



## The True Results of the 2004 Philippine Presidential Election Based on the NAMFREL Tally

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**ABSTRACT.** The National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) tally of the 2004 Philippine presidential election shows clear signs of manipulation through selective tabulation in favor of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, making her lead over Fernando Poe Jr. appear to be larger. However, much of the skew in the NAMFREL data can be removed by making certain corrective assumptions to estimate how the uncounted votes went. This paper asserts that during the 2004 Philippine presidential election, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo did not win by around 1.1 million votes over Fernando Poe Jr. It was a very close contest, with the most probable results ranging from a GMA win of around 156,000 votes or less, to an FPJ win of around 84,000 votes or less.

**KEYWORDS.** presidential election · Philippines · NAMFREL

### INTRODUCTION

During the 2004 Philippine presidential election, I volunteered for election watch with the Coalition for Hope, a group against election fraud. I chose the group because three Catholic bishops initiated it. My assignment was to monitor the tabulation by the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL), which was supposed to be the citizens' election watchdog. Because of some abnormal behavior I observed in the NAMFREL data, I ended up being a "watchdog of a watchdog." When the bishops declared—prematurely, I think—that the cheating was "not massive" but "isolated," I continued in my personal capacity, because I wanted to know not only who really won the elections but also by how much. This final report is the result of my personal search for the truth. Its contents are my responsibility alone.

NAMFREL released 83 reports. Eighty-two were released while the tally was going on, from May 11 to June 5, 2004. NAMFREL stopped its tally on June 5, 2004 by issuing a final report, Report No. 82, with

79.21 percent of precincts reported. On June 30, 2004, it issued a Terminal Report (also Report No. 83), which brought the precincts reported up to 82.98 percent. The NAMFREL reports of presidential votes were broken down into regional tallies. Except for Reports No. 63-68 and 73, the regional tallies in the reports did not include a breakdown by region or province of the precincts reported, as required by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC).

This paper contains three major sections. The first part is a comparison of the results of the NAMFREL and Congress tallies to identify major discrepancies, the second part is an analysis showing the skew in the NAMFREL data in favor of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (GMA), and the last part discusses a method to correct the skew, in so far as it can be corrected, in order to determine the true results of the 2004 presidential election.

In this report, certain words have very specific meanings, as follows: *total votes* (the sum of the votes for the five presidential candidates), *GMA lead* (GMA votes minus Fernando Poe Jr. [FPJ] votes), *percentage share* (votes garnered by a candidate divided by the total votes) *GMA margin* (percentage share of GMA minus percentage share of FPJ), *skew* (an abnormal set of data that makes a candidate's apparent lead larger or smaller than the real lead) <sup>1</sup>, and *false trend* (an abnormal set of data leading to an apparent winner different from the real winner in an area).

## LIMITATIONS

This report assumes that the precinct-based election returns (ERs) collected by NAMFREL reflect closely how the people truly voted. Because of this assumption, it does not cover election fraud that involves altering the ERs themselves, including fake ERs, disenfranchisement of voters in specific areas, or misuse of government funds. The report does note the possibility that the new data in NAMFREL's Report No. 83 contains some spurious ERs.

The refusal of NAMFREL officials to release to the public their breakdown of precincts reported by province creates another limitation. NAMFREL's COMELEC accreditation required the release of this essential piece of information not only at the end but also as the tally itself progresses, so that the public may appreciate whether the tally was proceeding evenly in each candidate's bailiwick or whether certain bailiwicks were contributing a disproportionate share to the national totals. In COMELEC SPP Case No. 03-002 issued on December 10, 2003, the supplemental resolution which gave accreditation to

NAMFREL as COMELEC'S citizen's arm, NAMFREL was required to publish its results "indicating the regional breakdown by province, with the total number of precincts reported compared with the total number of precincts in the area."

Thus, the breakdown by province (or, at least, by region) of precincts reported should have been included in the system design itself, to meet the COMELEC requirement. NAMFREL's system designers did not do this however. It should have been a simple matter to add this to the NAMFREL reports, as the author suggested to NAMFREL officials as early as May 15, 2004, the fifth day of the tally. Of NAMFREL's 83 reports, only seven included such a breakdown by region. This was done on the eleventh to the fourteenth day of NAMFREL's canvass (Reports No. 63-68 covering 56.06-63.40 percent of all the precincts, issued May 21-24, 2004) and again on the seventeenth day of the 26-day tally (Report No. 73 covering 67.57 percent of all the precincts, issued May 27, 2004).

It was essential for NAMFREL to release this information at the end of the tally (Report No. 82), and in its Terminal Report (Report No. 83), but neither report did. Despite repeated requests from the author, NAMFREL officials have not released the information so far (as of May 21, 2005). Thus, our estimates of the voting turnout per precinct as well as the final voting turnout per region are based on the average over the first 17 days instead of the entire 26 days of the tally and are subject to a larger-than-usual averaging error.

If NAMFREL releases this breakdown, *any analyst can make a very good ER-based estimate of the true results of the 2004 presidential election*, independent of the COC-based Congress canvass.

## COMPARING THE NAMFREL AND THE CONGRESS TALLIES

Two parallel tallies were made for the 2004 Philippine presidential election: the official tally which culminated in the canvass by Congress of provincial Certificates of Canvass (COCs), and the unofficial tally of ERs by NAMFREL.

If the two match, we are probably as close to the true results of the elections as we can get. If they do not, NAMFREL's ER-based tally is probably closer to the truth. For three reasons: 1) it is harder to tamper with 216,000 plus ERs than with 180 COCs to bias nationwide results, 2) it makes less sense to risk doctoring a tally which is unofficial anyway, and 3) teachers who canvass the ERs in full public view and

Table 1. Major discrepancies in National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) and Congress election tallies (by region)

Area	Congress		NAMFREL		Discrepancy (%)
	GMA (%)	FPJ (%)	GMA (%)	FPJ (%)	
Philippines	40.0	36.5	39.4	36.9	0.9
ARMM	61.9	30.6	38.8	58.0	50.5
Central Mindanao	32.2	39.2	24.0	44.5	13.5
Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR)	39.5	26.1	38.0	28.6	4.1
Northern Mindanao	43.1	42.2	40.8	43.9	3.9
Western Mindanao	48.3	39.6	44.7	39.9	3.8
Caraga	54.4	30.4	53.5	30.7	1.3
Southern Mindanao	41.2	41.8	40.6	41.9	0.6
Southern Tagalog	24.2	44.9	24.2	45.3	0.5
Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV)	45.0	19.6	44.4	19.2	0.2
Bicol	28.9	24.9	27.9	23.8	-0.1
NCR	26.5	36.7	26.5	36.5	-0.2
Cagayan Valley	32.3	44.7	32.6	44.4	-0.5
Central Visayas	72.4	16.2	72.6	15.9	-0.5
Eastern Visayas	45.4	43.3	45.7	42.9	-0.6
Western Visayas	58.9	25.8	59.4	25.4	-0.9
Ilocos	35.8	43.8	35.6	42.3	-1.3
Central Luzon	37.6	42.5	39.2	41.5	-2.6

Note: Congress count is 100 percent complete; NAMFREL 83percent.

NAMFREL volunteers are more credible than COMELEC provincial canvassers.

