

CIVIC EDUCATION IN THE PHILIPPINES: CONFRONTING THE CHALLENGES OF THE PRESENT TIMES

Ma. Glenda Lopez Wui, PhD
Jessica Sandra R. Claudio, Carl Russel R. Reyes, and
Rosselle Trishia M. Reyes-Carbaja



**ROSA
LUXEMBURG
STIFTUNG**
SOUTHEAST ASIA
MANILA OFFICE

Civic Education in the Philippines: Confronting the Challenges of the Present Times

is published by Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung

4th Floor Dusit Thani Manila, Ayala Center, 1223 Makati City, Philippines

www.rosaluxmanila.org

Editorial deadline: September 2023

Editing/Proofreading: Gegensatz Translation Collective

Layout and Design: Nonie Florenda

This publication is part of the Rosa Luxemburg-Stiftung's political education work.

It is distributed free of charge and may not be used for electoral campaigning purposes.



**ROSA
LUXEMBURG
STIFTUNG**
SOUTHEAST ASIA
MANILA OFFICE

This publication is sponsored by the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung with funds of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of the Federal Republic of Germany. This publication or parts of it can be used by others for free as long as they provide a proper reference to the original publication.

The content of the publication is the sole responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily reflect the views of the RLS.



Civic education primarily serves the purpose of maintaining and harnessing self-government in a democracy.

Democratic self-government requires that citizens be well-informed and capable of critical reflection to participate in governance.



CIVIC EDUCATION IN THE PHILIPPINES:

CONFRONTING THE CHALLENGES OF THE PRESENT TIMES

Ma. Glenda Lopez Wui*

with Jessica Sandra R. Claudio, Carl Russel R. Reyes, and Rosselle Trishia M. Reyes-Carbaja*

INTRODUCTION

Analysts have characterized the recently concluded 2022 elections in the Philippines as dominated by clan politics and historical revisionism (Chan 2022). The election of Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. for president — son of the infamous dictator and former president Ferdinand Marcos, Sr. — and Sara Duterte for vice president — daughter of former president Rodrigo Duterte — attested to the lack of democratic choice in the Philippine electoral process.

Clan politics has long been a fixture of Philippine elections. In the 2013 senatorial election for instance, it was estimated that 70–90 percent of elected positions were held by family dynasties (McCarthy 2021). The Marcos-Duterte alliance in the 2022 presidential elections has been referred to as “dynasty cartel” (Arao 2023). Aside from the election of Sara, a son of Rodrigo Duterte was elected as the mayor of Davao City while another as representative of the city’s first congressional district. The son of President Marcos Jr. is Ilocos Norte’s first district representative and senior deputy majority leader of the House of Representatives, while his first cousin is the representative of Leyte’s first district and the House Speaker. Aside from weakening democratic choice for public officials, it has been shown that political dynasties negatively impact governance, such that areas governed by dynastic families have lower standards of living as compared to those which are not (Mendoza et al. 2019).

Ferdinand Marcos Jr. benefited from the historical revision of the dictatorial and corrupt rule of his father. Marcos Sr.’s presidency was presented by Marcos’s supporters as the Philippines’ golden age in spite of the hundreds of activists who were killed during his rule, and the bankrupt economy at that time. The widespread disinformation launched by the Marcos election campaign on social media largely facilitated this historical revisionism (Devlin 2022; Elemia 2022).

The results of the recent important political exercise show that the Philippines is yet to realize the ideals necessary for a functioning democracy. Civic education can play a pivotal role in the realization of democracy given its aim to develop informed, effective, and responsible citizenry who can better engage in governance. Civic education enables the acquisition of “knowledge, skills, attitudes and experiences to prepare someone to be an active, informed participant in democratic life” (Campbell 2012: 1). Civic education primarily serves the purpose of maintaining and harnessing self-government in a democracy. Democratic self-government requires that citizens be well-informed and capable of critical reflection to participate in governance.

Effective civic education is important because the skills that are necessary in sustaining democratic self-governance — such as the ability to participate in democratic processes, the capacity for critical thinking and acting deliberately in pluralistic communities, and the empathy that allows individuals to listen to and consider others’ opinions — are acquired through

*Ateneo de Manila University

learning (Avery 2003; Quigley 1995). The objective of civic education is to enable citizens to competently and responsibly participate in a nation's political life.

This paper aims to examine the teaching of civic education in K-12 schools in the Philippines and its current challenges. K-12 is the compulsory basic education level in the Philippines. It is composed of kindergarten, elementary school (grades 1–6), junior high school (grades 7–10), and senior high school (grades 11–12). This paper also discusses the historical context of civic education development in the Philippines, especially the institutions and actors that contributed to its development to better situate and understand its present challenges. Specifically, it aims to:

1. Examine the political institutions and actors that shape civic education policies in the Philippines;
2. Examine the education policies, concepts, and methodologies regarding the teaching of civic education in K-12 schools in the Philippines since 2000;
3. Analyze current issues that need to be confronted by civic education; and
4. Propose recommendations on how civic education can be enhanced in the Philippines.

