

(De)Constructing Myths in Editorial Cartoons: The Case of Philippine Elections

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Abstract

The electoral situation in the Philippines can be described as dramatic, and it seems to be a severe political competition since various media are exploited and manipulated; either the purpose is to construct or to assassinate one's character. This paper analyzed 20 editorial cartoons to identify the signifiers, infer the connotative meanings, and analyze the myths present in the editorial cartoons that represent the upcoming Philippine National election in 2022. This research employed a qualitative descriptive research design and content analysis. The researchers utilized purposive sampling in selecting the twenty editorial cartoons from reputable newspaper companies in the Philippines. Results of the study showed that the common signifiers present in the editorial cartoons were the men in barong and wearing salakot representing the Filipino citizens, alligator, lion, and pig representing the candidates, and finger-pointing that connotes blaming. Another significant finding that emerged from this study was the nine deconstructed myths inferred from the signifiers: political feud, hiding true intentions, political colors, election promises, power tripping, social media influence in electoral campaigns, foreign influence, honesty in an election, and nuisance candidates. In conclusion, from the perspective of the cartoonists of different media outlets, the election situation in the Philippines is negatively framed. Thus, the researchers recommend to conduct a study related to the signs used to portray the election process to understand the relationship of the concepts between its denotative and connotative meanings.

1. INTRODUCTION

The electoral situation in the Philippines can be described as dramatic, and it seems to be a severe political competition since various media are exploited and manipulated; either the purpose is to construct or to assassinate one's character. As one cannot usually express all their thoughts in narratives and opinions, one of the usual media accessible for the masses is the editorial cartoon. Editorial cartoons can be a suitable medium for expressing these thoughts, particularly political issues, as it allows cartoonists to sketch out ideas that cannot be easily explained in an editorial text (Popatco, 2020). According to Marin-Aresse (2015) in Akpati (2019), these editorial cartoons can be considered as a genre of discourse and communication as its construction is a combination of caricature, humor, and satire that

represents public or political figures, or socio-political events, as expressed by the cartoonist's critical stance.

An editorial cartoon is one way of effectively conveying political issues, as it gives a pictorial description and representation of the current political situation that invokes the readers' minds. Editorial cartoons are referred to as political cartoons as "they are intended to make readers think about the current political issues" (Ohio State University, n.d.). In the Philippines, editorial cartoons portraying different factions of political aspirants who expressed their interest to run for the national election this coming 2022 have arisen, as the names of familiar politicians in the Philippines such as Sara "Inday Sara" Duterte, the former Mayor of Davao City and the daughter of President Rodrigo Duterte, Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr, a Senator and the son of the former Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos," the current Vice-President of the Philippines, Leni Robredo, are only among the top choices of the Filipinos to be their candidate for the upcoming presidential race and have stirred different political parties. Moreover, the issue lies in the background of these candidates as the mainstream media have expressed their negative views towards some of the candidates. Though editorial cartoons do not occupy large portions of the media, they can significantly impact the audience and/or readership as they effectively and humorously convey messages succinctly (Mhamdi, 2017).

Several studies relating to semantics in politics, specifically on elections, have been conducted, such as Critical Discourse Analysis, which mainly discusses power in the discourses of the electoral candidates, as can be seen in the studies of Labang (2018) and Malimas et al. (2018). However, it seems that there is a limited resource when it comes to examining how the media portrayed the events of the ongoing elections in the Philippines, which is the filing of candidacy, as expressed in editorial cartoons. Understanding how the electoral candidates are being portrayed in the editorials is of paramount significance, as the signs used in the editorials could affect the voters' decision-making, whether the candidates' advocacies are aligned with their preferences and perceptions. This paper analyzed editorial cartoons to unveil the hidden meanings and myths present in the said editorial cartoons. Specifically, the study aimed to: a) identify the signifiers in the editorial cartoons, b) infer the connotative meanings of the signifiers in the editorial cartoons, and c) analyze and discuss the myths present in the editorial cartoons.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Matthews (2011) defined political cartoons as hand-drawn images that occupy a single visual frame, often accompanied by written text serving as an indicator of dialogue or narration. Thus, according to Osuagwu (2012, p. 74), "cartoons are used in the media as one of the devices for attracting attention and facilitation meaning comprehension in editorials." According to Mendoza (2016), it is already recognized that editorial cartoons are expressed through signs. Hence, it is a linguistic point of view that conveys a message: words, images, gestures, voices, and even thoughts which not only portray meaning but also offer ideologies, worldviews, and lifestyles.

