

The May 1986 Public Opinion Report:

A Political Analysis

by

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THE MAY 1986 PUBLIC OPINION REPORT: A POLITICAL  
ANALYSIS

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The latest challenge to the authority of President Aquino is much too recent to be forgotten. Although many people are wont to treat the incident as comic opera and its lead dramatis personae as mostly buffoons and senile politicians, others see in the attempted coup an escalated effort in a continuing, orchestrated campaign to destabilize the Aquino government. Thus, opinions differ as regards how to deal with Marcos loyalist rallies, demonstrations and coups, whether these be historical, current or projected activities. (No one appears to think that the most recent coup attempt would be the last.)

In July 1986, the failed putsch is probably only one of the various concerns which a more active public reflects on. Economic, social and political conditions which materially affect Filipino well-being cannot be ignored. One's quality of life, his living standards, peace and order conditions in his immediate community, the character of his government and the quality of its administration, the various institutions and forces which impact on the stability of his nation, as well as foreign influences which may not be wished away -- all these could be part of his extended opinion agenda.

Timing is of the essence in politically reading public opinion. Thus, in July 1986, as we reflect on survey findings generated in May 1986, it is prudent to recall that their context is the first 100 days of the Aquino government, when so much euphoria over the flight of Marcos and so much hopefulness in the new political leadership pervaded the country. At the time, pro-people, people-powered politics might not have appeared as achievable within this first 100 days, but given the quality of the new leadership, the degree of public support it enjoyed, and, furthermore, the apparent sympathy of the international community as indicated by de jure recognition of the new government and pledges of financial assistance, many Filipinos could not be faulted for thinking a new order was only a matter of time.

The present analysis reads the sentiments of Filipinos during this period of an immediately Marcos-free Philippines. In the second hundred days of the new administration, there are

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enough signs that this analysis might need modification in some important respects. Such modifications, their extent, and their implications might be more fully explored in a subsequent probe into the sentiments of our public. The Social Weather Stations and the Ateneo University, through this joint project called the Public Opinion Report, are already undertaking this follow-up survey.

## The Public Opinion Report of May 1986: General Findings

The May 1986 public opinion survey reflects at least four characteristics of the people who participated in this survey. These are their willingness to speak out on local and national matters which traditionally had called for much prudential responses, their sobriety and moderation in assessing current and short term economic and political conditions, their humanity in assessing errant political personalities and policies of national reconciliation, and their clear support for the new administration of President Aquino.

1.0 Outspokenness: In the May 1986 survey, there is reflected the much clearer split of opinions on many more issues than in previous surveys. Overwhelming majorities (e.g. those that would be in the higher 60s or over) are few and pluralities the rule rather than the exception. This fact of greater outspokenness is reinforced by the much smaller number of people who prefer to provide non-response responses (e.g. "don't know" and "refuse to answer") specially to questions that might be construed as either economically or politically sensitive. There is hardly any test question in the current survey where more than 10% of respondents preferred to take shelter in prudential responses. In contrast, comparable surveys like those of the Bishop Businessmen's Conference and the Philippine Social Science Council's Measuring the Public Pulse last year yielded as much as 45 to 50% of respondents replying "DK's" or "RA's" to many of the survey questions.

2.0 Sobriety and moderation: Despite the heady days during which time this survey ran, the respondents manage to project pragmatic, cautious optimism as regards their appraisal of current conditions and their expectations in the short term. It would have been normal to anticipate that Filipinos who have suffered much due to the economic recession and the political crisis would demand a rather dramatic improvement in their living conditions. On the contrary, they express a moderate optimism when asked to project their anticipated quality of life within the short term future. Less than a majority (40%) expect to improve their quality of life in the coming year; an equal number anticipates that it will hold at current levels and a small number (9%) predicts a deterioration. (Please see table 1.)

Table 1. Quality of Life (Philippines)

Questionnaire Item	Responses (%)		
Quality of life compared	Better now	Better before	Same as before
to 12 months ago	27	25	48
to 12 months from now	40	9	48
Ladder rating	Average Step		Number
Three years ago	5.0		
Now	5.0		
Three years from now	6.0		

Note: Responses of 'Undecided', 'Don't know' and 'Refused to Answer' are not shown unless they are fairly large. This accounts for the difference between the sum of the responses shown and 100%.

The remarkable thing, however, is when the respondents are asked to reflect on their current quality of life and compare it with that of past and future states. Using a ladder rating technique (involving the showing of a ladder with ten steps to the respondents, with the lowest step (1) as the worst possible state and the highest (10) as the best possible state of 'life), respondents on the average identified steps 5 (three years ago), 5 (now) and 6 (three years hence). This pattern bespeaks medium quality-of-life levels holding within the last three years and projected to improve slightly within the next three years. (Please see table 1.) By and large, Filipinos are not being unreasonable in their expectations of a better life. No unreasonable pressure is thus exerted on the Aquino administration to deliver beyond its presumable abilities. This sentiment is so much political capital for the present dispensation.