CIVIC EDUCATION AND THE PHILIPPINE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Civic education in the Philippines reflects critical struggles in the country's history. In particular, literature points to three key events in its history: 1) its colonial past under Spain and the United States; 2) the Marcos dictatorship in the 1970s–1980s; and 3) the succeeding pattern of governance post-Marcos (Baidon et al. 2016; Adarlo 2016). The anti-colonial and anti-dictatorial struggles resulted in a fragmented imagining of the nation's identity: one that relies on multiple narratives (Baidon et al. 2016) and a lack of trust in the state and the political elite (Mulder 2013). Recent global and national socio-political and economic challenges also require an appropriate response from the education sector. Challenges brought about by globalization beset the country even as, with its diverse population, it struggles at nation-building (Banlaoi 2004). The rise of social media and its impact on politics have also recently been the subject of much discourse, as these platforms gave rise to disinformation networks weaponized for political gain. The role of civic education becomes even more significant as the country navigates these contemporary social issues.

The colonial history of the Philippines left an indelible mark on the socialization of Filipinos. Education during Spanish rule primarily served the interests of the Catholic Church, and its primary concern was to evangelize the natives into the Christian doctrine. Access to education at that time was also reserved for the elite few (Durban and Catalan 2012; Adarlo 2016). Those who had the privilege of being educated were called *illustrados* (Hispanicized intellectuals), who according to Niels Mulder (2013) eventually became vanguards of a Filipino nationalism that was elitist in character.

The American colonial period implemented the public school system, which somehow made education more accessible to Filipinos, and secularized the education sector. According to

Julian Go (2000: 343), this was part of the Americans' "'civilizing' mission for the non-elite". Baildon et al. (2016) note that political education, which was originally accessible only to elites in the colonies, was one of the key objectives of the American colonial project. Developing civic responsibility through democratic thinking and values was one of the aims of the education system introduced by the Americans as part of a vision to spread their cultural values to their colonies. English was also introduced as a medium of instruction, which served civic purposes. The language would serve to unite Filipinos, who had a diverse linguistic landscape, and, upon achieving this goal, would be a way to expand and advance democracy (Acierto 1980).

Despite the American push to educate Filipinos to eventually self-govern, the nature and content of the curriculum they implemented bore similarities with that of Spain. During both colonial periods, the underlying goal was to pacify the Filipinos and make them docile colonial subjects. The legacy of the Philippines' colonial past led to what Renato Constantino (1966) called the "mis-education" of the Filipinos or the proliferation of a "colonial mentality" that keeps them civically passive.

After the American colonial period and the Second World War, the Philippines needed to craft not just its identity as a newly-independent nation-state but also of its citizens who were no longer colonial subjects. Thus, the process of building civic identity was relational between the state and the citizen (Adarlo 2016). Civic education during this period followed the principles of former President Manuel L. Quezon's "Code of Citizenship and Ethics" (Republic of the Philippines 1939), which included the development of individuals' moral character and personal discipline in the push towards nation-building. Civic conscience and the performance of civic duties were also emphasized. Mulder (2016) remarked that the early stirrings of nationalism in the post-colonial years, though underdeveloped at the time, resulted in the formation of civic movements that became crucial during the challenging period of martial law.

In 1972, then-President Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law, a response to "lawless elements" seeking to wage "an armed insurrection and rebellion against the Government of the Republic of the Philippines" and to "supplant our existing political, social, economic and legal order with an entirely new one" (Republic of the Philippines 1972a). Educational policies during martial law promoted national development through civic education. Marcos signed the Educational Development Decree (Republic of the Philippines 1972b) which highlighted the role of schools in achieving national development goals; one goal in particular was the strengthening of the national consciousness. Civic education during this time also emphasized love of country through personal moral development, specifically by being law-abiding citizens (Adarlo 2016). In fact, Baildon et al. (2016: 105) pointed out that the "dominant values imparted in Social Studies textbooks emphasised discipline rather than freedom". The People Power Revolution in 1986, which toppled the Marcos presidency, provided a different sense of nationhood and solidarity, born out of the rejection of the dictatorship, rather than that originally intended by Marcos in his educational reforms.

During the Aquino administration, citizenship education reflected a "re-articulation of democratic ideals and social justice" (Adarlo 2016: 261) through social studies subjects (e.g., Civics and Culture at the elementary level; Foundations of the Filipino Nation, Asian

Civilization, Philippine Economy and World History at the secondary level; see Baildon et al. 2016). These subjects also often included topics on democracy, people's rights and freedoms, and patriotism. The role of the youth in civic affairs was also highlighted during the post-Marcos years. Finally, the use of the Filipino language in instruction became a crucial component of civic education.

Poverty and inequality were markedly high during the Marcos regime. Cronyism and patronage politics ensured the hegemony of oligarchs in the country (Martial Law Museum n.d.). This pattern continued years after the Marcos regime, as re-democratization efforts during the Aquino administration did not result in an improved economic performance because the country was marred by political instability (Kimura 2003). Persistent poverty and the increasing gap between the rich and the poor negatively impacted civic capacity and participation among Filipinos (Baildon et al. 2016). The country's historical context, as has been discussed, has also resulted in a "weak" state that is unable to manage the emerging diversities in its society (Banlaoi 2004). The consequence is a weak sense of nation as people identify more with smaller units of social networks (e.g., family/clan ties, ethnic group membership, etc.) instead of the state (Adarlo 2016; Baildon et al. 2016).

A civic education curriculum that can inspire belonging, citizenship, and civic responsibility is imperative in rebuilding the weak state. A weak state also connotes a government that is unable to provide for the needs of its people (Rice and Parrick 2008). An informed citizenry, courtesy of an effective civic education, can contribute to better governance, as well as the transformation of the weak state by electing competent officials and ensuring that leaders are accountable for their actions.

