

The Lipman-Sharp Model of Community of Philosophical Inquiry and the 2022 Philippine Elections

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Abstract: The Philippines is currently under an “infodemic,” marked by the constant threat of disinformation and misinformation, affecting the flow of information and public discourse among Filipino citizens. In particular, this phenomenon poses a significant challenge to the democratic activity during election as it influences voter decisions by shaping their perceptions. An analysis of the role of fake news in the 2022 Philippine elections reveals two main issues: (1) supporters often propagate their beliefs by spreading fake news, and (2) many Filipino citizens are vulnerable to fake news due to their deficiency of skills. These issues highlight the precarious situation of Filipino voters—individuals are misled by members of their own community and educational institutions struggle to produce thinkers capable of resisting the infodemic. As such, this research explores the potentials of the Lipman-Sharp Model of Community of Philosophical Inquiry in addressing these challenges by cultivating multidimensional thinking in students. The study suggests that strengthening the development of critical, creative, and caring thinkers, particularly among the youth, can help reshape political discourse and create a more reflective, respectful environment for navigating opposing beliefs, particularly in the context of the Philippine election.

Keywords: *Community of Philosophical Inquiry, Philippine elections, multidimensional thinking, misinformation, disinformation*

Introduction

In the Philippines, an ongoing “infodemic” underscores the persistent threat posed by disinformation and misinformation. More commonly known as the spread of ‘fake news,’¹ this phenomenon encompasses two forms: misinformation, which refers to inaccurate or false information, and disinformation, which involves the deliberate dissemination of malicious content, often in the form of hoaxes or propaganda.² This growing problem poses a serious threat to the democratic process of elections in the Philippines. In theory, the voting activities including voting decision relies on how voters construct their opinions from unbiased information, but the spread of fake news disrupts this ability.³ We are then regarded as “patient zero” with the amount of fake news

¹ Sheila Siar, “Fake News, Its Dangers, and How We Can Fight It,” Policy notes (PIDS-Online), August 2021, <https://pidswebs.pids.gov.ph/CDN/PUBLICATIONS/pidspn2106.pdf>.

² “Factsheet 4: Types of Misinformation and Disinformation,” Using Social Media in Community Based Protection: A Guide, n.d., 230–31. <https://www.unhcr.org/innovation/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Factsheet-4.pdf>

³ Yuko Kasuya, Disinformation and the Victory of Ferdinand Marcos Jr. in the 2022 Philippine Presidential Election, January 17, 2024, <https://saferinternetlab.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Yuko-Kasuya-KISIP-PAPER-2024.pdf>.

in social media that corrupts public perception.⁴

To highlight the effects of this movement, the recent elections manifested certain ways on how fake news impede the choices that would determine the ideal flow of the elections. Trolls in the cyberspace are involved in smearing opponents and birthing fervent fanbases.⁵ Political fandoms such as “Kakampinks” and “Uniteam” are two opposing examples, with the former supporting former Vice President Leni Robredo and the latter favoring current President Bongbong Marcos. The campaign period developed different forms of strategies e.g., the spread of different narratives, news, and press releases which blurred the line between what was true or not. This political polarization occurred as differences in views prevailed during the campaign season that resorted to strategies, allowing citizens to act for the benefit of their preferred candidate. Among these strategies is the use of fake news as a tool to influence political beliefs and attitudes that further aggravated the fanbases of both parties. The infodemic bent the elections when it created a media and information culture that can shape perspectives and reinforce beliefs through the lack of factual information and dialogue—leading the Philippines to a deeper polarization in the coming years.⁶

The vulnerability of Filipinos to fake news can be traced back to the thinking skills they possess, or lack thereof. For example, thinking skills such as critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem-solving, which are skills expected to be honed in the 21st century.⁷ These skills are essential to the increasing advancement of technology and globalization, changing the way we function or work in society.⁸ In the complex and uncertain world today, students become effective in accounting for knowledge through “recognizing, defining, acquiring, and producing it.”⁹ Furthermore, better learning experience is facilitated as children become equipped with tools to deal with different problems in a systematic and flexible manner, face information and arguments with a critical disposition, and communicate in a more effectual way.¹⁰ Thus, enhancing their thinking skills will enable students to face the progressing world around them even with challenges brought by its complexity.

Supposedly, these skills are cultivated inside educational institutions that hone and prepare students for society. Unfortunately, the current education system contains persisting problems such as “...low pupil performance, poor teacher quality (in a system where teachers are central to the education process)...”¹¹ Given these problems, schools are unable to produce active students as productive members and thinkers in society. Additionally, not all students have access to quality

⁴ Imelda Deinla et al., “Philippines: Diagnosing the Infodemic,” Lowy Institute, August 2, 2022, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpretor/philippines-diagnosing-infodemic>.

⁵ Japhet Quitzon, “Social Media Misinformation and the 2022 Philippine Elections: New Perspectives on Asia,” CSIS, November 22, 2021, <https://www.csis.org/blogs/new-perspectives-asia/social-media-misinformation-and-2022-philippine-elections>.

⁶ Imelda B. Deinla et al., “The Link between Fake News Susceptibility and Political Polarization of the Youth in the Philippines,” *Asian Journal of Political Science* 30, no. 2 (May 4, 2022): 160–181.

⁷ Emine Balci and Ramazan Eryilmaz, “The Impact of Philosophy for Children (P4C) Activities on Enhancing the Speaking Skills of Gifted Students,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 15 (October 22, 2024).

⁸ Lisnawati Rusmin et al., “Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills in the 21st Century,” *Join: Journal of Social Science* 1, no. 5 (August 22, 2024): 144–162.

