



# Restudying The Filipino Voter Today

## Introduction

### A. Some Considerations.

In 1995 the Institute for Political and Electoral Reform conducted a study on the voting behavior of the Filipino electorate. The study was conducted in December 1995 and was completed by October 1996. Last July 2003, it undertook an eight-month update research of this same study.

The 1995 study was conducted in order to have an in-depth analysis on the voting behavior of the Filipino electorate. There have been a number of studies about the Filipino electorate. In 1992, the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) and the Ateneo Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs (CSP) published “1992 & Beyond: Forces and Issues in Philippine Elections”, a resource which is popular among the NGO community. The Institute for Popular Democracy also came out with several publications like Boss, All in the Family, and [De]scribing Elections, which are focused studies that try



to make us understand the inter-action of forces that determine the flow and results of the electoral process in specific regions and towns.

Moreover, because they are focused, authorities can always claim that such studies are true only for the specific areas where they were conducted, and cannot speak for the entire electorate.

Equally important, any real effort to contribute to electoral reforms - a mission which the Institute has committed itself to - must be backed up by a real understanding of voter behavior that goes beyond generalizations and assertions; a study that can **quantify and substantiate in fact** sound and solid arguments in working for meaningful electoral reforms.

There are various ways of studying voting behavior. One is to analyze election results in relation to the position taken by the candidates on relevant issues or in relation to campaign organizations and events. Such a study entails looking into party and/or candidate platforms and speeches, focusing on campaign strategies and machinery build-up. Trends, in this way, can be established by examining changes in the election results over time.

Another way is by directly studying individual voters. Qualitative techniques such as focus groups, in-depth interviews and projective techniques are often used. They attempt to probe into the minds of the electorate. The results however, are difficult to quantify.

The results of 1995 voter behavior research underwent a series of validation conferences, wherein the results were presented to various electoral stakeholders: the NGO/PO community, media practitioners, academe, and government officials. The Institute conducted four conferences, one for each of the island groups: Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao, and one conference on a national level. It was during these conferences that the study garnered support for its findings from the various sectors which led to various electoral reform initiatives, as well as education campaigns in order to address the issues raised by the study's results.

This study caught the attention of the media as well as the politicians because it was not merely a survey that asked respondents who they would vote for in the election. It was rather analyzing the behavior of the electorate in the whole election process.

In addition, one of its findings which was the determinant of votes caused a stir in the political and showbiz arenas.

The 1995 study identified four determinants in which the Filipino voter chooses a candidate. The primary factor in choosing was based on the candidate's popularity. Findings show that the voters tend to easily identify with the candidate's popularity and public image. The next factor is the endorsement of traditional networks and organizations, which includes the family, church and ward leaders. The third factor that the voters consider in choosing a candidate is the characteristics that can be of benefit to the voter. The least consideration for the voters is the party program.

The 1998 Presidential elections validated these findings. First, during the campaign period some of the presidential candidates sought the support of the religious groups carrying clout. Speaker Jose de Venecia asked for the blessings of his candidacy from the Jesus is Lord Movement which is one of the biggest Christian fundamentalist groups in the country. Meanwhile former President Joseph Estrada requested support from the Iglesia ni Kristo, a major religious group known for their block voting in elections.



Former President Joseph Estrada, a well known actor from the 1960s to 1970s, was able to maintain his popularity even when he changed careers from actor to politician. He sustained his popularity during his term of office as mayor of San Juan for two decades until he ran for senator in 1987. Riding on his popularity, he easily won his bid for the vice-presidency in 1992 and was the first president to get as high a percentage vote as 38% in a race of ten presidential candidates.

This proved that Estrada's popularity was more effective than his contender Jose de Venecia's track record as a Speaker of the House of Representatives. De Venecia's tactics of using the showbiz personalities to endorse his Presidential bid could not match with the popularity of a showbiz personality candidate.

Seven years after the conduct of the study on voting behavior of the Filipino electorate, the Institute decided to do an update of the same study, a decision caused by events that unfolded in 2001. Joseph Estrada, elected president in 1998, was ousted and replaced by then Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. This episode was brought about by a series of mass actions from different sectors rallying against Estrada in 2000 and asking him to resign from his post. The people were fed up with the issues and controversies that Estrada was involved in, from the mansions of his mistresses to his involvement in gambling. Consequently, he was slapped with an impeachment case. The unsuccessful impeachment trial led to a four-day mass up of anti-Erap forces and eventually his expulsion from his position.



Synchronized national and local elections were held in the same year as Estrada's ouster. Although the Presidency of Estrada led to an untoward end, a lot of aspiring celebrity politicians tried their luck in the 2001 elections. This time many of them lost their bid. Such an outcome seemed to contradict the determinants of the 1995 study.

In July 2003, the Institute started the project of updating the psychographics study. The same research methodologies were used except for the case study.

The following chapters will discuss the comparison of the 1995 study and the result of the 2001 update.

## **B. The Psychographics Study.**

This is a **psychographics study**. It is a research that attempts to place the electorate in psychological, rather than purely demographic dimensions. One difference of the psychographics study with the ordinary survey is that it uses demographics to study and measure attitudes, values, lifestyles and opinions of people.

A psychographics study is often used in a market study of a product. It is usually used to find out the behavior of the consumer in choosing a particular product. In this research on the voting behavior of the Filipino electorate, the psychographics approach was used in order to understand the behavior of the electorate regarding elections.

The study uses both quantitative and qualitative research techniques. The quantitative instrument - the survey - is

focused not only on the demographic characteristics of the Filipino electorate but also on the more abstract aspects of voters' attitudes, opinions and interests. The responses are quantified using factor analysis and other statistical measures.

The qualitative method of in-depth interviews of key informants - candidates, campaign managers, ward leaders, precinct watchers, Comelec officials, citizens' watchdogs, etc. - was conducted not only to validate the quantitative aspect of the research but more to gain insights and deeper understanding of voters' behavior.

The focus of the key informant interviews was on how past electoral exercises were conducted in the municipality, their appraisal of the attitudes of voters towards elections and the candidates, and on the strengths and flaws of the electoral laws.

What we shall present to you in this publication will be the survey results of the study validated by behavioral patterns and trends derived from key informant interviews analysis of demographic and psychographics data from Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao and NCR. In general, this study aims to contribute to the understanding of the Filipino electorate - what determines her/his vote and the influences that come into play during electoral exercises.

The result of the study is useful in understanding the national profile of the Filipino electorate. It is only of limited value in local profiles inasmuch as the demographics and specific situation in localities may greatly vary from place

to place. In that case, local psychographics studies may be conducted.

### **C. Where the Institute is coming from.**

IPER is a non-government organization that is currently engaged in research and education work on political and electoral reform but not solely with academic research. Within its ranks are a varied range of committed individuals - lawyers, grassroots leaders, priests, journalists, writers, teachers, etc. We all come from one political mold: the parliament of the streets. Our reason for establishing the Institute is to study and explore the parliamentary and electoral arena for effective grassroots empowerment and intervention in governance and in strengthening Philippine democracy. IPER is committed to the establishment and flourishing of a new politics in our country.

Hence, the need to study the arena and its constituents.

The Institute for Political and Electoral Reform (IPER) is a non-stock, non-profit non-government organization. Since its establishment in 1991, it has been involved in education and training in local governance and development as well as electoral education. The Institute has also been involved in lobby work for the passage of bills, especially those that promote reforms in governance and the electoral system. One of IPER's achievements in lobbying was the passage of the party list law. The Institute supported the bill and participated in advocating it before congress.

The Institute for Political and Electoral Reform (IPER) is a pioneering organization for the genuine democratization of governance and the empowerment of the citizenry through parliamentary and electoral struggles. It envisions itself to be a major catalyst towards the achievement of a liberated Philippine society contributing, in the process, towards the realization of a just, free and humane international order.

In order to achieve the above mission and vision, the Institute pursues the following strategies:

- a. Build a network and help coordinate citizen's action in political and electoral campaigns, and development advocacy;
- b. Coordinate with other initiatives in advocating for the enactment of societal and systemic reforms beneficial to the people;
- c. Undertake research and studies, and to propagate the same, on vital politico-electoral and developmental issues affecting the citizenry, thereby contributing to the development of independent and critical thinking especially among the grassroots;
- d. Educate grassroots organizations and local government officials on local governance and development, with the end in view of having a more responsive, effective and dynamic local government; and
- e. Educate the citizenry on their rights as electorate in order to enable them to effectively exercise such rights.

