
UNVEILING THE INJUSTICES AND NEGATIVES SURROUNDING OF THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL ELECTION 2022

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Abstract:

The Philippine Election 2022 is a critical event that will shape the future of the country. It is an opportunity for citizens to exercise their democratic rights and choose their leaders. However, beneath the surface of this seemingly democratic process lie several injustices and negatives that need to be brought to light. This commentary aims to delve into these issues and shed light on the flaws and problems that plague the Philippine Election 2022. This will analyze the current landscape of the Philippine Election 2022 and discuss the potential solutions that can be adopted to foster a more inclusive, fair, and transparent electoral process. It will also provide a critical appraisal of the existing electoral system and argue for reforms that can ensure free and fair elections. Additionally, this commentary will explore the impact of the current electoral system on the Philippine economy and the quality of governance, and it will advocate for the implementation of reforms that can ensure a more equitable distribution of resources and political power. Finally, it will provide recommendations for further research and action that can be taken to strengthen the electoral system in the Philippines. Plato once said: "Democracy... is a charming form of government, full of variety and disorder, and dispensing a sort of equality to equals and unequal alike." This statement captures the essence of democracy in the Philippines, where the electoral system has been shaped by a variety of factors, including socio-economic and political inequalities. This means that to strengthen the electoral system, it is necessary to find ways to address these inequalities and ensure that all citizens have access to their democratic rights.

Keywords: *National election, democratic process, critical issues, political dynasty*

Introduction:

Are you a registered Filipino and voted in the 2022 National Election? How was your experience voting? Did you experience a long queue line? How about the defective VCMS? Did you vote for your personal bet, or was just influenced by social media and forgotten history? What is in it for you after the election? It's already been a year since the national election, which was won by the son of the former president and dictator, President Ferdinand E. Marcos Sr., and the daughter of former president Rodrigo Duterte.

National Election for President and Vice-President happens every six years. This is the time to vote for the right and deserving Filipino leader to spearhead the nation. On May 9, 2022, the

Philippines chose the successor of the incumbent president. Filipinos will exercise their rights to vote and to choose the best next leader to help the country strengthen its economy which was devastated and mishandled by the past presidents and the worldwide health pandemic, Covid 19. The next leader will inherit from his successor almost 13 trillion in national debts. The National debt of the Philippines is the total debt, or unpaid borrowed funds, carried by the national government of the Philippines. The national government's total outstanding debt swelled to ₱13.86 trillion by the end of March 2023, the Bureau of the Treasury reported. Imagine with these numbers, our grandchildren up to the nth generation will pay for this through their income taxes. During a Senate hearing, one senator commented that we need to increase our population, so we have more to contribute to pay for the Philippine debt. Sounds pathetic for a senator to comment such in a senate hearing on national debt. The national debt blooms because the Philippines needs to borrow money to address the financial deficit from unemployment, past due debt from other financial institutions as well and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Critical Issues and Problems in the 2022 Philippine Election.

The Philippine Election 2022 is marred by various injustices and negatives that need to be addressed. The lack of transparency in campaign financing, the counting and tabulation of votes, and the selection of candidates erode the trust and confidence of the citizens in the election process. Additionally, vote-buying and electoral violence perpetuate a system that is far from fair and just. It is crucial for the government, election officials, and citizens to acknowledge these issues and work toward reforms that will ensure a more transparent, inclusive, and democratic election process in the future. Only then can the true voice of the Filipino people be heard, and their rights be protected in the electoral process.

With that, here are some of the reasons for issues and inequalities that happened in the recently concluded election in the Philippines.

