

# The philippine media and what is left of media essay



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Not everything that you read in the dailies are to be considered gospel truths. This was the answer I have got from my POL221 instructor when I asked him about how I should treat the news I obtain from the broadsheets. True enough, I saw the plausibility in the statement not so long ago during this semester. As I happened to browse on newspaper headlines about the deployment of Chinese ships to the West Philippine Sea, two of the Philippines' biggest broadsheets had conflicting news headlines. One said that the Chinese ships were already going back to their origin, their country while the other said that the Chinese ships were to stay around the disputed islands in the West Philippine Sea. There is, obviously, something wrong with how the media works in this country.

How the Philippine media arrived as how it is today is, of course, due to the history of the Philippines. This section of the paper will talk about the history of the Philippines in relation to media and information dissemination.

During the ancient Philippines, the barangay system of government headed by the datu and the council of elders have no other way reaching their constituents but through the umalohokan or the messenger of the barangay. Through him, the more or less 500 families inhabiting the said barangay will happen to know the recent proclamations of the datu and the council of elders concerning their future as a unit of society. Skipping further through our history timeline, near the end of the 333-year rule of the Spaniards was a group called " the Propaganda movement." [1] With the likes of Marcelo H. Del Pilar, Graciano Lopez Jaena, and Jose P. Rizal, the liberal minds of the nineteenth century Philippines, which battled for reforms and against the Spanish government in general, had really become prominent. This influx of

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liberalism in the Philippines was described as the start of the tradition of an unrestrained and adversarial press.[2] During the American period, the Philippine Herald was the most prominent mass medium which delivered in-depth national news.[3] As the World War II commenced and when the Americans seceded, the Japanese controlled the Philippine Media by portraying all the benefits of their GEACPS (Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere)[4] program of development. When the Second World War came to a close, the Third Republic commenced and the media developed through the prevalence of the radio as the most important tool for mass communication. The radio, specifically the AM band, delivered national and local news to every household. This is evident every president's inaugural ceremony and speech. The mass media developed with such dynamics. Yet, it experienced a different turn when Proclamation No. 1081 or known as the Martial Law imposed an immediate seizure and control over all media communication, facilities, and equipment starting September 21, 1972. Famous among all media stations seized by the government was that of the Lopezes' ABS-CBN Channel 2. Former President Ferdinand E. Marcos stated that he signed the proclamation because of obvious and fearless resistance of government control and depiction of hard, negative news which showed the ineffectivity of the government to suppress the tension brought about by demonstrators. [5] The media, after almost fourteen years, made an effort to restore democracy. With the likes of Radio Veritas and Radyo Bandido, the People Power Revolution that toppled the Marcos regime became powerful since then. Now, journalists will always resist the government control over mass media especially after the said revolution.[6] One very good example was the ouster of Former President Joseph Estrada in 2001. Some historians say that ' <https://assignbuster.com/the-philippine-media-and-what-is-left-of-media-essay/>

Erap', as he was fondly called by his supporters, became a victim of " coup d'text." [7] Text messaging was the fastest mode of information dissemination at that time. Philippine society continues to experience this kind of information dissemination especially with the advent of social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. I posit that, through this section of this paper demonstrating the history of the Philippine media, it is right to say that the mass media in the Philippines greatly influenced the turn of events of Philippine politics. This informal sector of the government encompasses all other sectors of society because through their dissemination of information, they can add, subtract, multiply or divide pieces of news as long as they deliver it to their target audience, to all Filipinos here and abroad.

This paper aims to explore these faults of the media, their efforts to affect change in their field and in our society, the challenges they continuously face up to this day, and the feasible and practical solutions offered by the author of this paper to ease the challenges that the world of mass media perennially faces.

What composes the new media? What are some of the media's efforts to address the pressing issues of the present? These questions will serve as the foundation of this paper and will cover a lot of discourse. This section of the paper tackles the media and their use of influence in order to affect change. Anchored with the media's (the chosen informal sector for this research) methods are the degrees of their effectiveness.

Periodicals, radio, and television are the traditional forms of mass media. What has become extraordinary forms of mass media is the use of social

networking sites like Facebook and Twitter to disseminate pieces of information in almost realtime. The new media made the individualistic have a community. Furthermore, the prevalence of the Internet made people know about the society they are living in.[8]And because of these new media, there has been a campaign by a certain television network which aims to make people informed while they are using the Internet as a vehicle for their opinions. That is the “ Think Before You Click”[9]campaign. Through observation, I, being a member of those sites like Twitter and Facebook, saw that the majority of users have been tamed after the campaign and made sure that their opinions are grounded on empirical data and not hoaxes.

There are some forms of regulating agencies or associations which ensure the decent content of news and they will be delved on in the next series of discourse. One association ensuring proper censorship is called the KBP (Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas). The KBP, as an association made for the media, instituted a Code of Ethics in which media agencies should follow. This Code of Ethics of the said association is a testament to the encompassing power of the television to deliver information about all sectors of society.[10]This Code is instituted because the television is the ultimate mass medium, an aggregate of many pictures which conveys a thousand words, bringing up-to-date information anytime, anywhere.