The Institute currently implements a five-year strategic plan from 2003 to 2007 in accordance with the above

strategies and in the light of the present situation in the Philippines. During the period, the Institute focuses on the following priorities:

- a. Pursue the electoral reform agenda through nationwide advocacy and networking, especially in relation to the 2004 general elections;
- b. Develop the capability for and advance legislative reform;
- c. Advocate for constitutional reforms;
- d. Revitalize the local governance network and advance reforms in local governance and development planning;
- e. Establish the research capability in support of the reform agenda of the Institute;
- f. Develop and conduct public information on the reform agenda of the Institute;
- g. Develop further the international linkages and network of the Institute; and
- h. Develop the necessary human and material resources for the sustainability of the Institute and its work.

To implement these priorities, the Institute has initiated the following four (4) programs:

- a. Electoral and Political Reform Program;
- b. Local Governance and Development Reform Program;
- c. Research and Public Information Program; and
- d. Administrative Services Program.

In April 2002, IPER led the Consortium on Electoral Reforms (CER), in co-convening the 2002 National Electoral Reform Summit, along with the Commission on Election, the Senate Committee on Constitutional Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws , and the House

Committee on Suffrage and Electoral Reforms. The summit issued a legislative and action agenda on electoral reforms during the 12<sup>th</sup> Congress.

IPER served as a resources institution in the First Philippine All-Parties Conference in May 2002 and participated actively in formulating the United Conference Declaration, especially on the aspects of electoral and constitutional reforms. This conference presented a consensus for a 2004 Constitutional Convention to amend the 1987 Constitution.

In 2003, it also helped in convening the National Citizen-Voter Education Summit and drafted the core voter education modules approved by the summit.





# The Study of Voting and Elections

## Related Literature

There are various ways of studying voting and elections. One possibility is to analyze voting and elections in relation to the position taken by the candidates on relevant issues or in relation to campaign organizations and events. Such a study involves looking into party and/or candidate platforms and speeches, focusing on campaign strategies and machinery build-up. Trends, in this way, can be established by examining changes in the election results over time.

This approach, which may be called “journalistic” analysis because it is often used by media in its election coverage, delves more into the intricacies of campaign organizations and events. Reporters focus on the number of votes garnered by certain candidates in areas that define social groupings such as the urban poor and workers’ communities or the middle class subdivisions. They describe candidates’ strategies, organizations and personalities.



But there are limitations to this kind of approach. It always assumes that machineries and election events really have significant impact on individual voters.

It does not mean, however, that analyzing campaign machineries, candidates' personalities and election returns are useless as sources of information to understand voting behavior. But individual voting can best be understood by studying directly individual electorate either through qualitative research methods such as the focused-group interviews or participant-observation or through quantitative method surveys.

The patron-client relations framework has been used to describe electoral politics in the Philippines. In this framework, political leaders who are of a higher socio-economic status (patron), acquire power by providing material benefits to people of lower status (client), who in turn, commit their votes to the patron during elections. Electoral exercises are often oriented to more personal and practical concerns as manifested during election campaigns where candidates woo voters not through programs of government but through favors and promises of material reward.

Other approaches to the study of electoral politics have also been rendered using the historico-structuralist approach which contends that the "focus should be on the structures of inequality which allows for the persistence of patronage politics in society, rather than on a historical notion of reciprocity advanced in the patron-client concept."

There are also studies that describe Philippine elections as a contest not of political parties but alliances of wealthy families who often control private armies and a wide patronage network. This approach contends that the network based on clans influences the vote of the electorate.

The reality however in Philippine electoral politics as manifested between 1995-2003 cannot be explained fully by the aforementioned frameworks especially the patron-client relations framework.

There is also a wide literature on the Filipino electorate and Philippine elections.

*1992 & Beyond: Forces and Issues in Philippine Elections* dissects the nature of electoral politics in the Philippines and traces the history of patronage politics and the influence of power brokers from the military, business, and the Catholic Church.

Boss looks at the five areas in the Philippines and examines what is at stake in the struggle for a local office. It describes the political and economic geography of these areas and explains why, despite urbanization and economic growth, local clans, warlords and politicians remain powerful.

*All in the Family* is a comprehensive study of the dynamics clan power plays in contemporary Philippine history. This book shatters the myth of the elite as a homogeneous whole and presents them as competing factions, divided into political clans vying for political power through elections.

[De]scribing Elections demonstrates that voters are not simple captives of the ideology patronage. It argues that should political analysts “unpack” the vote, one would find not only instrumental considerations but also normative and even critical considerations.

These works show that Filipino voting behavior is currently evolving. However, they also reflect the fact that Filipino voting behavior can still be largely explained through the usual framework of patron-client relations, clan politics and other frameworks mentioned above.

Despite the changes in voting behavior, there is still a lot to be desired. A great deal of work still should be done until the Filipino has evolved from someone who is passive and powerless to someone who is active and powerful.

### **Objectives of the Study**

This research principally aims to describe voting behavior, views and opinions of the Filipino electorate in various election processes and election practices. It also aims to identify specific reforms needed in the electoral system.

In particular, this research aims to: (1) re-evaluate the basic premises often used in analyzing voters' behavior by probing into the minds of the electorate through the use of a quantitative research technique (i.e. survey); (2) evaluate the existing electoral system to identify specific reforms needed in the electoral process and, (3) provide a framework for the development of policies in electoral reforms based on the experience of the grassroots.

## Methodology

### Design and Methods

This study is an attempt to describe and explain the attitude and perception of Filipino voters on various aspects of the political and electoral process.

Making use of combined quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the study undertook surveys, in-depth interviews of key informants, and library research. There were additional three case studies conducted in 1995.

### Sampling Methodology and Respondents/Informants

We used a multi-stage stratified random sampling procedure to identify the respondents from the target municipalities and cities in the survey. Stratification is the process of grouping members of the population into relatively homogenous subgroups before sampling. The municipalities and cities were used as strata whose number of samples was determined on the basis of the voter population of the municipality or city. Several factors were considered in the stratification: importance of the area in national politics, significance of PO/NGO work, size of the population, and the level of its economic and social development.

Thus, the study has sample municipalities and cities that are highly urbanized as well as highly rural; municipalities with a history of open, legal people's struggle and a history of armed revolutionary struggle; areas that are warlord-dominated and areas where governance is relatively liberal; and Christian as well as Muslim-dominated areas.

The 2003 study was conducted in the same sixteen municipalities and cities that were used as samples in the 1995 study. There were 1003 respondents.

The margin of error is 5%.

Key informants in each municipality include candidates, campaign managers, ward leaders, precinct watchers, Comelec officials, citizen's watchdogs, academics, and political analysts, among others. Ten key informants per municipality were chosen for the 1995 study while five informants per area were assigned to the 2003 study.

## **Research Instruments**

### **Interview Schedule**

The interview schedule or the survey questionnaire is divided into five parts:

- a. profile/personal background of the respondent;
- b. what determines their vote;
- c. their opinion on the conduct of the electoral process, i.e., from voter registration to counting of votes;
- d. their opinion on electoral fraud;
- e. their knowledge and opinion of electoral laws and reform measures.

There are 53 variables in all. The survey focused not only on the demographic characteristics of the Filipino electorate but also on the more abstract aspects of voters' attitudes and opinions.

### **Key Informant Guide**

The in-depth interview of key informants, on the other hand, was conducted not only to validate the quantitative aspect of the research but more to gain insights and deeper understanding of voter behavior.

The key informant interview guide is made up of four broad topics which center on the following topics:

- Determinants of vote
- Views on the general attitude of the electorate towards election and politics
- Views on electoral fraud
- Views on the intervention of various groups in the electoral process
- Views on the role of parties, coalitions and party system

The focus of the key informant interview was on how past electoral exercises were conducted in the municipality, their appraisal of the attitudes of voters towards elections and the candidates, on the strength and flaws of the electoral laws and on their recommendations for electoral reforms.

Case studies were carried out to draw some lessons from the participation of some people's organizations and non-governmental organizations in past elections.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Data collection covered a two-month period. Questionnaires were sent to each area through coordinators who were in charge of identifying the sample respondents, distribution and retrieval of questionnaires. Survey enumerators were

assigned to interview the respondents and record their responses. Interviews took an average of one hour per respondent.

For the key informant interviews, five interviewees were identified in each of the sixteen areas. Interviewers were also assigned to ask questions and record the proceedings on tape, which were then transcribed and encoded.

Survey responses were processed and a computerized database was created. The data were then subjected to various statistical measures using the SAS and for the 1995 study, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences or SPSS was used.

The responses for the survey are quantified using factor analysis and other statistical measures using the SAS statistical program.

The key informant interview results were encoded in a matrix and were collated to describe the various views of the interviewees on the issues or questions posed.



