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Research on the Quality of Print Journalism:  
an Analysis of Political Survey Results  
during the 2004 Electoral Campaign  
in the Philippines

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For my dad.

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Für meinen Papa.

## 1. ABSTRACT

Published in various newspapers, pre-election surveys have both been hailed as well as criticized. Politicians and journalists, for example use them to support their argumentation. Especially candidates who are lagging behind are likely to express fear that pre-election survey results could have an unwarranted influence on the voters' decisions and therefore on the election results. This thesis gives a short review about the background of these criticisms and investigates why the results of pre-election surveys are on the one hand very important for journalists and on the other hand very important as well for voters.

Therefore, this paper investigates the newspaper reports' quality on pre-election polls in the 2004 election campaign in the Philippines. The database is a content analysis of 281 articles that were published in the three major newspapers in the Philippines [Manila Bulletin (MB), Philippine Daily Inquirer (PDI), Philippine Star (PS)] in the last four weeks before election day on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2004. Press releases from major survey institutes were investigated for the sake of conformity to international recommendations.

More than 50 years after the first prediction of an election result was given in the Philippines<sup>1</sup>, the results of pre-election surveys are now a basic element of newspaper reports during election campaigns. As a result, the quality of press/media reporting on pre-election information in the 2004 election campaign is described to be mediocre, even though comparable numbers are missing. Articles that mention survey results only peripherally are not dominating. In about 30 percent of the articles, poll results were used to give a prediction of the election results. The closer election day came, the more dominant forecasts predicted a victory for President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Hand in hand with the improving survey results for the incumbent, a decrease in those articles biased towards the opposition's top candidate Fernando Poe Jr. could be seen. However, the formal quality of the articles, compared with international standards, leaves many possibilities for improvement.

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<sup>1</sup> Done by the opinion research firm "Robot Statistics" during the presidential election in 1953

## 1.1 The Philippines in 2004:

According to the Philippine Department of Tourism, the Philippines consist of 7,107 islands, covering a land area of 299,764 square kilometers. The main island groups are Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Capital is Manila. In 2000 there were a total of 76.5 million Filipinos (2000)<sup>2</sup>. Today, scientists estimate that 80 million Filipinos inhabit the islands.

The regions are subdivided into 73 provinces, 60 cities and 1.532 Municipalities and 40.904 Barangays, as the smallest administration units. The Philippine Government is centered in Manila. After the constitution was ratified in 1987, the Philippines returned to democracy after the Ferdinand Marcos era.

In the 2004 election campaign, direct votes elected „the president, 12 senators, 212 congressmen representing districts, and some 17,450 local government seats for governor, mayor, as well as provincial and municipal executive councils.“<sup>3</sup>

The presidential candidates in the 2004 election were:

- President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (GMA);

after former President Joseph Estrada was ousted in 2001, Vice-President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo took over presidency.

- Fernando Poe Jr. (FPJ);
- Panfilo Moreno Lacson (Ping);
- Raul Sagarbarria Roco (Roco);
- Eduardo Cruz Villanueva (Bro.Eddie).

Election day was on May 10<sup>th</sup> 2004.

In the final results, published more than one month after election day, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo became president (40%). Fernando Poe Junior came in second (36.5%) then Panfilo Lacson (10.9%), Eddie Villuanueva (6.2%) and Paul Roco (5.5%).<sup>4</sup>

Meantime Fernando Poe Junior died of a heart stroke on December 13<sup>th</sup> 2004.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.wowphilippines.com](http://www.wowphilippines.com); February 14th 2006; 5:00 pm;

<sup>3</sup> Article: ATENCIO; Joel; 300,000 Namfrel volunteers ready; in: Manila Bulletin; published: May 10<sup>th</sup> 2004; p. 1 and 4;

<sup>4</sup> Research Note No.13; Parliamentary Library – Department of Parliamentary Services; published: August 11<sup>th</sup> 2004; <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/Pubs/RN/2004-05/05rn13.pdf>; February 15th 2004; 7:00 pm;

## **1.2 How the study was done**

### **Acknowledgement:**

The major work of this study was done during a five month stay in the Philippines in 2004. During this time the author was able to personally obtain information on the 2004 presidential election and find relevant sources for the following content analysis and empirical research. In Manila, the author held contact with several organizations of scientific, national and non-governmental background. Information, gathered orally as well as in written form, helped to develop this study.

Because of a cooperation with the polling firm Social Weather Stations, SWS, the author had unlimited access to a great and substantial archive and was able to interrogate the staff members if any questions came in mind. SWS also offered access to the investigated newspapers.

The former Dean of the Center for Development Management (CDM) at the Asian Institute of Management and now Executive Director of AIM Policy Center Dr. Federico Macaranas supported this study through organizational and personal support.

The results of this study were first published during a Forum on August 19<sup>th</sup> 2004 at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel at Makati City. This Forum was organized by The Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Ateneo Center for Social Policy and the Konrad Adenauer Center for Journalism. Additionally, this study was supported through a scholarship of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Philippines.

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## **Summary of Tables and Charts**

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'Overdog' & 'Underdog' Effect / Poor People

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Prediction GMA (pro) / Week before Election Day

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Candidate Bias / Week before Election Day

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Candidate Bias (pro) / Newspaper

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Candidate Bias (pro) / Rating of Polls

### **Table 6; Page 21**

Content of AAPOR standards

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AAPOR Standards / Week before Election Day



## 2. INTRODUCTION:

Pre-election polls are a well-accepted, as well as a hated partner during times of electoral campaigns. Of course, most often, they are used to the advantage by those who are in leading positions, and they are likely used as newsworthy information by the mass media. But they are also often criticized – especially by politicians and journalists.

During the campaign of the 2004 general elections in the Philippines some presidential candidates spoke out their presumptions: either the pre-election survey results were wrong or might have been rigged. As to be expected, up in front were those candidates who lagged behind in the voters' preferences, in the last round of pre-election polls published shortly before the election day on May 10<sup>th</sup>.<sup>5</sup>

Ronald Allan Kelley Poe, more popularly known as Fernando Poe, Jr., once remarked: *"the finding of NFO Trends that Ms. Macapagal was leading Poe by 10 percentage points was a lie. You don't see this on the ground."*<sup>6</sup>

Panfilo Morena "Ping" Lacson commented further: *"If I have P100 million for political advertisements, I would not spend it on costly television and radio ads. I would spend a big part of it for surveys that would show me leading. [...] No wonder they are manipulating the surveys."*<sup>7</sup>

Eduardo Cruz "Brother Eddie" Villanueva was quoted in an article in the Manila Bulletin (MB):

*"And like other presidential candidates, Villanueva claims that the surveys are being manipulated to help the incumbent win the elections. "Change will only happen if the people resist survey trending and reject old politics. [...]"*<sup>8</sup>

Despite the criticism that polls might be wrong or even rigged, there are five major complaints about pre-election polls, as can be read in Philip Meyer's book "The New Precision Journalism":

1. There are too many polls
2. The polls are not accurate enough
3. The polls are often wrongly interpreted
4. Polls are too accurate
5. The polls affect the outcome of the election<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> 6% lead for President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo over Fernando Poe Jr. in the last Pulse Asia Survey and 7% lead for GMA over FPJ in the last SWS Survey before election day, with all other presidential candidates reaching not more than 11% of the votes.

<sup>6</sup> Article: CONTRERAS, Volt; Surveys irrelevant to the poor: Ateneo study; in: Philippine Daily Inquirer; published: April 27<sup>th</sup> 2004; pp.1 and 10;

<sup>7</sup> Article: DIAZ, Jess; May the best men win. Ping, Poe tell each other; in: Philippine Star; published: April 29<sup>th</sup> 2004; pp.1 and 18;

<sup>8</sup> Article: TORREGOZA, Hannah L.; Villanueva exhorts own political camp at rally; in: Manila Bulletin; published: April 30<sup>th</sup> 2004; pp.1 and 15;

<sup>9</sup> MEYER, Philip; (1991); pp.242ff;

The argument that polls could have an illegitimate influence on the voter's decision and can influence the outcome of elections, is the most used argument against pre-election polls and their publication before election day. The fear that survey results could have an impact on the voting decision is of course very popular among those political candidates who are lagging behind in the surveys.

As in most other western-orientated countries like the Philippines, the discussion about the meaning of opinion polls increase, the closer election day approaches, especially in the daily press.

However, there is an increasing demand among politicians - and even some journalists want to ban opinion polling. Or at least, they want to stop the publication of political survey results in certain terms before election day: either by law or by a self-regulation agreement among the members of the press/mass media.

This demand was enunciated by Philippine Star columnist, Jose C. Sison:

*"The law should specifically limit the release of survey results to the public as to frequency and timing. Surveys should not be conducted within thirty days prior to an election. Any survey conducted within that period should only be done privately for the candidates and should not be for public consumption. Severe sanctions should be imposed both on the pollsters and candidates found guilty of violating the rules on the conduct of straw polls."*<sup>10</sup>

2004 Senatorial candidate, Oliver Lozano, tried to stop the survey institute, Social Weather Stations (SWS), from conducting surveys or releasing its survey reports during the 2004 electoral campaign. On April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2004 Attorney Lozano filed a petition for injunction with temporary restraining order (TRO) before the Quezon City Regional Trial Court against the SWS. As expected, the Quezon City Regional Trial Court denied the petition outright, stating that Attorney Lozano *"has not shown a clear right to the issuance of a temporary restraining order, and neither has he shown the irreparable damage or injustice that he would suffer if the elections surveys will not be restrained."*<sup>11</sup>

In some countries, unlike in the Philippines, the critics of pre-election polls were more successful in trying to achieve a ban on the publication of opinion poll results by the mass media during a certain time period before election day.

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<sup>10</sup> Article: SISON, Jose C.; Comment "Straw polls"; in: Philippine Star; published April 26<sup>th</sup> 2004;

<sup>11</sup> Social Weather Stations, Court Denies Lozano Petition for TRO against SWS; Press Release April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2004;

As reported in “The Freedom to Publish Opinion Poll Results” by the Foundation for Information<sup>12</sup> in 2003, there are 30 out of 66 countries worldwide that have restrictions on publishing pre-election poll results before election day, among which are France, Italy, Greece and the Republic of Korea. In 16 out of these 30 countries, the results of opinion polls are banned, at least, five days before election day.<sup>13</sup>

That these bans do not make sense for democratic systems and free societies with freedom of speech and press has often been discussed. A ban would not stop the survey institutes from polling, it would only stop them from publishing their results for the public. The British Scientist, Robert Worcester, describes situations with a ban for pre-election surveys as following:

*“[...] the political parties would do even more polling than they do now – and leak it even worse than they do now.*

*Secondly, stockbrokers, jobbers and other City ‘gents’ would do private polls and leak them (or make them up as they do now).*

*Thirdly foreign media would commission private polls [...] and publish them overseas, and of course the results would be transmitted and reported subsequently in this country.”<sup>14</sup>*

Fortunately, the international trend seems to be more inclined towards a liberalization for the regulation of opinion poll reporting. As written in “The Freedom to Publish Poll Results”, “restrictions have been liberalized or even lifted in 15 countries. They stayed unchanged in five countries but in another nine, heavier restrictions were introduced since the last study.”<sup>15</sup>

In the Philippines, the survey institute Social Weather Stations, lead by Mahar Mangahas, Ph.D., fought a successful battle at the Philippine Supreme Court in 1999 for the freedom of speech, including the freedom of listening, assimilating and reporting what the sentiments of the Filipinos are. The Philippine Supreme Court, on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2001<sup>16</sup> declared with finality:

*“[...] a ban on election survey publication violates the constitutional freedoms of speech, of expression, and of the press”<sup>17</sup>. This Supreme Court ruling unequivocally declared “it unconstitutional to ban the publication of election surveys, even for a limited time, before the election”<sup>18</sup>*

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<sup>12</sup> The Foundation for Information (FI) is an independent organization registered in Amsterdam, Netherlands. It was formed in 1996 by ESOMAR. The Foundation operates on a world-wide scale.

<sup>13</sup> SPANGENBERG, Frits; (2003); pp.4ff.;

<sup>14</sup> WORCESTER, Robert M.; (1991); p.202;

<sup>15</sup> SPANGENBERG, Frits; (2003); p.8;

<sup>16</sup> Government Report; (G.R.) No. 147571; (2001);

<sup>17</sup> MANGAHAS, Mahar: Election Survey Freedom in the Philippines/July 29<sup>th</sup> 2003;

<sup>18</sup> SWS Media Release; (2001); the banned regulation was: Republic Act; RA 9006; (2001); Section 5.4; for further information see also: SWS Special Media Release; (2001);

## Questions to be answered

As we now know, politicians as well as journalists, will not stop criticizing the pre-election polls and their results. However, they will also not stop using them for their own purposes, as long as the numbers fit their interests.

As long as there are trustworthy survey institutes, trying to get an insight of the public opinion at a certain moment (using therefore the instruments of empirical methods), there will be reporting about these results. And it is the right of the reader to get the best information possible, and all the information he needs to be capable in understanding the results of these surveys.

Before talking about possible effects on the voting behavior, it is essential to investigate the quality of the articles, as they might be the first source for the public. Journalism, in some western countries considered as a independent “fourth power”<sup>19</sup>, serves as a control i.e. of politicians and their work. In the Philippines, the self-understanding of journalists is regulated in the Philippines Press Code of Ethics and represented in the guidelines of several media organizations. The Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility describes the functions of the media as following:

*“The press and the media need to exert special efforts to measure up a collective vehicle of information, as an instrument for clarifying complex issues and dilemmas of development.”*<sup>20</sup>

The Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism states:

*“[...] the media play a crucial role in scrutinizing and strengthening democratic institutions”.*<sup>21</sup>

As journalism normally has difficulties to control its own work, there is a vacuum – a “gap” – for a study like this. This paper therefore might be something like a “control of the control”. Consequently it is also the purpose of this paper to investigate how the survey institutes release their information to the media and how the media reports on them.

To get an overview of the quality of articles, including information about pre-election surveys, the following questions must be answered:

1. How often are polls mentioned in the print media before an upcoming election?
2. What aspects are media reports focused on: current poll results or statements about polls in general?
3. Are articles about polls used to give a prediction about the election results ahead of time?
4. Are there particular political leanings to poll-related articles, and do they go hand in hand with the developments in the surveys?

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<sup>19</sup> see i.e.: REDELFS, Manfred; (2003); legitimization of the media is ruled by the Supreme Court; p.220;

<sup>20</sup> Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility; [www.cmfr.com.ph](http://www.cmfr.com.ph); Mission/Vision; February 18<sup>th</sup> 2006; 4:00pm;

<sup>21</sup> The Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ); [www.pcij.org](http://www.pcij.org); Who we are; February 18<sup>th</sup> 2006; 4:20pm;

5. What formal information about the particular survey is mentioned in the examined articles? (Conformity with international standards)
6. How many aspects compared to international standards of survey related information, is provided through press-releases by survey institutes and other institutions?

But before these questions can be answered, some important facts about the relationship between pre-election surveys and the journalists, as well as the relationship between pre-election surveys and the voters must be mentioned.

