

# News Sourcing of Reports about President Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III State of the Nation Address from 2012-2014

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**Abstract**— This research employed the descriptive qualitative method, specifically content analysis of the online news sources of the published articles from the mainstream media and alternative media about President Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III (PNoy) State of the Nation Address (SONA) from the years 2012-2014. This study aimed to identify the news articles published before, during, and after the day of PNoy’s SONA, classify the sources cited, and determine which of the two media outlets are more traditional and non-traditional in citing their sources. Online news articles from Inquirer.net (a mainstream media agency) and Mindanews.com, Sustar.com.ph, and Bulatlat.com (alternative media agencies) were used. Based on the data, it showed that the mainstream media is more traditional while alternative media is more non-traditional in sourcing their news reports. The findings also showed that there were more sources cited by the alternative media in their news reports than by the mainstream media.

**Keywords**— mainstream media, alternative media, news sources, traditional sources, non-traditional sources

## I. INTRODUCTION

Technically, the profession of journalism is based on the relentless pursuit of facts. Indeed, news sources should be taken into consideration. Journalists do not become experts by merely writing news articles [1]. They become experts by doing research and being right.

On the other hand, journalists earn respect and authority by consistently producing quality and honest work, and citing facts and sources is one of the factors that would help improve the journalist’s credibility [2]. Which is why, sources should meet the standard definition of reliability, trustworthiness, authoritativeness, and articulateness [3].

Moreover, journalists use sources to drive their stories and support their understanding of events, issues, and/or concerns about a certain event [4]. These sources have a huge impact on the reader’s perceptions of issues and shape their opinion or stand. Oftentimes, people’s decisions are affected by what they have read in the newspaper or seen on television [3] [4].

As the pace of journalism’s development moves faster, emerging changes have become a challenge for both mainstream and alternative media. The aspect of news sourcing has also become even more crucial. News sources have become wider in scope because of the advent of social networking sites and other forms of technology [5].

The mainstream and alternative media are two different entities that control much of what people understand about

the events that occur around the world on a daily basis [6]. The way the news stories are transferred to their recipients comes through various forms of communication, all of which differ in providing news sources [5] [6].

In light of this, this research focused on the source trends of the mainstream and alternative media in their news articles about the 2012–2014 State of the Nation Address (SONA) of President Benigno "PNoy" Aquino III. By utilizing the agenda-setting theory and applying it to the analysis of mainstream and alternative media news sources, several trends emerged. These trends highlight what types of news sources are most frequently cited in the mainstream and alternative media.

## II. RELATED WORK

Numerous studies have been conducted about media framing on news sites. One of these is the content analysis of the March 2011 Japan Earthquake/Tsunami and Nuclear Disaster. The researcher found out that few disaster myths were used overall, and there was no evidence of nuclear crisis media hype during the time period [7]. Moreover, the researcher also discovered that the Yumuri Shimbun newspaper did not use more official sources than NYTimes.com. It was also mentioned in the study that it is important for journalist to strive hard to find as many sources as possible so that there will still be chance to validate the information.

Another similar study, entitled "Journalist and News Sources: Implications of Professionalism in War

Reporting." The study also wanted to find out the nature of the news sources and journalists' relationships and the extent of their professional values upheld [8]. It was discovered that the news media's choice of issues, people, and countries to highlight in their war stories has a growing impact on governments, diplomats, military, and humanitarian aid agencies.

Meanwhile, both studies concluded that since direct quotation of sources has been shown to greatly influence readers' perceptions of issues, the use of imbalanced quotations in testimony can be effective way to sway readers' opinions to one side on an issue without the readers even realizing that the quotation they just read was one sided [7] [8].

**III. METHODOLOGY**

The researcher employed a descriptive qualitative method, specifically content analysis, to analyze the classification of the sources cited in the news reports of mainstream and alternative media about PNoy's SONA from 2012-2014. The types of sources are based on Alito Malinao's classification of news sources.

**Data Collection Method**

The materials used are the online news reports about PNoy's SONA 2012–2014 published by mainstream and alternative media. The author searched the articles from the archives of mainstream and alternative media websites using the keywords "SONA of PNoy" and the date and year it was published. Reports before, during, and after the SONA 2012-2014 from Inquirer.net, the mainstream media, and Mindanews.com, Sunstar.com, and Bulatlat.com, all alternative media, are collected for categorization of reports and further analysis.

**Data Analysis Method**

News articles are presented in tabular form before identifying the sources for each article. The author then classified the sources as traditional or non-traditional based on Alito Malinao's classification of news sources.

**IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1: News Articles Published in the Mainstream Media and Alternative Media about PNoy's SONA 2012

SONA 2012				
Type of Media Outlet	Before (July 22, 2012) News Headlines	During (July 23, 2012) News Headlines	After (July 24, 2012) News Headlines	TOTAL
Alternative Media Agency	1. PNoy may recognize Bacolod cop in SONA	1. Priest: Aquino's inclusion of RH bill in SONA "unacceptable" 2. SONA 2012: Broken Contract, Broken record? 3. Lies, Terror, Violence in Aquino's third SONA 4. Nationwide SONA protest today: "The people won't be fooled". BAYAN	1. Protest greets PNoy's SONA in CARAGA cities 2. ARMM biz leader: "Final peace pact is key to good investment in Mindanao" 3. Anti-SONA 2012 protests in regions against privatization, right violations 4. Overseas Filipinos worldwide join people's SONA	9
Mainstream Media Agency	None	1. Scores hurt as protesters clash with cops 2. Aquino 'good news' not in sync with reality-Castro 3. No mention of RH bill in SONA, says SOTTO 4. Aquino vows to step up infrastructure development 5. Aquino calls ARMM governor 'terrified ghostbuster'	1. Aquino statement responsible parenthood 'safe', says Sotto 2. Guingona says Aquino's SONA surpassed his expectations 3. 3,000 cops block 5,000 protesters hurling stones	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>17</b>

Table 1 shows the collected news articles about PNoy's

SONA in the year 2012, published in the mainstream and alternative media. As shown on the above table, only one (1) news report was published before (July 22, 2012), the day of PNoy's SONA in the alternative media, and there was no news story published in the mainstream media. However, during July 23, 2012 of the SONA, a total of nine (9) reports were published from the mainstream and alternative media. Four (4) of those reports were from the alternative media, and five (5) were extracted from the mainstream media agency.

Moreover, after the day of the SONA (July 24, 2012), both news sites published news reports. There are four (4) articles published in the alternative media and three (3) reports published in the mainstream media. Although both news sites have published reports about the protest, most of the reports published in mainstream media are about the content of PNoy's SONA. Thus, there are 17 news stories published before, during, and after the day of PNoy's SONA. There are nine (9) stories from alternative media and eight (8) reports from mainstream media.

Table 2: News Articles Published in the Mainstream Media and Alternative Media about PNoy's SONA 2013

SONA 2013				
Type of Media Outlet	Before (July 21, 2013) News Headlines	During (July 22, 2013) News Headlines	After (July 25, 2013) News Headlines	TOTAL
Alternative Media Agency	1. Noy kin: Luisita raffie timed for SONA	1. Davao groups meet SONA with protest 2. PNoy eyes interlocking to augment coco farmers' income 3. Aquino continues to enjoy high trust, performance rating 4. SONA protest, march to Batasan on today, with or without a permit	1. GenSan, ARMM biz leaders hail Aquino's SONA 2. Aquino: No quarrel with critics 3. 21 cops, 3 militants hurt in SONA rally 4. "Long and winding SONA silent on what matters most to Filipinos". Progressive groups	9
Mainstream Media Agency	1. Bayan 'to assert right' to hold SONA rally 2. Metro cops all set for SON; MMDA enforces traffic rerouting	1. No specific threats to Aquino's SONA so far, say police. 2. Protesters egg anti-riot cops, burn Aquino effigy 3. A little home, jobs are what the poor want to hear from Aquino's SONA 4. Catholic Bishops: 'Do more for the poor' Prelates issue challenge to Aquino ahead of SONA	1. Gazmin dismisses Aquino failure to mention West PH Sea row in SONA 2. Nancy Binay laments non-mention of OFW plight in Aquino's SONA 3. Pro-FOI Solons unframed over bill's non-inclusion in Aquino SONA	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>18</b>

Presented in table 2 are the gathered reports about the SONA 2013 of PNoy. Before July 21, 2013, the day of SONA, only one (1) report was published in the alternative media, while there were two (2) articles published in the mainstream media. On July 22, 2013, the day of SONA, both media outlets published news reports. There were four (4) articles published in alternative media and four (4) news stories published in mainstream media. After the day of the SONA, another four (4) reports were published in the alternative media and three (3) articles in the mainstream media. Totally, there were 18 news reports published before, during, and after the day of PNoy's SONA in the year 2013. Nine (9) news stories from the alternative media and nine (9) articles in the mainstream media.

Table 3: News Articles Published in the Mainstream Media and Alternative Media about PNoy's SONA 2014

SONA 2014				
Type of Media Outlet	Before (July 27, 2014) News Headlines	During (July 28, 2014) News Headlines	After (July 29, 2014) News Headlines	TOTAL
Alternative Media Agency	1. Militants to stage anti-PNoy, anti-SONA rally	1. Anti-SONA rallies on "rain or shine" 2. Anything but yellow on SONA as disillusionment with Aquino increases 3. All set for SONA ng Bayan	1. Nakaka-disappoint naman, say MILF rebs on PNoy's SONA 2. Sectors see all lies and doom in Aquino's SONA 3. SONA thousands march to call Aquino ouster	7
Mainstream Media Agency	1. Rain in the forecast for SONA on Monday	1. Aquino: Not even a bomb can stop reform 2. Cops fire water cannons on charging SONA 3. Aquino lauds customs for increased collection one year since SONA shaming 4. Majority of Filipinos still content with Aquino-Inquirer. Net poll	1. Aquino missed key issues in 2014 SONA-political analyst 2. Jailed senators praise Aquino's SONA 2014 3. Over 18,000 SONA protesters march across the nation	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15</b>

As shown in the table presented above, a total of 15 reports were published in the mainstream media and alternative media about PNoy's SONA 2014; seven (7) reports from the alternative media and eight (8) articles from the mainstream media. Before July 27, 2014, the day of PNoy's SONA, only one (1) article was published in the alternative media as well as in the mainstream media. On July 28, 2014, the day of SONA, three (3) reports were published in the alternative media, and four (4) news stories were published in the mainstream media, including a poll regarding public trust in President Aquino.