The sobriety of Filipinos also may be indicated by their acknowledgement that as regards peace and order conditions and the political efficacy of most Filipinos, there has not been much change in the past three months. Public safety leaves much to be desired in terms of the security of citizens both in their homes and as they move in their communities. Close to a majority (46%) still express fear of being robbed on the streets of their

neighborhood; a majority (52%) still fears that burglars may break into their homes. Oligarchical rule continues to be the plurality opinion (35%) as these respondents agree that the country is run by a few who are powerful and most citizens do not have the power to prevent this situation from arising. (Please see table 2.)

Table 2. Government and Public Safety (Philippines)

Questionnaire Item	Responses (%)		
	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
In this neighborhood, people are usually afraid to walk the street for fear of robbery.	46	35	17
In this neighborhood, people are usually afraid that robbers would break into their house.	52	26	20
The nation is run by a few powerful and ordinary citizens can't do much.	35	33	28

Note: Responses of 'Undecided', 'Don't know' and 'Refused to Answer' are not shown unless they are fairly large. This accounts for the difference between the sum of the responses shown and 100%.

There is much caution expressed by sizeable pluralities and at times even majorities of respondents on issues having to do with the roles played by the church, the military and the communist insurgents in our national affairs. Although the overthrow of Marcos was clearly facilitated by the critical stance adopted by many religious, specially in the Catholic Church, the popular opinion still counsels non-involvement by the religious in political affairs like those of supporting electoral candidates (49%), or being involved even in working for clean and free elections (45%). On the matter of church involvement with the struggle for the oppressed, the public appears to be evenly divided (40% agree v. 38% disagree). These opinions have found more adherents in the current survey than in the BBC survey of June 1985, showing the erosion of the number of "Undecided", "Don't know", and "Refused to Answer" responses last year. (Please see table 3.)

Table 3. The Church (Philippines, June 1985 and May 1986)

Questionnaire Item	Responses (%)		
	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
Church should not get involved in the struggle of the oppressed.			
May 1986	40	40	17
June 1985	33	38	19
Church should not get involved in working for clean and honest elections.			
May 1986	35	34	18
June 1985	39	30	31
Church should not support any candidate in an election.			
May 1986	49	29	19
June 1985	43	27	30

Note: Responses of 'Undecided', 'Don't know' and 'Refused to Answer' are not shown unless they are fairly large. This accounts for the difference between the sum of the responses shown and 100%.

In the case of the military, popular opinion affirms by a clear majority that there has been a great improvement in the last three months (58%) and that the New AFP will be loyal to the Aquino government (55%). Nevertheless, a plurality of the respondents sounds cautious notes in the belief that there are probably high military officials thinking of wresting power from the civilian authorities (36%) and it might be a good idea to reduce the budget of the military now (38%). (Please see table 4.)

Table 4. The Military (Philippines)

Questionnaire Item	Responses (%)		
	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
There has been a great improvement in the military in the last three months.	58	19	20
Probably there are high military officials thinking of wresting power away from the government.	36	29	31
The new AFP will be loyal and obedient to the Aquino government.	55	12	28
It is a good idea to reduce the size and budget of the military now.	38	31	27

Note: Responses of 'Undecided', 'Don't know' and 'Refused to Answer' are not shown unless they are fairly large. This accounts for the difference between the sum of the responses shown and 100%.

A similar focus of cautious responses is the Communist Party of the Philippines and its military arm, the New People's Army. Pluralities of opinions attend the test questions regarding the communists. The NPA network is acknowledged to be widespread in the respondents' province or city (38%), yet there is affirmation that most of the people in the same area do not sympathize with the NPA (36%). As a matter of fact, a rather even split of opinions occurs on the issue of most NPA activities not being justifiable (31% agree v. 32% disagree). Only on the question of legalizing the Communist Party is there a majority (54%) who expresses their disagreement with the proposal. Whether pluralities or majorities, willingness of respondents to speak out is reflected in significant increases in response levels relative to those encountered in last year's comparable survey by the BBC. Predictably, this development involves a significant reduction in the number of people who last year responded with 'Don't Know' or 'Unsure' to the test questions on the CPP/NPA. (Please see table 5.)

Table 5. The NPA (Philippines, June 1985 and May 1986)

Questionnaire Item	Responses (%)		
	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
The NPA network is wide-spread in this province/city.			
May 1986	38	31	26
June 1985	28	26	43
Most of the people in this province/city do not sympathize with the NPA.			
May 1986	36	27	33
June 1985	28	23	47
Most NPA activities are not justifiable.			
May 1986	31	32	32
June 1985	20	28	50
The Communist Party should be legalized.			
May 1986	22	54	20
June 1985	20	34	45

Note: Responses of 'Undecided', 'Don't know' and 'Refused to Answer' are not shown unless they are fairly large. This accounts for the difference between the sum of the responses shown and 100%.

A final indicator of the sober and cautious attitudes of Filipinos in the May 1986 survey is their plurality opinion (42%) that one cannot be sure as regards the possibility of losing faith in peaceful means of promoting democracy in the Philippines. One must note, however, that a great deal of optimism is detectable in the responses to this question. The proportion of those who are sure that Filipinos could possibly lose faith in peaceful means is at the lowest mark (31%) in the past two years and may represent the reversal of an incipient trend towards popular acceptance of violent means in effecting social change. (Please see table 6.)