Since NAMFREL did not complete its tally while Congress did, we have to compare percentages of votes or percentage margins, instead of absolute numbers. Do they match? Yes, they do in some regions, particularly in Bicol and in National Capital Region, i.e. Metro Manila (NCR), but not in other regions. I have explained above why the NAMFREL tally is probably closer to the truth. Thus, we can use it to benchmark the Congress tally. Doing so shows the following major discrepancies (see Table 1):

1. The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM): An FPJ win with a 19.2 percent margin became a GMA win with a 31.3 percent margin. This implies an equivalent *dagdag-bawas* (vote padding and shaving) operation (FPJ votes changed to GMA votes) of 252 votes per thousand.<sup>2</sup>
2. Central Mindanao: FPJ's 20.5 percent margin was shaved to 7.0 percent, an equivalent *dagdag-bawas* rate of 68 votes per thousand.
3. Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR): GMA's 9.3 percent margin went up to 13.4 percent, equivalent to 20 *dagdag-bawas* votes per thousand.
4. Northern Mindanao: FPJ's 3.0 percent margin became 0.8 percent in favor of GMA, equivalent to 19 *dagdag-bawas* votes per thousand.
5. Western Mindanao: GMA's 4.9 percent margin went up to 8.6 percent, equivalent to 19 *dagdag-bawas* votes per thousand.
6. Central Luzon: The discrepancy was in favor of FPJ, increasing his margin from 2.3 percent to 4.9 percent, implying an equivalent of 13 *dagdag-bawas* votes per thousand in favor of FPJ. Later, we will suggest a different interpretation for this discrepancy.
7. Nationwide: Congress canvassed a 3.5 percent GMA margin over FPJ, while NAMFREL tallied only 2.6 percent, suggesting 4.5 *dagdag-bawas* votes per thousand in favor of GMA.

Table 2. Major discrepancies in National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) and Congress election tallies (by province)

Province	Congress		NAMFREL		Discrepancy
	GMA (%)	FPJ (%)	GMA (%)	FPJ (%)	
Basilan	58.5	35.7	20.3	72.6	75.1
Sultan Kudarat	53.5	17.2	20.1	49.1	65.4
Lanao del Sur	68.4	21.6	36.2	47.3	58.0
Sulu	53.5	41.5	32.1	61.4	41.3
Tawi-Tawi	38.4	56.9	20.4	74.8	35.9
Maguindanao	69.9	21.6	59.4	29.7	18.7
Lanao del Norte	41.5	43.7	32.3	50.7	16.2
Sarangani	32.9	46.8	28.7	51.3	8.7
Romblon	38.3	42.4	34.6	45.0	6.4
Zambales	26.4	51.7	24.7	54.3	4.3
Apayao	38.7	40.7	37.2	42.7	3.5
Benguet	40.6	17.2	38.6	18.5	3.4
Guimaras	74.3	10.8	72.8	12.3	3.0
Surigao del Sur	53.2	31.8	51.2	32.7	2.9
Agusan del Norte	57.0	27.2	55.1	28.3	2.9
Taguig/Pateros	25.9	36.1	24.2	37.2	2.7
Mt. Province	41.5	19.3	40.2	20.6	2.7
Ilocos Sur	50.0	27.0	48.7	28.0	2.3
Zamboanga del Sur	45.3	40.9	44.1	41.8	2.2
Kalinga	41.9	23.3	40.1	23.6	2.1
Quirino Province	35.0	40.6	34.6	41.8	1.6
Sorsogon	26.7	35.1	25.6	35.5	1.5
Pasig City	25.3	37.6	24.6	38.4	1.4
Biliran	44.0	42.8	43.4	43.5	1.3
Camarines Norte	26.7	40.4	25.9	40.8	1.3
Iloilo	70.7	13.4	70.0	14.0	1.2
Misamis Oriental	34.3	51.0	33.7	51.5	1.1
Bataan	22.4	58.0	21.8	58.4	1.0
Cagayan	36.9	42.9	36.2	43.3	1.0
Davao Oriental	47.9	39.1	45.0	37.2	1.0
Misamis Occidental	55.5	30.8	54.8	31.0	1.0
Leyte	49.4	37.3	49.1	37.9	0.9

Note: Congress count is 100 percent complete; NAMFREL 83 percent.

Among the provinces, the biggest discrepancies occurred in Basilan, Sultan Kudarat, Lanao del Sur, Sulu, Tawi-tawi, Maguindanao and Lanao del Norte, in ARMM, Central Mindanao and Northern Mindanao, with lead reversals in the first four provinces (see Table 2):

1. Basilan:<sup>3</sup> In NAMFREL's tally, FPJ got 73 percent of the votes and GMA 20 percent. When Congress was

Table 2 (continuation). Major discrepancies in National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) and Congress election tallies (by province)

Province	Congress		NAMFREL		Discrepancy
	GMA (%)	FPJ (%)	GMA (%)	FPJ (%)	
Camiguin	52.5	36.4	51.4	36.2	0.9
Valenzuela City	23.3	40.6	23.4	41.5	0.8
Abra	32.4	50.5	32.1	50.9	0.7
Occidental Mindoro	24.1	55.3	23.6	55.5	0.7
North Cotabato	32.6	42.5	31.0	41.5	0.6
Zamboanga Sibugay	36.1	52.5	35.8	52.7	0.6
Nueva Ecija	20.5	60.9	20.2	61.1	0.5
Pampanga	80.4	10.6	80.1	10.8	0.5
Malabon/Navotas	20.7	50.3	20.9	51.0	0.5
Northern Samar	29.0	61.9	28.8	62.2	0.5
Eastern Samar	45.2	44.3	44.9	44.5	0.5
Bukidnon	47.3	37.0	47.0	37.2	0.5
Negros Oriental	60.9	28.0	60.6	28.1	0.5
Caloocan	23.1	40.6	23.0	40.9	0.4
Mindoro Oriental	31.0	47.2	30.4	46.9	0.4
Davao del Sur	39.0	43.6	38.8	43.8	0.4
Pasay City	23.8	37.9	23.9	38.3	0.4
San Juan	25.7	31.1	25.5	31.3	0.3
Cebu	77.2	11.8	77.0	11.9	0.2
Italy	40.7	28.3	40.6	28.4	0.2
Catanduanes	17.6	40.0	17.3	39.8	0.2
Mandaluyong	28.6	35.2	28.4	35.2	0.2
Marinduque	27.5	48.9	27.5	49.0	0.2
Siquijor	65.4	24.1	65.1	24.0	0.1
Ifugao	42.5	20.1	42.4	20.2	0.1
Batangas	29.5	42.2	29.3	42.1	0.1
Albay	36.0	15.6	36.0	15.6	0.0
Cavite	20.5	26.8	19.6	25.9	0.0
Aurora Province	22.9	57.8	22.9	57.8	0.0
Capiz	54.7	31.4	54.7	31.4	0.0
Agusan del Sur	52.0	31.9	51.5	31.4	-0.1
Marikina	29.2	34.0	29.0	33.7	-0.1
Muntinlupa City	24.5	36.9	24.6	36.9	-0.1

Note: Congress count is 100 percent complete; NAMFREL 83 percent.

done with its canvass, GMA had won 58 percent of the votes to FPJ's 36 percent, equivalent to 376 *dagdag-bawas* votes per thousand.

