Post-Election Analysis of Pre-Election Polls

by

Ana Maria. L. Tabunda and Shiela A. Billones

For additional information, please contact:

Author’s name: Dr. Ana Maria. L. Tabunda
Designation: Professor and Executive Director
Affiliation: U.P School of Statistics and Pulse Asia, Inc.
Address: Room 312, Philippine Social Science Center Bldg.
Commonwealth Ave. Diliman, Quezon City
Telephone: 927-0028
E-mail: altabunda@yahoo.com

Co-author’s name: Shiela A. Billones
Designation: Junior Statistics Assistant
Affiliation: Pulse Asia, Inc.
Address: Room 312, Philippine Social Science Center Bldg.
Commonwealth Ave. Diliman, Quezon City
Telephone: 927-0028
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ABSTRACT

The 2007 senatorial elections had its share of surprising turns and yielded lessons for future elections. This paper seeks to cover a few of these by taking a second look at Pulse Asia's pre-election polls and published results of the 2007 exit poll. The paper uses multivariate techniques as well as a simple plot to gain more insights or provide stronger quantitative support for certain conclusions.

Introduction

This paper takes a second look at data obtained from the 2007 national pre-election surveys conducted by Pulse Asia, Inc. and some of the published results of the 2007 exit poll. The objectives of the paper are to mine more information from the data that would lead to a better understanding of the Filipino voter and of what transpired in the 2007 elections, as well as to record a few lessons learned from the last election. The paper focuses only on the senatorial election; the election of party list groups deserves a separate study.

Many of the ideas for the analyses presented in this paper occurred during the campaign, suggested by questions posed by subscribers and members of media. The pace of the campaign period, however, often left little time even for the usual survey-weighted regressions, much less for other multivariate applications that subscribers will still need to be oriented on. Even the interpretation of perceptual maps, which are used often enough in market research, has to be explained to candidates and takes getting used to. In addition, candidates and their campaign teams understandably focus only on information that is immediately relevant to the candidate’s prospects of winning or attaining the candidate’s goal (e.g., landing in the “statistically safe” top seven or top eight). A critical, core set of cross-tabulation tables usually serves the purpose. Nevertheless, more careful analyses can provide valuable insights into voter behavior even if these are not immediately relevant or crucial to most of the candidates in the heat of a campaign.

2 Professor, U.P. School of Statistics and Executive Director, Pulse Asia, Inc.
3 Junior statistics assistant, Pulse Asia, Inc.
Despite its title, this paper will not attempt to compare the results of the Pulse Asia pre-election surveys, not even those of the last survey which was conducted on April 21 to 25, to the official election results of the Commission on Elections (COMELEC). Even if COMELEC tallies can be regarded as error-free, election survey results have a comparatively shorter shelf-life than other survey results. The reason for this is that political candidates typically strive to change the situation, to effect more favorable election outcomes for themselves even in the last few days of the campaign period. Thus pre-election surveys conducted weeks in advance of election day cannot fully anticipate the impact of such efforts of various candidates.

Comparison of 2007 pre-election poll results with that of COMELEC is rendered even more difficult by the fact that the figures on total number of registered voters and total number of voters who actually voted that COMELEC can provide are incorrect. There is no data on number of registered voters or voters who actually voted for several municipalities, cities and districts for the Overseas Absentee Voters, National Capital Region, Cordillera Autonomous Region, and Caraga (COMELEC, Senatorial Canvass Report No. 31). Thus the recorded figures on total number of voters who actually voted in NCR and Region 2 are exceeded by the number of votes obtained by the leading candidate and three leading candidates in these areas, respectively. In addition, even a cursory examination of the figure for Region 3 readily indicates that the total number of registered voters who actually voted in the region is underreported. Thus, any postmortem analysis of the 2007 senatorial election will require careful estimation of the total number of registered voters who actually voted in several regions, more careful than that used in Virola (2007) to estimate the total number of voters who actually voted in the country. Such estimation can itself be the subject of another paper.