Table 6. Faith in Peaceful Means of Promoting Democracy (Philippines)

Questionnaire Item	Responses (%)
Will Filipinos eventually lose faith in peaceful means of promoting democracy?	
Possible	31
Not possible	22
Undecided	42

Note: Responses of 'Undecided', 'Don't Know' and 'Refused to Answer' are not shown unless they are fairly large. This accounts for the difference between the sum of the responses shown and 100%.

3.0 Humanity and Non-vindictiveness: In view of the material as well as psychological difficulties suffered by Filipinos during the Marcos years, the remarkable thing is how a sizeable number (69%) of respondents continues to regard him as a brave president despite his many other perceived failings. Although the general appraisal is that he betrayed his country as well as his people and that he should not be brought back to the Philippines as a matter of political prudence, almost one in three still believes that he must be allowed to come back to the country as a matter of Filipino right and other humanitarian reasons. A very small fraction of people would have him returned for primarily punitive reasons, about 4% of total respondents. Even among the big majority of people who do not want to see him back, better than one in three believes he would be safer abroad than in the Philippines. (Please see table 7.)

The reconciliatory mood of Filipinos is reflected in the sizeable majorities supporting President Aquino's drive to win back Marcos loyalists (69%), the communists (67%), and the Muslim secessionists or MNLFs (67%). It is as if people were willing to bind up their wounds, make peace with each other and, in concert, attend to the pressing business of nation-building. (Please see table 8.)

Table 7. Sentiments Towards Ferdinand Marcos (Philippines)

Questionnaire Item	Responses (%)	
	Agree	Disagree
<u>Statements about FM:</u>		
A brave president	69	25
Caring for friends who enriched themselves by pocketing government funds	54	33
Favoring foreign interests in our country	54	31
A deceiver or a liar	51	35
A thief of the nation's wealth	51	34
True to the duties of a patriotic president	41	47
Defender of poor and oppressed	38	52
Should Marcos return?	29	65
<u>Reasons why Marcos should come back:*</u>		
He too is a Filipino so he has the right to be in the Philippines.		64
He should be given a chance to express himself and clear his name.		43
He should be pitied; he is old and sick and no country wants him.		27
His expertise is needed to help in the country's economic and political progress.		26
He should be punished for all the evil things he did while he was president.		14

Table 7 (continued)

Questionnaire Item	Responses (%)
<u>Reasons why Marcos should not return:*</u>	
There is a threat that he might create a force that will destroy the current government.	54
He might cause trouble or disorder in the country's plan for economic and political progress.	53
He is safer outside the country; there will be people tempted to get back at him through violent means.	35
There will be many people afraid to tell the truth about the evil committed during the Marcos era.	20

Note: Responses of 'Undecided', 'Don't know' and 'Refused to Answer' are not shown unless they are fairly large. This accounts for the difference between the sum of the responses shown and 100%.

\* Multiple answers permitted, sum of responses can go beyond 100%.

The reconciliatory mood of Filipinos is reflected in the sizeable majorities supporting President Aquino's drive to win back Marcos loyalists (69%), the communists (67%), and the Muslim secessionists or MNLF's (67%). It is as if people were willing to bind up their wounds, make peace with each other and, in concert, attend to the pressing business of nation-building. (Please see table 8.)

Table 8. Pres. Aquino's Policy of Reconciliation  
(Philippines)

Questionnaire Item	Responses (%)		
	Too lenient	Just right	Too severe
Reconciliation Towards Marcos' friends and supporters	12	69	13
Towards NPA and communists	17	67	7
Towards Muslim rebels and MNLF	14	67	8

Note: Responses of 'Undecided', 'Don't know' and 'Refused to Answer' are not shown unless they are fairly large. This accounts for the difference between the sum of the responses shown and 100%.

4.0 Support for the Aquino administration: One of the clearest messages in this survey is popular recognition and support for the new government. The great majority (67%) situates government legitimacy not so much in an election mandate (which they believe Aquino to have gained in the snap presidential elections) as in "people power", that phenomenon which toppled Marcos and simultaneously installed Aquino as President. The support of other sectors like the Catholic Church, the rebellious military as well as the American government, is identified by very small groups of respondents (6%, 6% and 4% respectively) as the most important legitimating factor. A negligible number (0.2%) points to communist support as the crucial factor. (Please see table 9.)

Table 9. Most Important Source of Legitimacy  
for the Aquino Government (Philippines)

Source	Responses (%)
'People Power'	67
Aquino's election victory	14
Support of the Catholic Church	6
Support of the pro-people military	6
Support of the U.S.	4
Support of foreign states	1
Support of the communist rebels	0.2
Support of the Muslim rebels	0.0

Note: Responses of 'Undecided', 'Don't Know' and 'Refused to Answer' are not shown unless they are fairly large. This accounts for the difference between the sum of the responses and 100%

The people's support for the new administration is reflected in their positive appraisal of the initial policies of President Aquino. Majority support for policies of reconciliation with communist and Muslim rebels as well as Marcos loyalists has been noted earlier (supra, p.4. ). In addition, of seven more test policies, the Aquino administration has two majority endorsements, four pluralities bordering on majorities, and only one plurality where a split of opinion may be described as close. It is interesting to note that the last plurality involves the policy to release the detained top leaders of the CPP. (Please see table 10.)