2. Sultan Kudarat: NAMFREL results showed that FPJ won 49 percent and GMA 20 percent of the votes. The official Congress canvass, however, showed GMA winning 53 percent and FPJ 17 percent of the votes. In

Table 2 (continuation). Major discrepancies in National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) and Congress election tallies (by province)

Province	Congress		NAMFREL		Discrepancy
	GMA (%)	FPJ (%)	GMA (%)	FPJ (%)	
Negros Occidental	54.1	31.0	54.3	31.0	-0.1
Compostela Valley	44.3	37.6	44.3	37.5	-0.1
Batanes	56.5	29.2	56.6	29.1	-0.2
Ilocos Norte	17.2	42.3	17.3	42.2	-0.2
Camarines Sur	19.9	15.1	20.0	15.0	-0.2
Nueva Vizcaya	27.1	38.0	27.5	38.2	-0.2
Manila	26.8	38.7	27.1	38.7	-0.2
Parañaque City	29.7	30.2	29.9	30.1	-0.3
Rizal	22.3	46.4	22.5	46.3	-0.3
Laguna	20.5	50.2	20.5	49.9	-0.3
Palawan	18.7	63.6	18.9	63.5	-0.3
Samar	30.5	60.4	30.5	60.1	-0.4
Isabela	29.8	48.6	30.1	48.6	-0.4
Las Piñas	31.7	30.7	30.7	29.3	-0.4
Makati City	27.0	33.4	27.4	33.2	-0.6
La Union	18.7	55.6	18.9	55.1	-0.7
Tarlac	45.2	35.8	46.2	35.5	-1.3
Quezon Province	26.5	52.1	27.2	51.5	-1.4
Aklan	43.3	41.7	44.2	41.0	-1.6
Surigao del Norte	54.7	31.1	55.7	30.4	-1.7
Quezon City	28.6	33.0	29.4	32.1	-1.7
Bulacan	22.6	48.1	22.8	46.6	-1.7
Cotabato City	16.1	55.7	17.0	54.8	-1.8
Davao del Norte	41.0	41.5	42.1	40.7	-1.9
Southern Leyte	74.2	16.7	75.1	15.4	-2.2
Zamboanga del Norte	59.6	30.9	60.5	29.5	-2.2
Pangasinan	41.3	45.2	42.5	43.6	-2.8
South Cotabato	21.3	43.7	21.6	41.0	-3.1
Bohol	68.1	19.0	69.4	17.2	-3.1
Masbate	44.7	37.6	47.1	35.7	-4.3
Antique	49.3	33.8	55.1	27.0	-12.5

Note: Congress count is 100 percent complete; NAMFREL 83 percent.

effect, 327 out of 1,000 votes changed from FPJ to GMA.

3. Lanao del Sur: In NAMFREL, FPJ won 47 percent and GMA 36 percent of the votes. When Congress was done, GMA had won 68 percent and FPJ 22 percent of the votes, or 290 *dagdag-bawas* votes per thousand.
4. Sulu: NAMFREL results show FPJ getting 61 percent and GMA 32 percent of the votes. In Congress, it



became 53 percent for GMA and 41 percent for FPJ. Around 207 votes out of every thousand in the province changed from FPJ to GMA.

5. Tawi-tawi: Around 179 of every thousand votes in the province changed from FPJ to GMA, reducing FPJ's lead over GMA from 54 percent to 18 percent.
6. Maguindanao: Ninety-three votes for every 1,000 changed from FPJ to GMA, increasing GMA's lead over FPJ from 30 percent to 48 percent
7. Lanao del Norte: Eighty-one votes of every thousand changed from FPJ to GMA, reducing FPJ's lead from 18 percent to 2 percent of the total votes.

The discrepancies between the NAMFREL and Congress tallies extended to the presidential voting turnout (i.e., the average total votes for president per precinct). The biggest discrepancies occurred in ARMM, Ilocos and Central Visayas <sup>4</sup> (see Table 3):

1. ARMM: The region jumped in rank from the lowest (94.2 presidential votes per precinct) to the second to the highest (153.4 votes per precinct).
2. Ilocos: It jumped from 147.2 votes to 167.7 votes per precinct, making it the top instead of the sixth ranking region in terms of presidential votes per precinct.
3. Central Visayas: The turnout changed from 137.3 to 151.0 votes per precinct.
4. Central Mindanao, Eastern Visayas and Bicol: The three regions showed significant increases.
5. Cagayan Valley and Central Luzon: The two regions showed significant decreases.

In its Terminal Report, NAMFREL made no mention of these major discrepancies in GMA and FPJ votes and in the voting turnout between its tally and the Congress canvass. Instead, it only cited the discrepancy between its tally, which showed Robert Barbers leading Rodolfo Biazon by a few thousand votes for the twelfth place in the senatorial contest, and the COMELEC tally, which showed Biazon leading Barbers. In truth, because the Biazon-Barbers contest was a statistical dead-heat where every vote counted, the incomplete NAMFREL tally had nothing new to contribute towards its resolution.

Table 3. Discrepancies in average votes per precinct

Area	NAMFREL Congress Increase per precinct			Total increase
Philippines	145.5	149.0	3.5	767,539
The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)	94.2	153.4	59.2	339,701
Ilocos	147.2	167.7	20.5	233,807
Central Visayas	137.3	151.0	13.7	227,141
Central Mindanao	132.1	140.7	8.5	77,589
Eastern Visayas	138.6	146.6	8.0	84,447
Bicol	145.8	152.1	6.3	77,750
Caraga	145.8	148.1	2.3	13,487
National Capital Region (NCR)	134.3	134.8	0.5	16,144
Southern Tagalog	151.3	150.6	-0.7	-22,405
Northern Mindanao	144.1	143.2	-0.8	-8,657
Southern Mindanao	144.4	143.4	-1.0	-10,781
CAR	148.4	147.2	-1.2	-4,451
Western Mindanao	135.5	133.3	-2.3	-18,902
Western Visayas	154.9	152.6	-2.3	-39,992
Central Luzon	156.1	152.8	-3.2	-79,527
Cagayan Valley	162.0	153.2	-8.7	-63,831

The above analyses of the discrepancies assumed that NAMFREL's tally was closer to the truth. Can we argue the other way around, that the Congress tally is closer to the truth and that NAMFREL manipulated its tally to minimize the voting turnout in ARMM, reduce GMA's margin nationwide and reverse her win in two Mindanao regions?

In fact, a deeper analysis of the NAMFREL tally indeed shows indications of bias and manipulation. However, this bias, as will be shown in the next section, is generally *in favor of GMA, not FPJ*. This suggests that in some regions and nationally, the real discrepancy between the Congress tally and the truth is even larger than we have shown. In others regions though, and in fairness to those COMELEC officials who might have likewise risked their safety and even their lives to conduct an honest count, the COMELEC/Congress data might indeed be closer to the truth than NAMFREL's. We will identify these regions subsequently.