Party switching has its perils, for some

As in past elections, the 2007 elections saw the blurring of “party lines”, or more accurately, switches in political affiliation, both at the national and the local level. Those which received more attention from the media are the following. Sen. Manuel Villar, who as Speaker of the House of Representatives in 2000 approved the impeachment resolution against former president Joseph Estrada, ran as a guest candidate in the opposition ticket endorsed by the former president. Sen. Edgardo Angara and former senators Vicente “Tito” Sotto and Teresa “Tessie” Aquino-Oreta, who were closely associated with former president Estrada, ran under the administration coalition.
Filipino voters are accustomed to political party switching, political coalitions and makeshift political parties that fade as soon as the election is over. After all, the “shifting character of membership and leadership and the absence of ideological or programmatic differences between parties” are, according to Rocamora (2003), two of the defining characteristics of Philippine political parties. Thus, only about 40% of Filipino voters say they will surely not vote for candidates who switch parties (Table 1). And then, even among this group of voters, there are those who actually include in the list of candidates that they intend to vote for, one or more candidates who have switched parties or affiliations, an indication that few voters remember the parties of the candidates.

Table 1
POSSIBILITY OF VOTING FOR CANDIDATES WHO SWITCH PARTIES
April 21 - 25, 2007 / Philippines
(In Percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possibility of voting for candidates who switch parties</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>CLASS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BALANCE LUZON</td>
<td>VISAYAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>NCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surely vote for</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably vote for</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably not vote for</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surely not vote for</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will have no effect</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q8. Buboto ba ninyo ang mga kandidatong palipat-lipat ng partido o mga ka-alyado sa politika o hindi?
Note: * LOCATION: NL = Northern Luzon   SL = Southern Luzon   WV = Western Visayas   CV = Central Visayas   EV = Eastern Visayas   ARMM = Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao

But while many voters apparently give some candidates who switch political affiliations the benefit of the doubt, they take exception to other personalities’ switching of loyalties. Villar and Angara won their reelection bid; Sotto and Aquino-Oreta did not.

Aquino-Oreta did not have a good showing in any of the pre-election surveys conducted even before she filed her candidacy under the Team Unity (TU) ticket. Sotto, however, had a strong showing in all six senatorial polls conducted by Pulse Asia from July 2005 until the January 25-29, 2007 survey conducted prior to the filing of candidacy. The former senator was landing in the fourth to sixth slots (straight ranking) in all these surveys; his statistical ranking in
the January ’07 poll was 4-10 (i.e., his best possible rank was fourth, while his worst possible rank was 10), putting him squarely in the top 12, had the election been conducted at the time of the survey.

The response to Sotto’s joining the administration ticket was swift. In just about a month’s time the former senator dropped to the 12th slot in the Feb. 28-Mar. 5 survey, with a statistical ranking of 11-17. By end April, he had dropped to the 14th slot, with the same statistical ranking of 11-17.

To help provide quantitative support for what most every one already suspected namely, that it was largely the shift to the administration ticket that jeopardized Sotto’s election bid, Pulse Asia constructed multidimensional scaling (MDS) maps based on voter preference overlap. Multidimensional scaling is as statistical tool which maps similarities or dissimilarities between objects. Typically the map is constructed in such a way that points that are close in the map have greater similarity, as perceived by respondents, than points that are farther apart. [See, for example, Cox and Cox (1994).] MDS is used in market research to construct perceptual maps, typically preference maps. The ones shown here are refined versions of those constructed during the campaign period. The maps are based on voter preference only of candidates in the two main coalitions and a few strong independent candidates, as the interest is in the relative positions of candidates in the two coalitions and in those who eventually emerged as winners.

Pulse Asia constructed a similarity measure based on voter preference overlap. That is to say, the similarity measure between two candidates is based on the estimated number in the total voter population who include both candidates in their choice of senators. The measure is expressed as a proportion of voter preference for the candidate with the lower voter preference. The similarity measures are then transformed to dissimilarity measures for proper mapping as distances in Euclidean space.