⁹ Balci and Eryilmaz, “Impact of Philosophy for Children,” 1.

¹⁰ Carol McGuinness, rep., *From Thinking Skills to Thinking Classrooms: A Review and Evaluation of Approaches for Developing Pupils' Thinking* (Colegate, Norwich: Crown Copyright, 1999).

¹¹ Allan B.I Bernardo, Ma. Cynthia Rose B. Bautista, and Dina Ocampo, *When Reforms Don't Transform: Reflections on Institutional Reforms in the Department of Education*, 2009.

education. This further leaves disadvantaged citizens who are vulnerable to fake news. As a result, this hinders the Filipinos ability to receive the proper flow of information, challenging their democratic rights due to acts fueled by agenda. More than this, they are prevented from honing their thinking skills to combat the existing infodemic. This, then, reflects a post-truth phenomenon that depicts how facts are easily susceptible to the rapid increase of fake news, affecting how citizens process the information they receive in the digital sphere.

Therefore, there is a need for a framework that will aid the problems posed in public discourse and equip Filipinos with skills that will combat the infodemic. In this paper, I shall explore an approach that maximizes the potential of students and citizens alike in thinking, particularly in what they observe in their society and what they learn through being in dialogue with other members of the community. Thus, I use the Lipman-Sharp approach of the Community of Philosophical Inquiry (CPI) to cultivate multidimensional thinking skills, namely: Critical, Creative, and Caring thinking. The CPI is part of the Philosophy for Children (P4C) movement that aims to develop the skills of children—allowing them to engage in dialogue and reflect on certain topics as members of a community.¹² With multiple factors affecting the infodemic such as social classes, culture, and politics, this paper attempts to address the polarization of information and how discourse can be shaped within the community through decreasing the blow of the infodemic and creating an environment that is insusceptible to its disrupting effects. After the analysis of fake news that occurred during the recent elections, this paper shall explore the implications of the Lipman-Sharp CPI in creating a better environment amidst the current polarization of Filipino citizens and developing active thinkers essential to nation-building.

The 2022 Philippine Elections

The recent Philippine elections in 2022 were a controversial event in the country as it included multiple candidates who ran for the president’s position in place of former president Rodrigo Duterte. It was regarded by analysts as the “most significant election in the Southeast Asian nation’s recent history” because this entails replacing a president with a reputation for the brutal “drug war”, incompetence, mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic, and more.¹³ Out of ten candidates, two held the highest chance of winning the position namely, Ferdinand “BongBong” Marcos and Former Vice President Maria Leonor “Leni” Robredo. The other candidates included Manny Pacquiao, Isko Moreno, Panfilo Lacson, to name a few.

The presence of Marcos Jr. in the roster of candidates is one reason why the election was controversial. As the son of former Ferdinand E. Marcos Sr., and First Lady Imelda R. Marcos who ruled the dictatorship in the Philippines for 14 years,¹⁴ a Marcos victory may generate different expectations from Filipinos, as he presented the value of unity with the promise of progress for the country. Additionally, the Vice President of Marcos was Rodrigo Duterte’s daughter, Sara Zimmerman Duterte Carpio, forming a tandem that became one of the most challenging opponents in the race. Due to the popularity of their fathers, they were in a privileged position, effectively seen

¹² Leander Marquez, “Philosophy in Basic Education: Towards the Strengthening of the Foundations of Philippine Education,” *Policy Futures in Education*, December 6, 2017, 1–16.

¹³ “Why the 2022 Philippines Election Is So Significant,” Al Jazeera, May 9, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/8/why-the-2022-philippines-election-is-so-significant>.

¹⁴ 2022 *Philippine Presidential Elections*, 2022, <https://fleishmanhillard.com/wpcontent/uploads/2022/07/2022-Philippine-Presidential-Elections-Report.pdf>.

as “continuity candidates” of the previous administrations.¹⁵

In addition to this, the country was still in the middle of the pandemic during the campaign season and elections. Despite this, a high record of 4 million first-time voters aged 18 to 21 was reached, creating a landscape dominated by youth in terms of political interest and engagement in conversations.¹⁶ Their presence in social media increased political conversations, allowing them to engage with different people while being exposed to various information from different sources in support of their preferred candidates. However, clashing opinions are exacerbated by the spread of fake news, blurring the lines between factual narratives and information, and eventually leading to political polarization.

The spread of fake news results from the drive to impose beliefs in support of preferred candidates. It was reported that individuals who hate their political opponents are the ones who presumably spread fake news and deliberately share derogative content.¹⁷ This is seen in social media platforms and is a manifestation of how voters were participating in strategies that will benefit the candidates they support. For example, the Marcos-Duterte tandem benefited from inaccurate narratives in obscuring different facts about violations of human rights, plunder, and events from the martial law.¹⁸ Most disinformation carried out on different social media platforms were about the Marcos era being a testament to the “Golden Era” of economic growth and infrastructure while Leni is painted as a communist who was ineffectual in her position.¹⁹ On the other hand, the so-called Kakampinks were also recorded to spread fake news. Vera Files, a media non-profit organization, recorded multiple posts claiming that Atom Araullo supported Leni Robredo during the campaign by using old photos of Atom in different rallies or events which Atom himself fact-checked.²⁰ Quote cards which contain manipulative content and visuals that are intended to deceive Filipinos are seen across social media and were also spread by Filipinos clueless of its falsity.²¹

This issue reflects the problems that Arao stated back in 2019 which lie in the susceptibility of Filipinos to believe false information that they see online and the active dissemination of these. To quote,

“...it is disturbing that a significant number of Filipinos believe stories from fake news websites and dubious social media pages. It is also troubling that there are those who actively promote and disseminate these stories as well. If people start believing in fake news more than they should news from legitimate sources, they will tend to make decisions that would not be based on reliable

¹⁵ Cleve Arguelles, *From Anarchy to Unity of Families in the 2022 Philippine Elections: A Marcos Duterte Leviathan State?*, 2022, 219–36, https://ac.upd.edu.ph/acmedia/zgallery/asj_58_2_2022/ASJ_58_2_2022_FINAL/10_Arguelles_-_Essay_ASJ_58-2-2022.pdf.