### **3. BACKGROUND:**

#### **3.1 The importance of pre-election polls for journalists**

Communication scientists discovered in earlier studies that results of pre-election polls are considered newsworthy information, thus easily represented by the mass media. Philip Meyer describes it as following:

*“For many journalists, the effort to measure and even predict electoral behaviour has been motivated by simple competitiveness. The most interesting fact about an election is who wins. If you can find out ahead of time, it is news by definition.”*<sup>22</sup>

During electoral campaigns, polls are often reported in the mass media, and like the Canadian Pollster Andersen describes it, *“during periods when polls were recently released they received more attention than any other election issue, and commonly occupied the lead story.”*<sup>23</sup>

#### **3.2 Effects of poll reporting on voting behavior**

Communication scientists’ opinions differ concerning the influence of pre-election poll results on the voter’s decision. However, it has become clear that the perception of the poll coverage in the media is considered as an important pre-condition for a direct influence on the voting behavior. The German communication-scientist Frank Brettschneider, discovered that the perception of poll-coverage through mass media increased between 1957 and 1983 from 17% to 72% of the German population. Since then, the percentage of those who got information about polls from the mass media, stabilized between two thirds and three quarters out of 100 percent.<sup>24</sup>

Obviously, the results differ between the Philippines and Germany, especially considering the media environment of the average Philippine household. According to an SWS Survey in 1993, 82% of the families had a radio, 54% of the families had a TV; and only 7% of the families were subscribers to one of

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<sup>22</sup> MEYER, Philip; (1991); pp.241-242

<sup>23</sup> ANDERSEN, Robert; (2000); Paragraph: Results – The Emphasis on Polls;

<sup>24</sup> BRETTSCHEIDER, Frank; (2003); p.267;

the daily newspapers.<sup>25</sup> As there is no update on this survey, the figures of an SWS finding in 2002 can help to show, how things have changed in the last years: 53% of the population watches a daily news show on television, 11% read the latest news in the newspapers and 17% listen to the latest news on radio, at least once a day.<sup>26</sup>

In the same survey, SWS asked the following question: “How often do you follow the results of any public opinion poll in any newspaper or magazine?” Despite the 13% who answered as having followed the survey results regularly, 52% of the respondents answered that they followed the reporting of poll results at least once in a while.

As an answer to the question “whether or not results of some polling organizations that make frequent predictions of election results, are most correct”: 53% percent of the respondents nodded to “most correct” (19% rather not correct, 28% “don’t know”). It seems the Filipino people by the majority trust in the media coverage on poll results. This is another reason why the quality of the media reports on polls should be investigated.

But the perception of media reporting about poll results, does not mean that there is an important influence on the voting behavior. Brettschneider stated, those voters who where interested in the media coverage of pre-election polls – and might have used these as an additional information to make their final voting decisions, were mostly so-called “Campaign-Junkies”. Those are persons who absorb information about the electoral campaign desirously. Those people are politically very interested and are considered to belong to the better educated. As a matter of fact, however they are also considered to mostly be people with an above-average developed connection to a certain political party or basic political setting. Moreover because of their relatively close bonds to a certain political party or political basic setting, “Campaign-Junkies” are considered to be almost invulnerable to any manipulation by pre-election poll reporting.<sup>27</sup>

The major difference between German and Filipino Voters were described by Mangahas and Guerrero: *“Since politicians change parties easily, voters are much more loyal to personalities than to parties.”* and *“[...] owing to weakness of party affinity, the subscribers and clients can come from different parts of the political spectrum.”*<sup>28</sup> I suggest to stay with the term “Campaign-Junkies” for the described type of voter in Germany. But in the Philippines, “Campaign-Junkies” are not the same. The more appropriate term for these type of voters should be

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<sup>25</sup> SWS Survey; (1993);

<sup>26</sup> SWS Survey; (2002);

<sup>27</sup> BRETTSCHEIDER, Frank; (2003); p.268;

<sup>28</sup> MANGAHAS, Mahar; GUERRERO Linda Luz; (2003); Most politicians switch camp in order to obtain better financial support. Compare i.e. REITERER, Gisela M.; (1997); p.138;

“Political Junkies”. The Filipino “Political Junkie” is not seriously bound to a certain party and therefore much more likely to switch his or her political camp.

Supporting the theory that Filipino Political-Junkies are not likely to be influenced by mass media reports on pre-election polls, an SWS Occasional Paper in March 2003 cited:

*“SWS Surveys show that only a few Filipino allow their voting choices to be affected by the published polls. In these few cases, the tendencies to go for the underdog are almost strong enough to offset the tendencies to go for the ‘overdog’, reducing further the slight bias for leading candidates.”<sup>29</sup>*

To underline their argumentation, the authors Mangahas and Guerrero referred to a question that was asked for the Social Weather Fourth Quarter 2000 and Second Quarter 2001 Reports:

*“Because of the survey news you got, would you say that your feelings as to who would probably win the senatorial election [became] clearer, confused or no effect.”<sup>30</sup>*

From all respondents who were aware of pre-election survey news in the media, almost 30% answered that their feelings had become clearer (same in 2000). Over 20% answered that their feelings had become more confused (26% in 2000), but the majority in both years answered that the results of pre-election surveys did not effect them at all (51% in 2001; 44% in 2000). Considering that personal estimation about the influence of survey results is not the best method to do research on, it can still be taken as a serious indicator.

Especially in U.S. elections, two effects regarding voting behavior were investigated: the bandwagon effect and underdog effect. Brettschneider investigated the two effects on German voters. The bandwagon-effect describes people’s behavior, when voting for the assumed winner, in order to be part of the winning majority. The underdog effect describes people’s behavior, when voting for the candidate lagging behind in the surveys, to help him, for example, draw public attention. For the United States and Germany both effects could not be proven.<sup>31</sup> The two effects in the Philippines were investigated with the following two questions:

Bandwagon-effect:

“Changed your vote to a candidate strong in surveys from one weak in surveys?”

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<sup>29</sup> MANGAHAS, Mahar; GUERRERO Linda Luz; (2003); p.12;

<sup>30</sup> SWS Social Weather Report; (2001); p.64;

<sup>31</sup> see: BRETTSCHEIDER, Frank; (1991); (2000); (2003);

Underdog-effect:

“Changed your vote to a candidate weak in surveys from one strong in surveys?”<sup>32</sup>

The results were the following for the 1998 election, when regarding the legitimate Filipino voters, especially those who obtained information from pre-election surveys. (see Table 1):

- a) In 2001 11% answered “yes” (21% in 2000) and 89% answered “no” (78%).
- b) In 2001 9% answered “yes” (16% in 2000) and 91% answered “no” (84%).<sup>33</sup>

With one exception, the number of positive answers were always higher within the household of dwelling classes of “ABC” than in “D” or “E”. This might be a slight indicator that the voters of the “ABC” classes could have been more influenced by the mass media reports, than the Filipinos of the lower social-economic classes (“D” & “E”).

**Table 1:**

	<b>‘Overdog’ &amp; ‘Underdog’ Effect / Poor People</b>			
	<b>RP</b>	<b>ABC</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>a) yes</b>	11% (21%)	17% (31%)	10% (21%)	11% (17%)
<b>a) no</b>	89% (78%)	83% (69%)	90% (79%)	89% (83%)
<b>b) yes</b>	9% (16%)	16% (15%)	8% (18%)	7% (7%)
<b>b) no</b>	91% (84%)	84% (85%)	92% (81%)	93% (93%)

The percentages in the chart above are the results of the Social Weather Stations Report: Second Quarter 2001; the percentages in brackets represent the results of the Social Weather Stations Report in 2000. (RP = Republic of the Philippines; Dwelling Classes ABC = people considered as being rich and middle; D&E = people considered as being poor and very poor)

As mentioned before, communication scientists’ opinions differ concerning the effects of the poll reporting on the voter’s decision. The British Scientist Robert Worcester, concludes the following:

*“Finally, do polls influence voting behaviour? I believe they do, and I believe this to be a good thing. For many years pollsters and psephologists both in Britain and the United States have shown that the public took notice of the polls and that their voting behaviour was affected thereby.”*<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> SWS Social Weather Report; (2000); and SWS Social Weather Report; (2001);

<sup>33</sup> SWS Social Weather Report; (2001) and SWS Social Weather Report; (2000); p.78;

<sup>34</sup> WORCESTER, Robert M; (1991) p.203 f.;



Even though it would be interesting to investigate the Filipinos' long-time relation to a certain political conviction, this matter cannot be dealt with in this study. As personally experienced in the electoral campaign of 2004, the author realized that most Filipinos rather voted for candidates they sympathized with than for candidates who represented their political convictions and ideas. As mentioned earlier, Filipino voters and politicians are more likely to change their political camp than i.e. in European countries. Elections in the Philippines are to a greater extent about persons, personalities and campaign rallies, than about specific political issues. In a personal interview with Ms. Evangelina Lourdes "Luli" M. Arroyo, only daughter of Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (GMA), her opinion was that the influence of the journalists on the news agenda during the 2004 electoral campaign seemed very high. Moreover, the campaign team of her mother published "a lot of press releases on several different issues", but the mass media "seemed to focus only on a few, including the discussion about who is leading in the surveys." Thus, it can be concluded that "Political-Junkies" in the Philippines are more likely to be influenced by personalized mass media reports on pre-election polls than in other countries. However, up to the present day, there is no proof for this theory.

Beyond controversy is that voters in the Philippines use the mass media reports concerning poll results, as additional information to make up their voting decision.

The mass media as the most important information source about candidates, the election and also survey results, can be seen as the main source for political information for the public during election periods. Of course, registered voters can also get their information through talking to friends, family, colleagues or even the church. But most of the time, this information has already been transmitted over the mass media before reaching the conversational partner who now quotes, i.e. a certain survey result.<sup>35</sup>

A recent study, done by the Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC) of the Ateneo de Manila University, supports that finding:

As presented in the study "The Vote of the Poor – The Values and Pragmatics of Elections" (16 focus-group discussions), the people considered as being poor and very poor are influenced in their choice of candidates by the following sources in declining order:

Media; Family; Church; Political parties; Surveys<sup>36</sup>

Considered that the poor and very poor people count roughly about 93 percent of the approximately 43 million Filipino voters, this result can be seen as a very important indicator for the meaning of mass media reporting during electoral campaigns. Taking a slight notice of the possible problems that may come with

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<sup>35</sup> BRETTSCHEIDER, Frank; (1991);

<sup>36</sup> The Vote of the Poor; The Values and Pragmatics of Election; Institute of Philippine Culture; Ateneo de Manila University, April 2004;

this development, Sheila Coronel and Yvonne Chua wrote in their article, "The Poor Vote Is A Thinking Vote":

*"Another problem the poor have, though, is that they take their cues on the suitability of candidates mainly from the mass media, which do not always give a complete or accurate picture of the qualifications of the contenders."*<sup>37</sup>

Any information about pre-election polls and forecasts merely serves as additional information for the people involved in a political process like the elections.

I.e. politicians may use it as a campaigning tool. The mass media may use the same information to describe the public opinion during such fierce times. And the public, from needy to wealthy, may and will use it, to make up their minds and finalize their voting decision.

As Wolfgang Donsbach, Editor of the Journal of Public Opinion Research and former President of the World Association of Public Opinion Research (WAPOR) said:

*"a modern constitutional democracy must believe in the responsibility of its citizens. This also includes belief in the capacity of its citizen to independently select information relevant to them and use this information sensibly."*<sup>38</sup>

#### **4. DATA and METHODS**

This paper contains the results of a content analysis of three major daily newspapers in the Philippines within the last four weeks before the election day of the 2004 Philippine General Elections (April 12<sup>th</sup> to May 10<sup>th</sup> 2004). As primary sources for this research, the author focused on the three newspapers with the biggest circulation base in the Philippines. By the time when the work for this paper was started, those three newspaper were:

1. Manila Bulletin; in the following text quoted as MB;  
(344.205 copies/Sundays - 262.809 copies on weekdays)
2. Philippine Daily Inquirer; in the following text quoted as PDI;  
(270 000 copies/Sun – 250 000 copies on weekdays) and
3. Philippine Star; in the following text quoted as PS;  
(259.000 copies/day)<sup>39</sup>

Out of all relevant copies in the four weeks before election day, a total of 281 articles concerning surveys and polls were analyzed; including 189 news articles, 68 opinion articles, 22 business articles and two other articles,

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<sup>37</sup> CORONEL Sheila S.; CHUA Yvonne T.; (2004);

<sup>38</sup> DONSBACH, Wolfgang; (2001); p.3;

<sup>39</sup> The numbers mentioned were all given and approved by newspaper officials through email, telephone request or personal contact in May 2004.

considered to be articles published by international news agencies. All coding was done by a single coder.

For the results of this paper, two major steps were done:

**Step 1:** content quality analysis

This analysis was done to tell how often results of pre-election polls were used in an article, and in what context the results of pre-election polls were used before election day.

**Step 2:** formal quality analysis

This analysis was done to tell if internationally recommended quality standards for the representation of survey results were complied with by the articles or not.

To get the results, each of the 281 articles was checked by the author of this study, using a code sheet with 46 variables, including 4 screening variables.<sup>40</sup> The data was then analyzed in two different ways: first systematically to answer the questions mentioned above and additionally in an explorative way to find additional results and approve the existing results.

Step 1: For the frequencies, among other things, there were variables used like “profession of the article author”, “who used the survey results in the article”, “were poll results compared”, “does the article give a prediction of the election outcome” or “are polls rated in the article” among other things.

Step 2: For the formal quality analysis the author referred to the “Standards for Minimal Disclosure” in the “Code of Professional Ethics and Practices” of the American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR)<sup>41</sup> that were given to public opinion researchers in March 1986 and were recently renewed in March 2004.

It is always difficult to find a quality standard that can be used to measure other people’s work. That is why the author chose the same criteria which have been used in similar studies in the past. Therefore compare Andersen (2000); Weaver/Kim (2002) and Brettschneider (2003).

Having the opportunity to have the results of this study compared with other national studies later, the variables for the formal quality analysis were oriented with the variables in the study of the German Election Campaigns by Brettschneider<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> The code sheet that was used for the study can be found in the appendix.

<sup>41</sup> compare [www.aapor.org](http://www.aapor.org) - Code of Professional Ethics and Practices; (August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2004, 10:00am)

<sup>42</sup> BRETTSCHEIDER, Frank; (2003);

Because of that, articles were among others, checked for the following eight AAPOR criteria:

1. Sample Size
2. Firm that commissioned the poll
3. The exact wording of the voting intention question
4. The margin of error
5. Definition of population for which the survey is representative
6. Method used in the survey
7. Time of fieldwork
8. Name of responsible poll institute

For the articles of the Manila Bulletin, the author coded several sub-articles under one main headline article as autonomous articles.

The reason why is that under the main headline on the front page, the Manila Bulletin published several articles. These sub-articles were written by different authors and are therefore in this work considered as autonomous articles.

## **5. RESULTS**

### **5.1 STEP 1: content quality analysis**

In the 2004 electoral campaign in the Philippines, 281 articles were published during the last four weeks in the three major newspapers which are the principal sources of this paper. Compared to the other two newspapers, Manila Bulletin (MB) and the Philippine Daily Inquirer (PDI), the Philippine Star (PS) had a slightly higher number of articles that included information about surveys. The articles' allocation was as followed:

Manila Bulletin - 81 articles;

Philippine Daily Inquirer - 78 articles;

Philippine Star -122 articles;

#### **5.1.1 The Information about polls or recent survey results**

The number of articles, including pre-election poll results, did not significantly change during the time period of the last four weeks before election day. The number of articles, including pre-election results, cross-tabulated by weeks, were:

1<sup>st</sup> week before election day: 67; 2<sup>nd</sup> week before election day: 84; 3<sup>rd</sup> week before election day: 69; last week before election day: 61 articles.<sup>43</sup>

Out of all 281 articles, over two thirds (71,5%) included information about recent poll results; almost one third of the articles (28.5%) included information only about polls and surveys in general, sometimes referring to developments at

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<sup>43</sup>

first week before election day: April 12th - April 18th 2004;  
second week before election day: April 19th – April 25th 2004;  
third week before election day: April 26th – May 2nd 2004;  
last week before election day: May 3rd – May 10th 2004;

certain survey institutes; sometimes presenting additional information about polls.

In the second week and third week before election day, the newspapers published an above-average number of articles about surveys (84 articles in all). The high number of articles with general information about polls in the third week (doubled) could answer this issue. (35 articles compared to 14, 14, and 17 in the other weeks).

Although the Manila Bulletin only had the second highest number after the Philippine Star of articles about surveys in all (81), the Bulletin had the highest number of articles with general information about polls which most of the time can be considered as additional information for the readers to achieve a better understanding of survey results.

Out of all 281 articles, 73 articles (26%) can be considered as “high quality/ information articles” about survey results during the 2004 electoral campaign. In those articles, the subject “survey” was dominating, while the article represented recent figures.