Fig. 1 is an MDS plot constructed from the January 25-29 survey data. In MDS plots, the x- and y-axes do not have their usual interpretation. That is to say, left-right, top-bottom positions in an MDS map do not signify ordering. Objects located on the left side of the map do not necessarily have less of the trait or attribute being measured than objects on the right side.

Although a 2D plot, the map conveys information about the position of the object in the third dimension or z-axis. The z-coordinate of those with the ‘0’ symbol, is positive but below 1; that with a ‘-’ symbol is negative but not lower than -1. Those with a ‘1’ symbol have positive z-coordinates of at least 1 but lower than 2.
of the map. Neither do objects on the top of the map possess more of the attribute than those on the bottom part of the map. Only the positions of the objects relative to each other have meaning. The relative positions of the objects also serve to indicate what the dimensions or axes of the map are scaling.

Candidates whose coordinates in Fig. 1 are close to each have greater voter preference overlap than those whose coordinates are farther apart. For example, even before the filing of candidacy, supporters of failed coup d'etat leader Antonio Trillanes (who had about 4% voter preference at the time) tended to vote also for third-termer Representative Francis “Chiz” Escudero and not for actor Cesar Montano.

The map indicates that former senator Loren Legarda, who consistently topped pre-election polls, is found close to the center of the 3D plot, had one been constructed. This is to be expected. As the candidate with the highest voter preference, she registers high overlap in voter preference with most of the candidates. Candidates close to the center of the map, in this case Legarda and reelectionist senator Francis “Kiko” Pangilinan, have high voter preference and tend to be voted in by supporters of candidates on both sides of the map. Legarda and Pangilinan ranked first and third at the time of the survey, respectively.

Found on the left side of the plot are those closely identified with the Macapagal-Arroyo administration namely, former Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor, third-termer representatives Prospero Pichay and Miguel Zubiri, as well as former Ilocos Sur Governor “Chavit” Singson, who is closely identified with First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo. On the right side of the plot are found opposition figures such as Escudero; JV Ejercito-Estrada, son of former president Estrada; reelectionist senator Panfilo Lacson; Susan Roces, widow of 2004 opposition presidential candidate

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5 The stress measure of the map is 0.17, indicating that the goodness-of-fit of the map is fair.
Fig. 1. MDS plot of voter preference overlap based on Jan. 25-29, 2007 survey

Fernando Poe, Jr; and Trillanes. Sotto is found on the “opposition side” of the plot, as are Angara and Aquino-Oreta. All four reelectionist senators belonging to the Wednesday club, Joker Arroyo, Pangilinan, Ralph Recto and Villar are found on the “administration side” of the
plot. Third-termer representative Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino is also found on the “administration side” of the plot prior to filing.

Thus the plot shows that, prior to the filing of candidacy, former senator Sotto was primarily obtaining support from voters who tended to favor opposition figures. This was a comfortable position to be in, for at the time of the January survey, only members of the Wednesday club among those in the “administration side” of the plot were in the top 12 slots.

Incidentally, entertainment personalities and the son of former President Estrada are found in the lower right quadrant of the 2D plot, suggesting that there are voters who tend to vote for entertainment people. The proportion, however, is smaller than the lowest voter preference among these entertainment personalities, which was at 9%.

The second MDS map (Fig. 2)\(^6\), which is constructed based on the Feb. 28 – Mar. 5 survey, shows that voters tend to vote along “coalition” lines.\(^7\) Located on the left side of the map are all the candidates on the Team Unity (TU) ticket; on the right are all the Genuine Opposition (GO) candidates. Two strong independent candidates, Pangilinan and former senator Gregorio Honasan, tend to be identified with the administration and opposition camps, respectively, at this time.