¹⁶ FleishmanHillard, “Presidential Elections,” 3.

¹⁷ Mathias Osmundsen et al., “Partisan Polarization Is the Primary Psychological Motivation behind Political Fake News Sharing on Twitter,” *American Political Science Review* 115, no. 3 (May 6, 2021): 999–1015.

¹⁸ Doisa Labiste, “Fact-Checking in the Philippines: The Quest to End Disinformation in Elections,” *FULCRUM*, January 12, 2024, <https://fulcrum.sg/fact-checking-in-the-philippines-the-quest-to-end-disinformation-in-elections/>.

¹⁹ Camille Elemia, “In the Philippines, a Flourishing Ecosystem for Political Lies,” *The New York Times*, May 6, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/06/business/philippines-election-disinformation.html>.

²⁰ VERA Files, “Vera Files Fact Check: Posts Claiming Atom Araullo Is ‘Kakampink’ False,” VERA Files, June 29, 2022, <https://verafiles.org/articles/vera-files-fact-check-posts-claiming-atom-araullo-kakampink>.

²¹ Deinla et al., “Fake News Susceptibility,” 2.

information.”²²

Moreover, in an online poll conducted during World Press Freedom Day, the sentiments of participants and speakers all led to the common statement that disinformation is the predicted winner of the 2022 Philippines Presidential Elections.²³ Echoing this sentiment, it implies that with the dissemination of this false information, the choices and the beliefs that Filipinos constructed constituted the results of the Philippine elections. False information disguised as legitimate information were rapidly disseminated online that further distorted how voters discern the legitimacy of political materials, allowing voters to choose the information they see according to their ideological preferences.²⁴ To quote Heydarian, “The Philippines is paying the price for not having regulatory oversight and not making sure that the general population has a necessary cognitive resilience against these kinds of brazen and blatant lies.”²⁵ Having affected the sphere of political discourse in social media that will supposedly help citizens create informed decisions, the democratic principle that factual and unbiased information should be accessible for all is compromised.²⁶ Analyzing the outplay of fake news in the 2022 Philippine elections can reveal two main problems: (1) supporters tend to forward their beliefs through spreading fake news, and (2) Filipinos are susceptible to fake news due to their deficiency of skills. This, then, directs us to Philippine education which will explain how the recent elections were carried out and how crucial the quality of information and public discourse is in the democratic rights of voting and its practice.

Philippine Education and the Lack of Thinking Skills

Analyzing the case of infodemic would reveal that the act of producing and spreading fake news can be intentional, causing harm for personal gain.²⁷ It was reported that individuals who hate their political opponents are the ones who presumably spread fake news and deliberately share derogative content.²⁸ The act of suffrage is compromised because there are people who are willing to disseminate false information and distort facts to persuade or convince others to gain vote for their candidate. With the evident presence of polarization, the practices of the Kakampinks and Uniteam became a collective action, further blurring the lines for everyone active on social media during the campaign season. In relation to how false information is disseminated, digital communities are also formed to share and support their common ideas, seemingly providing a sense of belongingness in their views.²⁹ Many Filipinos remain susceptible to fake news, continuing to be victims of biased information in social media.

The increasing use of social media in supporting or undermining candidates during the

²² Kim G. Quilting, “The Problem with Fake News: Up Experts Speak on the Impact of Disinformation on Politics, Society and Democracy,” University of the Philippines, December 19, 2023, <https://up.edu.ph/the-problem-with-fake-news-up-experts-speak-on-the-impact-of-disinformation-on-politics-society-and-democracy/>.

²³ Asia Centre, “Disinformation Winner of 2022 Philippines Presidential Election,” Asia Centre, May 26, 2022, <https://asiacentre.org/disinformation-winner-of-2022-philippines-presidential-election/>.

²⁴ Noa Cohen and Mirko Daniel Garasic, “Informed Ignorance as a Form of Epistemic Injustice,” *Philosophies* 9, no. 3 (April 29, 2024): 59.

²⁵ Elema, “Political Lies.”

²⁶ Kasuya, “Disinformation,” 17.

²⁷ Siar, “Fake News,” 3.

²⁸ Osmundsen et al., “Partisan Polarization,” 1.

²⁹ Cohen and Garasic, “Informed Ignorance,” 4.

election campaign is not addressed because of the absence of a law that will regulate its use.³⁰ Ideally, this paper may turn to schools as they have always been institutions capable of change and guiding the development of each student under their care. However, based on our discussion, Filipinos remain vulnerable to the threats of the infodemic. Due to the Philippines' education system, Filipinos are susceptible to the spread of fake news, which poses several issues on how it cultivates students who are members of the community. Although the Philippine basic education has been offering different subjects and courses; Filipinos, however, continue to be inadequate in thinking critically, even with the inclusion of teaching critical thinking. Perhaps, the current teaching methods might be ineffective.³¹