The study of Calimbo (2016) mentioned that according to Ferdinand de Saussure, a sign has two components: the signifier (the word, the sound, or image) and the signified (the meaning or the concept the signifier represents). Thus, a sign can be a word, a sound, or a visual image that stands for something else. Further, according to Chandler (2011), anything can be a sign as long as someone interprets it as signifying something—referring to or standing for something other than itself.

Barthes (1991) extends Saussure's semiological system by suggesting two distinct orders of signification, the first is Saussure's sign system, and the second is the mythological system. Barthes coined the denotation and connotation of the term to refer to the first order of signification, which he defined as the literal or obvious meaning, and connotation to refer to

the second order of signification, which he defined as the supplementary cultural meanings (in Berger, 2004). According to Barthes, myths reflect the prevailing ideologies of our time; consequently, because myths transmit concealed ideological functions, contrary to Saussure's idea of signs, myths are never arbitrary; instead, they are motivated. Thus, Robinsons (2011) emphasizes, "Barthes primary criticism of myth is that it obliterates history from language." It lends an appearance of being natural, eternal, absolute, or frozen to a particular symbol. To the consumer of myths [readers], the indicated connotative myths are "hidden," transforming the myth into a command or an unambiguous declaration of reality. The maker of myths seeks to present a myth as "true." Semioticians are thus tasked with the responsibility of elucidating such concealed meanings (Robinsons, 2011).

3. METHODOLOGY

This research employed a qualitative descriptive research design. According to Kumar (2011), the type of research design focuses on describing rather than examining relationships or associations towards a phenomenon or issue. In this study, the researchers found the design relevant, since this has aided them in deconstructing the editorial cartoons by identifying the signifiers present in the cartoons, interpreting their connotative meanings, and classifying the myths as observed in the interpreted cartoons.

The 20 editorial cartoons were purposely selected from reputable newspaper companies in the Philippines like Philippine Daily Inquirer, Manila Bulletin, The Philippine Star, and The Manila Time because they are the top four newspapers that Filipinos widely read. The researchers focused only on the editorial cartoons related to the upcoming 2022 national election and were published from September 2021 to November 2021. The qualitative content analysis was used in this study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first objective of this study was to identify the signifiers present in the editorial cartoons. There were 20 editorial cartoons analyzed and the researchers found 87 signifiers. As presented in the table below, the following were the recurring signifiers:

Signifiers	Frequency
Man/Woman	20
Barong Tagalog	6
Pink	5
Alligator	4
Sitting	3
Angry face	2
Certificate of Candidacy	2
Clown	2
Finger pointing	2
Pig	2
Yellow	2

The signifier *man/woman* appeared 20 times in the editorial cartoons. In addition, the signifiers can be categorized into five: *human signifier* (man/woman), *inanimate signifiers* (Certificate of Candidacy and clown), *animal signifier* (alligator and pig), *action signifier* (sitting and finger-pointing), *emotion signifier* (angry face), and *color signifier* (pink and yellow). In this manner, the artists can vividly associate the representation of these characters to real-life persons. People who were seeing and reading their work could easily guess and

related who these characters are as they have semblances on things that are commonly seen by the people around them.

The second and third objectives of the research are to infer the connotative meanings of the signifiers in the editorial cartoons and to discuss the myths present in the editorial cartoons. To infer the connotative meanings, the researchers utilized Barthes' concept of connotation (Chandler, 2005) which is the second-order of signification in his semiological system, and supplements cultural meanings. Furthermore, his notion of myths is also applied in this study as according to him, it reflects the prevailing ideologies of our time, as they are never arbitrary; but they are motivated.