- ***Voter Suppression*** - One of the key injustices observed during the 2022 Philippine Election was voter suppression, particularly targeting marginalized communities. Reports of voter intimidation, harassment, and restrictions on access to polling stations were prevalent. Such practices impeded the citizens' right to vote freely and fairly, perpetuating a system that favors certain political interests over the will of the people.
- ***Political Dynasties*** - The dominance of political dynasties remained a pervasive negative aspect of the 2022 Philippine Election. These dynasties, characterized by the consolidation of power within a few influential families, hindered the emergence of fresh voices and ideas. Consequently, this perpetuated a system where the electorate's choices were limited, and the democratic process was compromised. The issue of political dynasties in the Philippines has been a long-standing concern, as critics argue that it can hinder democracy, perpetuate unequal distribution of power, and limit opportunities for new political leaders to emerge. It has been associated with issues of

corruption, nepotism, and lack of accountability. The discussions around political dynasties in the Philippines continue, with ongoing debates on the need for anti-dynasty laws and the potential impacts on the political landscape and governance in the country. It is important to note that while there have been attempts to limit or regulate political dynasties in our country, these efforts have been largely ineffective due to various challenges, including opposition from politicians who benefit from such arrangements.

- **Corruption** – Indeed, corruption in the Philippine elections is a significant challenge that continued to plague the Philippine Election in 2022, with allegations of votebuying, bribery, manipulation of election results, and misuse of government resources. Such practices erode public trust in the electoral system and compromise the integrity of the election results. The existence of corruption not only undermines the democratic process but also contributes to the perpetuation of socioeconomic disparities. Corruption in elections is a complex issue influenced by various factors, including weak enforcement of election laws, inadequate regulation of campaign finance, and lack of accountability for those involved. Additionally, poverty and socio-economic disparities can exacerbate the vulnerability of voters to bribery. To address corruption in the Philippine elections, efforts have been made to strengthen the electoral policies and promote transparency and accountability. This includes reforms in campaign financing, enhancing the capability of election monitoring bodies, and raising public awareness about the negative impacts of corruption on democratic governance. However, combating corruption in elections requires a multi-faceted approach involving political will, strong institutional mechanisms, and active participation from civil society and the public.

- **Manipulation through social media** - The influence of social media on the 2022

Philippine Election cannot be ignored. While social media platforms provide a space for political discourse and information dissemination, they are also used as tools for disinformation, fake news, and online manipulation. The spread of false narratives and the amplification of divisive content further polarized the electorate, leading to a fragmented and distorted political landscape. The disinformation messages being spread on social media undermine the foundations of the entire democratic world. In countries with authoritarian regimes platforms are used to increase influence and manipulate elections.

- **Lack of Transparency** - One of the major criticisms of the Philippine Election 2022 is the lack of transparency in the process. Transparency is essential in ensuring a fair and just election, but unfortunately, it has been severely lacking in this election. The lack of transparency is evident in various aspects of the election, including campaign financing, the counting and tabulation of votes, and the selection of candidates. Transparency and accountability are vital components of any democratic election. However, the Philippine Election 2022 suffered from a lack of transparency in various stages of the electoral process. Allegations of irregularities during voter registration, malfunctioning vote-counting machines, and inconsistencies in tallying and reporting

results raised concerns about the integrity of the election. This lack of transparency further fueled public mistrust and undermined the legitimacy of the electoral outcomes.