CIVIC EDUCATION IN THE K-12 CURRICULUM

The current civic education in the Philippines is mandated by Article XIV, Section 3, of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, which states that all educational institutions in the Philippines shall provide a civic education that aims to:

Inculcate patriotism and nationalism, foster love of humanity, respect for human rights, appreciation of the role of national heroes in the historical development of the country, teach the rights and duties of citizenship, strengthen ethical and spiritual values, develop moral character and personal discipline, encourage critical and creative thinking, broaden scientific and technological knowledge, and promote vocational efficiency.

The Araling Panlipunan (AP) or Social Studies subject is the main venue for students to learn about civic education and nationalism. From Grades 1 to 10, the AP subject covers a variety of topics that contribute to individuals' knowledge and understanding of being Filipino citizens and their relation to the world. Table 1 (below) shows the major topics covered in each grade level (Department of Education 2016).

Table 1: Topics Covered in Araling Panlipunan in Grades 1 to 10

Grade Level	Topics Relating to Civic Education
Grade 1	Understanding of the self as being part of a family or community.
Grade 2	Understanding one's community including its history, typical livelihood, and leaders.
Grade 3	Understanding that communities are part of a province or region based on 1) physical characteristics, 2) culture, 3) livelihood, and 4) political structure, using concepts such as change and interactions between individuals and their physical and social environments.
Grade 4	Instilling pride in being a Filipino and in one's country, while valuing differences among the Filipino culture based on one's understanding of the country's geography, culture and livelihood, governance, and aspirations of the nation.
Grade 5	In-depth understanding of the history of the Filipino community starting from the 16th century. Students are exposed to historical information including Filipino ancestry, the Indigenous peoples, the events during colonization, the people involved, and the changes that occurred during this period. Through this, students will be able to place themselves in the history of the country and understand its current situation.
Grade 6	Appreciation of Philippine history, from the 20th century up to the present, toward the development of patriotism that will serve as a basis on how to view the world. Students learn about Philippine presidents and their contributions and impacts on the country.
Grade 7	Learning and appreciation of the geography, history, culture, society, government and economy of Asian countries to understand the Asian identity and the challenges confronting the region.
Grade 8	Learning about the value of collective action and responding to global challenges to humanity despite the vast diversity of geography, history, culture, society, government and economy of nations towards the realization of a peaceful, prosperous and promising future.
Grade 9	Understanding basic ideas and current issues in economics using the skills of knowing learned in social science (e.g., critical and scientific) towards the shaping of critical, thoughtful, responsible, environmentally- friendly, productive, just, and humanitarian citizens of the country and the world.
Grade 10	Focus is now on an individual's awareness of social issues, including economic and political issues, human rights, issues relating to education and the environment, and civic responsibilities. Students are given real-life events as examples in order to understand and realize possible solutions and actions to contribute to a better society.

Civic education is presently implemented in K-12 schools in the Philippines through the Makabayan curriculum of the AP subject. However, starting in the school year 2024–25, the

revised curriculum Matatag will be implemented. Civic education will be incorporated in the Makabansa subject in kindergarten up to Grade 3. While for Grades 4 to 10, civic learning is included in the AP subject (Ombay 2023). The Makabansa subject ensures that the skills in civics, arts, culture, history, physical education, and health are connected. It aims to instill in the minds of young students an understanding of self and their collective Filipino identity rooted in their community, town, city, province and region. (Ombay 2023). The revised curriculum for AP for Grades 4–10 AP includes topics related to the West Philippine Sea, the Hague arbitral tribunal ruling, human rights violations (e.g., warrantless arrests, political detention and red-tagging, trolling and extra-judicial killings), and gender-related topics (e.g., sex, gender, gender roles, discrimination, hate crimes, same sex union, and laws related to gender and violence against women) to teach students about contemporary issues facing the country. The senior high school curriculum review is ongoing at this time (Hernando-Malipot 2023).

In the current senior high school (SHS) curriculum, there are eight subtopics on civic education, with the core subject of “Understanding Culture, Society and Politics” (Department of Education 2013a). A study conducted by the Youth Leadership for Democracy (YouthLed) in 2022 outlined several problem areas in the SHS civic education curriculum and recommendations on how to address them (PIDS 2022).

The core subject of the “Understanding Culture, Society and Politics” covers only eight hours of instruction, and focused mostly on culture and society but not on citizenship. Therefore, SHS students who do not pursue the humanities and social sciences stream will have limited exposure to civic education. To address this, YouthLed recommended the incorporation of civics subjects in all SHS strands. YouthLed also pointed out that a number of the lessons were not focused on civic education, and some teachers struggled to come up with the relevant modules and materials. In relation to this, the organization recommended the development of co-curricular materials and training manuals to strengthen the capacities of junior high school (JHS) and SHS teachers. Partnerships between schools and NGOs in delivering civic education lessons should also be developed. The Project Citizen to be discussed below is an example of such initiative.

Aside from the above critiques of and recommendations for the SHS curriculum, there is the general observation that civic lessons tend to be confined to the rote learning of information and government processes without the experience of and critical reflection on the lessons. Studies suggest that experiencing civic lessons through activities such as conducting research on community issues, service learning, and in-person observations of government processes (e.g., deliberations in Congress or the Senate) enhances students’ civic consciousness (Barr et al. 2015; Mirra and Morrell 2011).