The current education system in the Philippines experiences problems such as "... low pupil performance, poor teacher quality (in a system where teachers are central to the education process)..."³² This is a reflection of the traditional education setup first coined by Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* where educators have been using the banking model of education wherein the potentialities of students are hindered as a result of the reduction of their creative and critical powers and their passive role inside the classroom.³³ This banking model of education mirrors how fake news influence how people consume information on social media platforms. People also collect information from other mediums that contain data about the world. According to the Philippine Institute for Development Studies, it is important to capacitate citizens with the skill of fact-checking and of being analytical by equipping them with media literacy. However, this is currently not the case for the Philippines. Unequal access to education exacerbates these injustices because resources and tools for knowledge are deprived by the system itself.³⁴

The accumulated effects of misperceptions can reach a collective distortion of public opinion that affects the result of policies and election results.³⁵ Education, or the absence of it, contributes to how people process information and arrive at certain conclusions, having presented candidates who promise certain platforms that attract them. With the constant presence of this infodemic and its attached effects, the corruption of information prevents us from prioritizing the well-being of the citizens through the act of voting. Additionally, the presence of infodemic hinders citizens from realizing the significance of building relationships and possible dialogue that will strengthen the value of the information in the online sphere. There is also a lack of beholding the truth in this endeavor, creating an environment that leads voters astray in the process of deciding on the candidate they will put into position. These occurrences can be ascribed to the "post-truth" phenomenon which Bufacchi defines as:

a deliberate strategy aimed at creating an environment where objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion, where theoretical frameworks are undermined in order to make it impossible for someone to make sense of a certain event, phenomenon, or experience, and where scientific truth

³⁰ Aries Arugay, "Stronger Social Media Influence in the 2022 Philippine Elections," FULCRUM, November 29, 2022, <https://fulcrum.sg/stronger-social-media-influence-in-the-2022-philippine-elections/>.

³¹ Marquez, "Basic Education," 3-4.

³² Allan B.I Bernardo, Ma. Cynthia Rose B. Bautista, and Dina Ocampo, "When Reforms Don't Transform: Reflections on institutional reforms in the Department of Education." *HDN Discussion Paper Series*, no. 2 (2009): 1-64.

³³ Mahbulul Alam, "Banking Model of Education in Teacher-Centered Class: A Critical Assessment," *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences* 3, no. 15 (2013): 27-32.

³⁴ Cohen and Garasic, "Informed Ignorance," 7.

³⁵ Joshua Tucker et al., "Social Media, Political Polarization, and Political Disinformation: A Review of the Scientific Literature," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, (2018): 51.

is delegitimized.³⁶

McIntyre mentions how this occurs when practitioners are more focused on asserting something more important than the truth.³⁷ This results to actions that pushes people to believe pieces of information regardless of the existence or non-existence of evidence.³⁸ Recalling the situation of the previous 2022 Philippine elections, where stark differences in beliefs arose and the flow of information among citizens became crucial in the outcome of elections, it is thus necessary to improve how we engage or act in political conversations online to forward the truth.

To address the lack of skills caused by the educational issue that continues to affect online discourses about the elections, this paper explores the pedagogical model employed by the P4C program which is the “community of inquiry” that anchors deliberation and collaboration.³⁹ It claims that lives in a democratic society are improved due to the higher-order thinking skills that the program cultivates. This kind of education is designed for all and has a quality evaluated by the thinking skills it develops in students. Even with the challenges presented, we may try to address these concerns by assessing the dynamics that engage in online political conversations, encouraging Filipinos to develop their thinking skills under the CPI as a dialogical framework.

The Lipman-Sharp Community of Philosophical Inquiry

The Community of Philosophical Inquiry (CPI) as developed by Lipman and Ann Margaret Sharp, is compared to the Socratic Dialectic practiced by Socrates whom according to Lipman was a “great communicative genius” despite not practicing communal philosophical dialogue.⁴⁰ As opposed to having Socrates’ conversation with oneself, the CPI is then raised as one that is composed of members who are open to self-correcting processes upon being in dialogue with each other. This approach enables growth through communicating views, asking questions, evaluating ideas, exposing arguments, and reconstructing these.⁴¹ Most people usually see philosophy as a theoretical study of the world—a world full of questions yet few answers, and one which creates “ivory towers” that are detached from the needs of our society. However, these questions can reveal the potential of philosophy in addressing the current challenges of society today.

Moreover, Kennedy emphasized that a fundamental aspect of the CPI is the pragmatic problematization of something in order to improve a lived situation.⁴² With this, the continuous process of reevaluating our thoughts comes with discovering that various narratives and experiences will uncover conflicts and differences when communicated within a community. This, then, will drive us to inquire more about them. By becoming aware of their experiences and perspectives, we may reflect on them and enforce necessary changes and actions to further develop ourselves or our

³⁶ Vittorio Bufacchi, “Truth, Lies and Tweets: A Consensus Theory of Post-Truth,” *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 47, no. 3 (January 14, 2020): 347–361.

³⁷ Lee C. McIntyre, *Post-Truth* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2018).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

³⁹ Matthew Lipman, “Teaching Students to Think Reasonably: Some Findings of the Philosophy for Children Program,” *The Clearing House* 71, no. 5 (1998): 277–280.