Myth 1: Political Feud



Fig 1. Dear Voter, look beyond colors and ask for platforms



Fig 2. Certificate of Candidacy



Fig 3. Allegations



Fig 4. Skeletons in the Closet



Fig 5. Pulling BBM Down

The figures above show one of the significant myths found in this study. The political feud among clans and political parties is present in every election. Figure 1 shows the different signifiers like Man in Red denote that the man who wears a red shirt is the A Party and has a connotation that this man represents a political party. Another signifier present in Figure 1 is Man in Blue, which denotes that the man who wears a blue shirt is the B Party and has a connotation that this man represents another political party. Fingers pointing at each other is another signifier that denotes the finger-pointing describing someone. Thus, it connotes that both parties are accusing and throwing shades at each other. Lastly, Figure 1 presents a signifier of angry expressions. This expression denotes an intense feeling of abhor and hate between or among political parties. Furthermore, this signifier connotes that one party is wrongly/falsely accused of something, which becomes the reason why they are angry or vice versa. Based on the signifiers and their denotational and connotational meanings, Figure 1 shows that political parties in the Philippines are throwing issues at each other, making people focus on the issues thrown at each other and not on their respective platforms that lead to Political feud.

Figure 2 is also in consonance with figure 1. The identified signifiers and their denotational and connotational meanings resulted in a myth that there is a political feud in the Philippines. The first signifier identified in this political cartoon is formal business attire. This signifier denotes that the attire is used in formal meetings and connotes that the said attire is one way of presenting oneself formally. The second signifier are the two men sharing pants, which denotes one pant being shared with the two men and connotes that these two men share something in the common interest for a government position. The third signifier is the one man going away, which denotes that someone is going in a different direction. This connotes that

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someone does not want to be involved in a particular event. The fourth signifier is the Signed Certificate of Candidacy, which denotes the certificate announcing a person's candidacy for the office they are interested in. This certificate of candidacy connotes the process that every electoral candidate undergoes to signify their intention of running for a position formally. These four signifiers create a myth that the politicians manifest the crab mentality and the *ija-ija aho-aho* mentality (a Boholano term for "what's yours is yours, what's mine is mine"), which creates political feuds among the political parties and clans.

Figure 3, entitled Allegations in Aid of Elections, also shows the same myth. The first signifier identified in this political cartoon is a pig with a denotational meaning of being an omnivorous domesticated hoofed mammal. This first signifier connotes that the pig represents Politician A, characterized as a greedy, filthy person. Another signifier identified was an alligator, which has a denotational meaning of the one who alleges someone and connotes that the word "Allegator" is a pun intended to sound similar to an "alligator," which means dangerously opportunistic and greedy. This alligator represents Politician B. Another signifier identified was a Poster of the Alligator. This denotes that the poster is a picture of a reptile, and it connotes the real identity of the Alligator, which is opportunistic and greedy. Another signifier identified was an Alligator pointing to the pig. This denotes that the alligator is saying something to the pig and connotes that Politician B is accusing Politician A of corruption or unbecoming practices. Lastly, both are dressed in Barong. This signifier represents that the pig and the alligator are wearing the Philippine national costume for men and has a connotation that these two represent the Filipino Politicians. Combining these signifiers leads to a myth that Politicians A and B share the same characteristics: greed. However, Politician B accused first Politician A of doing something to tarnish the character of Politician A. In this manner, the true identity of Politician B may have not yet been revealed as the issues are focused on Politician A, which leads to political war among clans or parties.

Figure 4, entitled Skeletons in the Closet, supports the myths in Figures 1, 2, and 3. There are three signifiers identified in this political cartoon. The first signifier is an alligator that denotes a sarcastically grinning alligator dressed in a white coat and holding a camera and connotes that some politicians are getting information from other politicians to expose each other's secrets. The second signifier identified in this cartoon is the skeletons that denote the three smiling skeletons in different poses and connotes that even though people already know their secrets, politicians still manage to pose and smile in front of a camera, pretending that they did nothing wrong. Lastly, is the "It is that time of the year when politicians expose each other secrets" phrase, which denotes that there is a time in the Philippines that Politicians are exposing each other secrets and connotes that election time is the perfect time where politicians are finding faults and whistleblowing the dark secrets of each other. These signifiers present a myth that politicians are finding faults during elections instead of focusing on their platforms and agenda. Some politicians in the Philippines are shameless, and there are no permanent friends or enemies in Philippine Politics, resulting in a political feud.