### **5.1.2 What kind of articles made the front page**

It could be assumed that most of those 73 articles (“high quality/ information articles”) might have been front page articles. The reality turns up otherwise. With a irrelevant Cramer’s V of 0.13, there is no statistically significant relationship between those articles and the front page placement. (43 out of 73 articles were not front page articles.)

The 281 articles all in all contain 87 (31%) front page articles, almost one third. Even though the “high quality/information articles” still represent the biggest group among the front page articles (30), the articles which included information about surveys just peripherally, is still high with 25.

Compared to articles that include statements about polls in general, the number of articles with recent survey results on the front page is still much higher (65 compared to 22). Articles with recent survey results are therefore more likely published on front page than articles, including information about polls in general. That was an expected result, as actual information is more newsworthy than old information.

There is a strong statistical relationship between the kind of article (“news”, “opinion”, “business”) and the front page. (Cramer’s V = .451; Approx. Sig. = .000) As seen in the database, 86 out of 87 front page articles were “news” articles, only one “opinion” article made it to the front page. That “opinion” article was written by the Chairman of the Board and Publisher of the Philippine Star, Maximo V. Soliven<sup>44</sup> and can therefore be considered exceptional.

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<sup>44</sup> Article: SOLIVEN, Maximo V.; If Comelec Chairman Abalos collapsed...; in: Philippine Star; published: May 9<sup>th</sup> 2004; pp.1 and 16;

### 5.1.3 Who used the survey results in the article

As a user of an article, the author considered the person, who decided to use the survey results for his purposes. If the user of the survey results in an article is a journalist, it was the journalist's decision to use the survey results as additional information or even as a basic information for his article. If the user is a politician, the survey results were used by politicians to strengthen their arguments in public. If the user is a pollster, the survey results were used by a professional communication scientist or other similar expert.

In this study, in 161 (57%) articles, the survey results were used by journalists, followed by the politicians with 85 (30%) and the pollsters with 10 (4%) articles. In the missing 9% or 25 articles no user could be clearly identified.

### 5.1.4 The prediction of election result

When talking about pre-election surveys, two different terms must be discussed. First: the "opinion poll", which can be seen as a snap-shot of the actual allocation of public opinion at a certain moment in time. Second the "election prediction", which is considered to give a forecast about the election trends or results ahead of time. One has to keep in mind that an opinion poll does not directly lead to a reliable prediction of the election results.

Worcester describes it similarly:

*"There is no opinion poll in the world that, taken in April, can predict the outcome of an election held on 14 June, and that goes for France, Britain, or anywhere else in the Western world. A poll is representative of opinion only at the time it is taken."*<sup>45</sup>

Still, some of the journalists take the results of pre-election surveys for granted and forget that the results of surveys are momentary snap-shots of the "pulse" of the respondents within a defined sample size, within a defined territorial area, and undertaken within a particularly defined period.

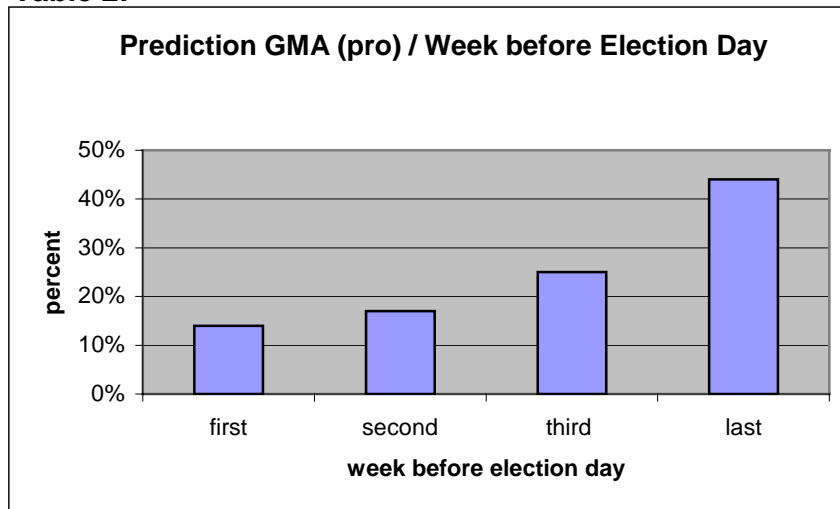
In this study, in 81 out of 281 articles (almost 30%), the journalists already gave a prediction of the election outcome – including the information "still undecided" and "already clear". In all cases this information was related to quoted survey results. Using the pre-election survey results as a mirror of the momentary public opinion of "Whom would you vote for, if the presidential election would be held today?", 31 of the 81 articles predicted that the election would still be undecided; 50 articles stated that the election result was already clear, mostly favoring a certain candidate.

Furthermore, the closer election day came, more and more journalists followed the increasing numbers in the surveys for President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (GMA) and predicted her victory. As can be seen in the four weeks before election day, the number of predictions that said the election result is "already clear" (N=52) pro GMA, increased towards the election day on May 10. (see Table 2)

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<sup>45</sup> WORCESTER, Robert M.; (1991); p.129;

**Table 2:**



The basis for the chart above are all articles that made a prediction of the election result and said the election result was already clear. (N=52) They were then cross tabulated with articles that biased towards GMA and the week of their publication.

Considering that the newspapers followed the survey results in their publications, the strong bias pro President GMA was not a surprise.

Out of 31 Articles that made a clear prediction of the election outcome, 22 were written pro GMA, 5 pro FPJ (one against him), one pro Ping, 2 pro Roco and 0 pro Bro.Eddie.<sup>46</sup>

### **5.1.5 The Candidate bias**

To find out about the candidate bias of an article, Krueger and Zapf-Schramm suggest two different approaches: (1) the direct evaluation pro or against a candidate; (2) the evaluation of events and issues in connection with the candidates' names.<sup>47</sup> As the Elections in the Philippines focus on persons rather than on issues (see paragraph 3.2), it would have been too difficult and therefore not reliable to investigate approach 2 in the framework of this thesis. Approach 1 was investigated as following:

each argument pro or against one of the five presidential candidates was weighed separately. Most of the time, it was easy to tell for or against which candidate the article favored. In cases of a marginal difference, the arguments of an article were counted to be able to attain the final bias.

After a screening variable ("does the article have a political bias"), there were five variables implemented in order to find out whether the article favored or disfavored each of the five candidates GMA, FPJ, Ping, Roco and Bro.Eddie, or treated them without any positive or negative tendency. Because of this set up, several articles were evaluated repeatedly.

<sup>46</sup> GMA = President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo; FPJ = Fernando Poe Jr.; Ping = Panfilo Moreno Lacson; Roco = Raul Sagarbarria Roco; Bro.Eddie = Eduardo Cruz Villanueva;

<sup>47</sup> KRÜGER, Udo-Michael; ZAPF-SCHRAMM, Thomas; (1999); p.229;

Almost every second article that was published in the last four weeks before election day, including information about surveys, showed a certain political bias (48% or N=135 out of 281). The articles with a certain political tendency were not only comments or business articles, as could be expected. Almost 50% of all news articles (48% or 91 out of 189) were biased pro- or against at least one candidate. Out of 68 comments 37 (54%) were biased, as were 7 out of 22 business articles.

Out of 135 biased articles, the clear majority favored the incumbent GMA with 68 articles or 50%, and only 6 articles or about 4% favored against. The other 67 articles preferred the other presidential candidates in declining order: FPJ (22 or 16%); Ping (15 or 11%), Bro.Eddie (14 or 10%) and Roco (8 or almost 6%).

The reason why Roco comes in last in this ranking can be explained by his drop out of campaigning activities from April 12<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>, due to medical treatment in Houston, Texas in the United States of America. During his active time in the electoral campaign, the number of articles tending towards Roco was almost doubled than during the time when he was out of the country.

As mentioned earlier, it is obvious that the incumbent President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo could rely on a strong support by the press; at least in the three newspapers examined for this study. During the last four weeks of the 2004 electoral campaign, almost every second of those articles favoring one of the five presidential candidates, tended towards Ms. Macapagal-Arroyo.

The positive impact of this press coverage on the described “band wagon effect” for GMA, was also boosted by a dwindling positive coverage for the opposition’s top candidate FPJ. In the last four weeks of the 2004 electoral campaign, the FPJ-tending articles declined steadily from over 20% in the first week to only 10% in the last week before election day. (see Table 3)

**Table 3:**

Candidate Bias / Week before Election Day						
			week before election day			
			first	second	third	last week
GMA	pro	Col %	50,0%	58,3%	36,8%	58,6%
	neutral	Col %	50,0%	36,1%	55,3%	37,9%
	against	Col %		5,6%	7,9%	3,4%
FPJ	pro	Col %	21,9%	19,4%	13,2%	10,3%
	neutral	Col %	75,0%	75,0%	76,3%	86,2%
	against	Col %	3,1%	5,6%	10,5%	3,4%

The base for the percentages of both candidates are in each case all articles with a political bias (N=135; out of all 281 articles) split up into the last four weeks before election day according to the day of appearance in the newspapers:



Out of the three major newspapers, the biggest support for President Macapagal-Arroyo came from the Philippine Star. From all articles with a political bias pro-GMA (68 articles) more than every second article was published in the Philippine Star (N=36 or 52,9%). But at that point it is important to keep in mind that the total number of articles published by the Philippine Star was also much higher than the number of articles published by the other two newspapers (N=122 out of 281).

Of the three newspapers, investigated for their individual political preferences (by the articles they published, touching the topic surveys with a concrete political leaning pro, or against one of the five presidential candidates), the Philippine Star is still the newspaper that favored GMA the most. Out of 53 articles with a certain political leaning for a presidential candidate, 36 articles (67%) were written in favor of GMA.

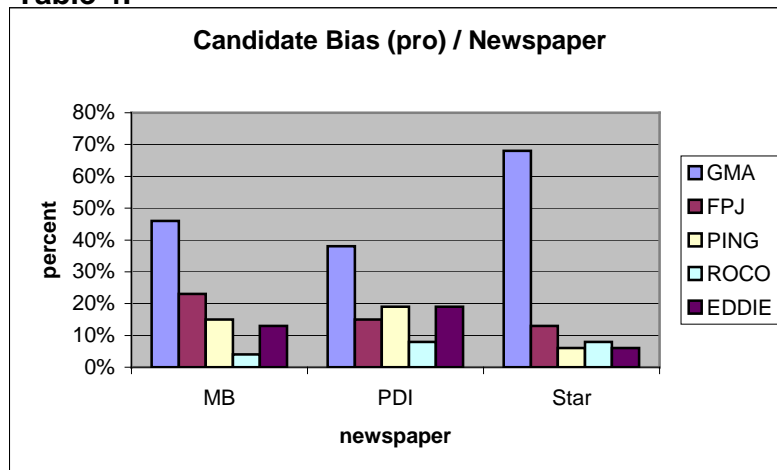
Both of the other newspapers seemed to be “Pro-GMA” newspapers as well, considering that each of them published the majority of their biased articles for the incumbent GMA: The Manila Bulletin 45%; Daily Inquirer 38% (see Table 4)

The Manila Bulletin did also focus on a positive press coverage for presidential candidate Fernando Poe Junior, FPJ. Out of 48 biased articles, 11 were written pro FPJ (25%); compared to 4 out of 30 articles published by the Daily Inquirer (13%) and 7 out of 53 articles published by the Philippine Star (13%).

The other presidential candidates found no specific support or disapproval in the investigated newspapers. Only a few articles showed a political bias regarding the candidates Roco, Ping and Bro.Eddie. Most of them were written with a positive bias. The Manila Bulletin published not one article with a political tendency against one of these three candidates.

Although the picture seems to be very clear, one again has to keep in mind that the basis for this survey were just those articles which presented information about the topic “survey”. Despite these results, it is possible that other articles in the three newspapers favored the presidential candidates in a different arrangement. However this does not seem likely.

**Table 4:**



The basis for the chart above is the number of articles with a positive bias towards a candidate. (N=135); The basis for each newspaper were MB 48 articles, PDI 26 articles and Star 53 articles.

#### **5.1.6 The rating of the polls compared to the Candidate bias**

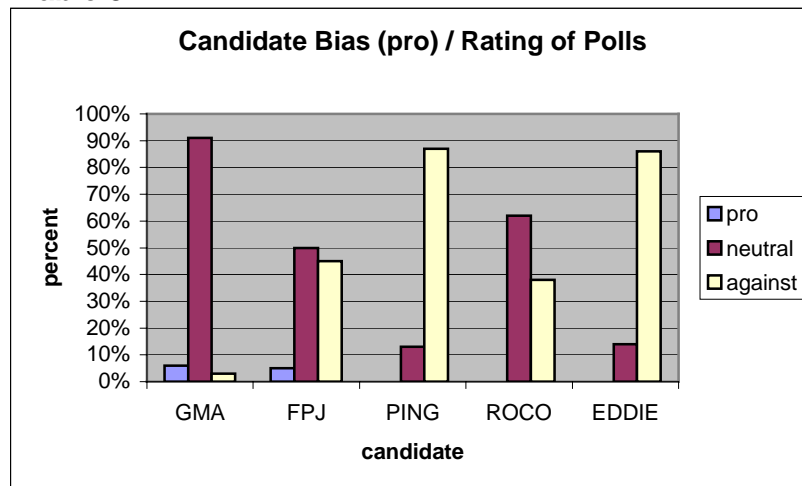
During electoral campaigns, survey results are almost always criticized by those candidates lagging behind. To investigate if this was also the case before the 2004 Philippine General Elections, this study uses a variable that indicates how the articles rated the polls in general - positive, neutral or negative. Out of 281 articles only 17 (6%) rated the polls positive; 209 (74%) were neutral and 55 (20%) rated the polls as negative.

In order to find out about a possible link to the candidates, the variable “candidate bias” was used again and cross tabulated with the variable “rating of the polls”.

From all the articles which were pro-GMA, 4 articles rated the polls positive, only two rated the polls negative. As expected, the articles which favored the opposition candidates FPJ, Ping and Bro.Eddie, rated the polls overwhelmingly negative (see Table 5).

For GMA, Ping and Bro.Eddie, there is even a statistically significant relationship between the rating of the polls and the political bias towards the candidate. Given an eta of .508 for GMA, .495 for Ping, and .424 for Bro. Eddie at the 0.05 level of significance.

**Table 5:**



The basis for the chart above is the number of articles with a positive bias towards a candidate. (N=135). The variable "rating of polls" was coded "negative", "neutral" and "positive".

## 5.2 STEP 2: formal quality analysis

### 5.2.1 The amount of information about polls in an article

To make a conclusion about the general quality of survey-related articles, previous studies usually investigated the number of articles which presented information about surveys casually. Scholars criticize that these articles, most of the time do not name the sources of information, thus becoming non-verifiable. Further, additional information about the mentioned survey results are most of the time also not stated.

In this study, the ratio between informative articles and articles with marginally mentioned survey information is 60:40 percent.<sup>48</sup> This is still a good ratio, considering that in 60 percent of the studied articles more than one third of the text was about surveys.<sup>49</sup>

The development of this ratio in other countries like Germany supports the concern for the Philippines that the ratio might change towards more articles with just little information about surveys in the future. For example as seen in the German Election campaigns for the "Bundestag" in 1987 and 2002 the mentioned ratio worsened over the years from 80:20 percent to 36:64 percent in the latest survey.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>48</sup> For this ratio the variable "subject poll" was recoded: the categories "dominating" and "important" (1 and 2) were put together and compared with the category "peripheral" (3).

<sup>49</sup> According to Brettschneider, Frank (2003) articles with 70% or more text about surveys were considered „dominating“, with 30% or more text about surveys were considered „important“.

<sup>50</sup> BRETTSCHEIDER, Frank; (2003);p.262;

### 5.2.2 Conformity compared to AAPOR standards

As mentioned earlier, this study refers to the same criteria as were used in other studies before.<sup>51</sup> The framework for the formal quality analysis is, therefore, oriented towards the recommendations given to journalists by the World Association of Public Opinion Research (WAPOR), the American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) and the European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research (ESOMAR). As their recommendations are almost similar, these criteria can be regarded as a generally accepted measure for analyzing the 281 articles examined in this study.