Voter preference for eight of the 11 personalities in the January survey’s top 12 who eventually ran for a senatorial seat increased by 4 to 11 percentage points (pp).\(^8\) The eight included Angara and Villar, who “crossed coalition lines”, so to speak. The coordinates for both senators stay close to y-axis, indicating that they continue to draw support from voters who tend to vote for members of the other coalition.

The exceptions in the top 12 for whom voter preference did not increase were former representative Alan Peter Cayetano (voter preference decreased by 1 pp), Aquilino “Koko” Pimentel, Jr. (voter preference decreased by 1 pp) and Sotto (voter preference declined by 3 pp). Cayetano’s votes were cannibalized by the entry of a nuisance candidate bearing the

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\(^6\) The stress measure for Fig. 2 is 0.17, indicating fair fit.
\(^7\) The data indicate that at the time of the survey, about half of registered voters included more opposition than administration candidates in their list; about a fourth included more administration than opposition candidates, while 16% included the same number (nonzero) of administration and opposition candidates.
\(^8\) Strong contenders in an electoral contest typically obtain an increase in voter preference after filing of candidacy as voter preference consolidates for those who are actually in the running.
same surname, Joselito Cayetano, who obtained 7% voter preference. Pimentel did better in the earlier pre-election surveys than in later ones, apparently because some voters initially mistook him for his father.

In the case of Sotto, there appears to be no reasonable explanation, other than party switching, for a decline in voter barely two weeks into the campaign period. The MDS plot shows him on the TU side of the plot, with a coordinate quite a distance from the y-axis. This indicates that he shares less voter preference overlap with the GO candidates, more of whom are making it to the top 12.
The question remains: why does the Filipino electorate tolerate party switching by some candidates and not others? If it were simply a matter of wrong choice of coalition, with the administration coalition being the wrong choice, then Angara’s chances of winning should have suffered as well. The fact that it did not suggests, along with other survey findings, that it is a combination of several factors, not just party switching, that affects a candidate’s chances of winning. Other factors that come into play are qualities of the candidate himself/herself and the candidate’s campaign strategies, including strategies for dealing with the negative response of the public to the switch. Still and all, findings suggest that, for the 2007 senatorial elections, choice of coalition carried much weight.

*The 2007 senatorial elections as referendum on the Macapagal-Arroyo administration*

In all four pre-election polls conducted by Pulse Asia, about 60% of the voters maintained that they were choosing senatorial candidates on the basis of the latter’s qualities, not on the basis of the candidates’ alignment with or against the Macapagal-Arroyo administration. This figure is essentially the same as in 2001, although the percentage of those preferring candidates who support the administration declined by 11 pp, while that preferring candidates opposing the administration increased also by 11 pp since May 2001. NCR, in particular, registers large increases in preference for candidates opposing the administration.9 [See Tables 2a to2c.]

9 The January survey has a sample size of 1,200. The three other pre-election surveys each has a sample sizes of 1,800. The increase in the percentage supporting candidates opposing the administration in NCR is significant, even if allowance for design effects is made.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>CLASS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>NCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Apr 2007</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Apr 2007</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mar 2007</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jan 2007</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>May 2001</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Apr 2001</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mar 2001</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feb 2001</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:  
(1) Pre-Election Survey of April 3-5, 2007  
(2) Pre-Election Survey of April 21-25, 2007  
(3) Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding off or to Don't Know and Refuse responses.

VOTER PREFERENCE: PRO-/ANTI-ADMINISTRATION CANDIDATES
February 2001 to April 2007 / Philippines
(In Percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If the senatorial candidates for the May (2001/2007) elections were divided into two groups only, which senatorial candidates will you vote for?</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>CLASS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>NCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2007</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2007</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 2007</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2007</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2001</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2001</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 2001</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 2001</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:  
(1) Pre-Election Survey of April 3-5, 2007  
(2) Pre-Election Survey of April 21-25, 2007  
(3) Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding off or to Don't Know and Refuse responses.