[11]Another agency is the PCIJ (Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism). The PCIJ is a non-profit, independent media agency which specializes in investigative reporting.[12]Since they specialize in investigative reporting, the PCIJ journalists have maintained an eye of scrutiny. They always look upon the programs of the government, its

advantages and implications, to give the Filipinos a closer look upon the both sides of the story. The PCIJ has always been known for its fair and balanced reporting. This is a good development in the mass media of the past two decades for they give fair pieces of information which come from different public documents. They, too, publish books as part of their information dissemination and proved to be effective in giving the citizens fair, just, and balanced news. Still, another agency which overlooks upon the Philippine media is the CMN (Catholic Media Network)[13]. Being a predominantly Catholic country, the CMN aims to bring about not just good news but also justice and solidarity among the Filipinos in times of tribulations with the likes of People Power 1 and the calamities which has struck the country.

One of these serious failings of the media is that there seems to be conflicting reports about a single issue.[14]This basic problem can be rooted from the challenges that continue to prevail upon media personnel until now. There has been, since the advent of Martial Law, the media corruption wherein journalists fell prey to bribery to stop the sensationalization of their exposes.[15]They will fall to bribery because of their low salaries. As many folks say, “Walang pera sa pagsusulat.” This is also true in the Philippine press. That is why, the AC-DC and ATM journalism have been prevalent amongst media agencies especially during and after the Martial Law era. AC-DC or Attack-Collect-Defend-Collect system is a mode of corruption prevalent in the media. It works when a reporter attacks a person’s rival or enemy for a fee; the same reporter defends the person he or she previously attacked for money.[16]It clearly shows that there is no conviction on the part of the journalist. Also, the citizens which happen to be readers of that journalist

who succumbed to the AC-DC system will be confused on whose story to believe. Another mode of corruption is the ATM journalism which is a transformation of envelope journalism.[17] Writing positively for certain firms involved in bad light for an exorbitant fee is called ATM journalism. It is called as such because the money is deposited to the ATM account of the journalist. These are clearly challenges to all journalists to become credible in their news writing. But how will they respond to those challenges if there are three factors which hinder many Filipino journalists to going deep into the real cause of events? These factors are deadline pressures, extreme competition, and budgetary constraints.[18] This budgetary constraint and the challenges it imposes can be summarized through this passage.

“ Working journalists have not been so effective at practicing development journalism because so many of them have been co-opted by the system for their own economic survival. But there are some community newspapers truly working for the community good. Envelope journalism is a problem, but it’s not only the fault of the receiver but also of the giver.”[19]

The solution for the said envelope journalism and its transformation which happens to be ATM journalism is said to be development communication or development journalism. That is not yet in full bloom. The development journalism tackled in the above passage will be delved upon later during the discussion of feasible and practical solutions addressing the challenges of the media.

Another challenge which curtail the media from delivering the real cause of events is the lack of experience due to many youth reporters. According to

one observation conducted by the PCIJ around 1997, Malacañang reporters are not honed in writing stories about the pressing issues of the day due to their youth and inexperience. Also, they find economics, business, and foreign interests topics as among the difficult to work with in their news writing.[20] Youth and inexperience will really serve as an obstacle to reporters in going through the most important issues which the Filipinos need. Moreover, the news brought about by tabloids, which are sold at a lower price than the more important broadsheets, are mediocre and focus on crimes which are obviously hard and negative pieces of news which people ought to disregard because of its unimportance.

Furthermore, another challenge is the slow passage of the Freedom of Information Act of 2010. Many media agencies are still having limited access to public documents which are important for transparency, accountability and credibility of the media. The Section 5 of the FOI Act of 2010 states:

“ Sec. 5. Presumption – There shall be a legal presumption in favor of access to information. Accordingly, government agencies shall have the burden of proof of showing by clear and convincing evidence that the information requested is exempted from disclosure by this Act.”[21]

But the lobbying for this FOI Act of 2010 has been taking a long time and those journalists who specialize in investigative journalism really want this bill to be signed as a law to have a greater access on governmental documents, initiating a new press which is fair, just, and balanced in their news delivery.



Lastly, the likes of Marlene Esperat and environmentalist Dr. Gerry Ortega have been victims of extrajudicial killings. This posed a challenge to many aspiring journalists who always advocated for the truth. How about these people? They also advocated for the truth and yet they were killed. That is why, this posed danger and fear to aspiring journalists and to those journalists who are already part of the journalism world will now resort to corruption to prevent the loss of their lives and succumbing to the private armies of the influential politicians which ought to hide from the gnashing teeth of the law.