1. Sample Size
2. Firm that commissioned the poll
3. The exact wording of the voting intention question
4. The margin of error
5. Definition of population for which the survey is representative
6. Method used in the survey
7. Time of fieldwork
8. Name of responsible poll institute

Although this paper treats the question of these formal criteria as a “the more – the better” story, it has to be said that not all scholars agree that all eight AAPOR disclosure standards should be included in an article about polls. Meyer and Jurgensen stated in 1991 that *“literal conformity of every report on a poll to AAPOR standards would place burden on the readers that would reduce, not increase, their net acquisition of information”*.<sup>52</sup>

The Philippine Press Code of Ethics recommends, *“the sample size and the margin of error should be disclosed”*.<sup>53</sup>

To investigate the conformity compared to the mentioned AAPOR standards, only 73 out of 281 articles were analyzed. These 73 articles were “dominated” by the subject survey and presented “recent figures” of surveys. All the other articles needed not necessarily represent all AAPOR standards, as they did not focus on recent survey results. Out of the investigated 73 articles almost every article included information about the name of the poll institute that conducted the poll. In two thirds the exact time of fieldwork for the mentioned study was presented. The sample size used was mentioned in 59%, the margin of error in 36% and the firm that commissioned the survey in 32% of the articles.

Less attention was given to the information about the population for which the survey was representative of (15%), the method that was used (15%) and the exact wording of the voting intention question (10%) (see Table 6).

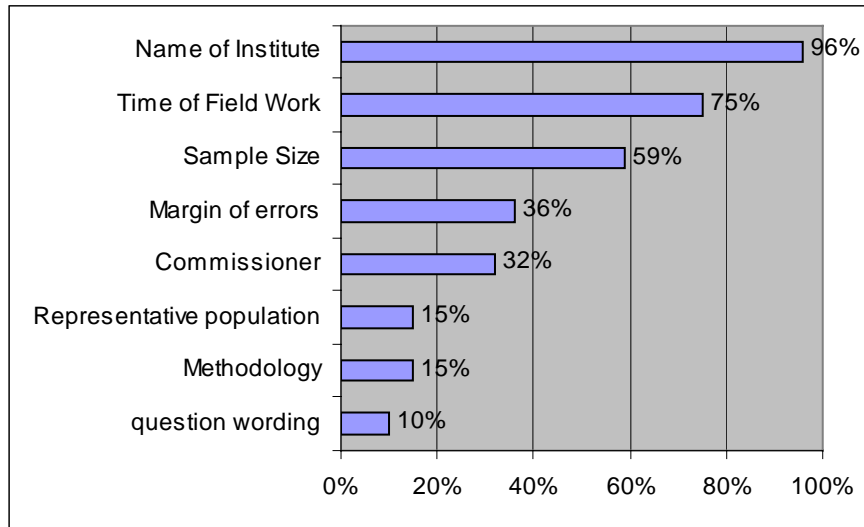
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<sup>51</sup> see: PALETZ, David L.; SHORT, Jonathan Y.; BAKER, Helen; COOKMAN CAMPBELL, Barbara; COOPER, Richard J.; OESLANDER, Rochelle M.; (1980); and MILLER, M. Mark; HURD Robert; (1982); and ANDERSEN, Robert; (2000); and WEAVER, David; SUNG, Tae Kim; (2002); and BRETTSCHEIDER, Frank; (2003);

<sup>52</sup> MEYER, Philip; JURGENSEN, Karen; (1991); p.3;

<sup>53</sup> <http://pressinstitute.ph/> ; Expanded PPI Code of Ethics; February 20<sup>th</sup> 2006; 3:15pm;

**Table 6:**



Content of AAPOR standards based on articles dominated by the topic "survey" and presenting "recent survey results". (N=73)

It would be interesting to have comparable numbers from former electoral campaigns in the Philippines, but sadly there are no numbers available. Thus the reader should keep in mind what these numbers are: one picture of a short term of four weeks before the 2004 election.

For all 73 articles a mean of 3,37 AAPOR standards were included per article. As there are no comparable numbers of the Philippines available, it might be interesting to see findings of a German study. In a survey on the German press coverage in the 2002 election for the "Bundestag" 159 articles showed a mean of 2,58 AAPOR standards per article. For the investigated articles in the Philippines this is still better by a plus of 0.79<sup>54</sup>. The comparison between Germany and the Philippines is just a indication and does not satisfy scientific requirements. But it is interesting to state that in the electoral campaign in Germany in 1998 the number of investigated articles (82), as well as the mean of AAPOR standards (3,50), were similar to the findings of this study. But in the German study 4 newspapers and 12 weeks before election day were examined compared to the 3 newspapers and 4 weeks of this study. This study documents a very high interest of the press in the topic "survey" in the Philippines in the 2004 election campaign.

Considering the mean of each newspaper, the Philippine Daily Inquirer (PDI) leads with a mean of 3,93 AAPOR standards mentioned per article that was dominated by the subject survey and that presented recent results. The Philippine Star (PS) goes second with a mean of 3,36, followed by the Manila Bulletin with a mean of 3,08.

It is a fact that the Philippine Daily Inquirer published the fewest articles with the mentioned requirements (N=14). But in average these articles included more

<sup>54</sup> BRETTSCHEIDER, Frank; (2003); p.265

AAPOR standards than the articles published by the Philippine Star (N=33) and the articles published by the Manila Bulletin (N=26).

In other comparable studies, the AAPOR standards were taken as the dependent variables, cross-tabulated with the following independent variables:

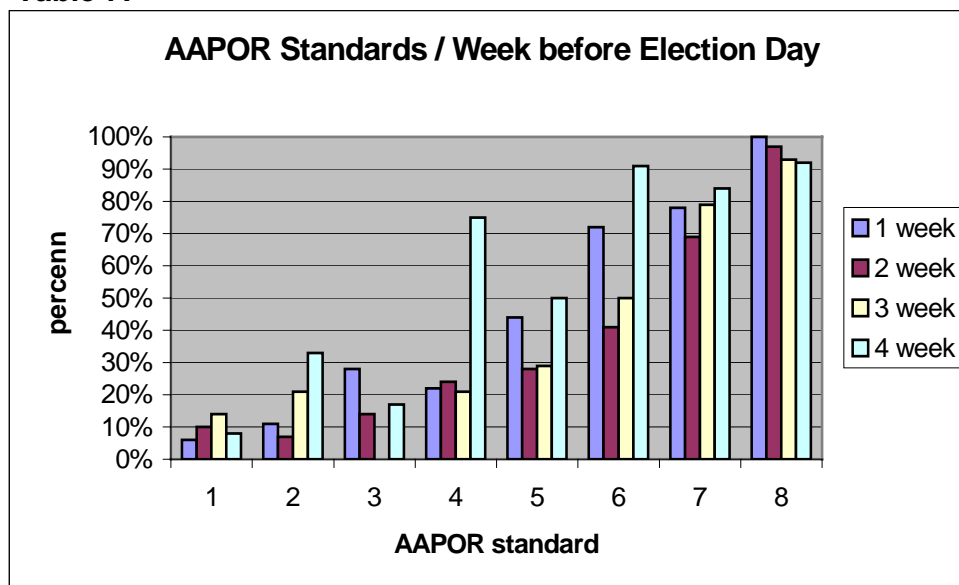
- a) year of election
- b) time period until election day
- c) survey topic and
- d) source of the survey information

Because of a lack of comparable numbers in this study, only the changes during the time period of the last 4 weeks before election day (May 10, 2004) could be researched.

Considering the week of publication, the number of the following formal aspects increased, the closer it came to the election date. (see Table 7):

- Method used in the survey (+22%)
- Firm that commissioned the poll (+53%)
- Margin of error (+6%)
- Sample Size (+20%)
- Time of field work (+5%)

**Table 7:**



Numbers used in the chart above:

1. question wording
2. Method used in the survey
3. Definition of population for which the survey is representative
4. Firm that commissioned the poll
5. margin of error
6. sample size
7. time of field work
8. Name of responsible poll institute

Although the number of articles (“dominating” and “recent figures” N=73) did not increase in the four weeks before election day, the percentage of five out of eight AAPOR standards increased. This can be evaluated as an indicator stating that the journalists reacted on arguments and concerns during the earlier weeks of the electoral campaign.

Particularly, the aspect “firm that commissioned the poll” was often discussed in public before election day, i.e. Philippine Star<sup>55</sup> and Manila Bulletin<sup>56</sup>. These discussions often included the concerns that the “unmentioned” commissioners might have had an influence on the results of the surveys. The head of the Social Weather Stations Mangahas, was even accused of having rigged the pre-election surveys in favor of his first cousin and the opposition’s top presidential candidate, Fernando Poe Jr.. Several articles in the press tried to answer these fears.<sup>57</sup> Even Senate President Franklin Drilon published information, defending the independence of the accused pollster.<sup>58</sup> This might have all led to an increased focus of the journalists on publishing the name of the firms that commissioned the polls. This would explain the outstanding improvement in mentioning the commissioner in the last four weeks prior to election day from 22% to 75%.

### 5.2.3 Differences between news reports and opinion columns

The kind of article, “opinion column”, “news report” or “business article” was also recorded, according to their location in the newspaper. Compared to the number of included AAPOR criteria, the “news reports” did better than the “opinion columns”.

The mean of AAPOR standards within the news reports was calculated 3.42; the business articles ranked second with a mean of 3.25; and the opinion articles ranked last with a mean of 2.8 AAPOR standards included per article. The basis for this examination were the 73 articles that “dominated” in the category survey and presented “recent results”.

This ranking is highly understandable, as “opinion columns” focus more on providing a different view on topics and giving reasons to discuss, than focusing on a very detailed presentation of, i.e., pre-election poll results. This lies more in the responsibility of “news report” authors. As Andersen stated, “opinion columns” “[...] provide more elaborate discussion of news stories that are typically discussed elsewhere – they can be excused for their lack of technical reporting.”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Article: SORRANO, Ben; (2004); Bro. Eddie says surveys part of plan to cheat in polls; in: Philippine Star; published April 25<sup>th</sup> 2004; p.6;

<sup>56</sup> Article: SINFUEGO, Roy C.; (2004); Senate bed Padilla asks two survey firms: Who’s funding you?; in: Manila Bulletin; published: April 28<sup>th</sup> 2004; p.12;

<sup>57</sup> Article: PAMINTUAN, Ana Marie; (2004); Scapegoats; in: Philippine Star; published: April 28<sup>th</sup> 2004; p.16;

<sup>58</sup> Article: CLAPANO, Jose Rodel; Drilon confident SWS not conniving with Malacanang on survey results; in: Philippine Star; published: April 29<sup>th</sup> 2004; p.1 and 9;

<sup>59</sup> ANDERSEN, Robert; (2000); Last sentence of the paragraph: Reporting of the Technical Details;

### 5.3 Content Analysis of Press-Releases of the Survey Institutes

During the coding of this study 17 different sources of survey results were mentioned in the 281 investigated articles. These 17 sources were:

Social Weather Stations (mentioned in 112 articles), Pulse Asia (109), Ibon Foundation (11), NFO Trends (16), Holy Name University Research Center (1), ARO – Asia Research Organization (4), Proberz Research and Consultancy (5), Bear Stearns (2), Makati Interlink Media Services (6), Eurasia (3), Consumer Vibe Asia (1), Malacanang Inhouse Survey (4), Manila Broadcast Corporation (1), Alon sa Pantalan (1), StratPhil (1), Radio Mindanao Network (1), Makati Business Club (2).

From the named sources above only Pulse Asia, Social Weather Stations and Ibon Foundation made their press releases available to the public after election day May 10<sup>th</sup> 2004. Their relevant press-releases were investigated.

From all other mentioned sources only NFO Trends, Holy Name University Research Center, ARO and Consumer Vibe Asia could have published serious surveys. As their press releases were not available to the author no statement is possible about how their work satisfied scientific requirements. The others were no reliable sources for political surveys in the 2004 election campaign. These institutes mostly referred to something like inhouse surveys, mock polls, SMS surveys. Nevertheless they were presented in the newspapers often without any further information on about the results were achieved.<sup>60</sup>

All newspapers focused on the publication of survey results of SWS and Pulse Asia. Of articles which mentioned at least one survey institute, Manila Bulletin referred to SWS and Pulse Asia in 39 out of 60 (65%); The Philippine Daily Inquirer in 50 out of 61 (81%) and The Philippine Star in 77 out of 92 (83%). The Manila Bulletin referred to highest number of different institutions: in the last four weeks before election day, Manila Bulletin published results of 12 different institutes, mostly presented as reliable survey results. The Philippine Daily Inquirer published results of seven different institutions. The Philippine Star presented results of 10 different institutions.

Manila Bulletin presented the results of smaller and unknown institutes together with results of SWS or Pulse Asia. In two articles the results of the Asia Research Organization were published together with SWS results. Both Articles on Survey Results of the Macati Business Club were presented together with results of a Pulse Asia survey.

That was also done by the Daily Inquirer: The results of Bear Stearns were published twice by the Philippine Daily Inquirer: once together with results of a NFO Trend survey and in a second case together with SWS results. The results of Eurasia were published together with results of NFO Trend or together with results of SWS and NFO Trends.

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<sup>60</sup> Additional information on the mentioned institutes can be found in the appendix.



### 5.3.1 Pulse Asia

The Survey Institute Pulse Asia released two Pre-Election Surveys (PES) during the relevant time period of this study. Both press releases of Pulse Asia<sup>61</sup> included most of the criteria required by the AAPOR.

Very easily available for every reader of the press releases was the information about:

1. Name of responsible poll institute
2. Sample Size
3. Time of fieldwork
4. Margin of error
5. Method used in the survey

Further down – not very easily found was the information about:

6. The exact wording of the voting intention question
7. Definition of population for which the survey is representative
8. Firm that commissioned the poll

As the Pulse Asia Survey Institute used the same scheme/format for the press release of each PES result, it seems convenient for the reader to find the important additional information about the survey. Positive is that the first five aspects are concentrated in the first – and mostly second paragraph of the release.

However journalists might find it irritating that the number of Filipinos for which the survey was representative of, as well as the exact wording of the voting intention question was not given in the beginning of the release – but mentioned later in the text.

Unnecessary discussions raised during the election campaign about “who commissioned the poll”. It seems that some of the complaints published in the newspapers were part of the political campaign of some candidates:

*“Look who are the people behind or financiers of the SWS, Pulse Asia and other surveys. Most of them, if not all, are businessmen supporting Arroyo or Fernando Poe Jr.”* [Presidential candidate] Villanueva said. *“It’s a sin to tell lies much more to deceive people and they are spiritually liable for that.”* he said.<sup>62</sup>

Even worse if the journalists do not answer these uninformed complaints within the same article, by quoting the press-release:

*“Pulse Asia undertakes surveys on its own without any party singularly commissioning the research effort.”*<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> PES 1: March 27<sup>th</sup> to April 4<sup>th</sup>; PES 2: April 26<sup>th</sup> to April 29<sup>th</sup>;

<sup>62</sup> Article: SORRANO, Ben; Bro. Eddie says surveys part of plan to cheat in polls; in: Philippine Star; published: April 25<sup>th</sup> 2004; p.6;

<sup>63</sup> Pulse Asia Press Release; Survey March 2004; p.2;

Another example of uninformed and unnecessary complaints in the mass media was published in the Manila Bulletin on April 28<sup>th</sup>, when Nueva Vizcaya Representative Carlos Padilla was quoted:

*“The SWS and Pulse Asia should make public the personalities who are financing the presidential surveys as well as the survey design”,* Padilla said.”<sup>64</sup>

Additional information like “don’t knows”, “sub samples” and informative “charts” were included in all Pulse Asia PES press releases. Pulse Asia decided to group the “refusals” and the “don’t knows” together – that is legitimate, thus providing the information in the press release.

### **5.3.2 Social Weather Stations:**

The findings in the Press Releases of the Social Weather Stations Survey Institute as well leave almost no room for any complaints.

