

Political Ideologies on the Philippine Press

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Abstract - *A political ideology is what guides a country and makes a government effective. Moreover, media serves as the society's watchdog. Media is the most effective tool in shaping public opinion. Among the different types of media, the newspaper is the oldest and was the most effective tool in shaping public opinion. There are several types of a newspaper article. However, it is the editorial article that is considered as the heart of the newspaper. With this, the study examined the present political ideologies in the editorial article of the three leading broadsheets in the Philippines (Philippine Inquirer, Philippine Star, and Manila Bulletin) which the researchers referred to as the Philippine broadsheets. Also, the research aimed to analyze the factors that are evident in an editorial article such as the focus and the treatment present in the political editorial articles of the three leading broadsheets. Comparative content analysis method was used to generate the data analyzed. In choosing the unit of analysis, the study utilized the Purposive Sampling Method with the intent of the researchers in filtering out highly political editorial articles. The result of the study showed that majority of the political editorial articles published by the Philippine Broadsheets from June 2014 to June 2015 present Liberalism as their political ideology and most of their political editorial articles were treated neutrally.*

Keyword: *editorial articles, Political Ideology, Comparative Content Analysis, Philippine Broadsheets*

INTRODUCTION

Media can affect us without our consent. From the way we act, we talk, we dress, we interact and many more. It has always been a vehicle for reforms and persuasion. Moreover, it entertains, it informs, it educates, it campaigns, and it serves as the society's watchdog [1]. Furthermore, media is considered as a vehicle for promoting democracy [2]. However, among these roles, the greatest power that the media have is that the people rely on it so much that it is the most effective tool in shaping public opinion. It can reach the people through broadcast (radio and television), print (newspaper, journals, magazines, newsletters, etc.), and through the internet which is also known as the new media [3]. Among these types of media, the print media, to be specific, the newspaper is the oldest. Newspaper, may it be a broadsheet or a tabloid, contain these types of articles: the local news articles, the national news articles, the international news articles, the feature articles, showbiz articles, the editorial articles, and columns [4]. Furthermore, amongst the types of newspaper articles, the editorial article is its vital part and considered as the heart of the newspaper. It usually

has a fixed page in the newspaper. It is said to be the heart of the newspaper for the story it runs is about what is currently happening in our country or what others may call the 'big' issue or the 'hot' issue. An editorial article, however, is not considered as a news article. It is an article that contains the opinion of the editor and the editorial board. It is supposed to be written in the third person and does not contain a by-line. Moreover, an editorial article can explain or interpret, criticize, entertain or praise a certain issue or story [5]. Additionally, an editorial article either makes the readers think or persuade them to believe on the newspaper's stand towards the issue. An editorial article have different approaches. It can persuade, educate, entertain or simply be written as a tribute to a person or an event [6]. Also, there is this type of editorial article that is usually used when there is a major issue in the country. This is the Pooled Editorial. A pooled editorial article is an article that is written by different editors in different publications but have the same topic. An editorial article can be written positively, negatively, or neutrally depending on the stand of the publication company [7].

As mentioned above that media is a powerful tool in shaping public opinion, though the oldest, the newspaper played a vital role in the development of democracy in the Philippines. It was one of the tools used by our brave men during the Spanish colonization to liberate the Filipinos. During the Marcos regime, publications were shut down, and some were privatized. The Filipinos do not have the voice to speak out then. But, due to the strong nationalistic fervor that some of the universities have, some stood up through their campus publications. Furthermore, newspapers have always been very helpful in giving and sharing news to the Filipino citizens. Based on the history, newspaper played a critical role in achieving democracy for the Philippines [8]. Public information is an important part of governance that can channel efficiently through government media. It created awareness for the mass people and helped them accept the policies of the government if used effectively. When the public has the right amount of information, this will lead to public involvement that ensures that citizens have a direct voice in the public decisions. Nowadays, out of all the broadsheets that are being circulated in the Philippines, there are three that stood out namely the Philippine Daily Inquirer, the Manila Bulletin, and the Philippine Star. These broadsheets have been presenting different news coverage about Politics, Health, Poverty, Economic Status, Business, World, Entertainment, and Government.