- **Campaign Financing** - Campaign financing plays a crucial role in any election process. However, in the Philippine Election 2022, there have been numerous cases of questionable campaign financing. Many candidates have been accused of accepting huge amounts of money from unknown sources, leading to concerns about potential corruption and undue influence in the election. This lack of transparency raises doubts about the integrity of the candidates and the fairness of the election process. Another negative aspect that plagued the election was the glaring inequality in campaign financing. The exorbitant costs associated with running for public office created an uneven playing field, favoring candidates with access to vast financial resources. This disparity restricted the chances of aspiring candidates who lacked the financial means to compete, resulting in an unbalanced representation of diverse perspectives in the political landscape. Furthermore, if a person's candidacy was financed by an unknown source, more chances that if the person won, he/she would have to pay back his/her debt which leads to corruption in public offices.
- **Counting and Tabulation of Votes** - Another area where transparency is lacking is in the counting and tabulation of votes. The use of automated voting machines has been hailed as a step towards a more efficient and transparent election process. However, there have been reports of glitches and irregularities in the machines, raising doubts about the accuracy of the results. Technology, no matter how high-tech it is, is being manipulated by an expert in information technology. Additionally, the lack of access to the source code of the voting machines has made it difficult for independent experts to verify the integrity of the system, further eroding trust in the election process and results.
- **Selection of Candidates** - The selection of candidates is another aspect of the Philippine Election 2022 that has been marred by a lack of transparency. Political parties and influential individuals often have a significant say in the selection of candidates, resulting in a limited pool of choices for the voters. This lack of diversity and competition undermines the democratic principle of giving citizens a wide range of candidates to choose from. Furthermore, the selection process often favors candidates with financial resources and political connections, further marginalizing those from less privileged backgrounds. Also, the policy on selecting candidates must be reviewed especially on the educational qualification of a candidate. Let's face it, we will not submit to a leader who seems to be underqualified.
- **Vote-Buying and Electoral Violence** - Vote-buying and electoral violence are not new phenomena in Philippine elections, and unfortunately, the Philippine Election 2022 is no exception. Vote-buying, the practice of offering money or gifts in exchange for votes, undermines the democratic process, and compromises the integrity of the election. It perpetuates a system where those with financial resources can buy their way into power, rather than being elected based on their qualifications and merit. Electoral violence, on the other hand, refers to any form of violent behavior or activities that occur during the electoral process. It typically includes physical intimidation,

harassment, threats, property damage, or even loss of life. Reports of harassment, intimidation, and even killings have been documented during the campaign period, further undermining the credibility of the election. Electoral violence can have a detrimental impact on the democratic process, leading to a climate of fear, low voter turnout, and a compromised election outcome. Addressing electoral violence is crucial for ensuring a free, fair, and peaceful electoral process.

- ***Voter Suppression and Intimidation*** - One of the major injustices observed during the Philippine Election 2022 was voter suppression and intimidation tactics employed by some candidates and their supporters. Reports of vote-buying, coercion, and harassment were widespread, undermining the principle of free and fair elections. These acts deprived voters of their right to freely express their political choices and eroded the democratic ideals the election was meant to uphold.
- ***Disinformation and Misleading Campaigns*** - The 2022 Philippine Election was also marred by a rampant spread of disinformation and misleading campaigns. Social media platforms became breeding grounds for false narratives, fake news, and propaganda, aiming to manipulate public opinion and sway election results. Such tactics not only misled the voters but also impeded their ability to make informed decisions based on information.
- ***Politicization of Government Institutions*** - The politicization of government institutions was yet another negative aspect that tainted the Philippine Election 2022. The alleged use of state resources and institutions to promote the interests of specific candidates or parties compromised the neutrality and integrity of public institutions. This practice erodes public trust, undermines the democratic fabric, and fosters a culture of impunity.

Filipino voting experience.

If you voted last May 9, you exercised your lawful rights as a Filipino. But the question is how do you exercise your rights as a Filipino? The voting precinct opens as early as 6 a.m. If you are an early bird, you will still have a chance to cast your vote earlier but if you are like the other Filipinos and you all have the same thinking that later will be the best time to vote and when you go to your precinct assignment and you get the shock of your life that the line is too long and you don't have to do but to wait for your turn.

About 2,000 defective vote-counting machines (VCMs) have spoiled the opening of the country's national elections—leaving affected voters disappointed and a poll watchdog warning against the potential disenfranchisement of a million voters. As early as 10:30 AM, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) said the defective VCMs encountered "common issues": paper jams – 940, rejected ballots – 606, VCM scanner malfunction – 158, VCM printer, not printing – 87, not printing properly – 76. Comelec Commissioner George Garcia, however, said these have been resolved already after the affected units were either repaired or replaced.

How Filipinos voted their future leaders.