## The Filipino Voter

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A general profile of the Filipino voter suggests that:

- The Filipino voter is defined by laws of the Philippines
- The Filipino electorate is increasingly female
- The Filipino voter is young
- The Filipino voter is poor
- There are a number of Filipino middle class voters

The Filipino voter is defined by age and residence requirements and at present numbers around 37 million (1998 figures from the Comelec). The youth population is 70.83% of the total number of Filipinos. The average Filipino worker earns P193.43 but needs around P369.87 for food, shelter, clothing, education, and health. Forty percent of the total population or around 5.6 million families or 28 million individuals live below the poverty line. On the other hand, Filipino middle class voters comprise at least 50% of the total voting population.



## Respondents' Profile

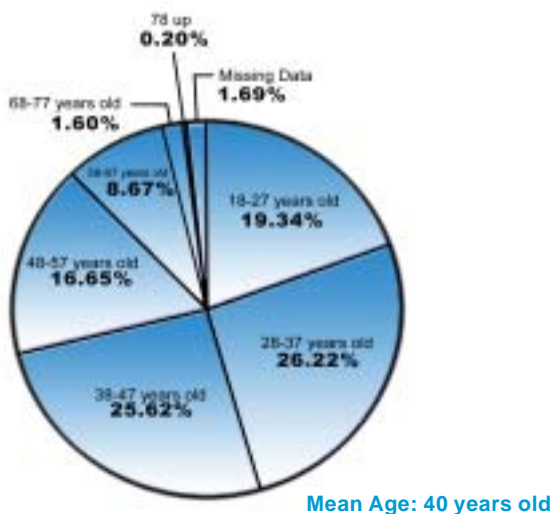
Survey respondents in 1995 and 2003 have the following characteristics:

### Age

In the current study, the respondents consist mostly of voters in the 28-37 and the 38-47 age bracket and the smallest number of respondents from the 78 years old and up group.

The breakdown of the respondents according to age bracket is shown in the figure below.

**Figure 1.**  
**Respondents by**  
**Age Bracket**  
**(2003)**



Given the age breakdown in the 1995 study, 7% were in the 18-21 age group or what can be considered as the new registrants and first-time voters, 38.9% in the 22-35 age group and 38% in the 36-50 age bracket. Only 16% were in the 51-78 age group.

Similar to the recent study, the 1995 study had more than three-fourths of the respondents between 22 and 50 years of age, with the youngest being 18 years old while the oldest 78 years old.

### **Sex and Civil Status**

In the 2003 study, there were more females (53%) than males (47%). A big majority of the respondents or 70% are married while the rest are either single or widow/widower.

Respondents in the 1995 study comprised more males than females. The percentage distribution has somehow been reversed. Only 47% were females while the remaining 52% males. Again, a majority of the respondents or 72% were married.

### **Income**

The respondents show varying income levels but the biggest portion of those who indicated their income fall in the below-P10,000 monthly income bracket. The next two brackets are P10,000-19,999 and P60,000-79,999 income levels, with a little over 10% of the respondents belonging to each group.

In 1995 however, we noted that over half or 45% of the respondents had a monthly income of P5,000 or less. About 20% had an income of more than P5,000 but less than P10,000.

### **Educational Attainment**

Thirty nine percent (39%), the biggest portion of the sample in the 2003 study attended secondary school while 28% reached college and 20% attended grade school. More than five percent had vocation or training while only 5% had graduate degrees or were pursuing post-graduate education. About 1% did not indicate their educational attainment.

Meanwhile in the 1995 study, most respondents or 40 percent had a college education. About 26% reached high school while only 15% the elementary grades. The rest attended vocational/technical schools or pursued post-graduate studies.

### **Religion**

In the 2003 study, a majority of the respondents were Roman Catholics. The number of Protestants and Islam respondents attained about the same percentage of 8%.

In the previous study, some 79% or majority were Roman Catholics, 2% belonged to the Iglesia ni Kristo, 5% to the different protestant denominations while 10% were Islam. About 3% belonged to other religions such as the Mormons.

### **Language**

The survey respondents were composed of a large number of Tagalog-speaking people. Figures show that 69% of the respondents speak Tagalog while 46% speak Cebuano, most of whom are from the Mindanao region. Other languages spoken were: Ilocano, Bicolano, Ilonggo, Waray and English.

### Respondents according to Region

Given the identified municipalities and cities in Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao and the National Capital Region (NCR) where the respondents were taken, the following figure shows the distribution of our sample in the 2003 survey according to region.



**Figure 2.**  
Respondents  
according to  
Region (2003)

### Participation in Elections

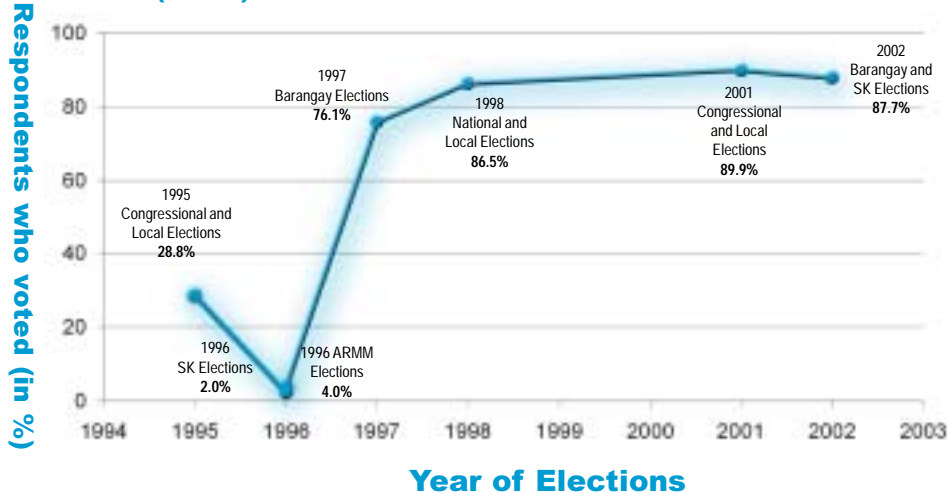
Some 24% declared that they have been registered voters since 1995. This group comprises the largest percentage of respondents in terms of the year in which they became registered voters. A smaller percentage of 6.4 include respondents who only recently became registered voters since they chose the years between 2000 and 2003 for this question.

The succeeding figure shows the number of respondents (in percentage) who voted in each of the indicated elections since 1995. These percentages, however, do not indicate that

more respondents have participated in one election than in another.

The small percentages in the 1996 *Sangguniang Kabataan* (SK) and Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) elections can be accounted for by the smaller number of respondents who are qualified in these two special elections. Only 19% of the total respondents belong to the 18-21 years age bracket and are qualified to vote in the SK elections. Also, only 7% of the respondents come from ARMM areas, i.e. Cotabato City and Sultan Kudarat Nuling.

**Figure 3.**  
**Respondents' Participation in Elections (2003)**



In the 1995 survey, most respondents or 44% were registered voters since 1972. About 29% were qualified voters since the pre-martial law period while 25 percent became voters only after the ouster of the Marcos dictatorship.

Some 4% had voted only once while less than one percent voted in all elections since 1946. More than 70 percent of the respondents voted in the 1987 congressional elections and 84% in the 1992 presidential elections.



## What Determines The Vote?

For nearly two decades after the ouster of Ferdinand Marcos, the post-dictatorship situation changed the political scenario of the Philippines. The political arena in which the typical scenario was dominated by those who belong to political clans was suddenly invaded by show business (showbiz) personalities. From local government elective positions up to the national government, celebrities on the verge of losing the shine on their stars were now entering politics as an alternative career. It was not hard for showbiz personalities to win in the elections because they were well known to the public. Even in the 1998 presidential elections the frontrunner was a former actor-turned politician, Joseph Ejercito Estrada. However, a sudden turn of events took place in 2001. Estrada was ousted because of an unsuccessful impeachment hearing that brought the people to mass and call for his resignation. During the impeachment trial, several issues were raised such as corruption, governance and morality. People were distressed with the government's wrongdoing. When Estrada was ousted and replaced by President Arroyo, people still were not satisfied with the

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government. The reforms that the people were expecting from the change of leadership did not materialize. This dissatisfaction led to another uprising on May 1 of 2001. A mass of disgruntled people marched to Malacañang Palace with the intent of overthrowing the Arroyo administration. This event was a concrete manifestation of their dismay with the administration.

This chapter will treat on how Filipinos choose their candidates and whether the aforementioned turn of events have had any effect on the electorates' considerations in making decisions.

### **How do voters choose their candidate?**

The 2003 update of the psychographics study differs from the results of the 1995 study in the part on what determines the vote. To know what determines the vote, we asked respondents the following questions: What characteristics do you look for in a politician? What influences your vote? What other factors do you consider when you vote?