Figure 5, entitled Pulling BBM Down, also presents the same myth. There are five signifiers identified in this editorial cartoon. A first signifier is a paper plane that denotes a folded paper that resembles a plane. This signifier has a connotational meaning that BBM is leading the Street Surveys. Another signifier identified was a man riding the paper plane that has a denotational meaning that this man represents Bongbong Marcos (BBM) and has a connotational meaning that the man riding the paper plane is a presidential candidate. Another signifier identified was a Man wearing a "*salakot*" which denotes the Filipino people who participated in the presidential street surveys. This also connotes that many Filipino citizens support Bongbong Marcos. Another signifier identified in this political cartoon was the hook chain pulling down the paper plane. This signifier denotes a long chain with a hook in its one end and connotes that influential/powerful people are trying to pull down BBM by filing a disqualification case. Lastly, the signifier, Man and Woman in Pink, represents Conchita Carpio Morales and Antonio Carpio which connotes that they are influential personalities in

the Philippines for being former Ombudsman and Former Justice in the Supreme court, respectively that supports VP Leni. With their denotational and connotational meaning, these signifiers form a myth that Bongbong Marcos is leading the presidential street surveys, and the supporters of VP Leni are trying to pull him down by filing a disqualification case. Because of this, the supporters of VP Leni Robredo and the supporters of Bongbong Marcos are engaging in a political a feud.

This study substantiates Azhar et al.'s (2021) assertion that political cartoons are an integral element of the press and are published in every newspaper worldwide. These editorial cartoons can alter people's perspectives and successfully deliver messages, information, and ideas. Political cartoons are used to critique the political system's injustices, the abuse of political power, and the chasm between government representatives and the general population. These cartoons penetrate the viewers' thoughts instantly with visual pictures and make them aware of sociopolitical ills in a way that a whole essay or column cannot. These political cartoons depict how the people feel about their elected officials.

Myth 2: Hiding True Intentions

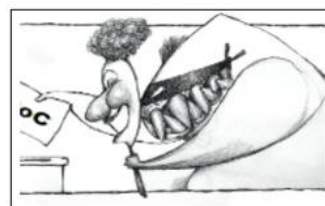


Fig 6. Perverting the Elections



Fig 7. To run or not to run/



Fig 8. Wrong Turn



Fig 9. Placeholder

The figures above present another central myth in this study that shows that some politicians in the Philippines hide their true intentions when running for office. This myth can be supported by signifiers found in the four editorial cartoons above.

Figure 6 presents different signifiers that may lead to the earlier significant myth. The first signifier is a clown, which denotes a comic entertainer performing a comedy or funny act in front of people and has a connotational meaning of any person who can make other people laugh by committing foolish actions intended or unintended. The second signifier is a Mask which denotes an object used to cover the face; it can be used as a disguise. This signifier also connotes a face that a person projects, other than their true self. The third signifier present in this editorial cartoon is a monster which denotes an imaginary creature that is large and frightening and connotes a person who wields a position that makes them powerful yet frightening. The last signifier for this editorial cartoon is the Certificate of Candidacy (COC), which denotes a certificate announcing a person's candidacy for the office they are interested in. This signifier connotes a process that every electoral candidate undergoes to signify their intention for running a position formally. Together with their denotational and connotational meanings, these signifiers contribute to the formulation of a myth which says that an electoral candidate, who wears a mask, bluffs the electoral process by filing a certificate of candidacy, hiding their true intentions for running in a national election.