The media became the cause of many events which deemed influential and important in the framing of our Philippine history.[22]Some of these events are: 1) toppling of the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos in 1986; 2) resignation of many high ranking officials and influenced the system of elections and; 3) many personalities entered the political arena. This simply says that the great bandwidth of media had clearly influenced the Filipinos in framing their decisions. That is why it is important for the author of this paper to propose feasible and practical solutions in order to address the challenges which the media experience. This last section of the paper is a list of possible solutions which the media can adapt to put themselves in order and to deliver fair and balanced news.

Many say that to deliver bad news is more profitable than delivering good news. To change this connotation of the media, the writer of this paper adapted Nora Quebral's definition of what she calls as " development communication." She defined the term as follows:

“ Development communication is the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater social equality and the larger fulfillment of the human potential.”[23]

To exercise this development communication is to have a paradigm shift amongst journalists and those who aspire to be such. They must realize that reporting good news is as worthy and as profitable as reporting bad news. Also, journalists must instill in their minds that knowledge and information can empower people and make them productive in their endeavors.[24]

Now, for a more balanced reporting, especially of the executive branch of government, the writer proposes that there must be responsible journalism while standing firmly behind the government.[25]Responsible journalism means that accuracy must not be compromised together with the people’s right to know. Through the guidance of KBP, CMN, PCIJ and other agencies, the media will progress to its state of credibility. Also, to address the corruption in Philippine media, the writer proposes that news agencies must increase the salaries for their journalists. Give them many benefits. Moreover, provide them with hazard pay for they risk their lives just to give the Filipinos the main events which complete the nightly habits of our fellow citizens. Maintain teambuilding activities and continue giving seminars to reporters to hone their skill in news writing and to always be accurate in their news delivery, satisfying the Filipinos with credible, balanced, and fair pieces of news. These are some of the not-so-difficult and practical ways which can be initiated by different media agencies to further improve their manpower

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in terms of newscasting and information dissemination forwarded to development communication.

Conveyance of the media of a different interpretation of a news article is evident due to many young journalists who decided to enter the world of mass media. There is lack of training, knowledge, and experience on the part of young journalists.[26] That is why, it is only right that colleges and universities offering journalism as a course must impose a hard and rigid curriculum. This will give journalism majors, the wanna-be-press reporters, a firm impression of what is in store for them in their chosen field. Also, the wanna-be-journalists must have a firm grasp of current events and affairs of the nation to be kept abreast of how to deal with the national public agenda advocated by the president leading at that certain time.[27] For example, the incumbent, President Aquino, advocates the “Kung walang corrupt, walang mahirap”[28] policy. In turn, the journalists must get themselves updated with the programs of the government to have a good interpretation of the news and to disseminate it correctly to the viewers, the citizens of the country. On another note, the professors must also have a strong sense of will and determination to train their students to become professionals and go into in-depth news accounts of what is in store in the history of our nation and of the world. They (the professors), too, must have credence in their own right to prove that they are worthy of imparting knowledge on journalism. That means, showing everything that many young journalists did not have like training, knowledge, and experience.

It is previously said above that there must be more fundings and benefits given by media agencies to their personnel as a way to alleviate the lives of  
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our journalists and to stop media corruption for a more credible reporting. But there is still something needed to make the lives of our journalists feel secure. That is by giving them the security aides to make them confident in bringing out the truth no matter what. It is also a solution to prevent, if not stop, the extrajudicial killings which became prevalent during the past administrations.[29]

The connotation that what is only correct in the information provided by the press and the media is the date of circulation and broadcast, respectively, is expected to be washed away after the discussion of this paper.

In conclusion, there must be a two-way process between the newsmakers and the media in making things correct and credible for viewers and readers. Development journalism, wherein the positive news is as worthy as its contrary, must be given with primordial concern. In this world of social media where news can be as fast as realtime, information may be distorted and may be different from what is real and believable. We should deviate from the tradition of unrestrained and adversarial press which rooted back from the Spanish colonization. We already have our own civilization. We have our own minds. We can use those individual minds to create a nation, a nation whose ideals are embodied in the government and its affiliate agencies which provide for the welfare of its constituents. We must have no time for battling our hearts and minds out. Instead, we must work for the progress of our nation. The media, as the most influential, must start the effort by development journalism. Another is by giving credence to their unrelented works which give exceptional views of the pressing issues of our day. This informal and marginalized sector really works through a two-way process. <https://assignbuster.com/the-philippine-media-and-what-is-left-of-media-essay/>

Therefore, they need the government in carrying out the truth and the government will need them in order to report developmental news which will help increase the productivity of its citizens.

Yes, it may take years before the mass media will carry out the advocacies of development journalism. Yet, it is still possible. Mass media and technology, as allies in making lives comfortable, must make good use of their resources to carry out good will and determination. That is, determination to uphold the truth no matter how hard and how risky it is. The citizens must continue to be part in this effort. Especially that the media is in part with the marginalized and the informal sectors of society, citizens must realize their role as the second “ disseminators” of truth. That will help for the increase of productivity of the nation which, in turn, will alleviate the country from its tribulations brought about by the aspects of politics, economics, and society in general.

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