In the Philippines, an example of such activity is Project Citizen administered by the Philippine Center for Civic Education and Democracy (PCCED) (Piñgul 2015). The PCCED is a non-government organization whose mission is to strengthen civic education so that citizens can meaningfully participate in democratic life. It works with teachers, youth leaders, local authorities, and civil society groups to strengthen civic lessons in schools, empower local authorities and civil society groups so that citizens can engage in shared governance (PCCED 2023). Project Citizen is a supplemental civic education program that aims to enhance attitudes of public high school students towards civics and their efficacy. The project, which

is adapted from “We the People: Project Citizen” designed by the Center for Civic Education in the United States, offers a ten-step program implemented across six months (August to February of the school calendar) for students to participate in solving community problems by formulating relevant policies. A study conducted on the impact of the project found that students who participated in the project registered higher civic efficacy and attitude scores than non-participants (Piñgul 2015).

Another example of an activity-based civic lesson is the civic writing project conducted by researchers from the Ateneo de Manila University where high school students wrote letters to the incoming president of the Philippines in 2022. In the letters, the students wrote about the social problems that they wanted to see resolved by the elected president, and why they chose these issues (Wui et al. 2023). Efforts to make civic lessons more engaging and effective are important as the country grapples with critical governance concerns, as shall be discussed below.

Another issue related to the basic education curriculum is the teaching of history. Previously, Philippine History was a dedicated subject taught in the first-year high school level or grade 7 in the AP curriculum. In 2014, following the implementation of the K-12 law, the Department of Education (DepEd) removed Philippine history as a stand-alone subject, but mandated that its teaching be integrated in the AP curriculum across grade levels instead (Department of Education 2022). However, educators argued that the DepEd directive has practically diluted the teaching of history (Dalisay 2023). This resulted in young Filipinos who lack knowledge of the most important facts and events of the past, and appreciation of how the past shaped the present. Some educators also argued that the void created by the lack of dedicated history teaching provided openings for historical revisionism and disinformation by political operatives (Dalisay 2023). As has been discussed, political disinformation in the Philippines is an important concern of its civic education.

CIVIC EDUCATION AMID POLITICAL CHALLENGES IN THE PHILIPPINES

Civic education imparts necessary tools for the youth to effectively engage as citizens. Thus, it must be able to promptly respond to the contemporary social and political contexts of a particular polity. In the Philippines, clan politics and disinformation are two of the many political challenges that hamper the realization of substantive democracy. Other political challenges include the effort to bring together the various ethnic, religious, and national groups into a more inclusive governance of the Philippine state (Buendia 2021), and the attainment of economic growth for human and educational development which could redound to better politically informed citizens. Adrienne Chan (2022) notes that the supremacy of political dynasties “erodes democracy by undermining actual political competition and excluding outsiders from public service”. This form of elite domination has been a constant feature of Philippine politics and has greatly figured in the classic viewpoints of understanding the country’s politics (Quimpo 2008).

However, the way dynasties conduct politics has also changed. One of these changes is the integration of social media into their public relations repertoires. Chan (2022) argues

that the victory of Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. is a convergence of clan politics and historical revisionism. Marcos Jr. certainly benefited from his family name and political connections stemming from his father. But it must be said that upon their return, their clan has also embarked on a project to re-entrench themselves into local and national politics, and public consciousness. And this includes the rehabilitation of their family’s reputation, much maligned after Marcos Sr.’s ouster. Contemporarily, they circulated narratives on social media which included the denial of the dictatorship’s atrocities, overstating Marcos Jr.’s educational attainment, and claiming that their wealth was inherited and not stolen (Chan 2022).

The ensuing discussion presents insights from works on political dynasties and disinformation in the Philippines, and the implications of these political challenges to civic education and the education system at large.

POLITICAL DYNASTIES

Ronald Mendoza, Leonardo Jaminola, and Jurel Yap (2019) provide two definitions of political dynasties. Thin dynasties refer to relatives following each other sequentially in holding elected office, while fat dynasties describe relatives who hold elected office simultaneously. They found that in the past three decades, political dynasties have skewed towards the latter. From 19 percent of all local elected officials in 1988, the share of fat dynasties had ballooned to 29 percent by 2019. Dynasties have circumvented term limits, which only cover the number of consecutive terms an individual can have, as opposed to limits to the number of relatives in elected posts. By turning into fat dynasties, they can keep elected posts within the family. This has an effect on the competitiveness of elections and the periodic transfers of power necessary for a vibrant democracy.

Connections have been made between the proliferation of dynasties and economic development. Mendoza et al. (2016) found that dynasties are associated with poverty specifically in areas outside Luzon. In a later study (Mendoza et al. 2019), their review of works that make this link show that dynasties may behave in two ways. First, they may cause underdevelopment as they siphon off wealth and resources for their own interests, and at the expense of their constituents. This happens since they operate in a system with weak checks and balances, exacerbated by their occupying multiple elected positions simultaneously (Tusalem 2013; Garces, Jandoc, and Lu 2017). On the other hand, dynasties may encourage some development by investing in it, in the name of expanding their families’ influence in a locale. In the latter case, any progress in infrastructure and services can be attributed to dynasties. Relationships with constituents resemble patron-clientelistic ties. They develop linkages bound by loyalty in exchange for services and favors, such as jobs, promotions, and access to goods (Tusalem 2013). As dynasties have a concentration of resources to provide through the mobilization of state power, voters may be inclined to retain them. How the devolution of local governance in the Philippines panned out also serves the interests of dynasties. Ideally, it serves as a measure for greater accountability, and more responsive services at the local level. However, it can also be mobilized to expand and entrench one’s power (Garces, Jandoc, and Lu 2017).