Figure 7, entitled To run or not to run, presents different signifiers that lead to a myth that some politicians hide their true intentions in running for office. In this political cartoon, the first signifier, Half-human, half-crocodile figure, denotes a juxtaposed half-crocodile and

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half-human figure preparing to run, which connotes that some Politicians in the Philippines are saying that they will not run for any position, but in reality, they have a desire to run for the next election. Another signifier present in this study is the *callout* which denotes the "I will run I will not run phrase." This phrase connotes that politicians are using this tactic so that their detractors will not focus on destroying or maligning them. The two signifiers present in Figure 7 deconstruct a myth that many politicians are using this tactic to protect their dark secrets. If they inform ahead of time the public that they are running for any position, their detractors will expose their dark secrets to the public. Hence, this is the number one reason why some politicians keep saying that they will not run for any office or a higher office. Thus, they usually file their COC instead once the election is fast approaching. This myth leads to a general myth that with this kind of tactic, some politicians are hiding their true intentions when running for an office.

Figure 8, entitled Wrong Turn, presents four signifiers: an alligator, an attaché case, a beggar, and the street markers. The first signifier, an alligator, denotes an alligator running away. It has a connotation meaning that it represents some politicians running away from their promises during the election campaign. The attaché case denotes a small thin suitcase used to carry important papers or documents. This connotes that the attaché case symbolizes those politicians who can control the elections. The beggar denotes a beggar mother holding her undressed baby, which connotes that they are the ones who represent the marginalized voters. Lastly, the street markers denote the Honest Public Servant and self-interest markers. These markers connote that the politicians are not faithful to their promises of keeping an honest public service. Instead, they are running for an office because of self-interest. These signifiers deconstruct a myth that many politicians in the Philippines are not running to be honest public servants but are vested in self-interest. Hence, the marginalized voters are the usual victims of every election.

The last figure is entitled Place Holder. This editorial cartoon presents four signifiers: a gift, a man, another man, and a gift card. The first signifier is the gift which denotes an item given to someone without the expectation of payment or anything in return. This signifier connotes that this gift represents the official list of candidates for the 2022 Elections. A second signifier is a man, which denotes the man who wears *salakot* (Filipino native hat made of palm) and *kamiseta* (undershirt). This signifier connotes the representation of the ordinary Filipino citizens waiting to release the official list of running candidates. The third is the signifier, another man who denotes the man wearing "*barong*" on top of a gift which also connotes that this gift represents the electoral candidates. Lastly, the gift card denotes a note attached to the gift and has a connotation meaning of being a reminder to the ordinary citizens that the official announcement of the official candidates running for office will be on November 15. These signifiers lead to a myth that Filipino people are curious about running for the presidential and vice-presidential positions.

Myth 3: Political Colors



Fig 10. Pink Paint



Fig 11. Changing the Senate

The two editorial cartoons above present one of the major myths found out by the researchers in this study. The editorial cartoons deconstruct a significant myth that there are political parties or political color in the Philippines. The researchers found six signifiers present in figure 10, entitled Pink Paint. These are *Pink paint, a yellow t-shirt, a Wood basin, a Smiling woman, a label, and a cartoon character*. The first paint denotes A paint that is colored pink and connotes the political color used by the political party (Liberal Party) of VP Leni Robredo. The yellow shirt connotes a political color attributed to the "Liberal Party" previously led by the late President, Benigno Aquino III. the wood basin denotes A deep wooden container used to hold liquid which also connotes the representation of all the Supporters of VP Leni Robredo. The smiling woman denotes A woman wearing a smile that shows happiness and is labeled as VP Leni, which connotes that VP Leni expresses her happiness as her supporters are painting her into another political identity, the pink power. The label dubbed as "Yellow No More" denotes A political party used to describe the "Aquinos," which connotes that VP Leni is not influenced by the "yellow" people anymore; thus, this is now the era of another political party. Lastly, the cartoon character denotes A panther in pink color and showing a pleasant and contented expression, painting VP Leni with pink paint. This signifier connotes those supporters of VP Leni who are confident and at ease with their chosen candidate to run for the Presidential election. These signifiers lead to deconstructing a myth which says that VP Leni, a supporter of the late President Aquino, is happily painted with a different color by her supporters, that will re-brand herself as a candidate with a different political agenda and dissociate herself with the ideals of the previous "liberal party."