Support for the Aquino administration is further indicated by popular reaction to her cabinet appointees. Even as more than two-thirds of her appointees are known by less than half of the respondents, three-fourths of those who know the new officials express satisfaction over their appointments. (Please see table 11.)

Table 10. Public Sentiments on Selected  
Aquino Policies (Philippines)

Questionnaire Item	Responses (%)		
	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
Confiscation of Marcos' 'hidden wealth'	64	14	16
Freezing wealth and properties of Marcos cronies	55	20	20
Abolition of the Batasan Pambansa	49	28	19
Forced resignation of Comelec Commissioners	46	27	23
Replacement of elected officials with appointed Officers-in-Charge	43	31	25
Forced resignation of Supreme Court Justices	42	31	23
Released detained top Communist Party leaders	37	34	24

Note: Responses of 'Undecided', 'Don't Know' and 'Refused to answer' are not shown unless they are fairly large. This accounts for the difference between the sum of the responses shown and 100%

Table 11. The Cabinet Members: Public Awareness and Satisfaction (Philippines)

Cabinet Official	Responses (%)	
	Aware	Satisfied*
Beherson Alvarez	15	69
Joker Arroyo	39	70
Jose Concepcion	40	69
Jose Diokno	63	77
Juan Ponce Enrile	94	81
Jose B. Fernandez	44	70
Jose Gonzales	24	77
Neptali Gonzales	41	77
Teopisto Guingona	21	77
Salvador Laurel	95	82
Teodoro Locsin	41	74
Ernesto Maceda	56	78
Rogaciano Mercado	31	75
Ramon Mitra	50	80
Solita Monsod	16	76
Jaime Ongpin	50	73
Mita Pardo de Tavera	19	78
Aquilino Pimentel	76	58
Hernando Perez	23	71
Lourdes Quisumbing	41	81
Fidel Ramos	90	83
Alberto Romulo	38	79
Rene Saguisag	40	78
Jovito Salonga	71	82
Augusto Sanchez	32	74
Claudio Teehankee	38	80
Luis Villafuerte	31	78

\*

Of those who profess to know the cabinet official.

Government credibility is readily granted by more than a majority (54%) of the respondents, with only a tiny group (6%) disagreeing. The positive feeling extends to strong majorities who believe that the government attends to most or almost all of the people (70%), and takes care of them whether they be rich or poor. And perhaps of crucial importance, a good majority (58%) affirms their feeling of freedom in that they can say anything without fear, even if they were to speak out against the

administration. This sentiment is a turnaround from the feeling last year in a comparable survey, where only one out of three respondents acknowledged this sense of freedom. (Please see table 12.)

Table 12. Political Efficacy (Philippines)

Questionnaire Item	Responses (%)		
	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
Rich or poor, the people are being cared for by the government.	62	14	21
I can say anything without fear even if anti-administration			
1986	58	19	20
1985	33	29	38
Is the government credible?	Yes 54	No 6	Somewhat 36
How many people do you think are attended to by government?	Many/Most 70	Few/Very Few 23	

Note: Responses of 'Undecided', 'Don't know' and 'Refused to Answer' are not shown unless they are fairly large. This accounts for the difference between the sum of the responses shown and 100%.

Popular confidence is high (61%) in the ability of this administration to resist being influenced or dominated by the communists; however, there appears to be an evenly split balance of opinion (45% probable v. 46% not probable) as regards the probability of too much influence, even dominance by the military. A good majority (56%) discounts the probability that President Aquino could be a dictator. With all these sentiments and a natural tendency to be liberal with a new leader specially in a time of crisis, a firm majority (60%) affirms its satisfaction with the new President, with a very small number (7%) contesting the majority sentiments. (Please see table 13.)



Table 13. The Aquino Administration: Performance Rating and Prospects

Questionnaire Item	Responses (%)		
	Satisfactory	Not Satisfactory	Undecided
Performance rating of President Aquino	60	7	30
Might the administration be overly influenced by the military?	Probable	Not Probable	
	45	46	
by the communists?	29	61	
Might President Aquino become a dictator?	34	56	

Note: Responses of 'Undecided', 'Don't Know' and 'Refused to Answer' are not shown unless they are fairly large. This accounts for the difference between the sum of the responses shown and 100%

This is a significant vote of confidence in the Aquino leadership. In the last two years, the erosion of public confidence in the Presidency was manifest, with the former President unable to gain a satisfactory rating from the majority of his constituency. Whether or not the confidence in Aquino is sustained, increased or decreased, probably depends on how the people assess the extent and effectiveness of her efforts in improving their material conditions. After Marcos' twenty-year politics of plunder, Filipinos largely appear to understand the magnitude of this challenge. Thus, they have become more candid in expressing their opinions, more sober and moderate in their expectations, more humane and less vindictive in their evaluations of political actors and forces, and finally, more openly supportive of national leaders who need all the assistance to successfully confront multiple and historically enduring crises. Filipinos, it might be hazarded, have finally learned to be more pragmatic, critical, and thus actively optimistic about their destiny as a people.