Most of the stories covered by the Philippine broadsheets' editorial articles for the past year focused mostly on government and politics. However, according to Walbert [9], there has always been a history of political bias in newspapers. Articles such as editorial articles are somehow promoting political ideologies with or without the consciousness of the writers. Furthermore, political ideology is what guides a country. Having a single ideology can make a government effective and its people more cooperative. There are five main political ideologies. However, according to the study of Buendia [10], in the Philippines only three political ideologies were evident: Liberalism, Conservatism, and Socialism. It is a fundamental insight that more than one solution is available for any given societal problem. Ideological inclination strongly determines how a government formulate tactics to bring solution to political, economic and social challenges. In pluralistic democracies, these three mainstream (or combinations

of the three) tend to be represented in competing political parties in one form or the other [11].

Additionally, according to the study of Teehankee [12], a Professor of Political Science and International Studies at De La Salle University, the range of politics include democratic and state institutions with 29%. Followed by the local government and decentralization with eight percent (8%), democratic institution, five percent, (5%), policy making in general four percent, (4%), military and police three percent, (3%), elections, voting and election rules two percent, (2%), the bureaucracy three percent, (3%) and political parties, two percent (2%). Moreover, there are articles which categorized among the following: economic and extra-national processes with twenty-eight percent (28%); social actors with 20%; political order with 14%; political regimes with six percent (6%); and other topics with seven percent (7%).

If you look at the past election campaigns, there seems to be no concrete political ideology in the Philippines. Unlike in the United States where they either choose between a liberalist and a republican, in the Philippines, there seems to be a clash. There are three to five candidates for the presidential slate which gives the people a hard time to choose. The result of this study will help identify which of the ideologies reflect the most. In addition to that, this study can serve as an evaluation if the current political ideology that the administration utilizes. It is still effective or is it a time for a change? Lastly, the result of this study will reflect the objectivity of the three leading broadsheets – Philippine Daily Inquirer, Philippine Star and Manila Bulletin.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study desired to know the dominant political ideology presented by the political editorial articles of the three leading broadsheets, referred to as the Philippine Broadsheets, from June 2014 to June 2015. Furthermore, the research also pursued to know the treatment used by the three leading broadsheets in presenting the focus and the political ideologies in their political editorial articles.

METHODS

Comparative Content Analysis method was used to generate data in a more detailed manner. It is used to examine the present political ideology in the three leading broadsheets' editorial article. In selecting the unit of analysis, Purposive Sampling was used. This method is also a judgmental, selective and subjective

by the intent of the researcher of having a guide or criteria in choosing the samples out of the population, unit of analysis, to be analyzed or studied. This method looks for certain characteristics/qualities that the researchers analyzed [13]. Moreover, the researchers, filtered out the Political Editorial articles of the Philippines' Three Leading Broadsheets (published within June 2014 to June 2015) which served as the unit of analysis for the study. In the Philippines, broadsheets served and still continues to serve as an efficient discussion arena for different issues both locally and internationally. According to a survey done by Nielsen Media Research, the Philippine Daily Inquirer has sustained its leadership among Filipino broadsheet readers nationwide. Philippine Daily Inquirer has the widest reader population in the Philippines it has 250 thousand circulations daily. It surpassed Manila Bulletin in 1990 as the private newspaper with the largest number of circulating copies [14]. On the other hand, the Philippine Star is the most read broadsheet in the Philippines, surpassing Philippine Daily Inquirer with a market share of over 2.7 million daily readers nationwide [15]. Then, Manila Bulletin is known to be the eldest newspaper in the Philippines and the first newspaper company to go public. Manila Bulletin sustained its headship in the newspaper industry and in publications of magazine through its advertisements, circulation and clientele. As it is evident that Philippine Daily Inquirer, Manila Bulletin and Philippine Star are the three leading broadsheets in the Philippines, the researchers used the said newspapers as the source of information for the study. These newspapers were referred to as Newspaper 1 (Philippine Daily Inquirer), Newspaper 2 (Philippine star) and Newspaper 3 for Manila Bulletin. As for the

instrument, coding sheet, and coding guide was devised with the following criteria: focus, ideology, and treatment. These research instruments are helpful in analyzing the editorial articles of Philippine Daily Inquirer, Philippine Star, and Manila Bulletin. The researchers utilized Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) v.20 and various statistical treatments (percentage and Chi-Square) to process and analyze data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A significant level of difference is observed with a .000 level of significance. The political editorial articles presented by the Newspaper 1 focused mostly on Politicians' controversies scoring forty-nine percent (49.5%) while the Newspaper 2 focused mostly on policy with thirty point two percent (30.2%) and lastly, Newspaper 3 focused mostly on government controversies with a twenty-three point nine percentage (23.9).

