which was done mostly by the male respondents), to get passes for events (which both male and female respondents admitted to doing), privilege (more female respondents than male), and to enter premises (at equal frequency for both male and female respondents).

Uses of Press IDs

The following were the most common answers cited when asked to give uses of ID observed from colleagues: to avoid traffic violation, for payola/extortion/blackmailing purposes, to get freebies, to "harass" enemies and other ordinary people, to get favors/special treatment, and to get passes to concerts, etc.

Other answers include: serves as badges in beer houses, to get a cab, to cross over police lines, to solicit comments and generate information, to gain access to event or place (even if unlawful), and for misrepresentation (non-official engagements, no longer part

Table 6. Frequency of Circumstances When Press ID is Used
Other than Identification as Observed By Colleagues By Gender

Attibutes of the Press ID	Frequency	
	Male	Female
Avoid traffic violation	25	25
Processing papgers	26	14
Pass for an event	9	9
Gate pass	6	4
To enter a premise	5	4
For security	5	5
Checkpoints	5	7
For exercising authority	4	4
Ruler/Marker	4	4
Privilege	3	9

of company). From the data, most respondents observed from their colleagues "to avoiding traffic violation", payola/extortion/ blackmailing, and "to get special favors/treatment" as the most common attributes of the press ID. These three were the topmost answers, along with freebies as the more frequent attributes among others.

The attributes of *power* [avoid traffic violation, payola/ extortion/blackmailing, get special favors/special treatment, badges (in beer houses, etc.), arrogance, unlawful access, abuse (gate crashing, abuse of freedom, etc.), authority, power tripping, law exemption/illegal matters, threaten people, access to areas restricted to the press only], *recognition* [passes to concerts, get freebies, badges (in beer houses, etc.)], misrepresentation (non-official engagements), immediate assistance to any government agency, hanging at the windshield], *credibility* [solicit comment, generate information, press conferences, authority, hanging at the

windshield], and ***access to offices or information*** [avoid traffic violation, get special favors/special treatment, passes to concerts, solicit comment, generate information, unlawful access, gate-crashing, press conferences, immediate assistance to any government agency, authority, law exemption, access to areas restricted for press only were common in all responses (see Table 7).

Table 8 shows topmost observed attribute from both male and female colleagues is avoiding traffic violation. This is closely followed by payola, extortion, and blackmailing. The third topmost attribute observed is for special favors and treatment; wherein respondents observed this to be more frequently practiced from

Table 7. List of Circumstances of ID Use Other Than Identification

OFFICIAL	BOTH OFFICIAL AND PERSONAL	PERSONAL
• Immediate attention • Pride • Honor • PR • To influence people • Recognition • Credibility	• Immediate attention • Pride • Honor • PR • To influence people • Recognition • Credibility	• **Power** • **Gain public support**
• Pass for an event • Privilege parking	• Pass for an event • Privilege parking	• **Freebies (free movies, tickets, etc.)** • **Discounts** • **To solicit money** • **Badges in beer houses**
• Avoid traffic violation • Enter a premise • For security when covering risky or sentitive issues • To get records • Speedy processing of papers	• Avoid traffic violation • Enter a premise • For security when covering risky or sentitive issues • To get records • Speedy processing of papers	
• Ruler • Marker	• Ruler • Marker	• **Lock opener** • **Fan or *pamaypay*** • **To spread mayonnaise on bread**

Table 8. Frequency of Attributes as Observed by Colleagues by Gender

Attibutes of the Press ID	Frequency	
	Male	Female
Avoid traffic violation	22	13
Payola/Extoriton/Blackmailing	18	9
Freebies	10	5
Harass enemies	7	4
Specia favors/treatment	5	13
Arrogance	3	4
Badges (beer houses)	2	3
Concert pass	1	4

their female colleagues. The attributes for Freebies and to harass enemies are approximately at equal frequency on forth rank, with high-level of occurrence with the respondents' male colleagues. On a female higher frequency level are the attributes for concert pass, badges (used in beer houses), and arrogance.

The following data were gathered from the journal entries:
- The press ID was used to access roads even during color coding times.
- The press ID was used to help someone who had a vehicular accident. The victim could have been ignored if the then Production Assistance (PA) media personnel did not use her press ID to pressure the bus driver to help the victim.

Pong Olanday of RPN 9 relates,

I was still a PA in RPN 9 then. While on a bus ride a commotion happened and I, together with an officemate, discovered that the bus driver bumped a

Metro Aide, It seemed like they ignored the man so we acted like we were really from the media. We introduced ourselves and told them that we were from RPN 9 and told them that they have to fix that. We asked them to stop the bus. They let all the passengers down and helped the Metro Aide). We brought the Metro Aide to Labor Hospital. Then, after, that we were forced to testify to the incident.