A set of items were provided with each question. The respondents were to measure each of these items in a scale of 1 to 5 — [1] for *walang halaga*, [2] *wala gaanong halaga*, [3] *medyo mahalaga*, [4] *maalalaga* and [5] *for mahalagang-mahalaga*.

For the question on characteristics that voters look for in a politician five items were given namely,

1.1 *madaling lapitan*;

1.2 *malinis na pagkatao*;

- 1.3 *matulungin sa mga nangangailangan;*
- 1.4 *pagiging artista;* and
- 1.5 *pagiging sikat at popular.*

For the second question five items were also provided:

- 2.1 endorsement of family or relative;
- 2.2 endorsement of church;
- 2.3 endorsement of organization;
- 2.4 endorsement of showbiz personalities and;
- 2.5 endorsement of the political leader in the community.

To the third, the eight items were

- 3.1 *pagiging kabilang as oposisyon;*
- 3.2 *matagal nang nanunungkulan at subok na;*
- 3.3 *partidong kinabibilangan ng kandidato;*
- 3.4 *maraming poster at streamer;*
- 3.5 *mahusay magtalumpati sa pagtitipon;*
- 3.6 *nagbabahaybahay sa panahon sa kampanya;*
- 3.7 *nagtataguyod ng programa ng gobyerno para sa  
kaunlaran;*
- 3.8 *nagtataguyod ng alternatibong programa para sa  
kaunlaran.*

The 18 items serve as indicators to measure what determines the vote.

Based on the answers of the respondents, the 18 indicators were reduced into smaller sets to show common underlying factors relative to the items provided using a group of sophisticated statistical techniques called factor analysis.

Table 1. Determinants of Votes (Comparison of 1995 and 2003 Results)

## 1995 Study

### First Factor: Popularity

- Pagiging artista
- Pagiging sikat/ Popular
- Pag-endorso ng mga artista
- Maraming Poster
- Mahusay Magtalumpati sa mga pagtitipon
- Nagbabahay-bahay sa panahon ng kampanya

### Second Factor: Endorsement of traditional network and organization

- Endorsement of family or relative
- Endorsement of church
- Endorsement of organization
- Endorsement of ward leader

### Third Factor: Characteristics that can be of benefit to the voter

- Madaling lapitan
- Malinis na pagkatao
- Matulungin sa mga nangangailangan

### Fourth Factor: Party Program

- Matagal na nanunungkulan at subok na
- Nagtataguyod ng programa sa gobyerno-Philippines 2000
- Nagtataguyod ng alternatibong programa para sa kaunlaran

## 2003 Update

### First Factor: The Benefit factor (Characteristics that can be of benefit to the voter)

- Madaling lapitan
- Malinis na pagkatao
- Matulungin sa mga nangangailangan
- Nagtataguyod ng programa ng gobyerno para sa kaunlaran
- Nagtataguyod ng alternatibong programa ng gobyerno para sa kaunlaran

### Second Factor: Political Machinery

- Pagiging kabilang sa oposisyon
- Partidong kinabibilangan ng kandidato
- Maraming posters at streamers
- Mahusay magtalumpati
- Nagbabahay-bahay sa panahon ng kampanya

### Third Factor: Popularity

- Pagiging artista
- Pagendorso ng artista
- Pagiging sikat/ popular

### Fourth Factor: Endorsement of traditional network and organization

- Pagendorso ng pamilya o kamag anak
- Pag-endorso ng simbahan
- Pag-endorso ng samahan/ organisasyon
- Pagendorso ng lider

Factor analysis is based on the idea that it is possible to manipulate statistically the empirical relationships among several indicators to reveal a common unobserved factor or hypothetical construct that is related to the indicators.<sup>1</sup>

To determine the underlying voting behavior of the Filipino electorate, factor analysis was employed for the 18 variables. The following steps were undertaken:

1. Examination of the correlation matrix to determine the appropriateness of the factor model
2. Employing principal components methods to extract the significant factors
3. Rotation of the factors using the orthogonal rotation method, Varimax, for a more meaningful interpretation of the factors.
4. Naming the factors.

To determine the significant factors, all those variables with factor loadings greater than or equal to 0.5 are included in the solution. This indicates a high degree of commonality. For example in the 2003 update of the study, in factor 1 column characteristics 1, 2, and 3 and considerations 7 and 8 have a factor loading greater than 0.5 thus, they were included in the solution.

Looking at the preceding matrix, we can see that there is a difference with the preference of the voter in choosing their candidate from choosing the more popular candidate in the 1995 study to considering the benefit factor or the characteristics of the candidate that can be of benefit to the voter.

<sup>1</sup> Neuman, Lawrence W., *Social Research Method*. Allyn and Bacon. 1991.

The changes in outlook of the voters regarding elections seem to indicate hopelessness. The voters becoming cynical about Philippine politics thus, the most important factor for them in choosing the candidates are those from whom they will benefit most. The first three characteristics that fall under this factor show that the voters' first consideration in choosing are the benefits from the candidates. This characteristic is manifested in the voters' acceptance of money being offered to them during election. The respondents accept money during the election period because they think that it is only during elections they can directly benefit from the candidates (more discussion on vote buying in chapter six). This implies that voters have a limited appreciation of governance and policies that affect them, such that good governance is not a major factor to consider in their decision-making.

The findings of the survey are consistent with the result of the key informant (KI) interviews. According to the key informants, candidates win the elections mainly because of the political machinery, platform, popularity and public image.

Most of the key informants believe that political machinery and campaign funds are important factors that contribute to winning. The machinery contributes to the candidates' reach of influence particularly at the local level, while campaign funds oil the machinery to run efficiently.

The key informants felt that the intelligent voters' basis of selecting a candidate is their platform and program of government. For the intelligent voter it is important because it is based on consultations and identification of the problems of the community that should be addressed.



## Election Laws

# 5

There are many laws pertaining to elections in the Philippines and the omnibus election code governs all the elections in our country. However, despite the presence of these laws there are still fraudulent activities and failures that occur during elections.

Although the campaign period has not yet started, posters of aspiring politicians are already posted in public places. In addition, voters are not informed properly about new laws on election. For example, the party list system has been a law since 1994 and was first implemented in 1998, but at present it is still not clear to people what the party list is and what it is all about.

This chapter discusses the survey respondents' knowledge and awareness of the rules and laws governing the electoral process. It is divided into four (4) parts namely:

1. General Knowledge of Election Laws and the Omnibus Election Code;

2. Level of Awareness of Specific Provisions of the Omnibus Election Code;
3. Extent of Information on Changes Made or Initiated by Congress in the Law;
4. Awareness of Entities Conducting Voter's Education Campaigns

Certain replies of the respondents are correlated to some profile variables. Furthermore, a correlation between the responses under the above-enumerated categories is likewise presented to validate certain data tendencies that will be presented later.

### General Knowledge of Election Laws

This section refers to the general knowledge of the survey respondents about the omnibus election code. In this part of the survey, they were asked if they had knowledge of the election laws and what was the extent of their knowledge of the election code.

**Table 2.**  
**Respondents'**  
**Knowledge of**  
**Election Laws**

	Do you know of any Election Laws?	
	YES	NO
<b>1995 Study</b>	65.30	30.70
<b>2003 Update</b>	50.85	47.06

Results of the 2003 survey update are different from the results of the 1995 study. In the 2003 update, most survey respondents knew absolutely nothing about the omnibus election code while in 1995, a majority of the

survey respondents profess some knowledge of the election laws.

A subsequent question was asked to measure the extent of knowledge the respondents have of the Omnibus Election Code (OEC). The following are the results of the 1995 study and its update in 2003:

**Table 3.**  
**Respondents’**  
**Knowledge of**  
**OEC (%)**

	<b>1995 Study</b>	<b>2003 Update</b>
<b>How much of the OEC do you know?</b>		
No answer	3.7	2.7
I know absolutely nothing of OEC	34.9	54.7
I know a little	42.1	28.7
Average knowledge of election laws	17.8	11.3
Substantial knowledge of OEC	0.6	1.7
Very knowledgeable of OEC	0.9	0.9

As can be seen from the above, in the 1995 study 34.9 percent of the respondents had no knowledge of the OEC, 59.9 percent profess little/average knowledge, while 1.5 percent signified a high degree of knowledge of the OEC. There is a difference in the result of the 2003 survey, most of the survey respondents or 54.74 percent knew absolutely nothing about the Omnibus Election Code, while 39.98 of the survey respondents had little/ average knowledge of the OEC.