### THE SKEW IN THE NAMFREL DATA IN FAVOR OF GMA

Imagine a hypothetical election where candidates A and B are tied in an even match. The first report shows both getting one million votes

each. In the second report, they get two million votes each. In the third report, three million votes each; the fourth report, four million votes each. In the final report, they get five million votes each. The contest is a draw. However, if, starting with the second report, dishonest canvassers advance the count of an additional 100,000 votes for candidate A, his count would become: Report 1, 1 million; Report 2, 2.1 million; Report 3, 3.1 million; Report 4, 4.1 million; Report 5, 5 million. Reports 2-4 will show candidate A leading by 100,000 votes. Candidate B catches up in the final report and the contest still ends in a tie. However, if the count is aborted after the fourth report, the false impression that candidate A is winning by 100,000 votes will never be corrected. This is what happened in the NAMFREL tally.

There are three ways to show the pro-GMA skew in the NAMFREL data. The first way is to show that GMA votes were counted faster than FPJ votes. This was done by clustering GMA votes in the early part of the count and FPJ votes in its latter part. If we convert GMA's votes in each report into a percentage of her final vote (i.e., her vote in the Terminal Report), we can compare her votes not against other candidates' vote, but against her own final vote; how fast the percentage increases reveals how fast a candidate's votes were counted. Because the votes have all been reduced to percentages of their final votes, the speed of the tabulation per candidate can be compared (see Table 4).

Up to the fifth day of the tally, the difference between GMA and FPJ remained less than 1 percent, with GMA having gotten 20.75 percent of her final total, and FPJ 19.88 percent of his final total. On the sixth day (starting with Report No. 39), GMA jumps ahead at 38.15 percent to FPJ's 28.63 percent. By the eighth day, GMA has gotten 52.78 percent of her total votes, while FPJ has gotten only 42.00 percent of his, or a difference of 10.78 percent. By the seventeenth day of the tally, 82.22 percent of GMA's votes have been counted, but only 79.78 percent of FPJ's. On the eighteenth day, the difference between the two goes below 1 percent again. In the Terminal Report, both reach 100 percent. From the sixth to the seventeenth day, a significantly larger percentage of GMA's votes were counted than FPJ's votes, giving the public a skewed picture of the race between the two.

The clustering resulting from the difference in pace also shows if we split the NAMFREL reports into two: the earlier half and the later half. The totals for each half show that GMA votes were clustered towards the first half of the tally, while FPJ votes were clustered towards the second half of the tally. In the NAMFREL tally's first 9 days, Reports

Table 4. Progress of count per candidate

Day	Total Vote		Total vote as percent (%) of final vote		Skew
	GMA	FPJ	GMA	FPJ	
1	22,304	14,886	0.21	0.15	0.06
2	335,835	381,685	3.23	3.93	-0.70
3	912,807	826,061	8.78	8.50	0.28
4	1,598,165	1,548,693	15.37	15.93	-0.57
5	2,158,218	1,931,780	20.75	19.88	0.88
6	3,967,341	2,783,092	38.15	28.63	9.51
7	4,438,541	3,132,345	42.68	32.23	10.45
8	5,489,261	4,081,701	52.78	42.00	10.78
9	6,077,403	4,832,768	58.43	49.72	8.71
10	6,687,578	5,901,840	64.30	60.72	3.58
11	7,203,091	6,515,142	69.26	67.03	2.23
12	7,952,228	7,214,787	76.46	74.23	2.23
13	7,952,228	7,214,787	76.46	74.23	2.23
14	8,033,305	7,289,337	77.24	75.00	2.24
15	8,223,709	7,416,580	79.07	76.31	2.76
16	8,412,890	7,616,374	80.89	78.36	2.53
17	8,550,752	7,753,806	82.22	79.78	2.44
18	8,692,734	8,041,263	83.58	82.73	0.85
19	8,922,242	8,307,643	85.79	85.47	0.31
20	8,922,242	8,307,643	85.79	85.47	0.31
21	8,982,463	8,372,312	86.37	86.14	0.23
22	9,120,641	8,507,502	87.70	87.53	0.16
23	9,272,855	8,657,158	89.16	89.07	0.09
24	9,366,226	8,796,755	90.06	90.51	-0.45
25	9,454,635	8,869,037	90.91	91.25	-0.34
26	9,674,597	9,158,999	93.02	94.23	-1.21
51	10,400,401	9,719,479	100.00	100.00	0.00

Note: Positive skew is in favor of GMA, negative for FPJ.

No. 1-55 counted 13.3 million votes, with GMA ahead by 1.3 million votes. The subsequent Reports No. 56-83, covering the rest of the tally, counted 13.0 million votes, with FPJ ahead by 0.7 million votes. FPJ votes were clustered in the latter part of the tally and the GMA votes in the earlier part of the tally.

A reverse tabulation of the NAMFREL data also shows the clustering very clearly: treat the last batch of data (from the last report) as if it were the first batch, and tabulate backwards, with the first batch of data (from Report No. 1) being tabulated last. The results are the same. If this reverse tabulation is done with Reports No. 1-82, FPJ leads all the way from Report No. 82 to Report No. 40, or Day 26 to Day 6. Only with Report No. 39, when a big flood of votes from

Table 5. Reverse tabulation of votes shows skew clearly

Day	Lead		
	For this day only	Forward tabulation	Reverse tabulation
1	7,418	7,418	515,598
2	-53,268	-45,850	508,180
3	132,596	86,746	561,448
4	-37,274	49,472	428,852
5	176,966	226,438	466,126
6	957,811	1,184,249	289,160
7	121,947	1,306,196	-668,651
8	101,364	1,407,560	-790,598
9	-162,925	1,244,635	-891,962
10	-458,897	785,738	-729,037
11	-97,789	687,949	-270,140
12	49,492	737,441	-172,351
13	0	737,441	-221,843
14	6,527	743,968	-221,843
15	63,161	807,129	-228,370
16	-10,613	796,516	-291,531
17	430	796,946	-280,918
18	-145,475	651,471	-281,348
19	-36,872	614,599	-135,873
20	0	614,599	-99,001
21	-4,448	610,151	-99,001
22	2,988	613,139	-94,553
23	0	613,139	-97,541
24	-43,668	569,471	-97,541
25	16,127	585,598	-53,873
26	-70,000	515,598	-70,000

Note: Positive lead means a GMA lead; a negative lead means an FPJ lead. Forward tabulation is the way NAMFREL did it; reverse tabulation tallies votes starting with the twenty-sixth day and moving back to the first day.

Central Luzon, Central Visayas and Western Visayas came in at 1 a.m. of Day 6, does GMA gets the lead, which she then maintains up to Report No. 1. (See Table 5 for the reverse tabulation of Reports No. 1-82). Including Terminal Report in the reverse tabulation results in an initial GMA lead because the Terminal Report itself is skewed in favor of GMA. This GMA lead continues up to Report No. 75. Then it is again FPJ all the way down to Report No. 40. GMA takes the lead with Report No. 39 down to Report No. 1. The reverse tabulation again shows that FPJ's votes can be found more on the latter portion of the tally while GMA's votes are more on the earlier reports (and the Terminal Report, which is also skewed in favor of GMA).