How does this affect education? The Local Government Code of 1991 designates the responsibility of providing educational services to local government units. While dynasties do not directly interfere with how civic education is taught in their locales, they affect the delivery of educational services. The patron-clientelistic ties described by Rollin F. Tusalem (2013) and L. Garces, K. Jandoc, and M. G. Lu (2017) are evident in how education as a service is provided locally. For example, Ronald Mendoza et al. (2013) note that spending in education has become a means to secure constituencies. Scholarships, infrastructure, and even school supplies and additional food for students are mobilized in this manner.

POLITICS AND DISINFORMATION

As social media had become interwoven into campaigns by the mid-2010s, disinformation in politics has become a global issue. The rise of far-right leaders such as Trump, Modi, Bolsonaro, and Duterte is often attributed to the aggressive mobilization of disinformation campaigns in the digital sphere (Bello 2020; Fallorina et al. 2023). In the Philippines, it was found that it was the advertising and public relations experts that were the heads of disinformation. This network flows from these paid “chief architects” to the public who voluntarily subscribe to fraudulent information (Ong and Cabañes 2018; Fallorina et al. 2023; Chua and Labiste 2018).

Social media have afforded an unprecedented degree of participatory cultures (Cho, Byrne, and Pelter 2020), which is evident even in the proliferation of disinformation. Content easily crosses from one platform to another: shared, commented on, and reacted to (Chua and Labiste 2018). Users can potentially create their own content based on what they have consumed. But this degree of participation underscores the inequalities in terms of access to information. For example, Filipinos’ access to Facebook’s “Free Basic”¹ version has been associated with the rise of fake news (Chua and Labiste 2018). As opposed to those with mobile data, those in Free Basic cannot view photos, and have limited access to external websites to read content. Hence, they often rely on the in-app captions and news headlines as information sources.

The criticism of Facebook’s Free Basic, and the roles of other social media platforms in disinformation has prompted platforms to develop regulatory mechanisms to combat fake information circulating on their sites. Rossine Fallorina et al. (2023) note that “more aggressive takedowns of hate speech and inauthentic accounts” (13) were occurring by the time of the Philippine midterm elections in 2019. But they also observed that disinformation networks have found a way to circumvent these by employing smaller influencers.

While the development of regulation systems within platforms, and the initiatives of non-state institutions have combated the spread of disinformation, the education sector is constantly deemed to be playing a key part in this struggle. This appears warranted, as Margarita Felipe Fajardo (2023) finds in her review that young people find it difficult to discern between reliable and misleading information. Digital media literacy appears to dominate current initiatives and recommendations for education solutions. Fallorina et al. (2023) note that civil society organizations have initiatives to help develop online skills. Educators have also developed modules on critical thinking and towards the provision of educational materials.

¹ In some countries, Facebook/Meta has rolled out access to its “Free Basic” service, purportedly allowing Facebook access without requiring users to pay for mobile data; see <https://www.facebook.com/connectivity/solutions/free-basics>.

Spaces to combat disinformation within the K-12 system have also been seen as a locus of educational reform in the Philippines. The media and information literacy course, implemented in 2016 in senior high school, has received much attention toward this end. This course aims to develop critical thinking among students, and impart a sense of responsibility towards media and information production (Department of Education 2013b). These are important points, given the research finding (Fajardo 2023) that students struggle in identifying legitimate information. The study conducted by Fajardo involving senior high school and college students found that most students had the lowest beginning competency levels in author-checking, fact-checking, and bias-checking in the Stanford History Education Group's civic online reasoning tasks. Given that the study was conducted in 2020 after the start of the implementation of the media and information literacy course in 2016, it can thus be assumed that most of the student participants have already taken the course. The low scores of the participants in the civic online reasoning tasks imply that the course has yet to make an impact on the students' capability for critical assessment of online information. Fajardo also saw that one's ability to evaluate digital content is dependent on local digital infrastructure. Therefore, larger questions of inequality surface, which necessitate that the government make digital infrastructure accessible to the larger population of students, especially the marginalized.

The afore-mentioned study suggested that there was a need to further teach critical thinking skills to students, and that this should take place not only within media and information literacy, but rather across subject areas including AP with its civic education content. Teaching students to be critical consumers of digital information should be part of civic education because of the significant implications of disinformation on the country's governance, as shown in the recent electoral exercises.

Nonetheless, crafting a civic curriculum to produce critical citizens would be challenging. This is because of the long history of oligarchic rule that has failed to institute an education system, including civic education, aimed at developing critical citizens who will question the status quo and actively take part in nation-building. As Neil Mulder (2013) articulated, the dominant Filipino identity is personalistic and lacks affinity to the state or nation. Such is brought about by the inability of the state to connect to the ordinary people and cater to their interest instead of the elites. Therefore, mobilizing the public to imagine a nation they care about, including working on the election of competent officials whose background information they conscientiously study, would be difficult to realize. This lack of trust in the state and its elite leaders also predisposes the people to elect populist candidates without diligently examining the information propagated about the latter.