With the popularity of social media, it is not surprising that it ranks at the top as the most accessible source of election-related information for voters. But when it comes to trust, Filipinos are still likely to put their trust in more traditional communication platforms, such as television, followed closely by newspapers. While social media is the go-to source for information, Filipinos have learned to scrutinize reports from various media outlets with a more critical eye, having been enlightened by the many instances in the past when narratives were distorted to favor a particular political agenda or personal interest. Even digital natives from the younger cohorts use more conventional sources for election-related information to validate what they see and read on social media.

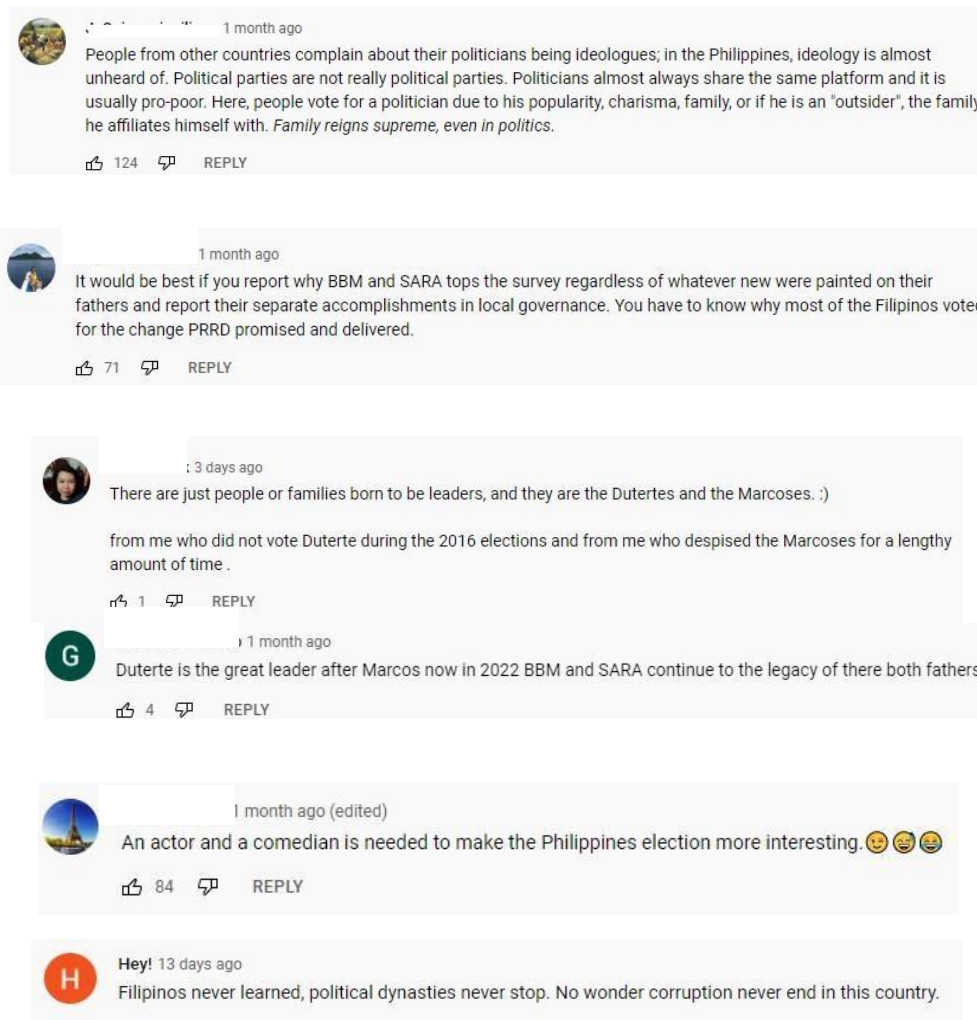


Illustration 1. Comments of citizens about the candidates after knowing their Family History and Professional Background

Impact of social media in the 2022 national elections.