Using the chi-square test of independence, it is shown that there is computed chi-square value of 122.701 and a significance level of .000. With knowing that significant level is below .05, the computed value is significant. There is a significant difference among the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Manila Bulletin and Philippine Star in terms of the topic or focus in their editorial article.

It also proves the rejection of null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference among the three leading broadsheets' topic of editorial article. To compare the result among Philippine Daily Inquirer, Manila Bulletin and Philippine Star, the difference of pattern in frequency among these three broadsheets is evident.

Table 1 Focus of the Political Editorial Articles of the Philippine Broadsheets

Focus of the Article	Newspaper 1		Newspaper 2		Newspaper 3	
	<i>F</i>	%	<i>F</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Suffrage	1	1.1%	10	23.3%	13	18.3%
Political Debate	7	7.5%	2	4.7%	1	1.4%
Government Controversies	34	36.6%	7	16.3%	17	23.9%
Policy Making	3	3.2%	13	30.2%	11	15.5%
Political Parties	0	0%	2	4.7%	5	7%
Politicians' Controversies	46	49.5%	2	4.7%	6	8.5%
Politicians' Issues	2	2.2%	7	16.3%	3	4.2%
Others	0	0%	0	0%	15	21.1%
Total	93	100%	43	100%	71	100%

$\chi^2 = 122.701$ (Significant Difference); sig= .000

Knowing that the three leading broadsheets have different goals and vision, the result of the study also shows the differences of the three in terms of the focus of their political editorial articles. Newspaper 3 focused mostly on government controversies, their vision is to be the nation’s companion in the quest for progress and development and the government controversies defined as the acts of the administration that involves its progress. While, the Newspaper 1 on politicians’ controversies which strongly shows that the broadsheet is free from the influence of government and other people/group that would write something about politicians’ involvement to government anomalies. Lastly, the Newspaper 3 focused mostly on policy making which shows support to the Aquino administration with knowing that the broadsheet is formed in the dark ages to support the administration of the late President Corazon Aquino.

Rood stated in his study that countable political issues that shake the government in 2014 and 2015. These articles are said to define the year of 2014 to 2015. It includes the “pork barrel” issue in July that reveals the anomaly within the Congress. Pork barrel is an allocation of budget to a member of Congress for its designated beneficiaries or projects for public. Then, the Supreme Court processes and handles the case against Disbursement Acceleration Program. After that, the attack of MNLF to Zamboanga City happened (September 9). Also, the Earthquake on Bohol (October 15) and Super Typhoon Haiyan (November 8). Moreover in the middle of 2014, Basic Law for Bangsamoro is being drafted by BTC and will be passed to Congress by May or June 2015. He concluded that regardless with these issues that affect PNoy’s political influence, the political system of the Philippines involve powerful presidency that PNoy and the administration can still maneuver things [16]. The insight and analysis prove that majority of the political editorial articles from 2014 to 2015 is contained within policy making, politicians, and government controversies.

The majority of the published editorial articles from June 2014 to June 2015 by the Philippine Broadsheets present Liberalism. Newspaper 1 has the greatest number of political editorial articles that supports Liberalism with 79.6% followed by Newspaper 3 with 64.8% and Newspaper 2 with 62.8%.

The ideologies presented by the political editorial articles reflect the values of the current government since the data resulted that the broadsheets’ political editorial articles, which acted as the signifier in the study, were mostly Liberal. Furthermore, it also reflects the ownership of the firms. It is evident that the owner/head/major shareholders of the publication have some association to politics and business. It also stated that liberalism and capitalism were intertwined. However, compared to the Newspaper 2, the Newspaper 1 and the Newspaper 3 have acquired a significant percentage when it comes to Socialism. They adhere to their values that seek to give equality and to empower the Filipinos.