During the relevant time period for this study, SWS published 11 press-releases, seven of which included recent figures of the SWS Pre-Election Polls. As recommended by the AAPOR/WAPOR, all relevant press releases by SWS included:

1. Name of responsible poll institute
2. Sample Size
3. Time of fieldwork
4. Margin of error
5. Method used in the survey

The SWS Survey Institute put much effort in presenting information about

6. Firm that commissioned the poll
7. Definition of population for which the survey is representative

Especially the companies that commissioned the SWS Pre-Election Surveys, 2 media companies and 1 public relations and political consulting company were always mentioned in the first two paragraphs and then later again, in the very informative paragraph called “Survey background”.

To include a paragraph like this makes it easy for interested readers, like politicians and journalists, to find the important background information without searching the entire press release.

SWS also put much effort in describing the base of their Pre-Election Surveys. After the COMELEC<sup>65</sup> had announced the number of “Registered Voters” (RVs) on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2004 SWS changed their base to that number 43.37 million. After that, SWS tried to find out how many of the “Registered Voters” were likely to

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Pulse Asia Press Release; Survey April 2004; p.4;

<sup>64</sup> Article: SINFUEGO, Roy C.; Senate bed Padilla asks two survey firms: Who’s funding you?; in: Manila Bulletin; published: April 28<sup>th</sup> 2004; p.12;

<sup>65</sup> Commission on Election; COMELEC; for further information see: <http://www.comelec.gov.ph/>;

vote. From that time they used the number of “Likely Voters” (LVs) as base for their results.

Only “The exact wording of the voting intention question” did not find a place in the major text parts of the SWS press releases. But if journalists were interested enough to research on the included charts, they could find the exact question that was asked.

Additional information like “don’t knows”, “sub samples” and informative “charts” were included in all SWS PES Press Releases.

### **5.3.3 IBON Foundation:**

The Ibon Foundation describes themselves as a research, education, information, and development institution since 1978. They are said to provide research, education, publications, information work and advocacy support.<sup>66</sup>

Their last survey before election day was published on April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2004, showing the opposition’s candidates FPJ and Loren Legarda for the vice-president in lead over the other candidates. This study refers to this survey as well as to an earlier press-release of March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2004:

Out of the eight AAPOR criteria, the Ibon Foundation missed to name the “method used in the survey”, the “Definition of population for which the survey is representative” of and the “firm that commissioned the poll”.

Additional information like sub-samples or refusals were also not mentioned. As “Definition of population for which the survey is representative” the IBON Foundation stated that the survey was done nationwide. An exact number was not mentioned.

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<sup>66</sup> see: <http://www.ibon.org/>; February 10<sup>th</sup> 2006; 2:00 pm;

## 6. DISCUSSION

During the last four weeks of the 2004 electoral campaign in the Philippines, journalists often used survey results as additional information. Topic of their articles was the situation between the five official presidential candidates. The 6<sup>th</sup> candidate, Eddie Gil, did not receive any attention since he was declared a “nuisance candidate” by the Commission on Election. For me, it would be interesting to investigate what journalists in the Philippines expect from the use of survey results. As seen in section 5.2.2, the use of survey results through journalists is very high in the Philippines compared to other countries with a higher number of scientific poll institutes. Pollsters used survey results in only 10 articles (4%). Thus, only two professional survey institutes were working in the 2004 Electoral Campaign.

The press coverage about the survey results in 2004 in the Philippines was mainly based on information provided by well-established institutes, namely: Social Weather Stations (SWS) and Pulse Asia.

When concentrating on 213 articles that mention a minimum of one of the four survey institutes or other institutions, 112 articles mentioned information provided by SWS and 109 articles mentioned information provided by Pulse Asia.

Due to their professional working methods and experience this is a positive result for the Philippines. These two institutes are, not just in the Philippines, but also in the international survey societies well-known and accepted. As seen in the content analysis of their press releases, both institutions try hard to fulfill the international recommendations and requirements.

However, the situation is partially dissatisfactory for journalists since they can only refer to the information provided by two institutions. Since the press market in the Philippines is quite a difficult market, journalists are always asked to compete with their colleagues and gain important information ahead of time. Thus, information and sources that can not be seriously considered as being survey results or survey institutes were left unobserved and uninvestigated – but still published. Especially the Manila Bulletin can be criticized in this matter since they presented results of 12 different “surveys”, however using surveys from SWS and Pulse Asia in only 65% of their relevant articles. Unscientific surveys together with results of well accepted firms like SWS or Pulse Asia were not differentiated. This can be very misleading for readers since they may consider all results as reliable, not knowing that some surveys were published by accepted companies and some not.

Consequently, this challenges the call for self-regulation within the media.

Even though pressure is practiced on every kind of media, the sources need to be investigated and the reliability of the information provided, should have an influence on the way the information is used in public. As results of this study,

the three newspapers, Philippine Star, Manila Bulletin and Daily Inquirer, used the information of 17 different sources for their articles about pre-election surveys and their results.

Journalists should keep in mind that there are elements that differentiate between a mock poll, a text-in or call-in event which is only used as a gimmick to entertain the public without scientific background nor a real survey. The differences lie in the elements that are indispensable, without which a survey cannot be called a survey. Sadly, there are no international regulations for the usage of the word “survey”.

The elements of a survey, referring to Philip Meyer, are:

1. An information goal or set of goals
2. A sample
3. A questionnaire
4. A collection method
5. Coding and analysis<sup>67</sup>

Even so, the press presented results of “surveys” that did not meet these demands:

*“Two more surveys show that President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo is gaining headway in the May 10 presidential contest, her camp said yesterday.*

*A text poll conducted by the Manila Broadcasting Corp. (MBC) on April 24-27 gave Arroyo 31.58 percent of the total 9,065 respondents, while Fernando Poe Jr. had 27.76, Raul Roco 18.22, Panfilo Lacson 13.8 and Eddie Villanueva 6.63 percent, with 1.74 percent undecided.”<sup>68</sup>*

Journalists need to entertain the readers and give them potential thoughts about the election and their final voting decision - especially if reliable pre-election polls cannot be made overnight, not allowing new results to be available every day. However, there are certain things to consider: Different surveys cannot be compared directly with one other – especially not without giving additional information about the field time, sample size, etc.. In all 281 articles, 69 articles used at least two surveys and compared their results. In six articles, the comparison did not satisfy academic standards. The six articles were published by the Philippine Star (4) and the Manila Bulletin (2) Treated with the right amount of seriousness, mistakes like the following one would not occur:

*“But the most significant note in the NFO Trends survey is the clear 4.4 percent points lost by Poe from the 30.8 percent voter preference he had in last weeks SWS survey.”<sup>69</sup>*

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<sup>67</sup> MEYER, Philip; (1991); p.101;

<sup>68</sup> Article: CHAVEZ, Chita A.; Tricycle drivers plan rally for president – Two more surveys; in: Manila Bulletin; published: May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2004; p.19;

<sup>69</sup> Article: REMONDE, Cerge M.; Not so much GMA’s gain, but FPJ’s loss; in: Manila Bulletin, published: April 27<sup>th</sup> 2004; p.9;

None of the 20 articles that compared at least two surveys' results and were published by the Philippine Daily Inquirer had to be criticized.

The author comes to the conclusion that journalists tried to find as many sources as possible for their articles about recent survey results. They also tried to place all of the results from different surveys in one article.

Almost 30% of all articles that mentioned one survey institute also mentioned at least one other institute. Mentioning two different surveys in one article is an even higher challenge for the journalist and should therefore be treated with care and caution. Moreover, there is no proof that articles with survey results from different surveys are more informative for readers than articles focusing on only one survey. Presenting only one survey and its results with all the needed additional information for a better understanding would often be better.

A couple of journalists may still argue that additional information, like AAPOR standards, is left out on purpose in order to not overstrain the reader. They might argue that the reader should not be bothered with additional numbers and facts. But journalists should use their privileges responsibly for the best of the public. Leaving them without information, which is necessary to be able to understand the matter, is not an accomplishment for this responsibility. In addition, journalists should not underestimate the abilities of their readers.

Along with the competition among journalists, a drive for information nobody else has ever published before also exists. In the 2004 electoral campaign, this led to the publication of the results of a survey that was allegedly conducted by the Radio Mindanao Network (RMN). Because the results of this survey were never meant to be reported in the press, RMN never published an official press-release. However, the results were presented like those of any other survey to the readers.<sup>70</sup>

In 83 articles (almost 30%) survey results were used to predict an election outcome. Worse, in more than every second of those articles (N=52 or 62%) the article's author used the survey results to predict an election outcome by saying that the election result were already clear. All these articles were written by journalists or authors whose professions were not mentioned in the newspapers. None of these unscientific predictions were made by professional pollsters.

Additionally, most of the journalists did not publish "news" article without a certain political tendency. As described in section 5.1.5, almost every second article with a certain political tendency was published as a "news" article.

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<sup>70</sup> The results of that survey were never verified at the Radio Mindanao Network office. As stated in a personal interview on August 2<sup>nd</sup> 2004, Research Director Rudolfo "Rudy" Tayao learned first about a publication of the results from the newspapers.

The Philippine Press Code of Ethics of the Philippine Press Institute includes the self-regulations for Philippine Journalists.<sup>71</sup> In Aspect III – “Writing the story” the first paragraph is: “*All efforts must be exerted to make stories fair, accurate and balanced.*” For the press coverage during elections, the Philippine Press Code of Ethics contains a complete Aspect: “I. Covering Elections”. Section D is headlined as following: “*Beware of surveys*”. The second sentence calls to attention what should be treated as a “survey” in Philippine newspapers:

*“Newspapers should clearly distinguish between scientific polls and non-scientific surveys such as readers' call-ins or write-ins and person-in-the-street interviews that are reported in statistical terms.”*<sup>72</sup>

To emphasize their goals for a better press-coverage regarding survey results another aspect is mentioned in the Code of Ethics:

*“Surveys that do not meet minimal scientific standards of validity and reliability should not be identified as polls, nor should they be portrayed in language suitable to scientific polls.”*<sup>73</sup>

### **6.1 Necessity for self-regulation or survey masthead**

As mentioned earlier, the survey market in the Philippines is dominated by two institutions: the Social Weather Stations and Pulse Asia.

Since these two institutions are not able to present new survey results every day, impatience – and the opportunity to report about surveys that do not satisfy the requirements of real surveys, can be the results. A self-regulated press could close this gap and help to prevent that more and more dubious results find their way into the daily news. Furthermore, gimmick surveys, like “text-in” or “call-in” polls, would be labeled as what they really are: trending and entertaining additives that are used to please the daily reader or particular interest groups.

This suggestion is not baseless since a self-regulating institution is already active in the Philippines, additionally to the television and radio code of the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas (KBP): the Philippines Press Council (PPC). Sadly however, self-regulation of the press in the Philippines through the PPC is not strong.<sup>74</sup>

Melinda Quintos de Jesus, Executive Director of the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility, published an article on July 29<sup>th</sup> 2004 with the following terse remarks:

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<sup>71</sup> <http://pressinstitute.ph/> ; February 20<sup>th</sup> 2006; 2:39pm;

<sup>72</sup> <http://pressinstitute.ph/> ; Expanded PPI Code of Ethics; February 20<sup>th</sup> 2006; 2:52pm;

<sup>73</sup> <http://pressinstitute.ph/> ; Expanded PPI Code of Ethics; February 20<sup>th</sup> 2006; 2:52pm;

<sup>74</sup> Shortly before election day 2004 the PPC suffered a small catastrophe when the so-called “Romulo letter” was not printed in other newspapers as it was requested by Marvin Tort, who had been chair of the Press Council for three years. In this letter, 34 points of reported “defamatory” comments made in three columns of the Philippine Star were included. After the Philippine Star published this letter only partly, the Philippine Press Council wanted the other newspapers to publish it completely to be able to reach public attention on all 34 points. As a consequence Tort resigned his post.

*"If the press cannot muster the will to make the Council an effective instrument for enforcing ethical conduct on its members, what credibility does the press have to criticize government and other powerful sectors for their failure to enforce rules and regulations? The failure of the press to report on the failings of practice and the misconduct of its members thus weakens its institutional role of "watchdog."75*

Another possible alternative to escape this difficulty with gimmick surveys and unknown institutions was first mentioned by Walter Rudolf in 1983: a survey masthead.<sup>76</sup> For every major publication about pre-election survey results a masthead must include important information like sample size, responsible survey institute and margin of error. The information has to be published with the survey results in order to be able to understand the results properly. As Brettschneider stated, such a survey masthead is now being used by two German survey institutes to label their results with the proper information.<sup>77</sup> A survey masthead would help to improve the number of technical information, according to AAPOR standards, which should be included in the poll articles.

## **6.2 Horse-Race Journalism**

Horse-Race Journalism was extensively discussed by Anthony Broh for the 1976 Presidential Election in the U.S.:

*"The candidate may take a short lead out of the gate, become fatigued and change strides at the quarter pole, lose momentum and slow down on the back stretch, or win by a nose because of a media blitz in the home stretch. The race is exciting to follow from the beginning to end."78*

The usage of horse-race-metaphors was described especially in the United States of America and Canada. Scientists agree that journalists use these metaphors in order to generate interest among voters and make politics more entertaining. Since Horse-Race Journalism primarily focuses on the politician who is leading the race, instead of stating relevant numbers, it is often criticized. Atkin and Gaudino state as following:

*"Instead of covering the candidates' qualifications, philosophies, or issue positions, polls have encouraged journalists to treat campaigns as horse-races, with a focus on the candidates' popularity, momentum, and size of lead."79*

Broh describes Horse-Race-Journalism as a

*"trivialization of one of America's greatest democratic phenomena" and criticized that "important issues of public policy may go unnoticed".80*

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<sup>75</sup> Article: QUINTOS DE JESUS, Melinda; Wanted: Self-Regulation for the Free Press, Center for Media Freedom & Responsibility, <http://www.cmfr.com.ph/documents/2004/2004mdjppc.html>; August 12<sup>th</sup> 2004; 10.30am;

<sup>76</sup> RUDOLF, Walter; (1983); p.10;

<sup>77</sup> see: BRETTSCHEIDER, Frank; (2003); p.265;

<sup>78</sup> BROH, C. Anthony; (1980); p.515;

<sup>79</sup> ATKIN, Charles K.; GAUDINO, James; (1984); p.124;

<sup>80</sup> BROH, C. Anthony; (1980); p.515;



In the German electoral campaigns between 1980 and 1994, 43% of the articles, dominated by the topic “surveys”, were written with the focus on who was leading the race, who was up for photo-finish or who had started the final lap in a better condition.<sup>81</sup>

In the 2004 Philippine electoral campaign, horse-race journalism did not dominate the press. Although the premises were advantageous to create the picture of a tight neck-and-neck race: two candidates GMA and FPJ were leading far in front but still very close to each other.

However, horse-race journalism was nevertheless a part of the press coverage in the polls of the last 4 weeks before election day in the Philippine 2004 electoral campaign.

*„Matching each other stride for stride in the final lap of this presidential race, neither challenger Poe nor incumbent President GMA has managed to gain a decisive advantage over the other.”<sup>82</sup>*

As Brettschneider already described, in the press coverage of German elections Horse-Race Journalism was mostly found in headlines of articles.<sup>83</sup> By using a list of relevant key words, extracted from studies written by Broh, McCombs i.e. and Brettschneider, the headlines of all investigated articles were analysed.<sup>84</sup> 46 headlines used horse-race metaphors to describe the survey results, like “Poll: GMA, FPJ still locked in tight race”<sup>85</sup> and “Internal surveys show FPJ way ahead – KNP”<sup>86</sup>. Most used words were “lead” (28), followed by “race/tight race” (12), “ahead” (3), “lose” (3).

### **6.3 Bandwagon and Snowball Effect**

As described earlier, scholars often tried to describe a “bandwagon effect” that starts after a candidate leads in the surveys. Because people want to join the increasing support for one person and be with the winner in the end, this effect is always considered as positive for a candidate.