Given the concerns besetting the education system in producing citizens who are critical consumers of online information, civil society's efforts on the matter could go a long way in alleviating the issue. Out of the Box (OOTB), an NGO based in Quezon City, Philippines, has been working on developing critical consumers of online information. Operating since 2014, OOTB was awarded first prize in the 2021 Global Media and Information Literacy Awards by the UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy Alliance (Philstar.com 2021).

OOTB has been developing educational modules on media literacy intended for teachers,

students and the general public available for free on its website. Among its recent initiative to address the crisis of disinformation is the 'Iwas' in #IWASFAKE. IWAS stands for the four important habits to deter disinformation: “Ikalma ang sarili.” (Take a pause and calm down.), “Wag basta maniwala.” (Do not easily believe and be skeptical.), “Alamin ang source at konteksto ng impormasyon.” (Always check the source and the context of the information.), and “Salain bago i-share at sitahin ang nagkakalat ng mali.” (Study and filter before sharing information and call attention to disinformation).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The recent elections — characterized by the perpetuation of political dynasties and disinformation — attest to the need for the enhancement of civic education to produce citizens who can critically engage in governance. Nonetheless, oligarchic rule, a product of the country's history of colonialism, threatens the implementation of a civic education aimed at developing a critically-engaged citizenry. Oligarchic rule has also resulted in a weak state unable to resolve persistent poverty and inequality, which has deterred marginalized Filipinos from identifying themselves as being part of a nation from which they can expect good governance. Presently, oligarchs have weaponized social media for disinformation to perpetuate their rule. This calls for better knowledge and use social media information and platforms, in order to undermine the threat posed to democracy by disinformation on these channels.

Similar to other endeavors aimed at strengthening democracy (Mulder 2013), civil society groups can help improve civic education. Concerned groups could work for reforms in education by advocating for changes in the curriculum, which could include the return of a dedicated Philippine history subject such as being done by a group of educators. In addition to its reinstatement, educators also advocate that Philippine history teaching should be enhanced by a pedagogy where students are not confined to the memorization of facts found on Google, but are taught to critically analyze and argue about the facts (Ocampo 2023). This will help students become more knowledgeable about the past to understand the present including current challenges faced by the nation, which could make them more civically engaged about the issues.

Another area is how civic lessons are taught which can be addressed by implementing relevant professional development (PD) for teachers to improve their teaching. An example of this PD is instructing the teachers on how to conduct research on social problems with their students, which has been shown to improve both the dispositions and skills of students (Mirra and Morrell 2011).

Civil society organizations can also partner with schools to implement innovative civic lessons and activities that could positively impact students' motivation and self-efficacy when it comes to civic engagement, e.g., Project Citizen administered by the Philippine Center for Civic Education and Democracy (PCCED). Another is the effort of the NGO Out of the Box (OOTB), awarded by the UNESCO for its media literacy lessons, to address the problem of disinformation that has impacted elections in the Philippines.

Lastly, civil society can work on creating or developing relationships with champions in

government who can help institute reforms in education policies. Concerned groups should creatively find ways to make these endeavors possible given the tendency of those in power to use government appointments as rewards for loyalty.

Overall, the myriad problems confronting the Philippines attest to the need for the strengthening of civic education to produce an informed citizenry who can effectively engage in governance and contribute to the nation's development. Civil society will have a pivotal role in making such civic education possible.

Ma. Glenda Lopez Wui, Ph.D. is Assistant Professor at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Ateneo de Manila University. She has published in international refereed publications on youth civic engagement, literacy of culturally diverse youths, students' academic motivation, and migrant communities. Her latest book publication is the "Civic Engagement of Asian American Student Leaders" (co-author Cameron S. White) by Lexington Books.

Jessica Sandra R. Claudio, M.A. is Instructor at the Development Studies Program of the Ateneo de Manila University and Research Associate at the Institute of Philippine Culture. She is a sociologist working on gender and women's studies, health systems, education, and social movements. Jessica has conducted impact assessments, monitoring, evaluation research for various development and health programs.

Carl Russel R. Reyes, M.A. is a Lecturer at the Department of Sociology of Anthropology, Ateneo de Manila University. He has been involved in research projects on youth civic engagement, homeless policies, community voting behavior, and indebtedness among public school teachers.

Rosselle Trishia Reyes Carbaja, M.A. obtained her AB Asian Studies at the University of Santo Tomas and MA in Social Development at the Ateneo de Manila University. She is currently a Lecturer at the Ateneo de Manila University with research focus on alternative education, civic education in the Philippines, and urban poor.

REFERENCES

Acierto, Maria Guillen (1980), *American Influence in Shaping Philippine Secondary Education: An Historical Perspective, 1898–1978*, Loyola University Chicago, available at https://ecommons.luc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2791&context=luc_diss. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.

Adarlo, Genejane Monroy (2016), "(Re)framing Citizenship Education in the Philippines: A Twenty-First Century Imperative", *The Good Society*, vol. 25, nos. 2–3, pp. 256–88, available at <https://doi.org/10.5325/goodsociety.25.2-3.0256>. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.

Arao, Danilo (2023), "Philippine Election Year Reinvents Dynasty Cartel", *East Asia Forum*, January 9, available at <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2023/01/09/philippine-election-year-reinvents-dynasty-cartel/>. Last accessed on October 1, 2023.

Avery, P. G. (2003), Using research about civic learning to improve courses in the methods of teaching social studies, paper presented at the Conference of the Education in Democracy for Social Studies Teachers: An Institute for Florida Teacher Educators, Gainesville, Florida, April 11.