Examination of the data from the April 21-25 survey nevertheless shows that all three groups - whether leaning towards pro-administration candidates or anti-administration candidates or choosing on the basis of the candidates’ qualities – tended to select candidates from both coalitions (Table 3).

Table 3. Median number of TU and GO candidates chosen, by pro/anti-administration stance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Median Number of TU Candidates</th>
<th>Median Number of GO Candidates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Those favoring pro-administration candidates</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those favoring anti-administration candidates</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those choosing on the basis of candidates’ qualities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All voters with senatorial preferences</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Survey-weighted estimates based on those with senatorial preferences, April 21-25, 2007 survey

Survey-weighted logistic regressions\(^{10}\) show that those favoring pro-administration candidates were more likely to vote for candidates Angara, Montano and Pichay than other TU candidates. Those favoring anti-administration candidates, on the other hand, were more likely to vote for Alan Cayetano, Lacson and Trillanes.

When asked to choose three characteristics they deem important for national leaders to possess, voters in the third group cite being propoor (45%), ability to equitably enforce the law (36%), knowledge and experience in management of government (31%) and trustworthiness (31%). However, in survey-weighted logistic regressions of voter preference on the traits first mentioned by voters who say they are not necessarily for pro-administration nor anti-administration candidates, fights anomalies in government (9% mentioning as first trait) is the attribute that emerges as a significant positively-signed explanatory variable in the models for many candidates.\(^{11}\) The variable is significant in the models for 9 out of the 11 GO candidates and two of the TU candidates, including the “people’s dragon”.

The other first-mentioned traits that emerge as significant factors for voter preference appear in only at most three candidates’ models and, in some cases, only in conjunction with fights anomalies in government. These other traits are:

\(^{10}\) All statistical tests are conducted at 0.05 level of significance.

\(^{11}\) Use of the first-mentioned traits is equivalent to requiring more stringent tests. Respondents may simply be citing three attributes because the question allows for it.
(1) has a clean record as a government official (mentioned first by 8% and appearing in the models for two GO candidates and 1 TU candidate);
(2) can give hope to most Filipinos (mentioned first by 3% and appearing in the models for two GO candidates);
(3) prays a lot (mentioned first by 11% and appearing in the model for 1 GO candidate); and
(4) has integrity and a good reputation (mentioned first by 4% and appearing in the model for 1 TU candidate).

The increase in the percentage of voters saying that they will support candidates who oppose the Macapagal-Arroyo administration as well as the preference for GO candidates among those who value leaders who fight anomalies in government tend to indicate that, for a sizeable percentage of voters (about a third)\(^{12}\), the 2007 senatorial elections was a referendum on the administration. The percentage of voters for which this was the case on election day itself could have been higher. The estimated percentage of one-third is based on voter sentiments at least three weeks before election day. It does not reflect voter response to developments in the last three weeks of the campaign period, including the televised interviews of Trillanes from his detention cell beginning May 9. Those interviews may have accomplished not just the surge in voter preference for Trillanes which the exit poll captured (from 22% in late April to 35%, or from 17\(^{th}\) to 10\(^{th}\) place),\(^{13}\) but may have served to improve the chances of the other opposition candidates as well.

**The unexpected victory: from single digit voter preference to a seat in the Senate**

At the start of the campaign period, several media practitioners posed the question of whether a candidate with single digit voter preference at the start of the campaign period could possibly truly win. The question was usually asked in connection with the prospects of certain administration candidates. A month later, the question evolved to one of whether a candidate with voter preference in the “teens” could possibly make it to the Senate, and still later whether a candidate with voter preference in the “twenties” at that late stage could still make it. The

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\(^{12}\) Adding 9% of 66% to 26% results in about 32%.