⁴⁰ David Kennedy, “Lipman, Dewey, and the Community of Philosophical Inquiry,,” *Education and Culture* 28, no. 2 (2012): 36–53.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 9.

community. In the words of Striano:

Lipman chooses to employ the —“community” construct because it goes back to a pattern of relationships and interactions built on the recognition and acceptance of a cultural, ideological, religious or social reference with which the members of the group identify, and which represents the reason for them to form as a group, to meet (according to regular timescales) and to spend time together (following a number of norms, rules, stories and traditions).⁴³

However, being in dialogue with different people in a specific community involves dealing with the different aspects at play. It is why in this approach, Lipman introduced “Multidimensional Thinking” namely, Critical, Creative, and Caring, the most important dimensions of thinking.⁴⁴ An equilibrium of these three thinking skills shall be maintained, constituting a process that “aims at a balance between the cognitive and the affective, between the perceptual and the conceptual, between the physical and the mental, the rule-governed and the non-rule-governed.”⁴⁵ This model can help citizens engage in inquiry, which is central to philosophical reasoning, and be conscious of their ideas leading to a more coherent meaning-making and encourage them to become “balanced, harmonious, and moral intellect.”⁴⁶ This multidimensional thinking can only be achieved if it is also cultivated in educational institutions through the youth. With the availability of online platforms, this can be utilized to engage in conversations and promote multidimensional thinking to a wider reach. Fortunately, as we have mentioned earlier, the P4C pedagogy of Lipman is one successful approach to developing the skills of children—allowing them to engage in a dialogue and reflect on certain topics as members of a community.⁴⁷

Philosophy for Children (P4C)

To strengthen nation-building, the country should be able to cultivate critical thinking in students. However, Philosophy, under the K-12 curriculum implemented by the Department of Education, is required to be taught to students as “Introduction to Philosophy of the Human Person” without any preparatory lessons from Grades 1 to 10.⁴⁸ In response to this, it is best to introduce Philosophy to elementary school students because it can potentially help enhance a student’s thinking skills and teach them how to be involved with society today.⁴⁹ Reflective inquiry and thinking should be the central essence of education. As such, P4C is a program that banks on this essence, aiming to develop society’s quality of thinking. The Philippines needs this result, and certain cultural contexts should be examined to assess what the country needs to adopt from the educational framework that P4C presents. For this to be successful, certain imperatives concerning practices, models, paradigms, materials, and training sessions, must be put into place to create an environment that welcomes a community of inquiry.⁵⁰ The foundational stages of a child, as they are introduced to simple

⁴³ Striano Maura, “The Community of Philosophical Inquiry as a Social and Cognitive Matrix,” *Childhood & Philosophy* 7, no. 13 (2011): 91–102.

⁴⁴ Matthew Lipman, *Thinking in Education*, January 20, 2003.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 199.

⁴⁶ Ann Margaret Sharp, “What Is a ‘community of Inquiry?’,” *Journal of Moral Education* 16, no. 1 (January 1987): 37–45.

⁴⁷ Marquez, “Basic Education,” 7.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁵⁰ Zosimo Lee, “Nurturing Communities of Inquiry in Philippine Schools,” *Thinking: The Journal of Philosophy for Children* 20, no. 3 (2014): 76–82.

philosophical concepts, enrich their curiosity, develop their skills, and prepare them as they face the realities when they grow up. With the dialogical framework of the CPI, I attempt to answer the question, “What is its implications to the problem of online political discourse?” Going back to the two main problems presented in the occurrence of fake news in the Philippine elections, we see that 1) supporters tend to forward their beliefs through spreading fake news and 2) Filipino citizens are susceptible to fake news due to their deficiency of skills. To further expound on the multidimensional thinking skills framework, we shall attempt to respond to these issues we highlighted.

CPI, Misinformation, and Disinformation

Given the country’s current situation as we analyze the Philippine elections, this reveals the lack of skills to remedy these issues. Due to the education system in the Philippines, students are unable to develop the necessary skills as it also fails to produce active thinkers. As previously mentioned, the online sphere has become dominated by the youth as they engage in conversations and promote their beliefs along with other people. Through the CPI, this paper explores potential ways to homogenize the youth with other people who may lack the thinking skills in an online dialogue regarding political conversations.

Multidimensional Thinking

The ability of the CPI to create active thinkers inside classrooms can be extended to the community, especially as multidimensional thinking is cultivated. This then creates a conversational process that exhibits the valuing of different aspects present, especially in a very controversial topic such as the elections where various information and opinions are thrown around social media. Overall, multidimensional thinking is developed through communicating within a community, engaging, becoming aware of other experiences, reflecting on these, and making necessary changes to achieve communal well-being. Lipman emphasized how these thinking skills comprise good judgment, one that is essential in combatting fake news. This approach can be a way to better face political conversations, contrary to what has occurred in the recent elections.

Caring Thinking. A unique aspect of the CPI framework is related to the idea of being caring. This aspect gives value to our passions and emotions, in consideration of the challenges or problems faced given in a specific context before making judgments.⁵¹ As discussed by Lipman, caring is a type of thinking that performs different cognitive operations such as looking for alternatives, exploring and creating relationships, initiating multiple connections, and weighing differences.⁵² Thus, being caring involves recognizing differences in perspectives among people and thinking about how we can respond with a better understanding of the situation. Lipman mentioned a kind of caring thinking called “emphatic thinking” that encourages us to go beyond our own feelings and perceptions and be considerate with someone else’s, enabling better and stronger judgments as to how we should act.⁵³

In the Philippines, citizens encounter believers and clashes of opinion right and left, showing how fake news is disrupting the supposed informed agencies of the citizens, especially in deciding

⁵¹ Joe Oyler, “Philosophy with Children: The Lipman-Sharp Approach to Philosophy for Children,” *Encyclopedia of Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 2016, 1–7.