Furthermore, in this journal entry, the press ID was also used to persuade choosy taxi drivers accommodate them.

In the other diary of another journalist, the press ID served as an easy access to government premises. Joy Garcia of the GMA-7 News and Public Affairs Department wrote,
One time year 2000, I had to interview somebody from the NBI with my reporter. But my reporter and crew went ahead of me. So I had to pass by the lobby guard alone. I forgot to wear my ID. The guard asked me where I'm going. I told him, I need to go at the Anti-Fraud Division. He then asked me to go to the other building to get a visitor's pass. When I showed him my ID, he laughed and said, "So, there it is".

In this instance, the press ID was presented to avoid harassment. On other occasions, the press ID was hidden to avoid harassment, e.g. during EDSA 2001 when rallyists did not spare the media people from their ire over the things happening then. The press ID served as an escape pass from being penalized for a traffic violation. Joy Garcia relates,

My EP and I are on our way to National Bookstore in Quezon Ave. It has been a long time since we last went there so we didn't know that they changed most of the streets to one way. The MMDA stopped us. He was trying to get my boss' license. My boss didn't have his license. We really tried to plead our way out. Then the MMDA asked us where we came from. My boss then showed him the GMA-ID that was hanging on the

rearview mirror. The MMDA allowed us to leave and reminded us not to violate traffic rules especially that we're from GMA-7.

Interview Results

Interviews done in Manila and research garnered showed that several media practitioners think that the press ID is an important part of media life, yet overrated in itself. Some reporters have stated that as they became more recognized, the press ID became more irrelevant, and the company ID became more useful. The more recognized reporters reasoned that it becomes secondary once people have already identified them; especially in the beat they are covering.

> Since I cover for example NBI - NBI is a law enforcement agency and everyday, you're there, and you're seen everyday. Sometimes, other offices don't require IDs anymore because they have identified you as the reporter covering that particular beat in their office. (Jay Taruc, personal communication, March 8, 2003)

> Although I will admit even without an ID now because I appear on television, there are people who, on their own, will volunteer favors. For example, very rarely is there a full restaurant when I eat out. No matter how full a restaurant is, when they see me, they will say, "Oh we're full BUT I think we have one more table left somewhere in some corner." Or in an airport, domestic airport, they will tell me, "You don't have to line up." But I do, as much as I can, unless it's a scene. But that's not even supposed to be a perk or a benefit. That's not supposed to be part of being a media person, ID or no ID. (M. Enriquez, personal communication, August 19, 2008)

Granted that everybody starts out with the press ID as a means of identification, there have been instances when it becomes unimportant, or should even be taken off. These are in the cases when the public would be hostile towards media presence (such as during the EDSA 2001, when rallyists would mistake certain networks as being pro-administration).

Media practitioners are aware of the power of the press ID, and recognize that this power could fall into the wrong hands, especially into those who do not have anything to do with the media and are only after the bit of power they could grab.

> I can't think of an instance when I used the press ID outside of work. None. Because when I'm out, in public, I'm more ashamed to brag that I am from media. It doesn't feel like we have extra power so I prefer to be just ordinary. I know of people who act like they are from media. They use if for extortion or to eat for free, like policemen—to get discounts. (A. Clavio, personal communication, March 28, 2003)

Despite these, one still cannot rule out people within the media who are inclined towards unethical practices.

> It is not the press ID that is abused but the job itself, because other people won't let you pass even if you are part of the media. So what if you're part of the media? You broke the rule. However, if you have the press ID, you get more weight and more privilege. You can enter places where not everybody is allowed to enter. You get more offers. When it comes to interviews, some people will even pay you just to be on camera and TV. You can also get free items from establishments, for example, a bar. Some ask for the owner and tell them that they are from ABS to get free stuff. Those were the cases I encountered but chose not to tolerate. Some even carry gun because they're part of media. All lies.

> Some police are also afraid of the media, so they are given protection, too. But that does not go for all. (G. Ramos, personal communication, March 22, 2003)

When the interviewees were asked about their views regarding the factors or conditions that led to the use of the press ID to be used for purposes other than identification, the answers given include the high regard for media practitioners, ignorance on the use of the press ID, economic factors (to increase one's income), the power it is associated with, lack of, or absence of, ethics and professionalism, and the temptation to have more than what one already has.