In the 2004 Philippine presidential electoral campaign, more and more candidates and their spokespersons took the terms “band-wagon” or “snowball” effect to imply that such a positive movement was started for a particular candidate:

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<sup>81</sup> BRETTSCHEIDER, Frank; (1996); p.486; and BRETTSCHEIDER, Frank; (2003); p.263;

<sup>82</sup> Article: MIRANDA, Felipe B.; (2004); Of breakaways and breakdowns; in: Philippine Star; published: April 13<sup>th</sup> 2004; p.6;

<sup>83</sup> BRETTSCHEIDER, Frank; (1997); p.258;

<sup>84</sup> BROH, C. Anthony; (1980); MCCOMBS, Maxwell E.; COLE, Richard R.; STEVENSON, Robert L.; SHAW, Donald L.; (1981); BRETTSCHEIDER, Frank; (1997); list of key words can be found in the appendix;

<sup>85</sup> Article: Poll: GMA, FPJ still locked in tight race; in: Philippine Star; published: April 13<sup>th</sup> 2004; pp.1 and 6;

<sup>86</sup> Article: Internal surveys show FPJ way ahead – KNP; in: Manila Bulletin; published: April 15<sup>th</sup> 2004; pp.1 and 4;

Under the headline “K4 reports snow-balling effect for GMA” campaign spokesman, Michael Defensor, was quoted by the Philippine Star on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2004, for saying:

*“It’s no longer a statistical tie. We now have a bandwagon of support for President Arroyo...”* Defensor made this remark after the latest SWS survey showed GMA as taking a significant lead over her main rival, movie actor, Fernando Poe Jr.”<sup>87</sup>

But also the opposition tried hard to start a bandwagon effect for their candidate, Fernando Poe Jr., as was published in the Manila Bulletin on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2004:

*“The bandwagon effect has already been established that would lead to the eventual victory of opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP) presidential candidate, movie star Fernando Poe Jr., in the May 10 presidential elections, former Senate President Aquilino Q. Pimentel Jr., a KNP senatorial bet, said yesterday.”*<sup>88</sup>

This development is astonishing as the politicians and their teams tried to start a movement on purpose, using the knowledge of communication science. They tried to start a “bandwagon” for their candidates even before these movements were observed, described and explained by scholars for the 2004 campaign.

#### **6.4 Impact on the Economy**

Especially in a more or less politically unstable country like the Philippines, election survey results have a great impact on the economy. In the 2004 electoral campaign, the representatives of economic interest groups supported the candidacy of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. Most of the foreign and local investors seemed to fear a “high school drop-out” and popular actor like Fernando Poe Jr. in Malacañang; the Philippine “White House”.

This was clearly manifested in the “roller coaster” performance of the Philippine stock market and the ultra fluctuating value of the Philippine peso during the electoral campaign, which was mainly related to the changes in the survey results:

*“Philippine Stocks hit a three-year high yesterday after PGMA for the first time grabbed a clear lead over actor Fernando Poe Jr. in an opinion poll 18 days before elections.”*<sup>89</sup>

or

*“The financial market is happy with the recent surveys which revealed the turning of the tide in favour for the incumbent, so to simply put it.*

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<sup>87</sup> Article: Copy of Press Release by the Malacanang Office of the Press Secretary (2004); K4 reports snow-balling effect for GMA; in: Philippine Star; published: April 25<sup>th</sup> 2004; p.11;

<sup>88</sup> Article: CASAYURAN, Mario; Bandwagon effect for Poe on, Pimentel says; in: Manila Bulletin; published: May 6<sup>th</sup> 2004; p.4;

<sup>89</sup> Article: LABOG-JAVELLANA, Juliet; RP stocks soar to 3 year closing high, in: Daily Inquirer; published: April 24<sup>th</sup> 2004; p.1 and 15;

*Confidence is high for GMA, Chinatrust Commercial Bank Philippines Executive Vice President and Treasurer Roland Avante said.*<sup>90</sup>

The stock market and the currency are crucial and socially sensitive elements. Considering that a lot of business companies and investors in the Philippines and abroad thought similarly, a correct and complete presentation of pre-election survey results in the press is even more important.

## **6.5 Final thoughts**

For journalists, there might be a lot of different reasons for the mediocre quality of the articles examined for this study. But even the number of reasons is hard to number down. The two following aspects are mainly mentioned when it comes to a investigation on the quality of journalism:

1. insufficient education of the journalists
2. typical problems in the journalistic workflow<sup>91</sup>

A survey between journalists for example would help enlighten the reasons for their working results. This however cannot be done within the framework of this paper.

### **6.5.1 The problem of insufficient education**

Especially during earlier times of opinion polling and surveying the public's opinion during electoral campaigns, there were many complaints about the less educated journalists – particularly, regarding their capability to work with statistical data and empirical research methods.<sup>92</sup> Over the years, however the journalists improved their knowledge and the number of conducted surveys increased. However, since opinion polling in the Philippines has been done now for more than 50 years, it seems that the methodology of empirical research has already grown to a reliable instrument of journalistic work in the Philippines.

Supplementary educational programs for journalists would help improve the situation. Seminars - as they were already offered for example by the Social Weather Stations since 1995, would be one possible. At that time, experts from SWS together with foreign scholars of WAPOR, “toured” through different media institutions to offer an extra amount of background information on professional polling, its methodology and the problems that can occur while reporting about it. For journalists interested on surveys, a special event in the office of the Social Weather Stations was offered.

Seminars could also be offered by universities and other professional institutions - although the author sees the responsibility for requesting such

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<sup>90</sup> Article: DUMLAO, Doris C.; Peso stocks cheer GMA poll lead; in: Daily Inquirer; published: April 28<sup>th</sup> 2004; p.B1;

<sup>91</sup> compare: BRETTSCHEIDER, Frank; (1996) and WORCESTER, Robert M.; (1991);

<sup>92</sup> i.e. MEYER, Philip; (1991); ZEH, Jürgen; (1987); DEMERS, David Pearce; NICHOLS, Suzanne; (1987);

events rather on the side of the media than on the side of the pollsters and empirical research experts.

Another idea that was brought up in former studies was that mass media companies should have at least one poll expert in their staff who would be able to rewrite difficult parts about survey results or point out any important aspects to his colleagues. With this solution, only one person would have to attend further education about empirical research – which obviously means saving money and time for the mass media companies.

### **6.5.2 The Problems in the journalistic work flow**

It is obvious that most journalists do not work in a perfect working environment. There are a lot of different reasons, like the competition to internet news-sources or the still increasing amount of information that should be published, which make time very limited for journalists. This time might be missing in the end to finalize or double-check an article about survey results.

Other problems that affect the journalistic work flow have been described by the British Scholar Robert Worcester:

*“Other problems that beset pollsters in dealing with the press include sub-editing after stories have been agreed with the reporter by sub-editors who do not understand (or care about?) the accuracy of the copy; well meaning academics or other third parties who ‘interpret’, sometimes, unknowledgeably, opinion poll results; inevitably short lead times and tight deadlines; space pressures; competitive ‘scoops’, ‘poll of polls’ averaging polls taken over the past week or so to suggest greater statistical reliability (theoretically so, but not if one poll is inaccurate as was the case in 1979); and perhaps my favourite, publication of amateur polls [...].”<sup>93</sup>*

Andersen concluded in his study on the press coverage about the 1997 Canadian elections and wrote: *“certainly some of the poor reporting can be blamed on ignorance.”<sup>94</sup>* I agree that not all mistakes in the coverage of the 2004 electoral campaign in the Philippines can be blamed on the lack of education of the journalists. However, the quality of reportage on pre-election survey results in the Philippines during the 2004 electoral campaign could have been much better, but could have been also worse, as developments in other countries like the USA and Germany show.

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<sup>93</sup> WORCESTER, Robert M.; (1991); p.183;

<sup>94</sup> ANDERSEN, Robert; (2000); last sentence;

### 6.5.3 Conclusion

Even if one keeps in mind that this study focused only on a time stretch of four weeks before election day and on the publications in only three major daily newspapers, it is, nevertheless, important to emphasize that there is still a lot of need for improvement in the journalistic coverage of pre-election polls and their results in the Philippines.

Two major survey institutes in the country - the Social Weather Stations and Pulse Asia did their job quite well, but the author is certain that for the next electoral season in the Philippines, a lot of the smaller institutions will come up again with polls/surveys and their results; maybe even more than in 2004. Recent survey results are highly demanded by journalists and politicians. For smaller institutions, this paper can offer some information on what they can focus on in their surveys or where to get further information - if they, in the future, want to do their part for a better journalistic survey results coverage in the Philippines.

While discussing the results of this thesis, please keep in mind that this study was coded by a single person. As far as possible, the author tried not to bias the results personally.

When the study was almost finished, the author discovered that the newspapers investigated in this study are known as “pro-GMA” papers in the Philippines. Any future studies should enlarge the number of investigated newspapers or focus on the opposition papers as well. As mentioned by first critics of this study, it would be worth to ascertain who funds the investigated papers and how these people are linked to politics.

While coding, a reliable and revisable technique was missing to identify articles using Horse- Race Journalism without being too subjective. If using a list of keywords, like in the headlines, it could help make the coding of Horse- Race Journalism more comprehensible. However in the framework of this study, this was not done for all of the 281 articles – thus, the variable “horse-race metaphor” did not deliver reliable results.

Unfortunately, when coding the mentioned survey institutes, the author did not put on record which survey institute played the major role in the articles focused on and which only played a minor role. Therefore, the author was not able to make any statements on the evaluation of each institute’s survey results.

If this paper helps to obtain a focus on the problems of pre-election survey reporting, one goal has been achieved successfully. Hopefully, readers have become more aware of the ongoing conflict and struggle in the Philippines; thus maybe being able to prevent negative development within Philippine journalism and even being able to improve the development of pre-election survey reporting.

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## 8. APPENDIX

### 8.1 Summary of all articles examined for this study - in order of publication date

No. of Article	Date	Headline of the Article	Newspaper	Front yes/no	Page
1	15.04.2003	Roco back in two weeks	Philippine Star	Front Page	2
2	12.04.2004	Lakas: Poe begging for funds	Philippine Star	Front Page	4
3	12.04.2004	JDV fearless forecast: GMA to lead by 5%	Philippine Star	Front Page	9
4	12.04.2004	Again, quo vadis?	Philippine Star		13
5	12.04.2004	Ping, FPJ try again to unite	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	5
6	12.04.2004	Roco squelches rumors says fight continues	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	5
7	12.04.2004	All-out poll drives resume	Manila Bulletin	Front Page	4
8	12.04.2004	Cebu groups back Roxas bid	Manila Bulletin		6
9	13.04.2004	Poll: GMA, FPJ still locked in tight race	Philippine Star	Front Page	6
10	13.04.2004	If you want unity, kick out Edong, Tito	Philippine Star	Front Page	7
11	13.04.2004	The undecided	Philippine Star		9
12	13.04.2004	GMA now leads FPJ says latest survey	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	16
13	13.04.2004	Surveys	Manila Bulletin		9
14	13.04.2004	FPJ, GMA in close fight	Manila Bulletin		4
15	13.04.2004	Revilla true to form in campaign sorties	Manila Bulletin		12
16	14.04.2004	local machinery GMA smile did it	Philippine Star	Front Page	1
17	14.04.2004	FPJ on surveys: no need to worry	Philippine Star	Front Page	1
18	14.04.2004	It's 6-6 in race for senate	Philippine Star	Front Page	1
19	14.04.2004	Lacson to quit Senate if he gets 3M vote or less	Philippine Star		9
20	14.04.2004	Roco leaves the campaign FPJ jumps back into it	Philippine Star		16
21	14.04.2004	UST and democracy	Philippine Star		17
22	14.04.2004	Benefitting from Rocos absence	Philippine Star		17
23	14.04.2004	Roco's break	Daily Inquirer		14
24	14.04.2004	Da King downplays GMA lead	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	10
25	14.04.2004	FPJ slams Lacson defends Angara	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	10
26	14.04.2004	Roxas leads Senate race	Daily Inquirer		3
27	14.04.2004	Bro. Eddie still confident of win	Daily Inquirer		3
28	14.04.2004	De facto withdrawal boosts GMA, pressures rivals	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	22
29	14.04.2004	FPJ stepping up drive in remaining 27 days	Manila Bulletin	Front Page	6
30	14.04.2004	Polls rigged	Manila Bulletin		6
31	14.04.2004	Villanueva camp predicts surprise win	Manila Bulletin	Front Page	9
32	14.04.2004	Speedy recovery	Manila Bulletin		6
33	15.04.2004	GMA: It's down to a 2-way race	Philippine Star	Front Page	7
34	15.04.2004	Bro. Eddie fighting to the end	Philippine Star		8
35	15.04.2004	Drilon predicts slim GMA win over FPJ	Philippine Star		8

36	15.04.2004	Virtual withdrawal FPJ chart remains flat as GMA	Philippine Star		10
37	15.04.2004	creeps onward	Philippine Star		11
38	15.04.2004	The stunning survey RP bond spreads tighten on hopes	Philippine Star		27
39	15.04.2004	of GMA victory in May Race is down to FPJ vs. GMA says	Philippine Star		4
40	15.04.2004	Angara	Daily Inquirer		2
41	15.04.2004	Ping: This will make GMA faint	Daily Inquirer		2
42	15.04.2004	Wind	Daily Inquirer		14
43	15.04.2004	Bandwagon for GMA Peso hits intro - day high of 55.66 to	Daily Inquirer		15
44	15.04.2004	1\$	Daily Inquirer		1
45	15.04.2004	Gov't dept yields fall Internal surveys show FPJ way	Daily Inquirer		1
46	15.04.2004	ahead - KNP	Manila Bulletin	Front Page	4
47	15.04.2004	Most capable	Manila Bulletin		4
48	15.04.2004	Sense of the Senate	Manila Bulletin		10
49	16.04.2004	PingPoe unification a done deal	Philippine Star		9
50	16.04.2004	Opinion pollsters as king makers	Daily Inquirer		14
51	16.04.2004	The tide has turned Bayan cites high survey rating to	Daily Inquirer		15
52	16.04.2004	debunk Rad tag Bangon Pilipinas bares anti-Bro.	Daily Inquirer		17
53	16.04.2004	Eddie effort	Manila Bulletin	Front Page	6
54	16.04.2004	No bandwagon effect	Manila Bulletin		11
55	17.04.2004	Lacson-Poe unity talks set anew From -3% in Nov to 30% in March -	Philippine Star	Front Page	8
56	17.04.2004	SWS	Philippine Star	Front Page	8
57	17.04.2004	Virtual runoff Palace denies internal survey, says	Philippine Star		16
58	17.04.2004	KNP deluded	Philippine Star		30
59	17.04.2004	Western Visayas poll	Manila Bulletin		11
60	17.04.2004	Muslim group defect to Ping's side FPJ, Lacson to talk unity on Estrada	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	10
61	17.04.2004	birthday	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	10
62	18.04.2004	GMA satisfaction rating up to lead	Philippine Star	Front Page	11
63	18.04.2004	It ain't over till the fat lady sings Without majority mandate the	Philippine Star		16
64	18.04.2004	winner can't govern well Kasaanga youth group gears up for	Philippine Star		17
65	18.04.2004	GMA Poll trending tells the story of	Philippine Star		30
66	18.04.2004	Palace race fame, family dominate senatorial	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	21
67	19.04.2004	race Abalos: a narrow win of just over	Philippine Star	Front Page	16
68	19.04.2004	1M voters for either GMA, FPJ	Philippine Star		4
69	19.04.2004	Loren leads Noli in Ibon opinion poll	Philippine Star		8
70	19.04.2004	Unification Why FPS's dipsy-dool why GMA's	Philippine Star		12
71	19.04.2004	upsy-daisy Mar's Mom confirms his romance	Philippine Star		13
72	19.04.2004	with Korina Davide to polls: protect the	Philippine Star		16
73	19.04.2004	environment	Philippine Star		24
74	19.04.2004	Last chance for opposition	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	22