Table 6. Progress of tally among the bailiwicks

GMA Area	GMA lead	Progress of count (%)	FPJ area	FPJ lead	Progress of count (%)	Whose bailiwick is ahead
Central Visayas	1,293,381	100.26	Southern Tagalog	924,108	87.30	GMA
Western Visayas	756,649	81.98	NCR	290,236	73.67	GMA
Caraga	143,524	73.03	Central Mindanao	129,426	52.54	GMA
Bicol	71,352	96.13	Cagayan Valley	111,638	79.23	GMA
OAV	47,311	100.00	Ilocos	98,476	88.13	GMA
CAR	42,138	78.75	Central Luzon	69,854	79.27	FPJ
Eastern Visayas	41,550	103.48	ARMM	67,500	79.78	GMA
Western Mindanao	31,472	84.87	Northern Mindanao	39,389	86.44	FPJ
			Southern Mindanao	15,828	85.99	

Note: Progress of count was based on the region's average vote per precinct as computed from Report No. 73. Exceeding 100 percent means that this average went up after Report No. 73. Bicol is Roco's bailiwick but GMA won there over FPJ.

The second way to show the pro-GMA skew in the NAMFREL data is to compare the pace of counting in each region. It can be shown that the counting in GMA's bailiwicks was faster than in FPJ's bailiwicks. Let us look at NAMFREL's Terminal Report again. Using the average votes per precinct computed from Report No. 73, we can estimate the progress of precinct reported per region throughout the tally up to June 5, 2004 as well as when the Terminal Report was submitted on June 30, 2004.<sup>5</sup> By matching GMA's top bailiwick (Central Visayas) with FPJ's (Southern Tagalog), GMA's second bailiwick (Western Visayas) with FPJ's (NCR), GMA's CARAGA with FPJ's Central Mindanao, and so on, we can compare how the NAMFREL tally progressed vis-à-vis areas where one or the other candidate was leading (see Table 6 for details):

1. GMA's Central Visayas (100.26 percent of precincts reported) was way ahead of FPJ's Southern Tagalog (87.30 percent of precincts reported).
2. GMA's Western Visayas (81.98 percent) was ahead of FPJ's NCR (73.67 percent).
3. GMA's Caraga (73.03 percent) was way ahead of FPJ's Central Mindanao (52.54 percent).
4. GMA's Bicol (96.13 percent), which was Roco's bailiwick but where GMA led FPJ, was way ahead of FPJ's Cagayan Valley (79.23 percent).

5. GMA's Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV) (100.00 percent) was way ahead of FPJ's Ilocos (88.13 percent).
6. FPJ's Cagayan Luzon (79.27 percent) was slightly ahead of GMA's CAR (78.75 percent).
7. GMA's Eastern Visayas (103.48 percent) was way ahead of FPJ's ARMM (79.78 percent).
8. FPJ's Northern Mindanao (86.44 percent) was slightly ahead GMA's Western Mindanao (84.87 percent).

The votes in areas where GMA was winning are generally counted ahead of the corresponding areas where FPJ was winning. This generally faster counting of GMA areas, particularly GMA's top bailiwick Central Visayas, meant that GMA votes were being counted relatively earlier and FPJ votes were being counted relatively later. This produced a skew in the NAMFREL results in favor of GMA, as she got an artificially higher margin due to her bailiwicks contributing a disproportionate share to the national totals.

Note also how Central Visayas overshot the 100 percent mark. This means that *its average votes per precinct went up after Report No. 73 was issued on May 27*. That this average would go up in the closing days of the tally can be interpreted two ways: as a normal variation in vote turnout per precinct or as a case of ghost voters being added late in the tally to pad the votes of a candidate. If NAMFREL releases the breakdown by province of precincts reported, we might be able to interpret this data better.

The third way to show the pro-GMA skew in the NAMFREL data is through its Terminal Report where more FPJ votes remained uncounted than GMA votes. The uncounted votes can be obtained by subtracting the votes already counted from the voting turnout per region (i.e., uncounted votes equals voting turnout minus votes counted). The voting turnout can be estimated by multiplying the average voting turnout per precinct (computed from Report No. 73) with the total number of precincts per region (i.e., voting turnout equals average voting turnout/precinct times the number of precincts in the region). This gives a total voting turnout of 31.4 million. This estimate is lower than the Congress voting turnout of 32.3 million, another discrepancy between the NAMFREL and Congress tallies. I could have used the official (COMELEC/Congress) turnout data to compute the remaining uncounted votes, but this would pollute the

Table 7. Votes not yet counted, as of June 30, 2004

Area	Uncounted	Lead (%)
NCR	1,038,329	FPJ by 9.99
Central Luzon	793,498	FPJ by 2.30
Southern Tagalog	635,610	FPJ by 21.15
Central Mindanao	569,133	FPJ by 20.54
Western Visayas	490,350	GMA by 33.93
Cagayan Valley	246,182	FPJ by 11.89
Caraga	233,300	GMA by 22.72
Southern Mindanao	211,709	FPJ by 1.22
Northern Mindanao	203,611	FPJ by 3.04
Ilocos	199,165	FPJ by 6.66
Western Mindanao	171,417	GMA by 3.27
CAR	121,735	GMA by 9.34
ARMM	109,193	FPJ by 15.66
Bicol	69,318	GMA by 4.14
OAV	0	GMA by 25.15
Central Visayas	-5,992	GMA by 56.71
Eastern Visayas	-50,885	GMA by 2.75

Note: The negative votes mean that the average vote per precinct in that region went up after Report No. 73

NAMFREL data with precisely those numbers we want to countercheck. Doing the math gives us the regions with the highest number of still uncounted votes (see Table 7):

1. NCR: This FPJ bailiwick tops the list with around 1,038,000 uncounted votes.
2. Central Luzon: Some 793,000 uncounted votes; FPJ also leads in this region.
3. Southern Tagalog: In FPJ's number one bailiwick, there were around 636,000 uncounted votes.
4. Central Mindanao: Another FPJ bailiwick, with some 569,000 uncounted votes.
5. Western Visayas: This GMA bailiwick is fifth in the list, with around 490,000 uncounted votes.
6. Cagayan Valley: An FPJ stronghold, with 246,000 uncounted votes.
7. Caraga: A GMA stronghold, with 233,000 uncounted votes.

The four remaining FPJ region (Southern Mindanao, Northern Mindanao, Ilocos and ARMM) still had 724,000 combined votes



uncounted, while the three remaining GMA regions (Western Mindanao, CAR and Bicol) had 362,000 combined uncounted votes. In the other two remaining GMA areas (Eastern Visayas and Central Visayas), all votes were tallied.

In all, around 4 million votes remained uncounted in FPJ areas, while only 1.1 million votes remained uncounted in GMA areas, another indication that NAMFREL's tally tended to delay the counting of FPJ areas and to advance the counting of GMA areas. This produced the skew in the NAMFREL tally in favor of GMA.

These three views on the NAMFREL tally all individually confirm the relatively advanced counting of pro-GMA precincts and the relatively delayed counting of pro-FPJ precincts. The data also show that the early clustering of GMA votes was most pronounced on the sixth day of NAMFREL's tally, starting with Report No. 39.

### THE SKEW FROM THE MAY 16 FLOOD OF GMA VOTES

A continuous faster counting of GMA areas produces a skew that becomes gradually larger as the tally progresses. The consistently faster counting of Central Visayas returns compared to Southern Tagalog returns, for instance, produced this kind of pro-GMA skew.

A sudden surge of high-margin precincts creates a different kind of skew—a sudden jump in lead, which then tapers down gradually as the delayed votes of the opponent catch up. This was the second major source of skew in the NAMFREL tally: a flood of GMA votes on the sixth day of the tally.