Baildon, Mark, Jasmine B.-Y. Sim, and Agnes Paculdar (2016), "A Tale of Two Countries: Comparing Civic Education in the Philippines and Singapore", *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, vol. 46, no. 1, pp. 93–115, available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2014.940848>. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.

Banlaoi, Rommel C. (2009), "Globalization and Nation-Building in the Philippines: State Predicaments in Managing Society in the Midst of Diversity after 9/11", *Philippine Security in the Age of Terror: National, Regional, and Global Challenges in the Post-9/11 World*, 1st edn., pp. 27–43, Auerbach Publications.

Barr, Dennis J., Beth Boulay, Robert L. Selman, Rachel McCormick, Ethan Lowenstein, Beth Gamse, Melinda Fine, and M. Brielle Leonard (2015), "A Randomized Controlled Trial of Professional Development for Interdisciplinary Civic Education: Impacts on Humanities Teachers and their Students", *Teachers College Record*, vol. 117, pp. 1–52.

Bello, Walden Flores (2020), "The Far Right: Formidable but Not Unbeatable", *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 388–398, available at <https://doi.org/10.1177/2277976020968318>. Last accessed on October 1, 2023.

Buendia, Rizal G. (2021), "Examining Philippine Political Development Over Three Decades After 'Democratic' Rule: Is Change Yet to Come?", *Asian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 29, no. 2, pp. 169–191, available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/02185377.2021.1916970>. Last accessed on October 1, 2023.

Campbell, David E. (2012), "Introduction", *Making Civics Count: Citizenship Education for a New Generation*, edited by David E. Campbell, Meira Levinson, and Frederick M. Hess, pp. 1–13. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Chan, Adrienne (2022), "What Happened? Revisionism, Clan Politics, and the Philippine Election", *Harvard International Review*, August 17, available at <https://hir.harvard.edu/what-happened-revisionism-clan-politics-and-the-philippine-election/>. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.

Cho, Alexander, Jasmina Byrne, and Zoë Pelter (2020), *Digital civic engagement by young people*, UNICEF, available at <https://www.unicef.org/globalinsight/reports/digital-civic-engagement-young-people>. Last accessed on September 20, 2023.

Chua, Yvonne, and Ma. Diosa Labiste (2018), "The Philippines", *Information Disorder in Asia: Overview of Misinformation Ecosystem in Indonesia, Japan, and the Philippines*, edited by Masato Kajimoto and Samantha Stanley, Hong Kong: Journalism and Media Studies Centre.

Constantino, Renato (1970), "The Miseducation of the Filipino", *Journal of Contemporary Asia* vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 20–36, available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472337085390031>. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.

Dalisay, Jose (2023) "Teaching History", *The Philippine Star*, May 8, available at <https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2023/05/08/2264615/teaching-history/amp/>. Last accessed on October 1, 2023.

Department of Education (2013a), "K to 12 Senior High School Core Curriculum – Understanding Culture, Society and Politics", December, available at https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/SHS-Core_Understanding-Culture-Society-and-Politics-CG.pdf. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.

_____ (2013b), "K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum Senior High School – Media and Information Literacy", December, available from https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/SHS-Core_Media-and-Information-Literacy-CG.pdf. Last accessed on October 2, 2023.

_____ (2016), "K to 12 Gabay Pangkurikulum Araling Panlipunan Baitang 1-10", May, available at <https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/AP-CG.pdf>. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.

_____ (2022), "On Philippine History in Basic Education", January 12, available at <https://www.deped.gov.ph/2022/01/11/on-philippine-history-in-basic-education/>. Last accessed on October 1, 2023.