## Other Matters on the Political Agenda

The May 1986 survey also tested for public perceptions on several other concerns: the process and results of the last snap presidential elections; the creation of a constitutional commission to draft a new constitution; the role played by the United States in Philippine affairs, with focus on the American military facilities (popularly referred to as American bases) in the Philippines; and the credibility of sources of political information.

Results of the last elections: Using a ballot box method which assures secrecy of their ballots, respondents identify Cory Aquino as winning handsomely over Marcos (63% v. 27%) in the snap presidential elections last February. Confirmation is provided by a big majority (70%) who state that Aquino won in their precinct. (Please see table 14.)

The reported voter turnout is quite high (84%), with only 16% failing to vote for various reasons. Those who describe themselves as boycotting the elections amounted to a tiny 1.4 % of respondents nation-wide, mostly concentrated in urban Visayas. Of those who were not boycotters but for some reason failed to cast their vote, 67% aver that they would have voted for Aquino and 22% for Marcos. Among those who voted, a significant number (11%) notes difficulties in locating their names in the precinct list of voters. (Please see table 14.)

A sizeable majority (64%) observes that the election was clean and free in their precinct. The citizen electoral arm NAMFREL, is credited by a smiliar majority (65%) with helping a lot to make the 1985 elections clean. Interestingly, a slim plurality (39%) agrees that the COMELEC, the constitutional electoral body, performed its job independently, without much partisanship. One out of three respondents (33%) disagrees with the plurality view. In Metro Manila and in urban Visayas, those disagreeing with the positive view of COMELEC constitute the plurality. (Please see table 15.)

A summary analysis of the findings on election issues points to Filipino voters taking to the polls in very large numbers, largely ignoring the calls for election boycott, and voting by a clear majority for Cory Aquino. Aquino's margin of victory over Marcos would have been further increased by support from non-boycotters who were unable to cast their ballots in the last elections.

The positive image projected by the NAMFREL appears in keeping with the dedicated efforts of its members to keep elections clean and honest. The more puzzling view is that the COMELEC acted independently and without partisanship. Most of the people who share this plurality view come from the rural areas of Mindanao and the Visayas and, regardless of urban or

rural origins, from Luzon minus Metro Manila. (Please see table 14.) They are also poorer in economic class and largely come from the 35-44 age group. (Please see table 15.)

Table 14. Perceptions of the 1986 Elections  
(Philippines, By Area and Locality)

Questionnaire Item	RP	Metro	Luzon		Visayas		Mindanao	
		Manila	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Who won in the last election in your precinct?								
Ferdinand Marcos	26%	22%	25%	39%	26%	28%	12%	16%
Corazon Aquino	70	76	72	56	82	70	85	80
Did you vote in the February 7 elections?								
Yes	84	85	85	83	85	86	84	82
No	16	15	15	17	15	14	16	18
Reasons for not voting:								
did not register	27	29	24	29	38	21	40	19
name missing in precinct list	12	12	22	6	9	11	17	17
got sick	13	16	6	12	9	18	4	19
boycott	9	5	6	12	22	7	4	6
prevented	1	4	2	0	0	0	0	3
other reasons	26	27	28	29	13	21	21	31
no reason	2	1	0	6	0	4	0	0
Intended candidate of non-boycotters who were unable to vote								
Marcos	22	16	30	23	20	27	4	21
Aquino	67	77	63	60	80	54	89	70
Problems locating their names in precinct list								
Yes	11	16	7	9	14	13	9	12
No	89	84	93	91	86	87	91	88

Table 14 (continued)

Questionnaire Item	RP	Metro Manila	Luzon Urban	Luzon Rural	Visayas Urban	Visayas Rural	Mindanao Urban	Mindanao Rural
How respondents voted								
Aquino	64	67	56	47	80	70	73	77
Marcos	27	30	29	40	14	22	17	16
The last election was clean and free in our precinct								
Agree	64	48	64	68	57	66	63	70
Disagree	19	36	18	16	22	14	19	10
In the last election the COMELEC performed its job independently								
Agree	39	31	38	39	33	41	41	45
Disagree	33	49	33	27	43	30	37	30
Namfrel helped a lot in making the 1986 election clean								
Agree	65	65	60	52	75	69	71	78
Disagree	15	20	18	20	13	9	12	9

Note: Responses of 'Undecided', 'Don't Know' and 'Refused to Answer' are not shown unless they are fairly large. This accounts for the difference between the sum of the responses shown and 100%

There is a possibility that in these identified geographic areas and bearing the noted personal attributes, respondents might not have had sufficient knowledge regarding the COMELEC nor the actions it took in the process of preparing for elections and conducting the same. Neither the process of voting, tallying, canvassing nor reporting election results might have been sufficiently understood. A filter question to segregate those with adequate familiarity with the COMELEC and its legal functions could have provided a more reliable finding based on the perceptions of survey respondents.