⁵² Lipman, *Thinking in Education*, 264.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 269-270.

who they will vote for. Factors that shape the citizen's decisions and viewpoints are yet to be addressed, pointing towards the worsening of the infodemic. With these factors, the value of care allows one to respond not just in a logical way, but one that is receptive to the situation. This also adds a lens that helps us value the importance of being in a dialogue as they inquire into existing issues in society. While children are not fully aware of the deep dimension of care, what matters is the whole experience of the dialogue that transforms them into cooperative inquirers.⁵⁴ As Oyler puts it, caring thinking thus puts value in being sensitive as to “how we are thinking, what is worth thinking about, and what is important to consider as we are thinking.”⁵⁵ In the words of the late Miriam Defensor Santiago:

The problem with elections is that Filipino voters, if they are uneducated, are often swayed by the personal appeal of a candidate. Public opinion is often shaped by conscious efforts of political elites and the media. It is a myth that Philippine voters make rational choices of candidates. Often, the uneducated voter is merely expressing support for the system, or merely expressing emotional attachments to certain symbols.⁵⁶

As this still applies today, this kind of attitude involves an affective situation that takes account of the voters' way of thinking and understanding various contexts that may have affected their beliefs. Their education, or the absence of it, also contributes to how they process information and arrive at certain conclusions, having presented candidates who promise certain platforms that attract them. Recalling Marcos Jr. campaign under the slogan of “unity” and “Bagong Pilipinas,” the desire of people towards the country's betterment is evident. As Aguilar puts it, the element of deception is present through metaphors that mimics the act of courtship using sweet words and promises.⁵⁷ In the same way, Macgamit, as he analyzed how Duterte tricked the Filipinos, calls this an “emotional belief” that highlights how emotions are attached to our reasoning and how emotion and cognition should not be attributed as “zero-sum terms,” proving how people are emotionally-driven in determining their beliefs.⁵⁸ Thus, it is essential to consider the emotional state of other people when communicating.

Creative Thinking. The infodemic is difficult to respond given its complexity. In addition to the previously mentioned thinking skill, Lipman describes this as “freshness” related to one's capability to imagine or envision possibilities as we respond to modern-day problems.⁵⁹ The cultivation of creative thinking allows us: to see through a skeptical lens to examine current beliefs, to see their faults, and to determine what beliefs we should push through to adhere to the situation at hand. At earlier ages, the P4C pedagogy cultivates this by arranging a flexible environment that allows children to explore possibilities and question these to maximize their realms of thought as they

⁵⁴ See Ann Margaret Sharp, “The Other Dimension of Caring Thinking (with a New Commentary by Phillip Cam),” *Journal of Philosophy in Schools* 1, no. 1 (October 16, 2014).

⁵⁵ Oyler, “Philosophy with Children,” 2.

⁵⁶ Miriam Defensor Santiago, “The Problem with Elections.” Transcript of speech delivered at FEU Central Student Organization Lecture Series, November 22, 2012.

https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/press_release/2012/1122_santiago1.asp

⁵⁷ Filomeno Aguilar, “Betting on Democracy: Electoral Ritual in the Philippine Presidential Campaign,” *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints* 53, no. 1 (2005): 91–118.

⁵⁸ Michael Magcamit, “To Feel Is to Believe: China, United States, and the Emotional Beliefs of Philippines’ Rodrigo Duterte,” *Political Science* 73, no. 1 (January 2, 2021): 6–30.

⁵⁹ Lipman, *Thinking in Education*, 247–249.

confront issues in Communities of Inquiry (COIs).⁶⁰ This can also potentially produce citizens who can conceptualize creative ways to promote the truth. For example, Benjamin & McLean’s study on creatively responding to science and the infodemic claims that improving science communication through changing mediums will improve students’ literacy regarding misinformation in science upon seeing society’s problem in the accessibility of science.⁶¹

Coinciding with the caring aspect of the CPI, creative thinking prevents the tendency of spreading malicious information to forward beliefs. As we have laid out earlier, different parties were involved in the spread of fake news, implying that people from different camps resorted to the act of spreading malicious and biased content for the benefit of their preferred candidate. If we recognize the complexity of the election campaign and the clash of beliefs, ways of forwarding truths and narratives do require a caring and creative aspect that allows us to think of better ways to approach conversations with other people. This then creates a dialogical environment that will allow parties to converse without resorting to hateful remarks, misleading information, and degrading contents that can undermine the preferred candidate of others. Instead, we are offered to listen and open our ears to others.

Critical Thinking. The country is expected to continue its current dynamics in social media where users are expected to reach over 91 million.⁶² With this, critical thinking is essential in combating fake news while online campaigning is prevalent. Traditionally, educators have been using the banking model of education in which the potentialities of students are not actualized due to the reduction of their creative and critical powers due to their passive role inside the classroom.⁶³ This model mirrors how fake news influence how people consume information on social media platforms, from what others say, and other mediums that contain data about the world. According to Lipman, critical thinking is skillful thinking that relies on criteria to produce good judgment, and is sensitive to context, and values self-correction.⁶⁴ Focusing on this definition, we see the powerful capability of thinking that citizens may possess to maximize ways of examining information that are. In an analysis made by Alexandra Babii, a fake news analysis model was created to pinpoint areas where critical thinking takes place.⁶⁵ When presented with fake news, one may be on the lookout for components of arguments, fallacies or reasoning errors, sources, language, and data. As a critical thinker, these common characteristics of fake news are conquered through awareness, careful assessment, and the ability to pause and evaluate thoughts and judgments. This, then, constitutes assessing what we think about a certain piece of information available to us.

Multidimensional thinking skills which Lipman considers as a “trinity of criteria” leads to what we can call an instance of excellent thinking—aiming at a balance between these three that will

⁶⁰ Yahya Ghaedi, Fatemeh Khoshnavay Fomani, and Mona Mahdian, “Identifying Dimensions of Creative Thinking in Preschool Children during Implementation of Philosophy for Children (P4C) Program: A Directed Content Analysis,” *Nigerian Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review* 2, no. 11 (November 2014): 30–37.