\(^{13}\) Trillanes lands in the 10\(^{th}\) slot once the votes for Alan Cayetano are adjusted. Pulse Asia counted but considered as stray votes those exit poll ballots containing only the name “Cayetano” (7.6%) in line with a COMELEC memorandum issued on 12 May 2007. The COMELEC resolution disqualifying Joselito Cayetano was, by design, to take effect after election day. Pulse Asia announced the 7.6% “Cayetano” only votes on the May 15, 6 PM broadcast of the exit poll results, and discussed the implications on the senatorial rankings if these were to be counted in Alan Cayetano’s favor. Unfortunately, we did not anticipate the need to incorporate this information in the very first set of printouts of the exit poll results handed to ABS-CBN.
answer is now a clear yes to all questions, but the candidate who did make it is not any of the candidates that had triggered these questions. It is Trillanes.

A simple time series plot (Fig. 3) shows that Pichay, Roco and Trillanes had essentially the same voter preference, below 10%, three weeks before the start of the campaign period. But the starting conditions or initial conditions of the three were not the same. Voters’ awareness of Roco (56%) was slightly higher than of Pichay and Trillanes (45% and 46%, respectively). Of the three, Roco had the headstart. But because of inadequate campaign funds, among others, the gains could not be sustained.

![Time Series Plots of Voter Preference for Candidates Pichay, Roco and Trillanes](image)

Fig. 3. Time Series Plots of Voter Preference for Candidates Pichay, Roco and Trillanes
(1=Jan07, 2=Mar07, 3=early Apr07, 4=late Apr07, 5=exit poll)

Voter preference for Pichay and Trillanes had the same trajectory from late January to late April. In fact, voter preference figures for the two candidates were statistically the same for this period.
Ironically, these two candidates and their campaigns had little in common. Trillanes, as leader of the Magdalo group, had tried to oust President Macpagal-Arroyo. Pichay, on the other hand, is a staunch defender of the President. In addition, Pichay was the biggest spender in the 2007 elections, having spent an estimated P202.7 million, while the Trillanes camp spent the least, an estimated P3 to P5 million (excluding political ads paid for by Sen. Maria Ana Consuelo “Jamby” Madrigal), according to Carmela Fonbuena, Glenda Gloria and Lou Janssen Dangzalan (*Newsbreak Post-Election Issue*, July-September 2007). Viewed in this light, even the climb in voter preference for Trillanes from January to April is astonishing.

The break for Trillanes came when a local court allowed him to grant interviews to media and campaign from his detention cell in May. The plot captures the impact of this development.

In a way, Trillanes’ catapulting into the winning circle resembles Sen. Pia Cayetano’s victory in 2004. Voter preference for Pia Cayetano surged after the airing of a *Maalala Mo Kaya* episode on the life of her father, Rene Cayetano, a few days before election day. The similarity is in the role that media played in the last leg of the campaign period in helping the two candidates gain victory. But the lesson in 2007 is different. It is not simply about the power of media and media packaging. It is also about people wanting changes in government, and how some are possibly entertaining violent means to attain it. As Marites Vitug put it, Trillanes’ victory “sends the most shrill and stunning message of the senatorial race: a man who once violently tried to oust President Arroyo won” (*Newsbreak Post-Election Issue*, July-September 2007).

**Conclusion**

This paper covered but a few of the insights and lessons from the 2007 elections. Lower benchmarks appear to have been established. For example, it is possible for a candidate to have single digit voter preference at the start of a campaign period and yet win in a senatorial election. It is likewise possible for a candidate with an awareness level of less than 50% to emerge victorious. But these have to be qualified. These are still the exceptions rather than the rule. There are more examples of candidates with such starting conditions, as it were, who did not make it to the winning circle.
There are limits to party switching that Filipino voters will tolerate, particularly in a highly polarized election. Voters will tend to vote along “coalition” lines in a highly polarized situation, rendering the choice of coalition or party more crucial. But other considerations, such as the candidate’s qualities and campaign strategies can offset the negative consequences of party switching.

And finally, the midterm election was indeed, for quite a number of Filipinos, a referendum on the Macapagal-Arroyo administration, if not on the presidency itself. The administration should take heed.

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