Another possibility is that the respondents interpreted the question to reflect on the COMELEC activity within their precincts and not the nation as a whole. This would mean interpreting the COMELEC activity to be largely limited to the voting and the counting of ballots and the preparation of election returns within the precincts, as witnessed by the respondents. In these circumstances, it might be comprehensible how a plurality of 39% could view the COMELEC as independent and non-partisan in the last elections.

Table 15. COMELEC Performance in the 1986 Elections  
(Philippines, By Economic Class and Age)

Questionnaire Item	Response (%)		
	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
In the last election, the COMELEC performed its job independently, without favoring any group			
Economic class ABC	35	46	16
D	39	34	23
E	40	29	28
Age group 18-24	36	35	27
24-34	39	35	22
35-44	45	30	22
45+	36	33	25

Note: Responses of 'Undecided', 'Don't Know' and 'Refused to Answer' are not shown unless they are fairly large. This accounts for the difference between the sum of the responses and 100%

**A new constitution:** A good majority (64%) affirms the need to replace the 1973 (Marcos) Constitution with a new one. The sentiment is strongest in the Metro Manila area (73%), with Visayas (70%) and Mindanao (70%) closely behind. Luzon has the lowest majority support (54%) among all the regions. Urban respondents have proportionately more support for a new constitution, as do people with higher economic class. There are also more males making the same response, but no clear pattern emerges when age is looked into as a correlate. (Please see table 16.1.)

Table 16.1 Constitutional Issues (Philippines, By Region and Demographic Attributes)

Questionnaire Item	Response (%)	
The 1973 Constitution must be replaced with a new one	Agree	Disagree
PHILIPPINES	64	27
Metro Manila	73	24
Rest of Urban Luzon	60	29
Rural Luzon	51	36
Urban Visayas	70	70
Rural Visayas	70	22
Urban Mindanao	69	22
Rural Mindanao	72	20
Class ABC	73	21
D	64	28
E	61	29
Age 18-24	64	32
25-34	65	28
35-44	64	27
45+	62	24
Sex Male	67	26
Female	60	29

Note: Responses of 'Undecided', 'Don't Know' and 'Refused to Answer' are not shown unless they are fairly large. This accounts for the difference between the sum of the responses shown and 100 %.

An even bigger majority (70%) would condition the holding of local elections (under Marcos, scheduled for sometime in May of 1986) to the prior completion of a new constitution. Metro Manila (74%) is most supportive of this view among the regions. At the national level, no clear patterns of correlation appear indicated for the usual demographic variables of urban/rural location of respondents, economic class, sex and age. (Please see table 16.2.)

Table 16.2 Constitutional Issues (Philippines, By Region and Demographic Attributes)

Questionnaire Item	Responses (%)	
	Yes	No
Draft a new Constitution before holding local elections		
PHILIPPINES	70	28
Metro Manila	75	25
Rest of Urban Luzon	68	28
Rural Luzon	71	26
Urban Visayas	68	32
Rural Visayas	72	26
Urban Mindanao	67	32
Rural Mindanao	62	34
Class		
ABC	69	28
D	71	28
E	67	30
Age		
18-24	70	28
25-34	66	33
35-44	69	30
45+	72	23
Sex		
Male	70	28
Female	68	29

Note: Responses of 'Undecided', 'Don't Know' and 'Refused to Answer' are not shown unless they are fairly large. This accounts for the difference between the sum of the responses shown and 100%

By a much bigger majority (86%), respondents would prefer that members of the body drafting the new constitution be elected rather than appointed. Across all regions, the sentiment is shared strongly, with Metro Manila showing the least strong majority support. Both economic class and age correlate negatively with this majority response. Higher economic classes and older age group respondents have lower proportions making this response. (Please see table 16.3.)

Table 16.3 Constitutional Issues (Philippines, By Region and Demographic Attributes)

Questionnaire Item	Responses (%)	
Preferred means of selecting members of the Constitutional Commission	Appointment	Election
PHILIPPINES	12	86
Metro Manila	16	83
Rest of Urban Luzon	13	84
Rural Luzon	11	87
Urban Visayas	9	90
Rural Visayas	10	86
Urban Mindanao	14	84
Rural Mindanao	12	87
Class		
ABC	16	82
D	12	86
E	11	87
Age		
18-24	11	88
25-34	12	87
35-44	13	85
45+	12	83
Sex		
Male	14	84
Female	10	87

Given that President Aquino had decided to appoint members to the Constitutional Commission and thus rendered largely academic the mode of selecting these officials, the respondents endorsed the idea that there should be from 30 to 50 people in the Constitutional Commission. Slightly over a majority (52%) affirmed that this number of officials is "just right". All regions reflect this majority sentiment, with a clear urban bias at work at both regional and national levels. One may add that age has a negative correlation with this sentiment, with older respondents showing lower proportions of "just right" replies. (Please see table 16.4.)