⁶¹ Kayla A. Benjamin and Sarah McLean, “Change the Medium, Change the Message: Creativity Is Key to Battle Misinformation,” *Advances in Physiology Education* 46, no. 2 (June 1, 2022): 259–267.

⁶² Fleishman Hillard Manila, “Presidential Elections,” 3.

⁶³ Alam, “Banking Model of Education,” 27–32.

⁶⁴ Lipman, *Thinking in Education*, 227.

⁶⁵ Alexandra-Niculina Babii, “The Use of Critical Thinking against Fake News,” *NORDSCI Conference Proceedings, Book 1 Volume 3 3* (2020).

create a multiplicative result.⁶⁶ These three skills shall be seen as equals, emphasizing the essential interplay between these skills in the COI, allowing children to formulate better judgments that Shahrtash considers as “appropriate, insightful, and relevant.”⁶⁷ Although engaging in dialogues entails a challenge that requires facing different opinions and will require effort, we aim to slowly build and foster a dialogical environment that exhibits a great balance of these thinking skills. It is not a guarantee that other people with different beliefs would adopt our preferences. However, the understanding and interplay of thinking skills as we evaluate information and communicate with others constitute a ladder toward a better dynamic in online platforms and potentially develop different actors who constantly engage in political conversations.

The multidimensional thinking that the P4C pedagogy cultivates through CPI offers a potential solution in the education system of the Philippines as it encompasses the different dimensions of the infodemic, whether it calls for critical judgment, creative solutions, or care for the community. As stated by an educator who practices P4C in Bradway Primary School, “Now more than ever, we need to be nurturing their thinking skills, helping them to form opinions and encouraging them to question and challenge the world around them.”⁶⁸ Overall, whether inside or outside our classrooms, we can continue to communicate with other people and exhibit thinking skills through what the CPI has to offer. This has implications for achieving a dialogical environment that Filipinos deserve, especially in the context of the elections.

CPI and Cultivating Thinkers

The experience of Filipinos in the recent elections proves that a lot of work has to be done to address multiple concerns in the current information climate regarding the spread of fake news. We have identified earlier the two main problems that are present: that people spread fake news to forward their beliefs and preferences and that citizens are susceptible to the spread of false information due to a lack of thinking skills. Drawing from our analysis, this constitutes an ongoing crisis and will continue to occur if these are not addressed. However, upon examining the dialogical framework of the CPI, we uncover potential solutions in slowly fixing our problems in online discourse, particularly by examining how the cultivation of thinking skills can transform how citizens participate within an online dialogical environment.

The issues experienced by the people should be addressed through adopting ways that can contribute to fixing these problems that the infodemic has caused. In our country’s case, since online platforms are currently comprised of disruptions to the interactions of the people due to the polarization brought by multiple factors including the infodemic, our solutions should be directed towards addressing this through education. The use of social media as an avenue for political discourse, especially during election campaigns, should emphasize the responsibility of considering other individuals in terms of disseminating information which is crucial in building up our beliefs. This responsibility should then be shared or extended to a collective movement that will combat polarization. The CPI, as a framework, offers possible ways to fight this infodemic and implies an

⁶⁶ Lipman, *Thinking in Education*, 201.

⁶⁷ Farzaneh Shahrtash, “Multidimensional Thinking in a Community of Inquiry (COI) vs. Critical Thinking (CT).,” *Budhi* 21, no. 3 (2017): 14–43.

⁶⁸ Paul Stockley, “Using Philosophy for Children to Help Children Spot Fake News,” SAPERE P4C, January 6, 2020. <https://saperep4c.wordpress.com/2019/12/23/using-philosophy-for-children-to-help-children-spot-fake-news/>.

individual and communal aspect that we should fulfill for the country's well-being.

As Individuals. The role of the individual lies in the CPI's central potential of cultivating multidimensional thinking. Contrary to our ideas being repressed, our engagement in different settings like the classrooms and online platforms allows an opportunity for participation. However, this participation should be done responsibly, emphasizing the importance of employing these thinking skills and its improvement during the process. In a survey conducted by FleishmanHillard's Manila office, results have shown that there is an increased amount of conversations regarding fake news and disinformation after the election, and these are mostly dominated by youth aged 18 to 24 years old.⁶⁹ These conversations imply that there is an ongoing awareness of the infodemic and that people can do and are doing something to talk about the issue at hand. This concerns how other people, including themselves, are faced with the same threats of false information. As online discourses are also dominated by the youth, the capacity to inform, self-correct, and evaluate our knowledge should be pioneered by them in order to be role models for other people in the social media space.

The CPI, as it places value not on theories, we usually study in the academe but instead on philosophizing, transforms the youth into responsible citizens as they engage with others. As we call for studying Philosophy in the early stages of education, we should acknowledge that there is no denying its success in developing thinkers who are critical and analytic, proving useful to the demands of the current world.⁷⁰ Through cultivating multidimensional thinking, we may establish political conversations that reflect how the CPI envisions it, addressing how we respond to competing beliefs and disseminating accurate information that will promote the truth. This way, we are able to give the good that is due for other people, creating an environment that will allow everyone to receive and comprehend information that is crucial to formulate their beliefs for upcoming elections.

Additionally, it is also important for individuals to realize how the CPI is a collaborative endeavor that reveals how a communal goal of the good life is targeted. Seeing the value of community in achieving our goal allows the youth to develop into citizens who push for changes in the system and becomes our drive to become better individuals in promoting better discourses that will help us attain better results.