Due to the high rate and cases of COVID-19 in the whole world, Filipino politicians will be expected to tap into the social media world due to the limited movements because of COVID-19 according to CNN (2021). Candidates for the Philippine election 2022 will influence and impact the voters through social media. According to Allan Herman (2021), A political strategy, social media will be the new go-to platform for campaigning. Allan Herman also mentioned that there is a technique in any election, and it is called ATC or "Awareness to Choose." This will establish awareness among all residents in the Philippines and especially among the voters. Herman also raised that social media allows voters and residents to obtain better insights regarding their chosen candidates.

In addition, social media can help candidates to campaign for themselves, for their party list but voters are prone to disinformation and fake news about their chosen candidates or the other candidates. Due to misinformation about the candidates, voters or netizens start to have healthy or unhealthy insights and political views on social media. With this kind of matter, the admins of all social media such as Twitter, labeled tweets as misleading and misinformation content of tweets and posts. While on Facebook and Instagram, the admins of these social media platforms favored removing and banning accounts that contained misleading information about the candidates for the Philippine election 2022.

Social media misinformation and the 2022 Philippine election.

According to Quitzon (2021), the battle for the presidency of the Philippines in 2022 is gaining traction. There are five front-runners among the dozens of candidates who have submitted paperwork: Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr., Emmanuel "Manny" Pacquiao, Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso, Christopher "Bong" Go, and Maria Leonor "Leni"

Robredo. Meanwhile, the Philippines is still battling the effects of the Covid-19 outbreak. With just roughly a third of the population completely vaccinated, a presidential campaign's ability to successfully use social media and control digital arenas will be critical in influencing public opinion. Traditional in-person campaign gatherings are also impossible to organize due to government lockdowns. As a result, candidates will rely on social media to reach out to voters much more than in prior elections.

In Philippine society, social media is a powerful force. It's a simple and accessible way to consume material, especially given how sluggish and unpredictable internet connectivity can be. Because social media is so easily accessible, it is a perfect venue for changing public opinion; as a result, politicians will go to any length to attract people's attention. In the Philippines, President Rodrigo Duterte's campaign was the first to capitalize on social media virality. Duterte's campaign used an army of internet trolls to "amplify" his message throughout Philippine cyberspace, according to his social media manager, Nic Gabunada. These trolls promote falsehoods in favor of Duterte's policies and continue to do so.

The after-effects of Duterte's chaotic social media campaigning will be passed down to the contenders in next year's elections. Candidates and their followers have either embraced or rejected these techniques. Isko Moreno, the mayor of Manila, has put his own twist on Duterte's demagoguery, criticizing "decent" and "moralistic" Liberal Party lawmakers. He used a news conference to malign Vice President Leni Robredo and her followers in response to the #WithdrawIsko hashtag circulating by her supporters. Naturally, fans of Robredo retaliated on Twitter, increasing the ugliness of social media.

Furthermore, Bongbong Marcos and his family proceed to work behind the scenes to update the decades-old disinformation efforts they have been promoting. Facebook sites, YouTube channels, and influencers reinforce assertions that change the public's perspective of the Marcos family, typically downplaying or denying the kleptocracy and human rights crimes that occurred during the Martial Law era. Marcos' campaign has been chastised for "whitewashing" his father's cruel reign as a "golden moment" for the Philippines, while also spreading myths and exaggerations about the Marcos family dating back to the 1960s when the older Marcos was president.

Misinformation spread via social media threatens to further polarize Philippine society and politics. As a result, each contender will have a tough struggle in the 2022 elections. Because just a simple majority is necessary to win the presidency, the proper mix of fury, virality, disinformation, and trolling might be enough to shift the scales in any candidate's favor. The stakes for this election are high: Filipino voters will decide whether the country's democratic institutions are strengthened or weakened.

Most Pinoys on social media say web content has changed their political views.

According to Kristine Joy Patag (2018), in the most recent study, 47 percent of Filipinos use the internet, with 94 percent using their mobile phones to do so. Of those who use the internet, 98 percent use it to check their social media accounts. According to the same poll, 39% of internet users "browse the web to read, watch, and/or listen to other items of interest to them." In the meanwhile, 29% of internet users read, watch, or listen to the news. Another 20% of people use the Internet to send, receive, and read emails.