75	19.04.2004	Nonsense and unsensibility Ibon survey indicates Loren now	Daily Inquirer		15
76	19.04.2004	adead A president who is decisive and in	Manila Bulletin	Front Page	4
77	19.04.2004	command Alyansa Senate bet urges prayers	Manila Bulletin		11
78	19.04.2004	for Roco FPJ allies insist that Lacson	Manila Bulletin		12
79	19.04.2004	withdraw from race	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	21
80	20.04.2004	Erap b'day wish: united opposition	Philippine Star	Front Page	6
81	20.04.2004	electoral inertia	Philippine Star		8
82	20.04.2004	An opposition win?	Philippine Star		9
83	20.04.2004	Political twist in western visayas	Philippine Star		21
84	20.04.2004	Unity eludes opposition	Daily Inquirer		13
85	20.04.2004	Losers	Daily Inquirer		12
86	20.04.2004	Poe win seen GMA woos - and wins - business	Manila Bulletin		4
87	20.04.2004	community	Manila Bulletin		8
88	20.04.2004	GMA's offer of a gov't of nat'l unity Pinoy's pessimism not my fault -	Manila Bulletin		9
89	21.04.2004	Arroyo Miriam wants other Senate bets to	Philippine Star		2
90	21.04.2004	account for TV/radio poll ads Joker warns GMA could lose	Philippine Star	Front Page	7
91	21.04.2004	Senate If you depend too much on feng	Philippine Star		11
92	21.04.2004	shui, you might end up chop suey GMA firms up lead in Western	Philippine Star		16
93	21.04.2004	Visayas as FPJ supports dwindles Dollar spreads tighten as GMA	Philippine Star		30
94	21.04.2004	widens lead over rivals	Philippine Star		8
95	21.04.2004	Senator's funds	Manila Bulletin		4
96	21.04.2004	Miriam rails vs. TV spending FPJ warns Ping time fast running	Daily Inquirer		2
97	21.04.2004	out	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	7
98	21.04.2004	Bro. Eddie No.1 in job interviews The importance of having a party	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	8
99	21.04.2004	machine KNP: FPJ will win with or without	Daily Inquirer		15
100	22.04.2004	united opposition	Philippine Star		6
101	22.04.2004	Elusive merger	Philippine Star		8
102	22.04.2004	GMA in Western Visayas FPJ leads in Ibon survey; Loren	Philippine Star		23
103	22.04.2004	overtakes Noli Ibon survey reveals FPJ leading	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	5
104	22.04.2004	rivals	Manila Bulletin	Front Page	4
105	22.04.2004	Most not satisfied	Manila Bulletin		4
106	22.04.2004	Who should give way CalPERS: Either vote of confidence	Manila Bulletin		8
107	22.04.2004	or bargaining gain	Daily Inquirer		3
108	22.04.2004	Another view on the campaign CBCP asks voters to shun	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	5
109	23.04.2004	experienced candidates Ping rejects FVR advice to slide	Philippine Star		4
110	23.04.2004	down Ping Lacson will "tell all" on/ FPJ	Philippine Star		10
111	23.04.2004	invited, too	Philippine Star		14

112	23.04.2004	Pro GMA group launched, says her victory imminent	Manila Bulletin		12
113	23.04.2004	Self selection and cherry picking in the polling business	Manila Bulletin		14
114	23.04.2004	Sentimental journey	Daily Inquirer		15
115	23.04.2004	FPJ leading in 3 surveys, KNP bares	Manila Bulletin	Front Page	4
116	23.04.2004	Solons hail Ibon poll see trend for GMA	Manila Bulletin	Front Page	4
117	23.04.2004	Confusing the public	Manila Bulletin		9
118	23.04.2004	Lakas sees silver lining in Ibon poll	Daily Inquirer		2
119	23.04.2004	As I see it	Daily Inquirer		14
120	23.04.2004	Confusing the public	Manila Bulletin		9
121	24.04.2004	Poe, Loren refute latest SWS poll	Philippine Star	Front Page	6
122	24.04.2004	SWS: opposition chances better if Lacson withdraws	Philippine Star	Front Page	4
123	24.04.2004	Election development favoring the president	Philippine Star		15
124	24.04.2004	Selective democracy	Philippine Star		16
125	24.04.2004	Port communities pick Roco in mock polls	Philippine Star		29
126	24.04.2004	Roxas tops cebu radio survey	Philippine Star		29
127	24.04.2004	Stocks hit 3-yr high, peso up as GMA widens lead	Philippine Star		1
128	24.04.2004	Survey	Manila Bulletin		4
129	24.04.2004	Poll results assessed	Manila Bulletin		4
130	24.04.2004	Arroyo reaction	Manila Bulletin		4
131	24.04.2004	SWS survey	Manila Bulletin		5
132	24.04.2004	RP bond prives rally in HK	Manila Bulletin		1
133	24.04.2004	More Filipinos think movie star Poe would win presidential race	Manila Bulletin		10
134	24.04.2004	For 1st time GMA clearly leads FPJ	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	15
135	24.04.2004	RP stocks soar to 3 year closing high	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	15
136	24.04.2004	The turtle and the hare	Daily Inquirer		13
137	25.04.2004	FPJ not sliding down either	Philippine Star	Front Page	6
138	25.04.2004	Iglesia, power brokers to decide May elections	Philippine Star	Front Page	5
139	25.04.2004	FPJ by now should have run out of excuses for not meeting with Lacson	Philippine Star		14
140	25.04.2004	Palace: United opposition has no chance against Arroyo	Philippine Star		6
141	25.04.2004	Bro. Eddie says surveys part of plan to cheat in polls	Philippine Star		6
142	25.04.2004	K4 reports snowballing support for GMA	Philippine Star		11
143	25.04.2004	More groups join `Kasaangga ni Gloria`	Philippine Star		30
144	25.04.2004	Poe to win in 9 of 16 regions - Ibon	Philippine Star		30
145	25.04.2004	Lacson - SWS survey results impossible	Manila Bulletin	Front Page	13
146	25.04.2004	The closing end game	Manila Bulletin		16
147	25.04.2004	The rise and fall of political ratings	Manila Bulletin		17
148	25.04.2004	Results of Aklan opinion survey raise questions	Manila Bulletin		3
149	25.04.2004	GMA rivals postpone rally in the	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	19

	deference to Labor Day			
150	25.04.2004 Reading the surveys?	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	19
	Newsbreak: Preventing a			
151	26.04.2004 checkmate	Philippine Star	Front Page	10
152	26.04.2004 Poe, Lacson not giving up on unity	Philippine Star		6
	GMA widens lead over FPJ in			
153	26.04.2004 survey	Philippine Star		12
154	26.04.2004 Don't take out the champagne yet	Philippine Star	Front Page	11
155	26.04.2004 Straw polls	Philippine Star		15
	Survey samplings scauty for			
156	26.04.2004 senators	Philippine Star		15
	Alyansa confident Roco will bounce			
157	26.04.2004 back after US trip	Philippine Star		12
	Bangon Philipinas prays for Roco to			
158	26.04.2004 back Bro. Eddie	Philippine Star		12
159	26.04.2004 Miriam tops Western Visayas poll	Manila Bulletin		8
160	26.04.2004 GMA widens lead over FPJ	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	22
	Thwart moves to undermine May			
161	26.04.2004 polls, GMA asks voters	Manila Bulletin	Front Page	4
162	26.04.2004 Undecided vote still up for grabs	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	22
	Poor Pinoys distrust, ignore surveys			
163	27.04.2004 - study	Philippine Star	Front Page	8
	Lacson's camp complains survey's			
164	27.04.2004 massaged to favor Arroyo	Philippine Star		2
	Trend more important than slim lead			
165	27.04.2004 in surveys	Philippine Star		11
	GMA vows to get the highest			
166	27.04.2004 mandate	Philippine Star	Front Page	2
167	27.04.2004 Roco, Bro. Eddie to explore alliance	Philippine Star		7
	Maceda keeps momentum in			
168	27.04.2004 surveys	Philippine Star		21
169	27.04.2004 FPJ not giving way to Lacson	Philippine Star	Front Page	9
	GMA sees landslide win in May 10			
170	27.04.2004 polls	Manila Bulletin	Front Page	11
171	27.04.2004 GMA leads	Manila Bulletin		11
172	27.04.2004 More groups endorse Revilla	Manila Bulletin		12
173	27.04.2004 T-bill yields drop on GMA's poll lead	Daily Inquirer		1
174	27.04.2004 Pro-Lacson respondents doubts poll	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	27
	Candidates surveys irrelevant to the			
175	27.04.2004 poor, says Ateneo study	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	10
	Not so much GMA's gain, but FPJ's			
176	27.04.2004 loss	Manila Bulletin		9
177	27.04.2004 No-el scenario makes no sense	Daily Inquirer		15
	Bro. Eddie vows to disprove			
178	28.04.2004 surveys in Ayalla ralley tomorrow	Philippine Star		6
179	28.04.2004 Scapegoats	Philippine Star		16
	Senate bed Padilla asks two survey			
180	28.04.2004 firms: Who's funding you?	Manila Bulletin		12
181	28.04.2004 Peso stocks cheer GMA poll lead	Daily Inquirer		1
182	28.04.2004 Credible elections	Daily Inquirer		15
183	28.04.2004 Blind followers of surveys	Daily Inquirer		16
	Opposition bets continue to			
184	28.04.2004 question survey firms	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	8
	Villanueva disqualification case			
185	28.04.2004 dismissed by Comelec in Makati	Manila Bulletin	Front Page	4
	Lacson camp eyes alliance with			
186	28.04.2004 Villanueva's group	Manila Bulletin	Front Page	5

187	29.04.2004	May the best man win Drilon confident SWS not conniving	Philippine Star	Front Page	18
188	29.04.2004	with Malacanang on survey results	Philippine Star	Front Page	9
189	29.04.2004	Desperados	Philippine Star		12
190	29.04.2004	K-4 sees insurmountable GMA lead Roxas: Topping survey a victory for	Philippine Star		27
191	29.04.2004	palengke people FPJ, Lacson unite to fight poll	Philippine Star		27
192	29.04.2004	cheating	Manila Bulletin	Front Page	4
193	29.04.2004	Vote of confidence	Manila Bulletin		4
194	29.04.2004	surprises	Manila Bulletin		7
195	29.04.2004	Narrow GMA victory seen	Daily Inquirer		2
196	29.04.2004	Drilon defends polling firms	Daily Inquirer		2
197	29.04.2004	Informed choice	Daily Inquirer		14
198	29.04.2004	Scientific tool	Daily Inquirer		14
199	30.04.2004	GMA may win by landslide - study	Philippine Star		6
200	30.04.2004	Hubris	Philippine Star		14
201	30.04.2004	election surveys	Philippine Star		15
202	30.04.2004	It isn't a slam dunk yet Villanueva exhorts own political	Philippine Star		3
203	30.04.2004	camp at rally	Manila Bulletin	Front Page	15
204	30.04.2004	polls defended	Manila Bulletin		6
205	30.04.2004	NY report says GMA win likely	Daily Inquirer		5
206	30.04.2004	Home from the sea	Daily Inquirer		14
207	01.05.2004	Homestretch Policemen's vote to give Poe a big	Philippine Star		12
208	01.05.2004	lead	Philippine Star		31
209	01.05.2004	From campaign	Daily Inquirer		14
210	01.05.2004	Negative ads	Daily Inquirer		14
211	01.05.2004	Why is Roco persisting in his quest? Respondents surfaces, criticizes	Daily Inquirer		15
212	01.05.2004	survey firms People's attitude could distort	Manila Bulletin	Front Page	6
213	01.05.2004	survey results FPJ is leading on the ground, says	Manila Bulletin		10
214	01.05.2004	Marahon	Manila Bulletin		3
215	02.05.2004	Iglesia endorses GMA, Noli	Philippine Star	Front Page	11
216	02.05.2004	Our evolving politics Foreign analysts predict GMA	Philippine Star		15
217	02.05.2004	landslide win Professionals air support for	Philippine Star		32
218	02.05.2004	Comelec and Abalos	Manila Bulletin		10
219	02.05.2004	Two more surveys Cavite leaders see GMA win amid	Manila Bulletin		19
220	02.05.2004	opposition division Terror threats cancel GMA sorties in	Daily Inquirer		17
221	03.05.2004	South	Philippine Star	Front Page	14
222	03.05.2004	Ping tops SSS mock polls	Philippine Star		11
223	03.05.2004	It's your fault if you are cheated Presidential race now in the final	Philippine Star		17
224	03.05.2004	stretch	Philippine Star		32
225	03.05.2004	Disturbing complaints The poor also don't believe in	Manila Bulletin		10
226	03.05.2004	surveys Hard work, glitz, Image reloaded,	Manila Bulletin		11
227	03.05.2004	GMA now on winning streak	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	22

228	03.05.2004	GMA hold on E class spells difference	Daily Inquirer		15
229	03.05.2004	What do political surveys have to do with business?	Daily Inquirer		2
230	04.05.2004	Hopeful signs	Manila Bulletin		8
231	04.05.2004	Elections seen clearing uncertainty, but Peso outlook basically cloudy	Manila Bulletin		2
232	04.05.2004	Plugging for friends	Daily Inquirer		13
233	04.05.2004	Lead in all you survey	Daily Inquirer		2
234	04.05.2004	INC: The little sect is a big player in RP politics	Philippine Star	Front Page	2
235	04.05.2004	Muslim-christian alliance pledges support for Arroyo	Philippine Star		9
236	05.05.2004	UST posts survey FPJ Loren ahead	Philippine Star	Front Page	9
237	05.05.2004	Noli - Loren word war heats up	Philippine Star		11
238	05.05.2004	couriouser and couriouser / how GMA cast her dragnet	Philippine Star		15
239	05.05.2004	Lacson to attend mass	Manila Bulletin		16
240	05.05.2004	FPJ takes big lead in new nat'l survey	Manila Bulletin	Front Page	14
241	05.05.2004	K4 shifts to Senate race	Manila Bulletin	Front Page	14
242	05.05.2004	Victory for GMA seen - Abalos	Manila Bulletin		2
243	05.05.2004	FPJ's campaign: royal passage stuck in real world	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	21
244	05.05.2004	Fearless forecasts at Kapihan sa Manila	Daily Inquirer		14
245	05.05.2004	Satur says GMA victory imminent	Daily Inquirer		18
246	06.05.2004	GMA widens lead over FPJ	Philippine Star	Front Page	8
247	06.05.2004	Most Pinoys trust Comelec but not Abalos	Philippine Star		6
248	06.05.2004	Peso closes at 4 month high of 55.46 to the dollar	Philippine Star		1
249	06.05.2004	Pulse Asia Survey	Manila Bulletin		4
250	06.05.2004	Exit plan	Manila Bulletin		4
251	06.05.2004	Bro. Eddie's thousands out to disprove surveys	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	8
252	06.05.2004	GMA pads lead in new survey	Daily Inquirer		2
253	06.05.2004	Peso soars on widening GMA poll lead	Daily Inquirer		1
254	07.05.2004	Pacquiao in seven - GMA by eight	Philippine Star		15
255	07.05.2004	New survey confirms FPJ's standing - KNP	Manila Bulletin	Front Page	6
256	07.05.2004	Non existent trend	Manila Bulletin		6
257	07.05.2004	Lacson camp preparing for a thank-you dinner	Manila Bulletin	Front Page	6
258	07.05.2004	The homestretch	Manila Bulletin		10
259	07.05.2004	Marketers and the polls	Manila Bulletin		5
260	07.05.2004	Villanueva's middle class armies	Daily Inquirer		15
261	08.05.2004	FPJ dismisses INC Shaddai nod to GMA	Philippine Star	Front Page	7
262	08.05.2004	two futures	Philippine Star		10
263	08.05.2004	Index ends up as market expects GMA to win	Philippine Star		2
264	09.05.2004	Arroyo headed for victory - SWS	Philippine Star	Front Page	6
265	09.05.2004	Kabayan deplores hatchet job	Philippine Star	Front Page	14
266	09.05.2004	If Comelec Chairman Abalos collapsed...	Philippine Star	Front Page	16