Table 16.4 Constitutional Issues (Philippines, By Region and By Age)

Questionnaire Item		Responses (%)		
On setting the size of the CONCOM at 30 to 50 members		Too Few	Just Right	Too Many
PHILIPPINES		20	60	15
Metro Manila		13	69	16
Rest of Urban Luzon		17	60	15
Rural Luzon		20	55	17
Urban Visayas		20	64	15
Rural Visayas		22	60	12
Urban Mindanao		25	58	14
Rural Mindanao		24	55	16
Age	18-24	17	65	16
	25-34	19	62	17
	35-44	18	60	18
	45+	24	53	12

Note: Responses of 'Undecided', 'Don't Know' and 'Refused to Answer' are not shown unless they are fairly large. This accounts for the difference between the sum of the responses shown and 100%

The issue of the new constitution and its urgency reflect the great public support that President Aquino enjoys among the respondents of this survey. While they may differ with her greatly on the mode of selection of these officials, they nevertheless defer to her actual decision and, still by a majority, lend support to a fait accompli. This kind of political capital, which is traditionally accorded new leaders by liberal supporters, is probably best used sparingly, reserved for the most delicate of political issues when the survival of administrations, governments and even regimes might be at stake.

The role of the United States: Some gains are made by the American government insofar as their popularity with Filipinos is concerned. A majority of survey respondents agree that most of what the US government wants to happen in the Philippines is good for Filipinos. Respondents from Mindanao and Visayas, specially those coming from rural areas, are particularly approving of the test statement. Economic class correlates negatively with the agree response, with those who are poorer being more wont to agree; age, on the other hand, has a positive correlation and proportionately more of the older respondents agree with the test statement. (Please see table 17.)

Table 17. U.S. Government Intentions in the Philippines  
(Philippines, By Region and Demographic Attributes)

Questionnaire Item	Responses (%)		
	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
What the US gov't wants to happen in the Phil is good for Filipinos			
PHILIPPINES	56	26	24
Urban	50	21	26
Rural	61	13	23
Metro Manila	44	27	28
Balance of Luzon	56	17	26
Urban	45	22	28
Rural	57	14	25
Visayas	62	13	22
Urban	59	16	23
Rural	63	12	22
Mindanao	64	12	22
Urban	60	15	24
Rural	65	12	20
Economic class ABC	47	26	24
D	56	24	17
E	60	24	13
Age 18-24	50	19	30
25-34	53	20	25
35-44	59	16	23
45+	62	11	21
Sex Male	55	23	19
Female	58	25	13

Note: Responses of 'Undecided', 'Don't Know' and 'Refused to Answer' are not shown unless they are fairly large. This accounts for the difference between the sum of the responses shown and 100%.

Those who disagree that the US government means well for Filipinos are largely urban-based, with Metro Manila respondents showing the highest proportion of those disagreeing from all regions. As expectable, they come from the higher economic classes. There is also a higher proportion of males who express disagreement with the test statement.

A similar gain might be noted for the sentiment to keep or

tolerate the American military facilities in the Philippines. A majority (50%) agrees that they should or may stay in the country. The greatest proportion of supportive respondents come from Metro Manila and this urban bias is reflected in all regions except Mindanao. Luzon has the lowest (45%) degree of support for the sentiment, being the only region without a majority affirming the test statement. Those from higher economic classes are more supportive of retaining the military facilities, as are males relative to females surveyed. The youngest group (18-24 years old) expresses the least support for the facilities while their elders all show majority support. (Please see table 18.)

Table 18. US Military Bases in the Philippines  
(Philippines, By Region and Demographic  
Attributes)

Questionnaire Item	Responses (%)		
	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
The US military bases should stay in the Phil.			
PHILIPPINES	50	19	26
Urban	56	19	22
Rural	46	19	29
Metro Manila	58	19	22
Balance of Luzon	45	20	29
Urban	55	17	23
Rural	40	21	32
Visayas	50	19	28
Urban	58	17	24
Rural	47	20	30
Mindanao	55	18	25
Urban	53	21	24
Rural	56	17	25
Economic class ABC	57	20	21
D	52	18	26
E	45	21	29
Age 18-24	44	22	33
25-34	51	21	24
35-44	54	20	27
45+	53	16	24
Sex Male	53	21	24
Female	47	18	29

Note: Responses of 'Undecided', 'Don't Know' and 'Refused to Answer' are not shown unless fairly large. This accounts for the difference between the sum of the responses shown and 100%

Those who disagree (19%) also proportionately mostly come from Metro Manila, but rural Luzon and rural Visayas are main source areas of disagreement too. A negative correlation obtains for age, with more disagreeing respondents coming from younger age groups. The other demographic variables do not correlate well with dissenting responses. (Please see Table 18.)

The positive rates for both test statements on the good intentions of the American government for the Filipinos and the retention of American military facilities here show improvements over those gathered in a comparable BBC survey last year. Please see tables 17 and 18.)

There is something interesting in the responses to the questions about the United States. Those who disagree with the perception of the US government intentions for the Philippines are good for the Filipinos have largely the same demographic profile as those who would like to see the American military facilities to remain in the Philippines, i.e. they come proportionately more from the urban areas and mostly from Metro Manila, from the better off economically speaking, and from male respondents. It is almost as if the respondents were making the distinction between American intentions and operations, where even those who disagree as to the goodness of American intentions nevertheless express support for the operations of the military facilities here. If this is indeed the case, then more and more Filipinos might be looking over Filipino-American relations with greater pragmatism. This possibility could be looked into using survey findings for the last year and the present Public Opinion Report. Furthermore, in forthcoming surveys, a working hypothesis might be entertained that there will be no necessary direct correlations for Filipino responses to these two statements regarding American intentions and continuing operations of their military facilities in the Philippines.