> *Pero hindi ko na sasabihin kung aling broadsheet, basta kilalang broadsheet. Nasa isang kainan kami kasi sinamahan ko yung isang kaibigan ko na balik-bayan. Tapos hindi siguro ako napansin nung broadsheet writer sa kabilang table. Hindi ba naman siya nagbayad ng bill nya pagkatapos ipakita na taga-media siya.* (T. Cabrera, personal communication, August 11. 2008)

> [I will not mention which broadsheet, but this was quite a famous one. We were in a restaurant, I accompanied a friend from abroad. The writer from that broadsheet did not notice me; that person did not pay the bill after showing that he/she is from the media].

When asked if they already attributed such characteristics to the press ID even before they entered the job, half of the interviewees said they did not know the press ID was being used for other purposes but said they eventually became aware of the various practices when they got exposed to the job. The other half of the respondents said they have heard stories and rumors about certain misuses of the press ID even before they became media men.

> *Halimbawa, siya, may violation siya sa traffic, minsan ginagamit naming iyong media ID noon para makalusot. Kasi ino-honor siya eh. Kumbaga kasi, iyong mga tao din, pag nakakakita sila ng media ID, parang natatakot sila. Parang naiisip nila, "Naku, pag hindi mo pinagbigyan ito, baka ma-media ka."*
> (L. Manalac, personal communication, August 18, 2008)

> [For example, a person has traffic violation, we sometimes use the media ID to get away in order to get out of the situation. It is honored. It seems like the people are fearful of the press ID. Perhaps they thought that if one doesn't five leeway to the media person, they might give you unwanted media exposure.]

Looking at the factors/conditions mentioned that the resource persons think led to the use of the press ID for purposes other than identification, it is to be noted that the concept of power surfaces. The concept is tied with the press ID. They see the press ID as a symbol of power, a representation of power. The press ID is seen as a powerful tool; thereby, it is used for other purposes outside of their job or duties as members of the media. Sometimes even those who are not members of the media anymore still use their press ID to get some favors or privileges. They think that that power of the press ID emanates from the power that is also attached to the media. The media is seen as very powerful and influential.

> *In most government offices, when you present yourself as member of the media armed with the precious press ID, if you're an Inquirer staff at least, they'll treat you with utmost respect and fast service. Panigurado iyan. Even when calling offices, magpakilala ka lang na taga Inquirer ka, aba maganda kaagad ang tono sa kabilang linya.* (E. Cena, personal communication, August 18, 2008)

[That is for sure. Even when calling offices, the simplest introduction of being from Inquirer, the other person on the other line changes his/her tone.]

Putting all the responses and views together, certain patterns can be noted. These answers can be further classified into socio-cultural attribution categories of the uses and attributes of the press ID. These categories are prestige, material/economic/profit, safety and convenience, and functional; with subcategories for official, personal and intersection of the two (see Table 9).

Respondents indicated they already attributed power to the press ID even before they entered the field. This would indicate that such conception of the press ID has been around for a long time already and media people have been using it for other purposes, not just for identification.

Others indicated they did not think the press ID can be such a powerful object but eventually saw it for themselves when they got into the field.

The Iconic Image of the press ID

The data gathered all go back to the concept of power. The press ID has gone beyond just a means for identification. It has become a symbol of power. The categorical placements of these attributes intensify this argument. There are attributes than may solely fall into either personal or official; while some will intersect between the two categories. A bearer of the press ID can avoid traffic violation; get access to an event, person, or place; enjoy privileges and freebies, command respect, get special treatment from other people, among others. Whether used for official or personal, these may, at certain intersection points, illustrate clear indications of the power and influence that the press ID possesses. People from the media themselves acknowledge this.

Looking back at Barthes' different orders of signification, the press ID represents the iconic sign. The connotations and

Table 9. Categories of Circumstances of ID Use Other Than Identification

	OFFICIAL	BOTH OFFICIAL AND PERSONAL	PERSONAL
PRESTIGE	• Immediate attention • Pride • Honor • PR • To influence people • Recognition • Credibility	• Immediate attention • Pride • Honor • PR • To influence people • Recognition • Credibility	• Power • Gain public support
MATERIAL/ ECONOMIC	• Pass for an event • Privilege parking	• Pass for an event • Privilege parking	• Freebies (free movies, tickets, etc.) • Discounts • To solicit money • Badges in beer houses
SAFETY AND CONVENIENCE	• Avoid traffic violation • Enter a premise • For security when covering risky or sentitive issues • To get records • Speedy processing of papers	• Avoid traffic violation • Enter a premise • For security when covering risky or sentitive issues • To get records • Speedy processing of papers	
FUNCTIONAL	• Ruler • Marker	• Ruler • Marker	• Lock opener • Fan or *pamaypay* • To spread mayonnaise on bread

attributes (e.g. access, passes to events, power, etc.) given to it by the members of the media constitute the second-order of signification. The third-order signification points to the cultural meaning of the sign. The connotations are taken into the cultural context in which the sign systems operate. For this particular study, the researcher looks at the culture of media and the press ID situated in Philippine society.