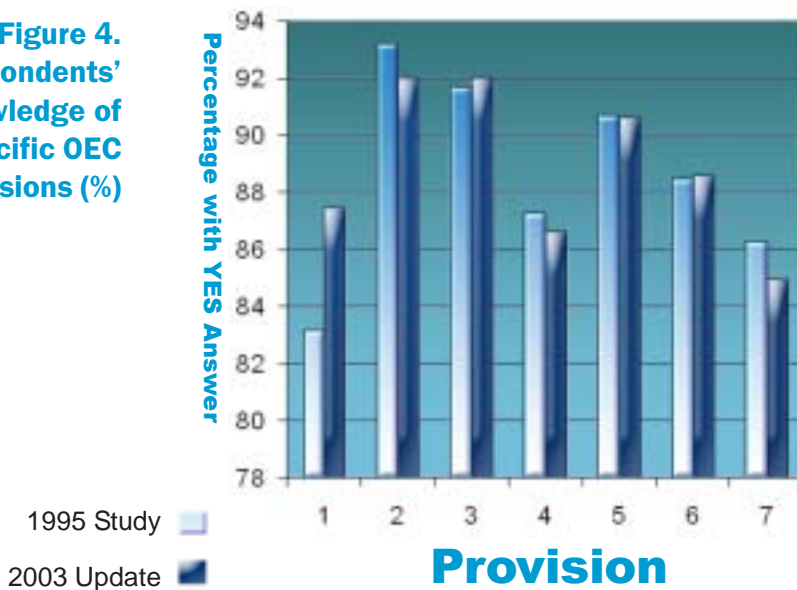
### **Level of Awareness on Specific Provisions**

Let us view specific provisions of the OEC and what the respondents said. There were seven (7) specific

provisions, the awareness of which were asked from the respondent. These are as follows:

- **Provision 1**, on the prohibition of posting campaign posters outside of areas not designated by COMELEC as common poster areas;
- **Provision 2**, on the prohibition to vote more than once;
- **Provision 3**, on the prohibition to vote in place of others;
- **Provision 4**, on the prohibition to accept payments in exchange for votes;
- **Provision 5**, on the prohibition to use terrorism, violence and other coercive acts to obtain votes;
- **Provision 6**, on the prohibition to bribe and coerce election officials; and,

**Figure 4.**  
Respondents'  
Knowledge of  
Specific OEC  
Provisions (%)



- **Provision 7**, on the prohibition for military and police personnel to enter and stay inside precincts and polling centers, except to vote.

A matrix is presented below to show the extent of awareness the respondents had on specific provisions.

As can be gleaned from the above, the 1995 study shows an average of 88.7 percent of the respondents were aware of the existence of the specific provisions above-enumerated. The result of the 2003 survey ranks almost the same 88.90 percent when it comes to awareness of the existence of specific provisions.

#### Extent of Information in Changes of the Law

	YES	NO
<b>1995 Study</b>	53.5	38.5
<b>2003 Update</b>	56.63	33.0

**Table 4. Respondents' Knowledge of Changes Done in Election Laws (%)**

Insofar as changes in election laws initiated or made by Congress from 1987 up to the present, the results of the 1995 study and the 2003 update of the study showed that a majority of the respondents were not informed and a lesser number know of the changes.

In the 1995 study, seven (7) legislative proposals, some of which eventually became laws, were taken up by Congress and were used in the Study to gauge the extent of information that reached the respondents. These seven

legislative proposals were also used in the 2003 update but with the addition of new electoral laws and bills. The respondents were asked to choose three (3) electoral laws or bills of which they are most informed, from the following choices:

- Election of Sectoral Representatives to Local Legislative Councils;
- Anti-Dynasty Bill;
- Prohibition of Undue Ecclesiastical Influence;
- Party-List System of Voting;
- Computerization of Lists of Voters and Computerized Voting;
- Anti-Turncoatism Prohibition; and,
- Overseas Absentee-Voting.

Additional 3 electoral laws or bills:

- Strengthening the political system and political parties
- Amendments in the Organic Act for Muslims in Mindanao
- Other electoral laws and bills

In the 1995 Study the three bills/laws in which the survey respondents were most familiar were:

1. Election of Sectoral Representatives to Local Legislative Councils;
2. Anti Dynasty Bill; and
3. Prohibition of Undue Ecclesiastical Influence

While in the 2003 update of the study the survey respondents were more familiar with the following bills/laws:

1. Computerization of Lists of Voters and Computerized Voting;
2. Party List System of Voting
3. Overseas Absentee Voting.

	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>1995 Study</b>	38.6	59.0
<b>2003 Update</b>	31.4	63.9

**Table 5.**  
**Respondents’**  
**Awareness of**  
**Voter’s Education**  
**Campaigns (%)**

### **Awareness of the Voter’s Education Campaign**

The respondents were asked about their awareness of entities, organizations, government agencies, institutions, conducting voter’s education and information campaigns. Both the 1995 study and the 2003 update show that only a few were aware of the voter’s education being conducted by different organizations.





## Election Procedures

# 6

This chapter views the conduct of the four (4) phases of the electoral process: registration day, campaign phase, election day, and the counting phase, from the perspective of the respondents. It is basically divided into three (3) parts:

- Evaluation of respondents about the electoral process;
- Fraudulent practices committed during the conduct of elections; and
- Observed responses of the COMELEC to the commission of fraudulent practices.

## Evaluation of the Election Process

The respondents were asked to describe their precinct and other precincts during each election phase. The following matrices present these assessments.

**Table 6.**  
**Respondents'**  
**Description of**  
**Election Phases**  
**(1995)**

The 1995 results generated the following percentages.

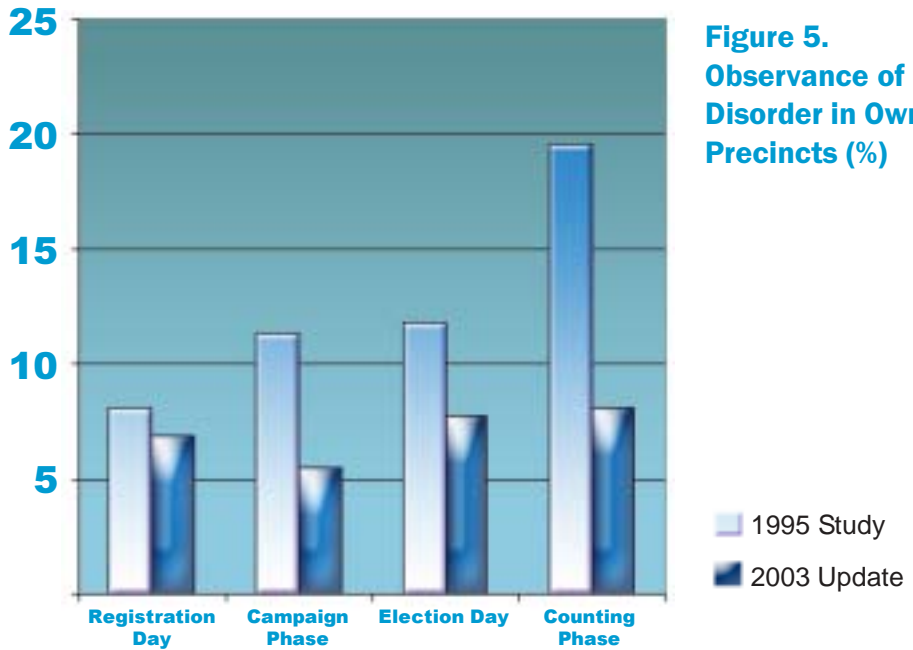
	Very Smooth and Orderly	Rather Orderly	Average	Not Orderly/ Rather Disorganized	Very Disorderly	No Answer
<b>Registration Day</b>	63.6	17.6	8.8	6.9	1.2	1.9
<b>Election Day</b>	52.1	22.4	11.3	10	1.8	2.4
<b>Counting Phase</b>	36	17.5	11.5	16	3.6	15.3
<b>Campaign Phase</b>	45.5	22.2	16.9	8.5	2.8	4.2

**Table 7.**  
**Respondents'**  
**Description of**  
**Election Phases**  
**(2003)**

While the 2003 study had this breakdown.

	Very Smooth and Orderly	Rather Orderly	Average	Not Orderly/ Rather Disorganized	Very Disorderly	No Answer
<b>Registration Day</b>	39.3	34.1	14.8	5.9	1.0	3.2
<b>Election Day</b>	30.8	32.7	18.5	6.4	1.4	8.6
<b>Counting Phase</b>	28.7	32.6	16.8	7.2	0.9	15.3
<b>Campaign Phase</b>	32.9	32.8	20.7	4.9	0.6	4.2

With some increase and decrease in percentages from the 1995 to the 2003 results, it could be maintained that the electorate, through the respondents, generally view



**Figure 5.**  
**Observance of**  
**Disorder in Own**  
**Precincts (%)**

orderly conduct of the elections from registration to the counting periods.