On Sunday, May 16, 2004, the sixth day of its tally, NAMFREL released six reports, Nos. 39-44, with a proportion of GMA votes so high that GMA's lead over FPJ jumped from 226,438 to 1,280,239 votes, and her percentage margin over FPJ jumped from 4.2 percent to 14.1 percent.

On that day alone, GMA got an additional 1,053,801-vote lead: 4.7 times the 226,438-vote lead she accumulated in the five previous days, 6.7 times the 156,499-vote lead she accumulated in the subsequent two days, and twice her 515,598-vote lead reported at the end of the 26-day tally.

Report No. 39 alone, issued at 1 a.m. of May 16, 2004, counted 1.33 million votes, the highest number of votes covered in any single report among the 82 reports of the 26-day tally. GMA got two-thirds of these votes, giving her an additional 637,614-vote lead, and a high

Table 8. NAMFREL Report No. 39

Region	GMA Lead	Votes (%)	Region	Lead	Region	FPJ Lead
Central Luzon	521,006	77.65	Cagayan Valley	0	Southern Tagalog	27,643
Central Visayas	71,859	10.71	Southern Mindanao	0	Ilocos	2,940
Western Visayas	49,769	7.42	Central Mindanao	0	Eastern Visayas	1,394
OAV	17,622	2.63	ARMM	0	Northern Mindanao	705
Western Mindanao	10,183	1.52			Bicol	564
Caraga	513	0.08			CAR	102
NCR	10	0.00				
Philippines	637,614	95.03				33,348

Note: FPJ won in Central Luzon. According to the Congress canvass, GMA won in Pampanga by 557,992 votes.

margin of 48 percent. These highly pro-GMA precincts came from Central Luzon (78 percent), Central Visayas (11 percent), and Western Visayas (7 percent) (see Table 8).

In Central Luzon, Report No. 39 alone changed the lead from FPJ by 52,450 votes (31.6 percent margin for FPJ) to GMA by 468,556 votes (50.9 percent margin for GMA). This false trend continued until the eighteenth day of the tally, when the Central Luzon lead switched back to FPJ, whose lead was still increasing slightly when NAMFREL stopped its tally on June 5, 2004 (see Table 8).<sup>6</sup>

That Sunday spike of GMA votes became Monday's headlines, setting the tone for the entire second week, during which GMA's hugely skewed lead reached 1.4 million. A potential side effect of this seemingly big lead was to demoralize FPJ watchers into thinking their cause was lost and abandoning their post, making the tampering of COCs easier.

NAMFREL's officials claim their policy is to count precinct election returns (an ER usually contains around 150 votes) on a "first-come, first-serve" basis. If these were truly the case, and the votes accumulated 150 votes at a time, any big concentration of high-margin GMA precincts would have been diluted as they were tabulated together with precincts coming from FPJ areas. These obvious spikes and uneven progress in the tally, involving millions of votes and occurring too often and too consistently in favor of GMA, show obvious signs of selective tabulation.

Recall the discrepancy between the NAMFREL and Congress tallies. In Central Luzon, Congress appeared to have increased FPJ's margin over GMA. In this particular case, given the clear selective tabulation by NAMFREL in this region, the COMELEC/Congress

results are probably closer to the truth. With its results as benchmark, we can now interpret the discrepancy as the skew in the NAMFREL data in favor of GMA, reducing FPJ's margin. This may also explain the discrepancy in Ilocos and possibly even Western Visayas.

I had earlier hoped that NAMFREL would eventually redeem itself when it submitted its Terminal Report. Instead, NAMFREL's Terminal Report showed serious infirmities that not only confirmed the pro-GMA bias in the NAMFREL tally, but raised the possibility of actual tampering (instead of simply delaying selectively) of NAMFREL data. It was likewise highly skewed in favor of GMA, as can be seen in the breakdown of the remaining uncounted votes, which are found to be mainly from FPJ areas. It still did not include a breakdown of the precincts counted by region or province, masking the true results of the NAMFREL tally. It contained returns from ARMM and Central Visayas which are so out of the ordinary that they could not be used with confidence as representative samples to estimate how the uncounted votes in these regions went (see next section). Worst, the Terminal Report implies a 100 percent voter turnout, a statistical improbability in so large a sample (1.6 million voters in every Philippine region except Central Mindanao). If the total new votes counted in the report (1,588,399) is divided by the total new precincts counted (8,169), one gets 194.4, the average number of presidential votes counted per precinct. Since a precinct has around 200 registered voters, this is 97.2 percent of the registered voters. If we further add the average number of voters who did not cast a vote for president or whose ballot were somehow invalidated (3.3 percent, based on the Terminal Report), then the voter turnout in the Terminal Report is 100.5 percent.

In fairness to most NAMFREL officials and the rank-and-file NAMFREL volunteers, one or a few persons in the tabulation center deciding which returns to revalidate and which ones to tabulate right away could have introduced the skews, intentionally or otherwise. My own interviews with NAMFREL officials and lower-ranking staff kept leading me to its "systems group" as the most probable origin of the skew. According to my sources, the revalidate-or-tabulate decisions were made within this group.

The gist of this section was published on June 20, 2004 in a leading national newspaper, *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (PDI). The accusation that NAMFREL's tally was skewed in favor of GMA due to selective tabulation was subsequently cited by several columnists (Antonio Abaya of the *Philippines Free Press*, Neal Cruz of *PDI*, and Dan Mariano of *Today*) and reported by other newspapers (*Malaya* and

*Tribune*). Yet, NAMFREL officials did not respond to this accusation in their June 30, 2004 Terminal Report. In addition, they were silent about the discrepancies between their tally and that of Congress, nor did they release the final coverage of their tally in terms of precincts per province.

### THE TRUE RESULTS OF THE 2004 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

It is clear from the NAMFREL tally that GMA could not have won by 1.1 million votes. NAMFREL's own Terminal Report showed GMA ahead by 680,922 votes, but the same Terminal Report also showed that 4.4 million of the remaining uncounted votes came mainly from FPJ bailiwicks and only 1 million from GMA bailiwicks. We would therefore expect the uncounted votes to contain more FPJ votes than GMA votes, which would reduce GMA's lead further.

We will now try to estimate as closely as possible GMA's actual lead over FPJ. To do so, we must estimate how those remaining uncounted votes went.

Let us go back to Report No. 82, which NAMFREL issued when it stopped its tally on June 5, 2004. That report showed GMA leading FPJ by 515,598 votes, with around 6.6 million more votes to be counted. We will treat the new data contained in the Terminal Report as a representative sample that presumably indicates how these 6.6 million votes went. We will review later our assumption that it is a representative sample.

The 6.6 million uncounted votes were distributed as follows: NCR, 1,160,189; Southern Tagalog, 888,262; Central Luzon, 813,470; Western Visayas, 651,322; Central Mindanao, 569,133; Western Mindanao, 341,009; Ilocos, 335,537; Eastern Visayas, 333,377; Caraga, 278,546; Cagayan Valley, 248,341; Northern Mindanao, 222,677; Southern Mindanao, 217,571; ARMM, 169,529; CAR, 151,103; Central Visayas, 125,509; Bicol, 118,497.