Moreover, after July 29, 2014, the day of SONA, both news sites published three (3) reports. Mainstream media and alternative media both reported protests and criticisms of the executive towards the government regarding the SONA of PNoy.

### Classification of Sources Cited in the News Reports

Table 4: Numbers of News Sources Cited in Mainstream Media and Alternative Media in their News Reports about PNoy's SONA 2012-2014

ONLINE NEWS SITES	TRADITIONAL	NON-TRADITIONAL	TOTAL
Alternative Media Agency	18	56	<b>74</b>
Mainstream Media Agency	34	21	<b>55</b>

Sources may be generally classified as either traditional or non-traditional. The government typically relies on traditional sources such as executive officials, police officers, military officials, constitutional bodies, the senate, and the Supreme Court. On the other hand, non-traditional sources are the cause-oriented groups, which include non-government organizations like Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, youth groups, labor groups, and the Teacher's Alliance, but also include individual commoners, religious

sectors, and experts [1]. Sources are identified based on the designations or labels mentioned in the articles.

Presented above is the total number of sources identified in the 25 news reports from mainstream media and 25 from alternative media. Among the 74 sources cited on the alternative news site, 56 are non-traditional sources, and 18 are traditional sources. On the other hand, the mainstream media cited a total of 55 sources. There are 34 traditional sources and 21 non-traditional sources. 129 sources are cited in the news reports of alternative and mainstream media about PNoy's SONA 2012-2014.

Based on the data above, the alternative media cited more non-traditional sources than traditional sources. In terms of sourcing, alternative media agencies will offer access to a much wider range of voices [9]. These often include members of local communities, protesters, and activists. In other words, alternative media pave the way for ordinary voices to be heard compared to the privileged voices of the elite [9] [11]. Indeed, based on the data, non-traditional sources are more cited. In a broader sense, "alternative media" simply means a wider distribution of non-mainstream political points of view [10]. However, there are also community media or alternative news outlets that have a little interest in political activism of any kind, which can also be shown in the data that shows alternative media also cites traditional sources [9].

On the other hand, the mainstream media is making extensive use of members of elite groups as sources [11] [9]. In mainstream news, "ordinary people" are most often used as material for "vox pop" interviews and their opinions are sought for human stories [9].

Based on the data presented, the mainstream media cited both traditional and non-traditional sources. However, the mainstream media has cited more traditional sources compared to non-traditional sources. The use of traditional sources such as "elite people" in the mainstream media is a routinizing source practice [9] [12], and that one recurring criticism of the mainstream media is that they often rely on the same set of sources who are government leaders and officials [5]. However, in the data shown below, the mainstream media is now overturning this routine since, based on the number of sources cited in their reports, there is only a relatively small difference between the number of traditional sources cited and non-traditional sources.

The use of officials in news stories would appeal to the readers as reliable and with expertise. In the current system, however, professionals or leaders with sufficient expertise are expected to use their knowledge or skills to outwit the readers [7] [8]. This, according to Stomberg's study, made the news reports biased and not reliable at all [7].

In terms of the number of sources cited, alternative media mentioned more sources in their reports compared to mainstream media. It is critical for a journalist to seek out

as many sources as possible so that the reporter can validate the information [1] [7]. Doing this may increase the objectivity, completeness, and impartiality of the articles, and biases may also be prevented [7].

## V. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE SCOPE

Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that alternative media cited a greater number of sources in their articles regarding PNoy's SONA from 2012–2014 compared to the mainstream media. Considering the equal number of reports (25) gathered from both media outlets, it can be concluded that alternative media is more extensive and more reliable in reporting news about PNoy's SONA, since, citing as many sources as possible will make the news reports more reliable, complete, and impartial [7]. Meanwhile, it is also evident in the data gathered that the mainstream media used more non-traditional sources and the mainstream media cited more traditional sources.

Although the results of this study do not generally reflect the trend of news sourcing in the alternative and mainstream media today, there was an assumption that mainstream media outlets would cite more traditional sources compared to alternative media. The use of traditional sources by both mainstream and alternative media is evident in the data gathered. However, in terms of usage of this type of source, alternative media often used non-traditional sources in their reports while mainstream media apparently cited more traditional sources, specifically government officials and leaders. This sourcing trend in the Philippines' mainstream and alternative media is also a manifestation of the so-called routinizing practice of sourcing [9] [12], in the media landscape, especially in the mainstream media.

Given this data, the researcher recommends that every journalist in the mainstream media should cite as many sources as they can to validate information and make the story reliable. This is in line with the data that shows the mainstream media has a smaller number of sources cited in their news reports compared to alternative media. Also, a more comprehensive study regarding source trends with the usage of survey and interview research design is recommended.

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