The biggest percentage of respondents who observed disorder said that it occurred during the counting phase.

Respondents were asked how they perceive the conduct of the election phases in other precincts. The respondents have relatively little knowledge of the conduct of elections and the commission of fraud in precincts other than theirs. This can be gleaned from the large number of respondents who readily answered “I do not know”.

## **Fraudulent Practices**

As mentioned, the study will also look into the fraudulent practices and irregularities observed during the various phases of elections in the Philippines.

Respondents were asked to describe the conduct of various election phases, by recognizing or observing any irregularity, or cheating that occurred in a particular election phase.

Results from the 1995 and 2003 survey manifest these figures.

It appears that in the 2003 study, the voters have less knowledge about commission of fraud during the various election phases than in the previous study. It does not follow,

**Table 8.**  
**Knowledge/  
Observance of  
Fraud in Own  
Precinct (1995)**

	<b>There was Fraud Committed</b>	<b>There was No Fraud Committed</b>	<b>I Don't Know</b>	<b>No Answer</b>
<b>Registration Day</b>	12.4	61.1	21.5	5.0
<b>Election Day</b>	19.8	58.6	17.0	4.6
<b>Counting Phase</b>	20.9	57.4	16.8	4.9
<b>Campaign Phase</b>	13.2	70.1	12.1	4.6

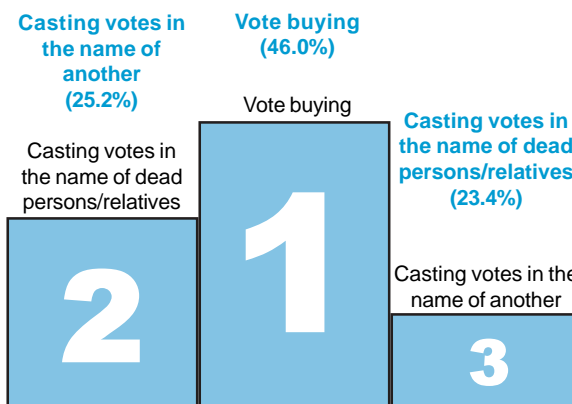
**Table 9.**  
**Knowledge/  
Observance of  
Fraud in Own  
Precinct (2003)**

	<b>There was Fraud Committed</b>	<b>There was No Fraud Committed</b>	<b>I Don't Know</b>	<b>No Answer</b>
<b>Registration Day</b>	8.77	57.93	31.11	2.19
<b>Election Day</b>	9.47	64.01	24.63	3.79
<b>Counting Phase</b>	12.86	60.01	24.77	2.39
<b>Campaign Phase</b>	14.46	53.34	30.01	2.19

however, that there actually was less fraud committed in the more recent elections. We might also note that those who responded, “I do not know” increased in the more recent study.

More specifically, the respondents were asked what election fraud or irregularity occurred during election day and during the counting phase. A set of choices was provided in the questionnaire, and the respondents were asked to tick them as they have observed or as they have knowledge of these irregularities.

The top three responses in the two election phases which were perceived to have the most fraud committed compared to other phases were noted.



**Figure 6.**  
**Top 3 Fraud**  
**Committed during**  
**Election Day**

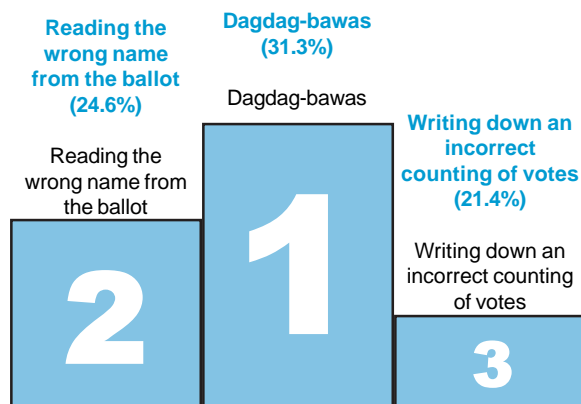
2003 Update

1995 Study

**Figure 7.**  
**Top 3 Fraud**  
**Committed during**  
**Counting Phase**

2003 Update

1995 Study



Insights gathered from the key informant interviews lend some validity to this finding. Most respondents from the interviews considered vote buying to be the most widely practiced election fraud or form of election fraud. The informants also cite various forms of cheating. These, however, can be generalized more from elections (and fraudulent activities) at the local level. The following were the most frequent answers of the informants on the question of what cheating practices were observed during election period: vote-buying; vote padding and *pananakot* or harassment committed against the voters and the members of the Board of Election Inspectors (BEI).

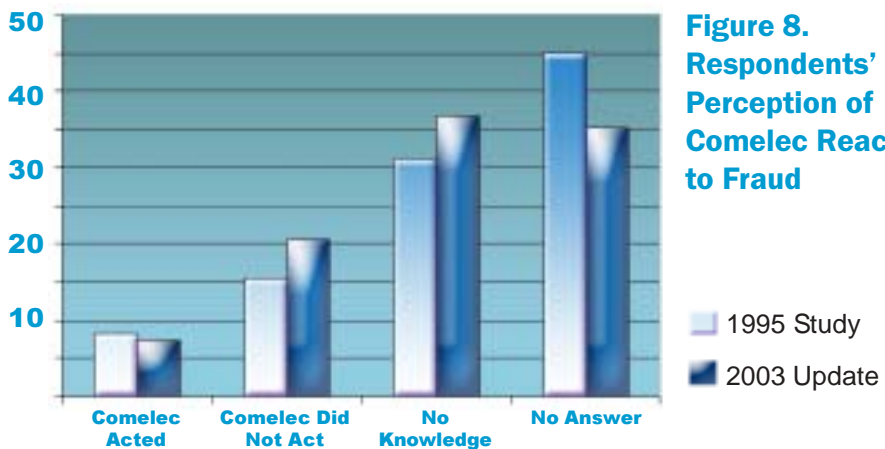
### COMELEC Response to Fraud

Respondents were also asked if they were aware of any action or response from the Commission on Elections or any of its representatives or officials to the fraud or irregularity committed during elections.

A meager 7% said there were efforts by Comelec in response to the fraud committed while 21% know of no efforts by the Comelec. This would indicate that there were more respondents who observed Comelec doing nothing to address the commission of fraud.

It is also worthy to note that some 72% were either not aware of any Comelec's response to fraud or did not answer the question. This may then account for the finding that the electorate is not aware of or just could care less if the Comelec does its job of monitoring and punishing those who commit election fraud and offenses.

The same trend can be observed in the 1995 study.



**Figure 8.**  
Respondents'  
Perception of  
Comelec Reaction  
to Fraud





# How The Electorate Views Common Election Practices And Election Fraud In Philippine Elections

# 7

## Views of Common Election (Mal)practices

The study identified eight common occurrences during elections all of which are election offenses indicated in the Omnibus Election Code:

- Vote buying
- Voting in another person's name/"Flying voters"
- Threatening voters
- Bribing local Comelec personnel
- Ballot-snatching
- Cheating during the counting of votes
- Use of coercion and terrorism during the voting process
- Election-related or politically-motivated killing

The last item was an addition from the original seven items given in the 1995 study.

Using these premises, respondents were asked what their views were of such election occurrences. In expressing their opinion, they were given four definite views to choose from. Respondents were also encouraged to give an open view, and here labeled as a fifth choice.

- **VIEW1** — It has become common practice.
- **VIEW2** — Nothing can be done about it anymore.
- **VIEW3** — There is nothing wrong with it.
- **VIEW4** — It should not be tolerated.
- **VIEW5** — Other views.

All respondents were asked to choose as many responses so as to fully express their views. The recent study resulted in the following percentages in responses.

**Table 10.**  
**Views on Common**  
**Election Practices**  
**(2003)**

	<b>Common Practice</b>	<b>Nothing Can Be Done</b>	<b>Nothing Wrong</b>	<b>Should Not Be Tolerated</b>	<b>Other Views</b>
<b>Vote buying</b>	40.2	14.9	1.9	48.4	2.5
<b>Flying Voter</b>	18.2	6.0	0.5	73.8	0.9
<b>Threatening of voters</b>	11.0	5.3	1.2	80.4	0.8
<b>Bribing Local Comelec</b>	7.0	3.8	8.6	66.7	0.7
<b>Ballot-Snatching</b>	6.6	4.7	0.5	85.0	1.8
<b>Cheating During Counting</b>	16.2	4.4	0.4	76.2	1.7
<b>Coercion/Terrorism</b>	7.0	4.1	0.8	85.8	1.2
<b>Election-Related Killing</b>	5.7	5.2	0.4	85.3	1.7

The fourth view/option that “the election occurrence should not be tolerated” garnered the highest percentages. Hence, a majority of the respondents have the general view that election (mal)practices should not be tolerated.