The results above were supported by the idea that the Philippines is a democratic country. As a democratic country, it supports the idea of freedom, of social equality, and of individualism. These traits were evident in the country. Some of the examples are the media firms that were able to air news that can oppose the government and the protests by organizations and party lists to fight for their rights to liberty and freedom of speech [17].

Table 3 shows the treatment used by the Philippine Broadsheets on their political editorial articles. No significant difference (.084 significance level) among the Philippine Broadsheets is observed regarding of the treatment they used in presenting their political editorial articles. Results show that the Philippine Broadsheets treated most of their political editorial articles neutrally where the Newspaper 1 had forty-three percent (43%) followed by the Newspaper 2 with thirty-nine point five percent (39.5%) and lastly, the Newspaper 3 with thirty-three point eight percent (33.8%).

Table 2 Political Ideologies Presented by the Philippine Broadsheets

Political Ideology	Newspaper 1		Newspaper 2		Newspaper 3	
	F	%	f	%	F	%
Liberalism	74	79.6%	27	62.8%	46	64.8%
Socialism	13	14%	3	7%	17	23.9%
Conservatism	6	6.5%	13	30.2%	8	11.3%
Total	93	100%	43	100%	71	100%

$$\chi^2 = 20.010 \text{ (Significant Difference); sig= .000}$$

Table 3. Treatment Used by the Philippine Broadsheets on their Political Editorial Articles

Treatment	Newspaper 1		Newspaper 2		Newspaper 3	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>F</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Positive	14	15.1%	14	32.6%	22	31%
Neutral	40	43%	17	39.5%	25	35.2%
Negative	39	41.9%	12	27.9%	24	33.8%
Total	93	100%	43	100%	71	100%

$\chi^2 = 8.209$ (No significant Difference); sig= .084

However, the neutral treatment is closely followed by the negative treatment in the Newspaper 3 with a thirty-three point eight percentage (33.8) and the Newspaper 1 with forty-one point nine percent (41.9%). On the other hand, the positive treatment ranked second in the Newspaper 2 with a thirty-two point six rating (32.6%). As the results reflect, the Philippine broadsheets were neutral in their political editorial articles. The shown result proves that they adhere to their taglines wherein the bottom-line is to provide unbiased information to the Philippine nation. As a media enterprise, the Filipino people can rely on the Philippine broadsheets' for just treatment of the major issues that were released in their articles.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

There is a significant difference among the focus of the issue of the Philippine broadsheets. Moreover, the focus of the Philippine Broadsheets from June 2014 to June 2015 centers mostly on policy making, politicians, and government controversies. Furthermore, the broadsheets support Liberalism as the rampant political ideology in the Philippines. It also goes in accordance with the party list that our current president belong to. It is quite pleasing to see that the broadsheets are in line with the government. When media is in the same track with the government, less disputes would arise. Marvelously, the Philippine Broadsheets were unbiased in their writing. How? For most of the articles published by the Philippine broadsheets were treated neutrally. It proves that they maintain their just view on the issues that they tackle in their editorial articles. This should not only be maintained and evident in the Philippine Press but also in other types of media that is available in the country when it comes to treating the news. Furthermore, although they are on the same wavelength with the government regarding political ideology, they were able to give their readers balanced news that can maintain their readers' trust.

Additionally, the obtained results also show that the Philippine Daily Inquirer and the Philippine Star accept and support social equality while consequently, the Manila Bulletin supports hierarchy. It can be observed on the way the Philippine broadsheets present in their political editorial articles. Since the result of the study concluded that the three leading broadsheets are different in the way they presented their political articles in terms of Political Ideology, the researchers suggest further studies related to it and use more than three political ideologies. However, this study focused only on highly political editorial articles as the unit of analysis. For further studies, researchers could also include other themes that can be found on the editorial articles. Moreover, other ideologies could also be included in the list instead of just focusing on Liberalism, Socialism and Conservatism.

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