Sources and credibility of political information: Of eight prelisted choices, respondents identified their sources radio/TV (92%), newspapers/magazines (63%), friends and relatives (22%) ahead of government offices (8%), school (8%), religious groups (8%), political groups not affiliated with government (6%) and others (0.3%). The urban background of more respondents affirming these choices is remarkable for practically all sources of information, but particularly so in the case of newspapers and magazines. All of these sources of political information are sensitive to economic class status, with proportionately more of the better-off respondents mentioning access to each of these sources. Sex accounts for only one discriminatory influence which appears to work in the case of newspapers and magazines; proportionately more males than females mention this as a source of political information. Age hardly makes any difference in the respondents' choice of source. (Please see table 19.)

Table 19. Sources of Political Information (Philippines, By Locale and Other Demographic Attributes)

Source of Information	Responses (%)							
	RP	Locale		Economic Class			Sex	
		Urban	Rural	ABC	D	E	Male	Female
Radio/TV	92%	92%	91%	95%	92%	89%	92%	91%
Newspapers/Magazines	63	79	52	91	66	50	66	60
Friends/Relatives	22	27	18	31	22	19	23	21
Gov't Offices	8	9	8	11	9	6	8	9
Schools	8	9	7	13	8	6	7	9
Religious Orgnzatns	8	9	7	12	8	6	8	7
Pol. Grps Not Affiliated w/Gov't	6	10	4	12	7	5	6	6
Others	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.0

Note: Multiple answers allowed, sum of responses exceeds 100%

In terms of credibility of political information sources, the respondents judged most credible radio/TV (64%), newspapers/magazines (29%), religious organizations (2%), government offices (2%), schools (2%), friends and relatives (2%), political groups not affiliated with government (1%), and others (0.1%). The urban bias is registered in the case of radio/TV and newspapers/magazines, with more urban respondents affirming these choices. Of the first three choices, only newspapers and magazines show higher economic class to correlate well with higher proportions of respondents making this choice. Age appears to make little or no difference in the choice made. In the case of radio/TV, at the regional level, the rural areas in Luzon minus Metro Manila, Visayas, and Mindanao have proportionately more respondents making the choice. Luzon records the highest proportion of respondents who look at radio/TV as their most credible source of political information. On the other hand, newspapers/magazines are preferred by male respondents in Mindanao than in other regions of the country; there is a clear urban bias at work in the higher proportion of respondents coming from rural areas in all regions except Metro Manila. (Please see tables 20 and 21.)

An analysis of the findings for sources and credibility of political information immediately points to the gross importance of both broadcast and print media in the processing and dissemination of political information. Perhaps largely due to the spillover effects of the February revolution, people identify broadcast media as the most credible sources more than twice as often as newspapers/magazines. It may well be that the ability of both radio and TV to cover and project specially critical situations "live" gives them the edge over other media.

Table 20. Most Credible Source of Political Information  
(Philippines, By Region)

Most Credible Source	Responses (%)								
	RP	Metro		Luzon		Visayas		Mindanao	
		Manila	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	
Radio/TV	64	60	69	75	44	64	45	58	
Newspapers/Magazines	29	32	31	22	42	23	45	32	
Religious Orgnzatns	2	2	0.3	2	4	4	4	2	
Gov't. Offices	2	3	1	1	3	2	1	5	
Schools	2	3	1	1	0.3	3	1	1	
Friends/Relatives	2	2	2	1	1	2	3	3	
Pol. Grps Not Affiliated w/Gov't	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	
Others	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	

Table 21. Most Credible Source of Political Information  
(Philippines, By Locale, Economic Class and Sex)

Most Credible Source	Responses (%)							
	RP	Locale		Economic Class			Sex	
		Urban	Rural	ABC	D	E	Male	Female
Radio/TV	64	58	67	48	65	67	61	66
Newspapers/Magazines	29	35	25	44	29	24	32	26
Religious Orgnzatns	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	2
Gov't Offices	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2
Schools	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	1
Friends/Relatives	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1
Pol. Grps Not Affiliated w/Gov't	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1

It may look strange ending this analysis on a note regarding sources rather than credibility of information. Yet, the data on respondents carry serious implications for a democratizing society. The urban-based and economically better-off are demonstrably able to access more sources now than the rural and poorer respondents. Since the present government clearly commits itself to democratization, the indicated policy is to facilitate citizen access to sources of political information, thereby

enhancing popular involvement in intelligent policymaking, its ~~effective~~ implementation and effective monitoring. All sources of political information need to be activated and access to them equitably distributed among the economic classes, through geographic space. Equity in this area ultimately targets for a more informed, knowledgeable, participatory and thus politically effective citizenry. A functional democracy probably would not settle for less.

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