Figure 11, entitled changing the senate, has four signifiers- trash can, clown, pink, and angry face. The trash can is a container that is used to hold wastes. It connotes that this is a derogatory term attributed to an ill-mannered, dirty, and useless person. The clown is a comic entertainer performing comedy or funny acts in front of people and has a connotation of any person who can make other people laugh by committing foolish actions, either intended or unintended. The color pink connotes those politicians under the slate of VP Leni Robredo. Furthermore, the angry face denotes an expression of hate for being antagonized, hated, or deliberately done wrong and connotes that the supporters are angry for being belittled. These signifiers lead to a myth that those supporters of the pink party are angry for being described as foolish and useless and deserve to be put in a trash can.

The central myth shown above corroborates Teehankee's (2019) assertion that political parties in the Philippines have essentially been an amalgamation of vote-generating machines geared toward putting their leaders in government, gaining access to patronage, and securing the benefits of public office in general.

Myth 4: Election Promises



Fig 12. Empty Promises



Fig 13. Presidential Candidates

Figures 12 and 13 show another major myth found in these political cartoons. These two figures show that election promises are always present every election. Figure 12, entitled empty promises, has four signifiers: *the dancing women, the bowls of food, the sitting man, and*

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yawning. The dancing women are labeled with *re-electionist trapos* (means traditional politicians), a record of incompetence, and empty promises, which have become sources of entertainment that connote that these women represent the characteristics of the politicians in the Philippines. The bowls of food denote an offering to the yawning man and connote that these bowls of food are the common forms of bribes from the candidates in exchange for the people's votes. The sitting man in the cartoon is a person sitting on a chair and represents Juan de la Cruz or the ordinary Filipino people. The yawning is an involuntary body movement with one's mouth wide open and inhaling due to tiredness or boredom, which connotes the re-occurring entertainment of the dancers made Juan de la Cruz tired; nothing is new. These signifiers deconstruct a myth that the Filipinos are tired of seeing re-electionist politicians, especially those with records of incompetence, and giving empty promises during elections, who are also giving the same bribe in every election.

On the other hand, Figure 13, entitled Presidential Candidates, shows two different signifiers. The first one is a man who is on top of a crocodile, promising that if he is elected, he will destroy corruption. This can be inferred that this man is a presidential candidate. This connotes that there has been massive corruption in the government since then. The second signifier is the grinning crocodile sarcastically answering, "Ohhh, Scary." This connotes that those corrupt officials are not afraid because they are rich, strong, and influential. These two signifiers lead to a myth that politicians are always promising since then that once they are elected, they will destroy corruption but even up to now, corruption is still present in the government. Thus, corruption in the Philippines will not be easily destroyed because corrupt officials are rich, strong, and influential people in the government.

The study's findings are consistent with Go's (2018) finding that politics has an emotional component. Politicians unquestionably pass the people's inspection. This is referred to as "*pagkikilatis*" (inspection) and "*kalkulasyon*" (calculation). How is this accomplished? Politicians are evaluated based on what they pledged and what they achieved. This may seem self-evident in the sense that politicians are expected to keep campaign pledges. Nonetheless, the populace contended that certain politicians are fraudulent and create the idea of sincerity. Additionally, Go (2018) emphasized the distinction between politics and "*pulitika*." The (Western) academic definitions do not relate to the people's political reality; consequently, "*pulitika*," a Filipino term, is a different term used to refer to the singular phenomena of plunder and hollow promises. "*Pulitika*" is a sleazy campaign strategy used by politicians to win elections. As a result, "*pulitika*" is highly artificial and ephemeral. It is a seasonal phenomenon.

Myth 5: Power Tripping



Fig 14. Politicking, Electioneering Done by Politicians



Fig 15. *Trapos* INC

The signifiers present in these political cartoons are the *lion, pig, and alligator*, which connotes the powerful, authoritative, and greedy politicians. The other signifiers, such as the mouse and a drowning man, represent two types of people: the ones working for these politicians and the ones who are part of the ordinary Filipino people, surrounded by the other signifier, shivers of shark, which connotes poverty. The cartoons portray two different scenarios in which the politicians can display their power: firstly, they are giving orders that they think could benefit people, but in actual work, little to none. Secondly, when the

politician's power is slowly fading, their friends in politics will help them run for an official post in national or local elections.