As a Community. Another thing we need to focus on is how our community should continue to move forward toward change. Adapting multidimensional thinking skills in the online landscape is one thing, but achieving this is another, and that is through reforms in education. Although we suggest how individuals who are able to cultivate thinking skills extend what they learn outside of the classroom, the opportunity to learn and develop as thinkers through education should also be one that is given to everyone. This promotes equal opportunities for Filipinos to be educated. Turning a blind eye to this condones how people are provided unfair resources and access to education.

Recognizing that not everyone has the privilege to be educated, students who will grow and continue to grow as responsible citizens through CPI may continue to extend their call for societal change by asking for further reforms in the education system while promoting the truth that we ought to protect. As stated by Lipman, critical thinking seeks to develop a product—using knowledge to be

⁶⁹ Fleishman Hillard Manila, "Presidential Elections", 4.

⁷⁰ Marquez, "Basic Education," 6.

able to create reasonable change.⁷¹ If Philosophy, under the framework of the CPI, is introduced at an early age, we are able to see the hope for the young. Echoing Marquez:

In order to free themselves from the manacles of oppression, we have to educate the Filipino youth to become critical thinkers and this can be achieved through a pedagogy that is critical, reflective, and reflexive, otherwise, nothing will change. And thus, only through emancipatory education can we achieve true liberation.⁷²

Being able to reflect on the problems in Philippine education can help open our minds to ways in which we can campaign for the knowledge and skills that others have yet to receive in this information climate. Unfair advantage should not be tolerated and should shift into one that necessitates collective action for the good of the community, especially under the context of the elections.

Establishing a system with a framework that can potentially address the issues on the current political polarization in online platforms exacerbated by the infodemic contains implications on how citizens form judgments during the elections. Advocating for education shall then lead to combatting fake news for the better application of skills in decision making in elections that always changes our lives for multiple years after its results. Transforming into a responsible community comprised of critical citizens implies that realizing the value of every vote would eventually help achieve a good life for everyone, sparking necessary ways to combat hurdles that would disrupt the democratic activity of voting for our country's leaders. As stated in the Philippines' Citizen-Voters' Education Module, the slogan is "Your Vote, Our Future."⁷³ This implies how important to promote the good for the country, with regards to practicing the right of suffrage.

Conclusion

The Lipman-Sharp Community of Philosophical Inquiry, therefore, offers ways to respond to the current ineffectiveness of Philippine education in developing citizens, for it transforms them into better members of society that engage in dialogue. The disruption of the flow of relevant political information among Filipinos during the 2022 Philippine elections and campaign season calls for approaches that will help address the unhealthy environment for dialogue which is supposedly a big tool in forming judgments for the upcoming elections.

With its ability to cultivate multidimensional thinking, the problems presented by political discourses that thrives in online platforms is addressed through the ways in which the youth is developed into critical, creative, and caring thinkers who respond to situations with an attitude that promotes a better environment for dealing with opposing beliefs. The complexity of the infodemic directs us to become caring and creative in the situation, to share our knowledge in better ways other than spreading fake news, and to become critical of the information that circulates online. The CPI framework provides opportunities to grow as learners who will extend and apply the skills we continuously develop as we communicate with people online, especially with those who have beliefs that differ from ours. Whichever candidate a person supports, the CPI advocates for becoming

⁷¹ Lipman, *Thinking in Education*, 211.

⁷² Leander Marquez, "Critical Thinking in Philippine Education: What We Have and What We Need," *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, October 1, 2017, 272–303.

⁷³ Office of the Ombudsman, Citizen-Voters' Education Module (2013).

<https://www.ombudsman.gov.ph/UNDP4/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/1.1.1.-CVE-Basic-Module-Final-Draft-1st-Ed.pdf>

responsible individuals and communities who try to remedy the dynamics in political conversations to allow everyone to self-correct, evaluate, reflect, and form their judgments based on accurate information.

The CPI is only achievable if this is implemented in our current education system through the P4C and other reforms that will provide better access to education. A lot of training and effort is required to extend this to other educators. Formal instruction and training of P4C is crucial for the next generation of teachers and teachers today to be better trained in this pedagogy that encourages COI.⁷⁴ Additionally, a political aspect in the way the program operates should also be considered by P4C practitioners, given the current political climate and ailments of Philippine society. If we are to commit ourselves to forwarding equality, democracy, and justice, the program should include ways that take inspiration from critical pedagogy, emphasizing the experiences of the oppressed and how we can criticize the dominant structures in our existing system.⁷⁵ Aside from the value of inquiry and being impartial, being reasonable involves the realization of different forces that perpetuate existing injustices towards Filipinos. Schools are institutions capable of developing skills and calling for equal opportunities for citizens, implying a step toward the change we want to occur in the country.

This implies that our ability to create an impact depends on how we are cultivated in a system that supports the production of responsible thinkers who are also able to extend what they learn in times that call for our participation. Overall, this is the kind of system our society should strive towards to—one that develops thinkers who do not promote the spread of the current infodemic and instead aim to explore and discern knowledge from experiences surrounding us—creating shared learning and understandings that promote the truth for the people even with the threat of uncertainty from fake news. Our role as critical, creative, and caring thinkers in engaging within the community towards making judgments and casting a vote should be realized as we move toward transformation. Only then can we become “building blocks for a better nation”⁷⁶ that can combat the threats hiding the truth that is crucial for our democratic country.

⁷⁴ Lee, “Nurturing Communities of Inquiry,” 80.

⁷⁵ Walter Omar Kohan, “Paulo Freire and Philosophy for Children: A Critical Dialogue,” *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 37, no. 6 (May 11, 2018): 615–629.

⁷⁶ Marquez, “Basic Education,” 5.

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