Of the election practices cited, vote-buying is especially noteworthy in that although a big percentage or 48% said that it should not be tolerated, a relatively big percentage (40%) of the respondents also recognized that vote buying has become a common practice or “*nakagawian na*” and some 15% said that nothing can be done about it anymore or “*wala nang magagawa*”. These findings will be further validated in the discussion of attitude of the electorate on election fraud and reasons for such attitudes.

Meanwhile, the 1995 survey obtained these results. In the table below, we can see that most respondents (48%) believe that vote buying has indeed become a common practice in Philippine elections. For them, vote buying has become the most common practice that occurs during elections.

Also, a significant proportion (42%) said that vote buying must not be allowed at all. Cheating during counting of votes and the use of flying voters were also significantly viewed as common practices in elections.

**Table 11.**  
**Views on**  
**Common Election**  
**Practices (1995)**

	No Answer	Common Practice	Nothing Can Be Done	Nothing Wrong	Should Not Be Tolerated	Other Views By Respondents
<b>Vote Buying</b>	2.0	48.5	6.0	1.0	42.5	0.1
<b>Flying Voter</b>	3.3	22.2	4.5	0.4	69.6	0.2
<b>Threatening Voter</b>	4.6	16.0	5.1	0.2	73.4	0.7
<b>Bribing Local Comelec</b>	5.8	19.2	4.4	3.8	66.4	0.5
<b>Ballot-Snatching</b>	3.3	16.9	4.5	0.3	75.0	0.1
<b>Cheating In Counting</b>	3.4	26.2	4.0	0.3	66.0	0.2
<b>Coercion/Terrorism</b>	4.6	15.6	4.1	0.3	75.1	0.3

## Attitudes and Perception on Election Fraud

The next portion of this chapter focuses on how voters view fraud - election fraud, in general, and vote buying, in particular – it being the most prevalent form of election fraud. For this section, the respondents were asked these major questions:

- **Must a candidate give/dole out money during elections? Why?**
- **Must a voter accept money (or some other thing) in exchange of votes? Why or Why not?**
- **Why is vote-buying accepted as a practice in Philippine elections?**
- **Why do people accept fraud as a reality in Philippine elections?**

### **Must a candidate give/dole out money during elections? Why?**

When asked if it is imperative for candidates or political parties to give money in exchange of votes, a big majority or 71% of the respondents said it is NOT imperative to give money during elections, while 27% said candidates should give money to voters. Only 1% did not answer.

Age, region of origin, and gender show significant influence in the respondents' answers to this question.

Males are more likely than females to answer in the affirmative. While, respondents from the Visayas are more likely to say yes than those who are from other regions of the country.

In general, older people are more likely to answer in the affirmative. Of those who said it is imperative for candidates to dole out money during elections, the biggest percentage or 18% come from the 50-59 age bracket.

The younger age groups (18-24, 25-29, and 30-34) said candidates need not give out money or some other thing to win elections while the older age brackets (35-60 up) said it is imperative.

When asked why, 79% gave varied reasons while 21% did not. Reasons cited by those who answered yes, include: money is a way to win elections; “uso” or that it is the growing trend; and there are voters who sacrifice their choice and principle in exchange for their votes.

Meanwhile those who answered NO reasoned that people have the right to choose and that money only further mars the conduct of elections.

**Must a voter accept money (or some other thing) in exchange of votes? Why or Why not?**

Conversely, on the question whether voters should accept money in exchange for their votes, older people were more likely to answer in the affirmative than younger people. Respondents from the younger age groups (18-24, 25-29, 30-34 and 35-39) said that voters should not accept money while those from older age brackets said it was all right to accept money during elections in exchange for their votes.

Most respondents in all age brackets said NO when asked if voters should accept money in exchange for their votes. But the biggest percentage or 20% of those who said NO came from the 35-39 age bracket.

Educational attainment and region of origin were other variables which significantly affected the views of the respondents whether voters should accept money in exchange for votes.

The lower the educational attainment the more respondents were likely to answer that it was okay for voters to accept money in exchange for votes, while respondents from the Visayas more than other regions were likely to share the same position.

Actually, among all respondents, a majority 83% answered in the negative while only 13% viewed it okay for voters to accept money or some other thing in exchange for votes.

In the 1995 study, almost everyone (89%) responded in the negative as well. This attitude is further confirmed when we correlated the responses to this particular question with the responses to whether it necessary for a candidate to give out money or anything just to win in elections.

Some 75% of the respondents who said that a voter must NOT accept money or anything given as a bribe, said earlier that a candidate must not dole out money or anything just to win elections. Ninety five percent of the respondents who rejected the idea of candidates giving

out money also rejected the idea of voters accepting money or anything just to vote for a candidate.

However, despite the conviction of most respondents that candidates should not give out money in exchange for votes, there are instances where some of these same respondents experience being bribed and some have even accepted the bribe.

### **Have You Been Bribed?**

On the side, the respondents were asked if they had experienced being bribed or offered money or some other thing in exchange of votes. Of the total number of respondents, 48% said they had experienced being given money in exchange for their votes while 36% actually accepted the money.

The results further show that males are more likely to get offers than females and respondents from the Visayas region are more likely to be bribed than people from Luzon, Mindanao or National Capital Region (NCR). Respondents from the older age bracket are also more likely to get offers more than those in the younger brackets.

In terms of religion, respondents who are in Islam are the least likely to be bribed.

### Did You Accept The Bribe/Offer?

On the question whether the respondents were given a bribe and accepted the money or some other form of bribe, gender, educational attainment, religious affiliation and region of origin are found to have had significant influence on the answers.

Males are more likely to accept the bribe and the lower educational attainment the higher the possibility of accepting the bribe. Practitioners of Islam are least likely to accept the offer of a bribe while the Iglesia ni Kristo members are more likely to accept the bribe.

Just as people from the Visayas are found to have more offers, so are they more likely to accept the offered money/ bribe than not. Also, they are more likely to accept the offer than people from other parts of the country. This may also account for Visayas respondents being more vocal about fraud than those from other regions.

### Why Did You Accept The Bribe?

There were several reasons indicated by the respondents why they accepted the offer or the money during elections.

These responses were consolidated into several response categories.

Some 11% answered "*kasi binigay/nakasanayan na*".

Twenty-four percent (24%) of the respondents answered that they derive some benefit from accepting.

There are also respondents (2%) who indicated that they were forced (*“pinilit”*) to accept the money or things in exchange for their votes.

Age, gender, and region of origin tell us a pattern of responses. Older people are more likely to get bribed than younger ones and males are more likely to get bribed than the female respondents.

Respondents in the older age bracket are more likely to accept the bribe than the younger ones. Perhaps this may account for the idealism the youth still have and the cynicism shared by the older and more experienced voters.

### **Why do people accept fraud as a reality in Philippine elections?**

The survey also generated perceptions on why people accept/tolerate fraud as a reality in Philippine elections.

When asked this general question, more response categories were generated but were seen to be almost identical to those in the 1995 study.

The succeeding table shows the percentage distribution of reasons given by the respondents. Powerlessness (over fraud or the situation) topped the responses in both the 1995 and the 2003 studies. This factor is usually qualified by saying *“wala nang magawa”* or nothing can be done with the fraud that occurs. This factor, however, pertains to the voters/respondents themselves, that is to say they are helpless or powerless against fraud.

1995 STUDY		2003 UPDATE	
Reasons	%	Reasons	%
<b>Powerlessness</b>	37.4	<b>Powerlessness</b>	25.1
<b>Beneficial</b>	22.5	<b>Fact of Life</b>	13.6
<b>Fact of Life</b>	11.5	<b>People's lives</b>	
<b>Effective means to</b>		<b>remain miserable</b>	12.1
<b>win in elections</b>	7.6	<b>Beneficial</b>	11.1
<b>People's lives</b>		<b>Effective means to</b>	
<b>remain miserable</b>	6.7	<b>win in elections</b>	7.1
<b>Do not care why</b>	5.0	<b>Out of Fear</b>	5.7
<b>Do not know why/NA</b>	5.5	<b>Do not know/NA</b>	4.6
<b>Nothing can stop it</b>	3.6	<b>Nothing can stop it</b>	4.2
<b>No Answer</b>	2.1	<b>No Answer</b>	16.0

**Table 12.**  
**Reasons for**  
**Accepting Fraud**  
**as a Reality in**  
**Philippine**  
**Elections**

Closely linked to this reason are two other categories: a “fact of life” and “nothing/no one can stop it”. Accepting fraud as a fact of electoral life is qualified by varied answers such as *“nakagawian na/sanay na”* or used to it and fraud considered as embedded in the political and electoral system. Meanwhile, the category “nothing can stop it” is related with the feeling or perception that no government authority/entity, even those tasked to oversee to the conduct of elections as COMELEC, can effectively limit fraud during elections. With answers such as “there is no person to report the incident to”, “no evidence” and “no response from authority” all account for the belief that no one has ever been convicted or punished in committing an election fraud. Hence, when we look back at the view of the respondents on Comelec response to fraud, we already noted that more than half of the respondents were unaware of any effort.