We are trying to estimate how these votes went per region. When the Terminal Report was not yet available, I had published an analysis applying the percentages established by the votes already counted on these uncounted votes, and I came up with a "final" GMA lead of 354,084 (*PDI*, June 20, 2004). However, this figure is still too high, because it assumes that the percentage shares of GMA and FPJ are the same in the uncounted votes as in the votes already counted. We have already established the NAMFREL tendency to count GMA votes earlier and FPJ votes later. This suggests that the uncounted votes will

tend to have a higher percentage of FPJ votes than can be found in the votes already counted. Therefore, I tried another analysis using the percentages established not over the 26 days of the tally, but only in the last day of the tally. However, the votes that came in on the last day of NAMFREL's tabulation (June 5, 2004) were too few in some regions, so why not the last two days of the tally. In fact, I tried all possibilities from the last day to the last 20 days, and I got a range of possible outcomes, from around 351,000 in the high end to around -20,000 in the low end. It meant that while GMA probably won the presidential race by very small margin, there was a slight possibility that FPJ won it.

Before the Terminal Report was issued, there was no way of narrowing this range down further. With the Terminal Report, we can now treat its new data as a representative sample to help us better estimate how the 6.6 million votes went.

It has been suggested that the total votes counted (i.e., Reports 1-82, plus the Terminal Report) be used, instead of the Terminal Report alone, as the basis for estimating how the uncounted votes went. The main reason why the paper did not do this is that sample data must come from the population itself. The votes counted in the Terminal Report (the sample) are part of the 6.6 million pre-Terminal Report uncounted votes (the population). However, the votes counted in Reports 1-82 are not part of this population.

The Terminal Report tallied 1,588,399 new votes, <sup>7</sup> with the following percentage margins per region (a negative margin means an FPJ lead): NCR, -15.38 percent; Southern Tagalog, -23.02 percent; Central Luzon, -16.43 percent; Western Visayas, 30.23 percent; Central Mindanao, no new data; Western Mindanao, 31.89 percent; Ilocos, 5.07 percent; Eastern Visayas, 4.20 percent; Caraga, 22.32 percent; Cagayan Valley, -13.39 percent; Northern Mindanao, -10.65 percent; Southern Mindanao, -32.28 percent; ARMM, 24.28 percent; CAR, -20.45 percent; Central Visayas, 79.08 percent; Bicol, 2.41 percent. One problem: the Terminal Report had no new data for Central Mindanao. In this case, we will fall back on the earlier Report No. 82, whose new data for Central Mindanao gives GMA a percentage margin of -53.79 percent. More problems: we assumed that the new votes in the Terminal Report were representative of the 6.6 million uncounted votes. However, in at least two regions, it contained abnormalities that suggest that it has been polluted with possibly spurious data:

1. ARMM: The Terminal Report counted 60,336 new votes, with a GMA margin of 24.28 percent. In contrast, a day-to-day summary of the previous 82 reports shows FPJ consistently winning in ARMM with an average margin of 22.17 percent.
2. Central Visayas: The Terminal Report counted 131,501 new votes, with a GMA margin of 79.08 percent, which is higher than anything GMA had gotten in the first 26 days of the tally.

Of course, these returns could be authentic. But they are so far beyond the averages established by the tally that, in the context of the GMA bias shown by NAMFREL's data, they cannot but arouse some niggling doubts, if not about their authenticity, at least about their being *representative samples*. If we use these seemingly abnormal percentages anyway, the result is a GMA win by 76,920 votes.

What percentages do we replace them with, if we reject the Terminal Report data from these two regions as unrepresentative? Like the Central Mindanao case, we can use the percentages established by the report immediately preceding the Terminal Report, Report No. 82 (No. 81 in the case of ARMM, because No. 82 contains no ARMM data), whose new data give the following percentage margins for GMA: ARMM, -37.16 percent; Central Visayas, 61.17 percent. If we proceed with the computations at this point, the result is an FPJ win by 49,717 votes.

A final correction still needs to be done. These percentages for Central Mindanao (-53.79 percent), ARMM (-37.16 percent) and Central Visayas (61.17 percent) are based on samples that are somewhat low: 819 votes for Central Visayas, 1,318 votes for Central Mindanao and 1,429 votes for ARMM. We will make a larger sample for each region by including the data in the next earlier report, yielding the following percentages: Central Mindanao (-22.31 percent), ARMM (-21.45 percent), and Central Visayas (33.97 percent). These percentages may be tried in various combinations; they will all yield a range of results defined by a high and a low estimate. The end result will be not a single number but a range.

This is our final set of percentages to apply to the uncounted votes: NCR, -15.38 percent; Southern Tagalog, -23.02 percent; Central Luzon, -16.43 percent; Western Visayas, 30.23 percent; Central

Mindanao, -22.31 percent (high estimate), -53.79 percent (low estimate); Western Mindanao, 31.89 percent; Ilocos, 5.07 percent; Eastern Visayas, 4.20 percent; Caraga, 22.32 percent; Cagayan Valley, -13.39 percent; Northern Mindanao, -10.65 percent; Southern Mindanao, -32.28 percent; ARMM, -21.45 percent (high), -37.16 percent (low); CAR, -20.45 percent; Central Visayas, 61.17 percent (high), 33.97 percent (low); Bicol, 2.41 percent.

Applying them to the uncounted votes per region tells us how the 6.6 million uncounted votes actually went (negative means an FPJ lead): NCR, -178,427; Southern Tagalog, -204,459; Central Luzon, -33,637; Western Visayas, 196,871; Central Mindanao, -306,157 (high), -126,958 (low); Western Mindanao, 108,760; Ilocos, 16,999; Eastern Visayas, 13,996; Caraga, 62,184; Cagayan Valley, -33,242; Northern Mindanao, -23,721; Southern Mindanao, -70,223; ARMM, -36,368 (high), -62,995 (low); CAR, -30,897; Central Visayas, 99,258; Bicol, 2,855.

Adding them all up gives a high estimate of -359,488 and a low estimate of -599,456 votes. This means: if we take the Terminal Report as a representative sample (after the corrections are made) of the uncounted votes as of Report No. 82, FPJ led GMA by around 359,000 to 599,000 in the 6.6 million uncounted votes. Combining this range of estimates with GMA's prior lead of 515,598 gives a final range of 156,110 to -83,858 votes. The high estimate says: GMA could have won by up to around 156,000 votes. The low estimate says: FPJ could have won by up to around 84,000 votes. <sup>8</sup>

We are done. Based on the NAMFREL data, with its pro-GMA skew corrected as best as we can, the most probable result of the 2004 presidential elections lies in the range between 156,000 votes in favor of GMA and 84,000 votes in favor of FPJ. It was a very close contest, and we are still not sure who won. The whole procedure is summarized in Table 9.