Recalling what has been presented in the historical background, the media in the Philippines has also become the fourth estate, recognizing its role and participation in the system of checks and balances of the institutions. There is a certain level of respect and credibility accorded to it. Indeed, power resides in the media especially when one considers, in addition, the way people have accorded their interpretations of the constitutional provisions set before the media.

This is the cultural context in which the press ID operates. To a certain extent, that power has been passed on to people behind it, the media men, and further to the press ID, as the research shows. People listen to what media men have to say, and some may even have the mentality of looking up to the media persons.

In this sense, the ID serves as a symbol of the power that the media have. Socio-culturally, people saw it – and still see it – as a symbol of power, thereby leading the majority of media practitioners to see the use of the ID for other purposes as a common and long-time practice in the field. Indeed, it has become a part of the culture of media in the Philippines – and, in this sense, supports a never-ending cycle where such actions are encouraged.

Conclusion

This study looked at an object that represents the people behind the media and, as seen in the study, the power of the media — the press ID. It also identified the iconic image of the press ID and

the factors, circumstances or situations that have led to the formation of that iconic image.

Other than its original purpose of identification, the iconic image of the Philippine press identification card in Metro Manila is thus identified by the various characteristics attributed to the press ID. The data gathered through surveys, interviews, and journals suggests the iconic image of the press ID as easy access, security, pass to events, a means to avoid traffic violation, tool to get freebies and privileges, among others. These uses and attributes of the press ID can be grouped categorically into the ID's official and personal functions, as well as within the socio-cultural frames. These were: prestige, material or economic, safety and convenience, and functional. Security as a press ID attribute was given more weight by respondents who were already several years in the field than those media personnel who were new in the field. Journalists who were in the profession for some less than four years to eight years gave more significance to easy access as a press ID attribute.

Implications and Recommendations

What can be gleaned from all these is that the press ID has become a symbol of power. The power that resides in the media has been absorbed by or passed on to the media people themselves and even the press ID, the tool that identifies the media people as members of the media. This supports Foucault's ideas on discourse and power. As people involve themselves in discourse, they create meanings and discourses involve power relations.

The historical and cultural context had a lot to do with the formation of such iconic images. As was shown in the historical background, media in the Philippines has, to a certain extent, enjoyed respect and public trust that the people look up to them and always listen to what they have to say. As Jensen noted, people contribute to the shaping of, or being shaped by, their interpretations as each individual has the ability to interpret and

use signs depending on his knowledge of current sign systems, built up and stocked through past interpersonal and mass communication.

As Geertz too have distinguished, the symbol of power of the press identification card is translated towards a thick description as media practitioners use it. Some people may view the media practitioners as "power trippers", fearful agents, or as people who expect to be presented with freebies, gifts, and other perks. For some, these may be in the assortment of holiday trips, free meals, and money in envelopes. Since media practitioners are covered by the entirety of the media, others view them to rightfully be accorded with special treatment and favors.

Following Barthes' levels of signification, people may think that the press identification card as a representation of power which may be abused by its users. This becomes the first order level of signification – the iconic sign. In some instances, the use of the press ID may elicit dislike from some people and even threaten others. Peoples' prior experiences and associations with the media and the press ID may have provided for these views. The myth by which the Press identification cards operate has been dependent on cultural orientations and with the sign system that people have come to know of it. Personnel of government agencies may at times regard media as people who are out to probe them or expose some irregularities within their organization which could prove upsetting for some of these agencies. At present, the reality appears to be taken quite naturally as it is also taken for granted.

Since such conception and practice has been around for a long time, the image was passed on and, as can be seen, still exists today. People have adopted the concept and images. As such, the press ID continues to be a symbol of power.

The study focused on the iconic images of the press ID. Other areas can be explored. The extent of use and misuse of the press ID can be one topic that can be studied. While it has been touched in some parts of the study, this has not been the focus of

the study. Moreover, some people claim that the abuse is not as widespread as before. Perhaps this claim can be explored.

The study also focuses on the Metro Manila area. Other areas can be looked into to check if the culture of media is the same or different in those areas.

It may also be noteworthy to further explore the differences, if any, in the extent of power that reside among the different media. No significant differences were observed in this study. Another study may be done to look deeper into the similarities and differences in the exercise of that power among the various media.

The people from the media have been the source of information for this study. It may also be worthy to look at what people outside of the media – the people who read the papers, watch TV, and listen to the radio – think about people from the media.

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