Another major reason is poverty, as reflected in answers such as “poverty/ignorance of the law” and “people’s miserable lives”. For one, people tend to accept fraud for socio-economic reasons. Related with this is the fact that people gain direct, immediate, and concrete benefits from the fraud, particularly from vote buying.

That voters get benefits from the act of cheating or vote-buying in elections is another frequent answer to the question. Again this factor is related to the socio-economic situation of the electorate. Responses under this category are: “because of money”; “benefit received”, “self-interest”, “to help relatives”, “favors”, “practicality” and “received as a bribe”.

Vote buying and accepting money or in kind during election season is also seen as an effective way for the politicians to win the elections. This is further qualified in responses such as: greed of politicians for power; politicians start it (fraud).

One response category identified in the 2003 study which was not identified in the earlier study was “out of fear”. Some 6% of the respondents attributed accepting money or a bribe out of fear of the candidates or their campaign leaders.

The figures generated from the present study are influenced by the age level of the respondents. The biggest percentage of respondents who see that voters are “powerless against fraud” come from the 25-29 age bracket. The same age bracket also recorded the biggest

percentage of respondents who feel that fraud is tolerated because “people’s lives remain miserable”.

The youngest age bracket (18-24) reasoned that fraudulent activities are “beneficial” and are already “a fact of life”.

Of the respondents who viewed the acceptance of fraud in Philippine elections, the biggest portion come from the 30-34 age bracket.

Those who belong in the older bracket (50-59) somehow view fraud as a reality in Philippine elections because of “fear” and that “nothing can stop” such a practice.

The results of the 1995 study substantiated that it is the income level of respondents that affects the pattern of responses. The reasons given as to why people accept fraud depended on what income bracket they belong.

Majority (58%) of those who reasoned that people are “powerless” were earning a monthly income of P5,000 and less. While they disapprove of fraud, they tend to dread those in power who commit it.

Of those who believe that “no authority can stop” fraud, a significant proportion (36%) were earning more than P5,000 up to P10,000 a month. They also comprised 32% of the total respondents who said people “do not care why” fraud is committed. All that matters for them is to vote.

Those whose monthly earnings are more than P10,000 a month, though comprising only 2% of the total respondents, made up 4% of those who see fraud as “a fact of life”. More of those who belong to this income bracket believe that fraud has already been embedded in the system. They see in the system that fraud is “nakagawian na”.

Interestingly, those earning P5,000 and less tend to believe that “no authority can stop” fraud. Though they comprised the majority of the total respondents, they made up only 49%, below their over-all proportion, of those who believe that no authority can put a stop to fraud.





## Various Views Of Filipino Voters On Electoral Reforms



At the end of the Survey, respondents were asked what electoral reforms they think are necessary to make the electoral system of the Philippines better. Different views were given, there were even some who shared their cynicism about the electoral situation and think that there is no chance for the electoral situation to improve. The study was able to formulate several consolidated views, ranging from the general to the particular, from the Comelec to the electorate themselves, from election laws and procedures of the candidates.

Gathering their views, it was found that most respondents think that the electoral situation will improve if fraudulent activities can be avoided. Most of the survey respondents see vote buying and *dagdag bawas* as the top two activities that should be avoided.

Moreover, they suggest that the government should strictly implement the law to avoid the fraudulent activities

during elections. They suggest further that those who will be caught cheating should be apprehended.

Aside from those mentioned above, the following are the views of the electorate regarding electoral reform:

1. Improvement in the Comelec's capacity to administer the whole electoral process. This includes providing Comelec with access to resources to facilitate speedy distribution of electoral paraphernalia, reshuffling Comelec officials down to the barangays and precincts, increasing the budget of Comelec to cover all expenditures necessary to facilitate efficient discharge of its functions. Teachers should now be relieved of their roles as Comelec officials during elections.
2. Launch a comprehensive information and educational campaign aimed at enlightening the electorate on the merits and demerits of certain election practices, giving them enough knowledge of election laws and regulations, and more importantly, serving as a stepping stone towards moral regeneration of both the electorate and the candidates. The tri-media must be utilized to facilitate effective and widespread dissemination.
3. To simply and strictly implement existing laws and regulations governing Philippine elections. The government is further tasked to lead in this particular endeavor.
4. Change and overhaul the whole electoral system. What is needed is a comprehensive electoral reform that will be initiated from above down to the lowest level of the electoral process.

5. Make improvements in the conduct of voter's registration and the manner of casting votes. Cheating and vote buying must be prevented.
6. A loser must accept the results of the election conducted, as a sportsman does.
7. There is nothing that can be done to improve the electoral system. Fraud will always prevail. There is no hope of improving the conduct of elections in the country.
8. Be vigilant, especially in guarding the sanctity of the ballot. The people must work together and must contribute to the effort at improving the conduct of elections. The people should not accept money or anything offered by candidates. It is the people, the electorate that must first show signs of reforming their attitudes and behavior in elections.
9. Dismantle private armed groups.
10. Vote for those who will honestly serve the people.
11. Revolution is the only solution.
12. Let the private sector run the conduct of elections in our country. Private non-government associations must band together to initiate meaningful reforms in the electoral system.
13. Excessive spending during campaigns must not be allowed.
14. The rich should give money to the needy. Reduce the number of elective positions. Elections must be held more frequently.
15. Apprehend those who violate the election laws.
16. Vote wisely. Do not vote for corrupt candidates.
17. Change the government leadership.
18. Total reform in the government.





## The Filipino Voter In The 2004 Elections

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Generally, the study indicates a deepening of voter consciousness of their sovereign power in choosing political leaders through the exercise of their right of suffrage and of the serious consequences of their vote. At the same time, it exposes the growing cynicism and the highly personalistic framework of the Filipino voter.

The downgrading of popularity—though still a significant factor in voter's choices—reflects this deepening. The benefit factor however, that replaced it shows a utilitarian approach to elections. Implied in this approach for the poor Filipino voter is a view of candidates and eventual victors as direct benefactors in the poor's ceaseless struggle to get out of the poverty quicksand. Solutions to pervasive poverty remain the one single most important platform/program that most voters ask from candidates.

It is in this sense that one can evaluate the impact of the momentous events of 2001 on the psyche of the Filipino

electorate. It showed the deep disillusionment with traditional politics.

This is more apparent in the seeming cynicism among adults, men, those coming from lower classes, and those who do not have a high educational attainment. There is also a significant geographical difference—there are more people coming from the Visayas who tend to be cynical about the system than those from other regions. Religion-wise, Iglesia ni Kristo voters tend to be more cynical than those from other religions.

On the other hand, the young, the women, and middle classes, and higher educational attainment showed a lower level of disillusionment and persistence of hope for reforms in the electoral and political system.

Applied to electoral fraud, the cynicism led to acceptance of money for votes by around 20 percent of Filipino voters. However, an overwhelming number (83 percent in 2003 and 89 percent in 1995) assert that there should be no fraud. Though a significant number accept bribes for their votes, there is a broad constituency for honest and clean elections.

Powerlessness or the perception of powerlessness represents the single most influential factor in the relatively passive acceptance of Filipino voters of electoral fraud. Conversely, it implies that organizing and mobilization—and the confidence these bring—can potentially and actually bring about reforms in the political and electoral system.

The upgrading of the factor of political machinery as second in importance after the benefit factor and the

relegation to fourth place of endorsement by traditional organizations and networks also implies the heightening of voter independence from traditional feudal ties. They embody the assertion of voter choice (albeit self-serving) and the rising importance of the mass media and political machinery in influencing Filipino voters.

The study shows that there is still a long way to go towards the maturation of citizen-voters within the context of Philippine democracy. The concept of the community, the nation, and country are not well understood as a framework for their electoral choices. It does show however, the certain development of voter consciousness towards the appreciation of their sovereign powers.

Citizen-voter education and electoral reform advocacy have their work cut out for them. The study affirms both the necessity and the opportunity for a thoroughgoing political and electoral reform advocacy. Unfortunately, the critical 2004 elections will not benefit much yet from reform measures. The measures remain a call to be answered in the years to come.