## CONCLUSIONS

This is as far as we can go in the effort to narrow down the truth about the results of the 2004 elections and the conduct of the Congress and NAMFREL tallies. Based on a careful analysis of the NAMFREL tally, these are my conclusions:

Table 9. Estimating the 2004 presidential election results

Area	Reports number 1-82			Terminal report			Adjustments, percent margin		GMA lead over FPJ	
	Total Votes	GMA lead over FPJ	Votes not yet counted	Total	GMA lead	GMA lead (%)	High estimate	Low estimate	High estimate	Low estimate
Philippines	24,776,090	515,598	6,624,072	1,588,399	165,324	10.41			-359,488	-599,456
Ilocos	1,342,522	-105,385	335,537	136,372	6,909	5.07			16,999	16,999
Cagayan Valley	936,763	-111,349	248,341	2,159	-289	-13.39			-33,242	-33,242
Central Luzon	3,013,975	-66,573	813,470	19,972	-3,281	-16.43			-133,637	-133,637
Southern Tagalog	4,116,227	-865,953	888,262	252,652	-58,155	-23.02			-204,459	-204,459
Bicol	1,673,985	70,167	118,497	49,179	1,185	2.41			2,855	2,855
Western Visayas	2,069,320	707,993	651,322	160,972	48,656	30.23			196,871	196,871
Central Visayas	2,149,349	1,189,384	125,509	131,501	103,997	79.08	61.17	33.97	76,777	42,635
Eastern Visayas	1,128,931	25,418	333,377	384,262	16,132	4.20			13,996	13,996
Western Mindanao	792,234	-22,617	341,009	169,592	54,089	31.89			108,760	108,760
Northern Mindanao	1,278,394	-37,358	222,677	19,066	-2,031	-10.65			-23,721	-23,721
Southern Mindanao	1,293,475	-13,936	217,571	5,862	-1,892	-32.28			-70,223	-70,223
Central Mindanao	630,107	-129,426	569,133	0	0	N.A.	-22.31	-53.79	-126,958	-306,157
ARMM	370,567	-82,149	169,529	60,336	14,649	24.28	-21.45	-37.16	-36,368	-62,995
Caraga	586,383	133,423	278,546	45,246	10,101	22.32			62,184	62,184
CAR	421,770	48,143	151,103	29,368	-6,005	-20.45			-30,897	-30,897
NCR	2,783,950	-271,495	1,160,189	121,860	-18,741	-15.38			-178,427	-178,427
OAV	188,138	47,311	0	0	0	N.A.			0	0
GMA lead in votes not yet counted									-359,488	-599,456
GMA lead in votes already counted									515,598	515,598
Final GMA lead									156,110	-83,858

Note: Using these seemingly unrepresentative Central Visayas and ARMM percentages instead of the corrections give a GMA win of 76,920 votes.



1. GMA did not win by around 1.1 million votes, as the Congress count leads us to believe.
2. GMA did not win by around 681,000, as the NAMFREL Terminal Report indicates.
3. The NAMFREL tally shows clear signs of manipulation through selective tabulation in favor of GMA, making her lead appear to be larger, but much of the skew in the NAMFREL data can be removed by making certain corrective assumptions to estimate how the uncounted votes went.
4. It was a very close contest, with the most probable results ranging from a GMA win of around 156,000 votes or less, to an FPJ win of around 84,000 votes or less.
5. NAMFREL officials appear to be keeping the truth from the public by not including in their system design a provincial or regional breakdown of precincts counted; not releasing this breakdown despite strong demands by the opposition, the media and election watchers; continuing to refuse to release this information today despite repeated requests; and keeping silent on the major discrepancies between their tally and the Congress canvass. If NAMFREL releases this breakdown, we might be able to narrow down the probable range even further and get closer to the truth.

There are good men and women among the NAMFREL officials. Thousands of NAMFREL volunteers risked their safety and their lives, hoping they can contribute towards a quick, complete and honest citizens' count. I suggest that they make themselves heard; ask their chair, secretary-general and the head of the systems group to explain these issues; and demand that the breakdown by province of the number of precincts NAMFREL covered be released to the public. This small piece of information will get us as close to the true results of the 2004 Philippine presidential election as NAMFREL's ER-based tally will allow. *That is not too much to ask for.* ❀

## NOTES

1. In statistics, “skew” is a departure from the normal curve, which is a more general definition yet still consistent with the definition of the term as used in this article.
2. To get the equivalent *dagdag-bawas* (vote padding and shaving) votes per 1,000: subtract GMA’s percentage margin based on NAMFREL from her margin based on Congress, divide the result by 2, and multiply by 10. To illustrate more simply, consider an area with 10 voters where FPJ wins 6 votes and GMA 4. To change this from 4-6 to 6-4 in favor of GMA (a 4-vote discrepancy), only 2 *dagdag-bawas* votes are needed. The first changes the score to 5-5, the second to 6-4. A *dagdag-bawas* vote doubles its effect because the vote subtracted from one candidate is then added to the other candidate. Thus, the equivalent *dagdag-bawas* votes is half the discrepancy. The percentages are multiplied by 10 to convert them to votes per thousand. (In software that automatically shows fractions as percent, multiply by 1,000.)
3. COMELEC’s Basilan data includes the returns from Isabela City, so I added NAMFREL’s Isabela City data to its Basilan data for comparison purposes. Basilan falls under ARMM, but Isabela City, though in Basilan, is under Western Mindanao.
4. The NAMFREL voting turnout data was extracted from its Report No. 73 (May 27, 2004). It is only this report, and earlier Reports No. 63-68, which included a breakdown of the precincts reported per region. Divide the total votes counted per region by the corresponding number of precincts reported, to get the average voting turnout per precinct.
5. Normally, this essential information should not be estimates but actual figures. NAMFREL has these figures but its officials refuse to release them.
6. I was at the NAMFREL tabulation center in La Salle Greenhills on Saturday and on Sunday. There were fewer than usual observers and NAMFREL volunteers during that first weekend after the elections. Report No. 39 covers a 9-hour period from 4 p.m. of May 15, 2004, Saturday, to 1 a.m. of May 16, 2004, Sunday. The few observers who were there that Sunday realized that GMA’s lead had jumped to more than a million. Some heated exchanges occurred between NAMFREL Secretary-General Guillermo Luz and a lawyer who was insisting that NAMFREL release a regional breakdown of the precincts counted. Mr. Luz said they could not do so. In truth, they could if they wanted to. Every report contained the national total of precincts reported by NAMFREL. They cannot get such a total if they did not have either regional or provincial figures to add up. NAMFREL did release the breakdown at the end of the second week. Throughout the week, however, media reports all referred to GMA’s million-vote lead. By the end of that week too, NAMFREL would move its headquarters to the RFM building in Mandaluyong. Media attention would shift to the COMELEC canvass of the senatorial race, and the “leak” by COMELEC officials of a GMA win by a million votes.
7. NAMFREL had announced on June 5, 2004 that it was stopping its tally, and issued Report No. 82. These votes were, in effect, tallied while nobody was looking. With this announcement, the media and other observers stopped monitoring the NAMFREL tally. It now turns out the tally was, in fact, still going on. This is equivalent to Congress announcing it will take a one-week break in its canvass, only for the public to find out later that Congress had tabulated during that break a significant number of COCs. With its 1.6 million new votes, the Terminal

- Report actually covered more votes than any of the earlier NAMFREL reports. At 1.3 million votes, only Report No. 39, another questionable report, comes close.
8. To those disappointed by the ambiguous results: you must understand that this exercise involves uncertainties inherent in making assumptions. When forced to choose between two equally reasonable assumptions—one which could err in favor of GMA and the other which could err in favor of FPJ—I decided to adopt both, one setting the upper bound and the other the lower bound of the results. Based on the NAMFREL data, it was indeed a very close contest that, perhaps, only a counting of the official ERs can resolve. The truth is in those ERs that Congress did not want to open.

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