- Devlin, Kayleen (2022), "Philippines election: 'Politicians Hire Me to Spread Fake Stories'", BBC News, May 8, available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending-61339293>. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.
- Durban, Joel M., and R. D. Catalan (2012), "Issues and Concerns of Philippine Education Through the Years", *Asian Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities* vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 61–69, available at [http://www.ajssh.leena-luna.co.jp/AJSSHPDFs/Vol.1\(2\)/AJSSH2012\(1.2-08\).pdf](http://www.ajssh.leena-luna.co.jp/AJSSHPDFs/Vol.1(2)/AJSSH2012(1.2-08).pdf). Last accessed on September 19, 2023.
- Elemia, Camille (2022), "In the Philippines, a flourishing ecosystem for political lies", *The New York Times*, May 6, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/06/business/philippines-election-disinformation.html>. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.
- Fajardo, Margarita Felipe (2023), "Filipino Students' Competency in Evaluating Digital Media Content Credibility: 'Beginning' to 'Emerging' Levels", *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, no. 15, pp. 58–70.
- Fallorina, Rossine, Jose Mari Hall Lanuza, Juan Gabriel Felix, Ferdinand Sanchez II, Jonathan Corpus Ong, and Nicole Curato (2023), *From Disinformation to Influence Operations: The Evolution of Disinformation in Three Electoral Cycles in the Philippines*, *Internews*, June, available at <https://internews.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/InternewsPH-June-2023-The-Evolution-of-Disinformation-in-Three-Electoral-Cycles.pdf>. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.
- Garces, L., K. Jandoc, and M. G. Lu (2021), "Political Dynasties and Economic Development: Evidence using Nighttime Light in the Philippines", *Philippine Political Science Journal*, vol. 41, no. 3, pp. 215–61, available at <https://doi.org/10.1163/2165025X-BJA10010>. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.
- Go, Julian (2000), "Chains of Empire, Projects of State: Political Education and U.S. Colonial Rule in Puerto Rico and the Philippines", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 333–62, available at <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417500002498>. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.
- Hernando-Malipot, Merlina. (2023), "DepEd Extends Public Review of K to 10 Draft Revised Curriculum until May 13", *Manila Bulletin*, May 6, available at <https://mb.com.ph/2023/5/6/dep-ed-extends-public-review-of-k-to-10-draft-revised-curriculum-until-may-13>. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.
- Kimura, Masataka (2003), "The Emergence of the Middle Classes and Political Change in the Philippines", *The Developing Economies*, vol. 41, no. 2, pp. 264–84, available at <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1746-1049.2003.tb00941.x>. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.
- Martial Law Museum. (n.d.), "It Takes a Village to Loot a Nation: Cronyism and Corruption", available at <https://martiallawmuseum.ph/magaran/it-takes-a-village-to-loot-a-nation-cronyism-and-corruption/>. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.
- McCarthy, Julie (2021), "Clan politics reign but a family is divided in the race to rule the Philippines", *NPR World*, available at <https://www.npr.org/2021/11/28/1058884480/duterte-marcos-and-political-dynasties-in-the-philippine-presidential-election>. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.
- Mendoza, Ronald, Leonardo Jaminola, and Jurel Yap (2019), "From Fat to Obese: Political Dynasties after the 2019 Midterm Elections", *Ateneo School of Government Working Paper Series*, September 2019, 19-013, available at <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3449201>. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.
- Mirra, Nicole, and Ernest Morrell (2011), "Teachers as Civic Agents Toward a Critical Democratic Theory of Urban Teacher Development", *Journal of Teacher Education*, vol. 62, pp. 408–20, available at <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487111409417>. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.
- Mulder, Niels (2013), "Filipino Identity: The Haunting Question", *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, vol. 32, no. 1, pp. 55–80, available at <https://doi.org/10.1177/186810341303200103>. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.
- Ocampo, Ambeth R. (2023), "Return history to K-12", *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, June 16, available at <https://opinion.inquirer.net/164080/return-history-to-k-12#ixzz8Ewm2KaAs>. Last accessed on October 1, 2023.
- Ombay, Giselle (2023), "DepEd Launches Revised K-10 Curriculum", *GMA News*, August 10, available at <https://>

www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/878503/deped-launches-revised-k-10-curriculum/story/. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.

Ong, Jonathan Corpus, and Jason Vincent A. Cabañes (2018), *Architects of Networked Disinformation: Behind the Scenes of Troll Accounts and Fake News Production in the Philippines*, UMass Amherst, available at https://scholarworks.umass.edu/communication_faculty_pubs/74/. Last accessed on September 20, 2023.

Philippine Institute of Development Studies (PIDS) (2022), “Civic Education in the Philippines Must Be Improved—DLSU Professor”, August 23, available at <https://www.pids.gov.ph/details/news/press-releases/civic-education-in-the-philippines-must-be-improved-dlsu-professor>. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.

PCCED (Philippine Center for Civic Education and Democracy) (2023), available at <https://www.pcced.org.ph/>. Last accessed on October 1, 2023.

Philstar.com (2021), Filipino NGO Wins UNESCO Prize for Media and Information Literacy Advocacy, December 13, available at <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2021/12/13/2147706/filipino-ngo-wins-unesco-prize-media-and-information-literacy-advocacy/amp/>. Last accessed on October 1, 2023.

Piñgul, Ferdinand S. (2015), “Measuring the Impact of a Supplemental Civic Education Program on Students’ Civic Attitude and Efficacy Beliefs”, *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 61–69, available at <https://doi.org/10.11114/jets.v3i2.600>. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.

Quigley, Charles (1995), *The Role of Civic Education*, Washington, DC: The Communitarian Network.

Quimpo, Nathan Gilbert (2008), *Contested Democracy and the Left in the Philippines after Marcos*, Yale University Southeast Asia Studies; Ateneo de Manila University Press.

Republic of the Philippines (1939), “Executive Order No. 217, s. 1939”, August 19, *Official Gazette*, available at <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1939/08/19/executive-order-no-217/>. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.

———(1972a), “Proclamation No. 1081, s. 1972”, *Official Gazette*, September 21, available at <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1972/09/21/proclamation-no-1081/>. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.

———(1972b), “Presidential Decree No. 6A 1972”, The LawPhil Project, available at https://lawphil.net/statutes/presdecs/pd1972/pd_6_a_1972.html. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.

Rice, Susan E., and Stewart Patrick (2008), *Index of State Weakness in the Developing World*, Brookings Institution, available at https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/02_weak_states_index.pdf. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.

Tusalem, R. F., and J. J. Pe-Aguirre (2013), “The Effect of Political Dynasties on Effective Democratic Governance”, *Asian Politics & Policy*, vol. 5, pp. 359–86, available at <https://doi.org/10.1111/aspp.12037>. Last accessed on September 19, 2023.

Wui, Ma. Glenda Lopez, Jessica Sandra R. Claudio, Rosselle Trishia M. Reyes, Carl Russel R. Reyes, and Enrique Nino P. Leviste (2023), *The people deserve better governance: Examining the letters of Filipino high school students to the Next President of the Philippines*, paper accepted for presentation at the Philippine Sociological Society (PSS) conference, Manila, Philippines, October 4–6, 2023.