	RP economy to pick up if GMA wins			
267	09.05.2004 - Bunye	Philippine Star		1
	Lokal markets cautions ahead of			
268	09.05.2004 elections	Manila Bulletin		4
269	09.05.2004 Meet the undecided voters	Manila Bulletin		3
270	09.05.2004 Undecided to decide	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	2
	As ratings dip, Noli decries black			
271	09.05.2004 prop	Daily Inquirer		2
272	09.05.2004 90 days	Daily Inquirer		14
273	10.05.2004 Comelec: It's all systems go	Philippine Star	Front Page	10
	Sheer hard work drives Arroyo's			
274	10.05.2004 presidential bid	Philippine Star		2
	Noli appeals to people: Guard your			
275	10.05.2004 votes	Philippine Star		4
276	10.05.2004 300 000 Namfrel volunteers ready	Manila Bulletin	Front Page	4
277	10.05.2004 A wide open race	Manila Bulletin		8
278	10.05.2004 Credible elections to boost stocks	Manila Bulletin		2
	The role of image studies and poll			
279	10.05.2004 surveys in the election	Manila Bulletin		2
	Dislike for a bet doesn't necessarily			
280	10.05.2004 mean he will lose	Daily Inquirer		3
	Quiapo fortune tellers an't agree on			
281	10.05.2004 who'll win	Daily Inquirer	Front Page	10

## 8.2 Summary of Tables and Charts

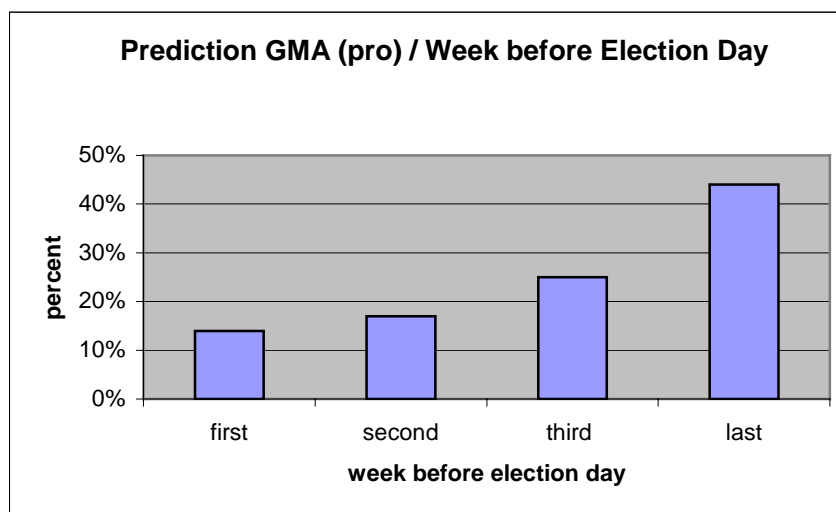
**Table 1: Page 8**

	<b>'Overdog' &amp; 'Underdog' Effect / Poor People</b>			
	<b>RP</b>	<b>ABC</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>a) yes</b>	11% (21%)	17% (31%)	10% (21%)	11% (17%)
<b>a) no</b>	89% (78%)	83% (69%)	90% (79%)	89% (83%)
<b>b) yes</b>	9% (16%)	16% (15%)	8% (18%)	7% (7%)
<b>b) no</b>	91% (84%)	84% (85%)	92% (81%)	93% (93%)

The percentages in the chart above are the results of the Social Weather Stations Report: Second Quarter 2001; the percentages in brackets represent the results of the Social Weather Stations Report in 2000.

**Table 2: Page 15**

**Table 2:**



The basis for the chart above are all articles that made a prediction of the election result and said the election result was already clear. (N=52) They were then cross tabulated with articles that biased towards GMA and the week of their publication.

**Table 3: Page 16**

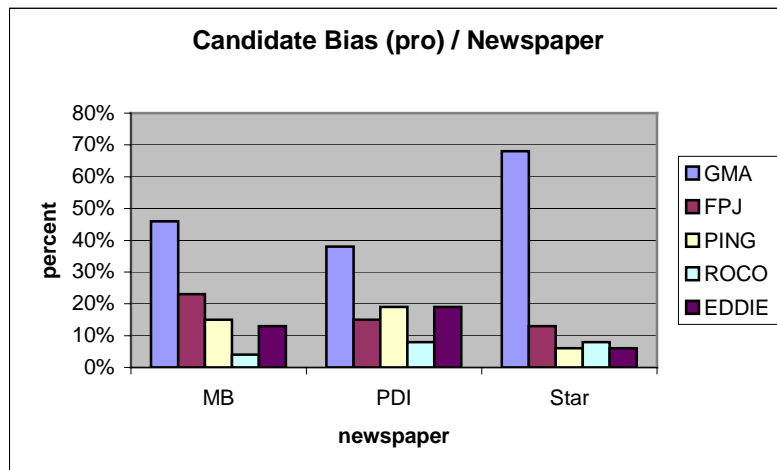
**Table 3:**

Candidate Bias / Week before Election Day						
			week before election day			
			first week b4	second week b4	third week b4	last week b4 elec.day
pro/ neutral/	pro	Col %	50,0%	58,3%	36,8%	58,6%
against GMA	neutral	Col %	50,0%	36,1%	55,3%	37,9%
	against	Col %		5,6%	7,9%	3,4%
pro/ neutral/	pro	Col %	21,9%	19,4%	13,2%	10,3%
against FPJ	neutral	Col %	75,0%	75,0%	76,3%	86,2%
	against	Col %	3,1%	5,6%	10,5%	3,4%

The base for the percentages of both candidates are in each case all articles with a political bias (N=135; out of all 281 articles) split up into the last four weeks before election day according to the day of appearance in the newspapers:

**Table 4: Page 18**

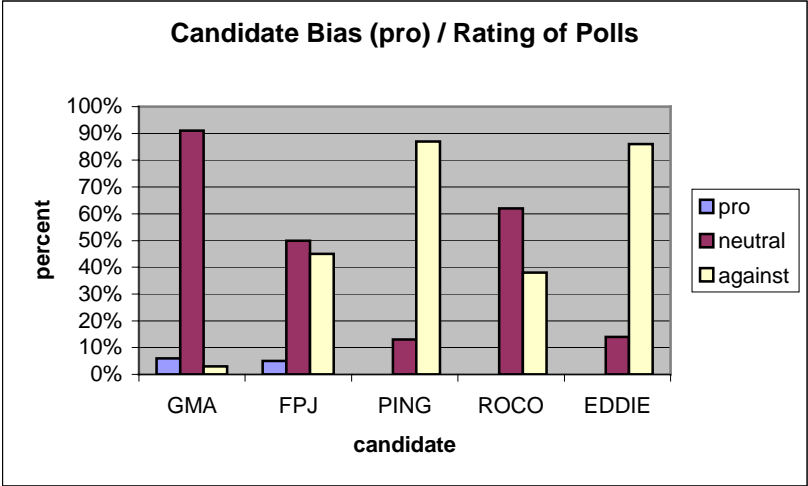
**Table 4:**



The basis for the chart above is the number of articles with a positive bias towards a candidate. (N=135); The basis for each newspaper were MB 48 articles, PDI 26 articles and Star 53 articles.

Table 5: Page 19

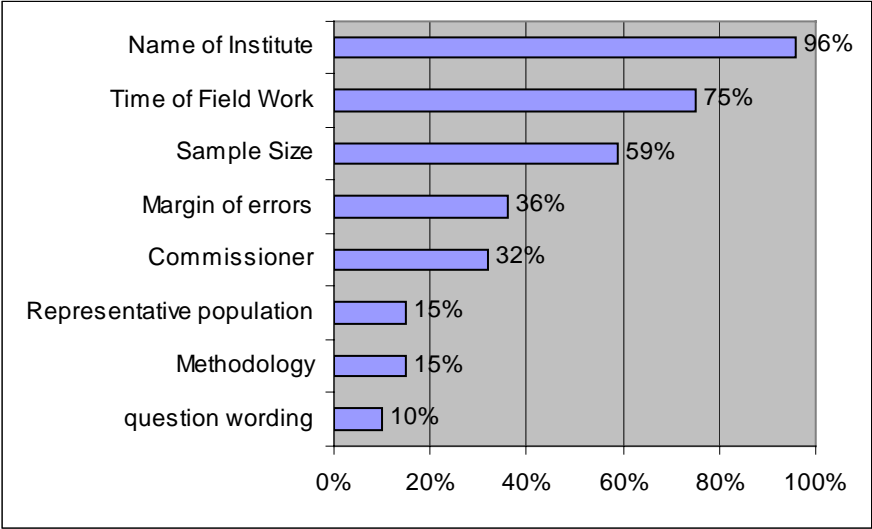
Table 5:



The basis for the chart above is the number of articles with a positive bias towards a candidate. (N=135). The variable “rating of polls” was coded “negative”, “neutral” and “positive”.

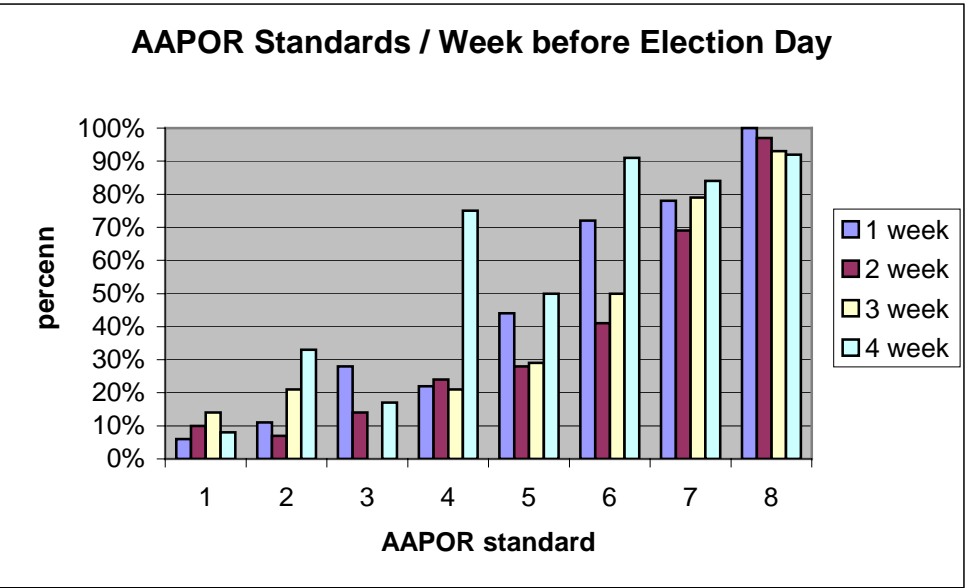
Table 6: Page 21

Table 6:



Content of AAPOR standards based on articles dominated by the topic “survey” and presenting “recent survey results”. (N=73)

Table 7:



Numbers used in the chart above:  
1. question wording 2. Method used in the survey 3. Definition of population for which the survey is representative 4. Firm that commissioned the poll 5. margin of error 6. sample size 7. time of field work 8. Name of responsible poll institute

### 8.3 Further information on the mentioned survey sources

NFO trends is described as *“the group that conducts the interviews for surveys designed by SWS and Pulse Asia.”*<sup>95</sup> The Holy Name University Research Center does a variety of researches as well as public opinion polling and states that a staff-member is a member of the WAPOR.<sup>96</sup> The Proberz Research and Consultancy is described as *„a firm established by seven professors from the University of Sto. Tomas in Manila“*.<sup>97</sup> Bear Stearns is a self-named *“global investment banking, securities trading and brokerage firm“*.<sup>98</sup> Consumer Vibe Asia is a business oriented *„full service research agency established by experienced market research executives“*.<sup>99</sup> Malacanang is the palace of the President of the Philippines. Inhouse surveys were published in several newspapers, falsely presented to be reliable sources satisfying all scientific requirements. StratPhil is a *“a non-stock, non-profit institution“* using *„timely, relevant and innovative interventions in research, publication, training, capability building, policy initiatives, public advocacies, technology and mass media.“*<sup>100</sup> Shortly before election day, Stratphil published a forecast of the election outcome based *“on several factors that influence the casting of votes in the Philippines“*<sup>101</sup> – but not on a survey. For all other mentioned sources, no further information was found nor provided, even if requested by the author.

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<sup>95</sup> Press Release; GMA's aim now: Clear, conclusive victory; April 26<sup>th</sup> 2004;

<sup>96</sup> see: <http://www.hnu.edu.ph/research/research.php>; (February 10<sup>th</sup> 2004; 0:20pm)

<sup>97</sup> Article: PUNAY, Edu; (2004); UST posts survey: FPJ, Loren ahead; in: Philippine Star; published: May 5<sup>th</sup> 2004; p.1 and 9;

<sup>98</sup> see: <http://www.bearstearns.com>; (February 10<sup>th</sup> 2004; 0:15pm)

<sup>99</sup> see: <http://www.consumervibe.com/info/index.php>; (February 10<sup>th</sup> 2004; 0:25pm)

<sup>100</sup> see: <http://stratphil.org/> (February 10<sup>th</sup> 2004; 1:10 pm)

<sup>101</sup> Press Release StratPhil; May 2004;

#### 8.4 List of key-words for analyzing Horse-Race Journalism

ahead	(3 times found in a headline)
gaining	(1)
out the gate	(--)
trailing	(--)
lead	(28)
race/tight race	(12)
tie	(--)
fatigued	(--)
change strides	(--)
stretch/homestretch	(2)
win by a nose	(--)
neck-and-neck	(--)
catching up	(--)
make it up	(--)
momentum	(1)

##### **key words found:**

gear up	(1)
give way	(1)
fight	(1)
stepping up drive	(1)

## 8.5 Code sheet

### Codesheet

article number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 title: \_\_\_\_\_  
 same like p. release  
   no 0  
   yes 1  
**KOA** news 1  
 opinion 2  
 business 3  
 different 4  
 Author \_\_\_\_\_  
   journalist 1  
   pollster 2  
   other 3  
   not mention. 4  
 User  
   missing 0  
   journalist 1  
   politician 2  
   pollster 3  
**S. Bulletin** 1  
   Inquirer 2  
   Star 3  
 Page \_\_\_\_\_  
**fp** yes 1  
   no 2  
 week b4 election  
   1. week 1  
   2. week 2  
   3. week 3  
   last week 4  
 subject "poll" is  
   dominating 1  
   important 2  
   peripheral 3  
 content of figures  
   recent figures 1  
   statements 2  
   #1 Sample Size  
     no 0  
     yes 1  
   #2 Commissioner  
     no 0  
     yes 1  
   #3 qu. wording  
     no 0  
     yes 1  
   #4 margin o. err.  
     no 0  
     yes 1  
   #5 repres. popul.  
     no 0  
     yes 1  
   #6 methodology  
     no 0  
     yes 1  
   #7 time fieldwork  
     no 0  
     yes 1  
   #8 poll institute  
     no 0  
     yes 1

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           two 2  
           three 3  
           four 4  
           five 5  
           six 6  
           seven 7  
           eight 8  
           Sub sample  
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             yes 1  
           present chart  
             no 0  
             yes 1  
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             yes 1  
 Comparison p.polls  
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   yes 1  
 illegal comparison  
   OK 1  
   NOT 2  
 Predict 1  
   election outcome  
   no 0  
   yes 1  
   Predict 2  
     the election is  
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     allr. clear 2  
 Candidate centred  
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 Issue coverage  
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 rating of the polls  
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   different 3  
   uncommissioned 4  
 Survey institute:  
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 Horse race metaphor:  
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   yes 1  
 Bandwagon metaphor:  
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   yes 1  
 Political bias: no 0  
                   yes 1  
                   + / = / -  
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           FPJ 1 2 3  
           Ping 1 2 3  
           Roco 1 2 3  
           Eddie 1 2 3

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 business 3  
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   pollster 3  
**S. Bulletin** 1  
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   Star 3  
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 week b4 election  
   1. week 1  
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   last week 4  
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 content of figures  
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     no 0  
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     yes 1  
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     no 0  
     yes 1  
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 Candidate centred  
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   yes 1  
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   negative 3  
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           Ping 1 2 3  
           Roco 1 2 3  
           Eddie 1 2 3

Encoder: Wolfgang Wichmann