According to Pulse Asia, 51% of Filipinos who use the internet to check their social media accounts have "changed their opinions concerning politics and governance at least once" because of anything they saw, read, or listened to on the internet. Luzon (52%) and Visayas (71%) had similar results, whereas the National Capital Region and Mindanao had 42 percent and 44 percent, respectively. Six out of ten Filipinos in Class E who check their social media accounts when they go online modify their political opinions because of what they read on their feed. A similar view was expressed by 57 percent of Class ABC students and 49 percent of Class D students. The findings contrasted sharply with those from June 2017, when "most Filipinos using the internet to access their social media accounts said they have never changed their political views as a consequence of whatever they discovered on the web," according to Pulse Asia.

Only 37% of individuals who use the internet check their social media accounts, according to the June 2017 study data. According to the data of 2017, 39% of them modify their political beliefs because of what they encounter on the internet. The poll took place from September 1 to 7, with 1,800 people participating in face-to-face interviews. The poll findings were revealed on October 10, one day before the Commission on Elections formally opened filing for the midterm elections in May 2019. From June 2016 to May 2017, according to Freedom House, a US-based human rights organization, there was an uptick in claims of commentators being paid to falsify social media material.

Moreover, the rampant spread of incorrect information on media platforms and the 2022 Philippine election.

Social media is one of the only ways for a candidate to campaign for his or her name, running position, and his or her platforms and plans for the country or the place he or she will lead in the future. But do voters or netizens think that the information gathered from social media platforms is a reliable source and legitimate to use in every circumstance?

Fake news peddlers, hackers, trolls, posers, etc. are now active on social media. In this case, there are times or most of the time netizens are encountering fake news, and troll posts on social media. Encountering misinformation on social media has a big impact on a voter's or netizen's perspective and point of view about a candidate unless netizens and voters are not easily fooled, and they will start to dig into some research.

Some of the netizens and voters are easily fooled by fake news, this can lead to bashing and despising of the Philippine electoral candidates of 2022. This misinformation can lead to brainwashing and even worse. Netizens and voters must be more vigilant in trusting information because not all the content on social media is true and legitimate.

The majority of Pinoys on social media think digital information has influenced their political beliefs.

This article showed the percentage of people who were using social media, the internet, as well as cell phones or gadgets all around the Philippines. With the polls that were used, there are Filipinos who didn't get affected by social media to have changes in their political views and perspectives. Some Filipinos really changed their political views after being exposed to social media and the internet. They had options and comments about the candidates they have chosen, and they didn't choose. Moreover, social media and the internet can affect voters and netizens in good, bad, or neutral ways. The effects of social media will still depend on people and their choices. It will depend on their decisions, beliefs about the candidates, and their will to vote.

Analysis:

Indeed, the influence of social media on the 2022 elections creates a huge impact, since the current situation of the pandemic, the politicians, and candidates for the Philippine election

2022 have taken advantage of the usage of the internet and social media to serve as campaigns. With this kind of campaign, a lot of Filipino netizens and voters have seen and kept on seeing a lot of advertisements, posts, and different political views from netizens. In that case, many Filipino netizens and voters are influenced by social media and have open eyes because of the social media environment, as well as being able to easily get information, news, and other things that can help them choose their candidates to vote.

Recommendations:

This commentary aims to suggest and recommend the following to mitigate the injustices and the spread of social media disinformation which is the main source of lapses and negative surroundings in the recently concluded election:

- This recommends students who are interested to know the factors that can affect their political views. This study provides students with the different factors that can affect the political views of individuals. This can also provide the said students with a better understanding and fair political standing.
- This commentary would like to recommend to Filipino Citizens so they to see the different political opinions, stands, and views. This study provides legit articles about the Philippine election in 2022. This study can help Filipino Citizens to be open to different political views of other Filipino Citizens, this study provides different factors why a person has that political stand, and this study can provide background history for the Philippine election 2022 candidates.
- This would also like to recommend Filipino voters for them to have ideas on how to vote during every election wisely and properly. The commentary provides relevant information that can enlighten future Filipino voters on how to handle the information that they can get from social media and from studying the historical background of the candidates that they need to choose from.
- This commentary would also like to recommend Professors out there since it can help them get some fresh data and information about the topic, as well as to help them realize how important is their role in teaching our future voters' details that they might need in the future. One specific example is how it is important for History professors to make sure that they will not be biased while discussing the previous significant events of our country. This study might make them realize that teaching both sides or all sides of History has a more accurate and positive impact on citizens, especially our voters.
- Also, for our government cabinets such as COMELEC to ensure and promote policies on transparency, accuracy, and integrity in their jobs as the commissioner that would impact the entire country. Through them, ensuring all Vote Counting Machines (VCMs) are working well and planning to have alternatives must be complied with. Also, they should mitigate and give stern sanctions or disqualification for those who will abide by the election rules.
- Lastly, this commentary is recommended for other researchers so that they can continue the study with slight adjustments and additional information that can also help others

such as registered voters. Other researchers can replicate some parts and objectives of this study so they can help figure out other factors that can influence the references of future voters, like the candidates' demographic profiles and sociological factors such as their incomes, geography, and family background.

Conclusion:

For the Philippine election of 2022, based on the data gathered from different articles, news, interviews, polls, and YouTube videos, it is safe to assume that Filipino voters and Filipino citizens or netizens are really influenced by social media and the history of the Philippine candidates for election 2022. The polls and interviews showed that Filipino voters will vote for candidates who have a better or greater background in politics. Filipino citizens are also doing some background checks on the candidates regarding their academics, what schools they attended, their achievements, and their platforms for the country.

Furthermore, knowing the family linkage or family history of each candidate is also proven to be very significant in how voters choose their chosen future leaders. People have different stands on how those family histories can affect the effectiveness of the said candidates. Some believe that the candidates with family members who were formerly elected to certain government positions will just continue the legacy, plans, and platforms of their relatives. This is where the debates started since some people were against how those former leaders implemented things, while some were in favor of how things were done by previous administrations.

With that, for the Filipinos to have a better Philippines, the country's problems are serious and manifold. Assault on our territorial integrity by a foreign power. Social injustice. Economic inequities. Widespread poverty and unemployment. Inadequacy of the healthcare system. Poor standard of education. Ravaging impact of the pandemic. The ills and woes that bedevil us will not go away by poking jokes and hurling curses at them and the opposition. Red tagging the so-called enemies of the state will only promote discord. National politics becomes toxic, and each side of the political divide hankers to destroy the other instead of focusing on their work. Unless the problems are addressed and resolved, we shall wake up and live day after day to confront them.

For democracy to survive, Filipinos should all work to have clean and honest elections in 2022. The Philippines needs presidential aspirants who will not talk trash and falsehoods. Filipinos want to hear reassuring words from presidential hopefuls who can give us a message of hope, not despair; optimism, not cynicism; candor, not lie. Filipinos should subject every candidate to meticulous scrutiny and skepticism. Filipinos should be able to hold every aspiring politician to account and hold him answerable for his acts or misdeeds once he's in office. Elections empower the people to get rid of or reject rapacious leaders who will debauch their hapless countrymen. There is a gulf between political promises and accomplishments, and voters should not be hoodwinked by charlatans who will promise anything just to get elected.

Voters should think clearly and critically when making their choices. They should realize the severe consequences of their decisions. A president enjoys extensive power to change the course of history. Every voter should help shape the political process improve the quality of political discourse in this country and upgrade the level of debate among the candidates. Candidates should have a global view of the issue and not carry on the trees that make up the forest. We need to reboot or reset the political culture that will define the fundamental issues that need to be expounded and tackled during the campaign. We need a leader who can restore dignity to the office of the president. A president who will honor his words and whose public pronouncements can be relied upon by his people.

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