Myth 6: Social Media Influence in Electoral Campaigns



Fig 16. Some 2022 Presidential Candidates



Fig 17. Surveys of Presidential Candidates

In Figure 3, one of the signifiers is the Bergens, a species of creatures that eats Trolls in the American computer-animated musical comedy, *Trolls*. In this context, it seems that the reference of Bergens is the Troll. The term "troll" is an internet slang referring to people who post inflammatory, insincere, off-topic, and often fallacious messages that provoke the readers in the online community. When these trolls provoke the online community, even ordinary people can behave like a troll, as factors such as personal mood and online discussion climate could also affect their behaviors (Cheng et al., 2017). In Figure 4, one of the signifiers is a pendulum, an object used for hypnotizing people. This pendulum connotes that one's situation can change depending on the direction of its swing. Another essential signifier in this cartoon is the man, wearing a salakot and a worn-out shirt with a patch, and is being hypnotized. This represents Filipino people who are being influenced by the surveys conducted by various organizations regarding their presidential bet. The myth that these cartoons depict, when it comes to choosing the candidate for them to vote for the coming elections, these people are often swayed with what has been projected in social media, without verifying the veracity of the information, even if it was just because of the internet trolls or actual people. Thus, their decision of whom to vote for the presidential election relies on what they have read or seen.

Myth 7: Involvement of Foreign Countries



Fig 18. Elections

As what can be seen in this political cartoon, the signs present are the man wearing a Barong Tagalog, which connotes to the Filipino citizens, the roosters represent the presidential candidates, panda, which is a native bear to South Central China represents China, and a clown who wears a dress that resembles the American flag, which connotes the power of America. The man in barong is telling the roosters that the panda and the clown want to pick their preferred candidates for the election, too. The myth depicted in this cartoon is the influence of outside countries regarding the national election, specifically big and powerful countries such as China and America.

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The Philippines already forged solid relations with America and China long ago. This bilateral relationship between the Philippines and China has made remarkable progress (Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of the Philippines, 2021). In terms of the economy, the Philippines is increasingly dependent economically on China, which is its largest trading partner and source of foreign investment (Hung, 2021). America, too, has its fair share in influencing the country. For ten years, they have occupied the country, spreading their cultures and practices from Luzon to Mindanao to educate the Filipinos, which was not done with the Spanish colonizers, from educational reforms to governance. Thus, the cartoonists wanted to portray that some of the big powers still have to meddle with the elections, as the established relations may either be improved or broken, which could cause complications in the future.

Myth 8: Honesty in Election



Fig 19. Pray for a Peaceful Election

As shown in Figure 19, the signifiers are the machine, the quack doctor, and some members of the Catholic church: the priest, the nun, and the sacristan. The machine in this cartoon connotes the PCOS machine used by the Commission on Elections during the elections. The quack doctor uses a chicken's blood as a sacrifice to carry out his enchantment. The Catholic church members, being the largest religious group and having a vast number of members, represent the religious groups. As presupposed from the text, *pray for a cheating-free election*. There have been cases of cheating in the electoral process in the Philippines. The myth drawn out from this cartoon is that the election has never been that clean. Regardless of whatever system is used in the election, from the manual to the electronic casting of votes, there is always cheating. Thus, these people are utilizing means, such as asking for divine interventions, to ensure that the upcoming election would not be corrupted.

Myth 9: Nuisance Candidates



Fig 20. Nuisance Candidates

As seen in this figure, the identified signs are flies, man, insect repellent spray, fly swatter, and the ballot box. A fly is a common insect found in the household, which can be seriously annoying and dangerous as it can transmit diseases. In this context, it is labeled as nuisance candidates, representing any candidate who mocks the electoral process by having

similar names of the registered candidates or is clearly not intending to run for the position selected. The man in Barong represents the Commission on Elections (COMELEC), who can evaluate and identify nuisance candidates. The insect repellent spray and fly swatter are ways of killing a fly, which depicts the process that the COMELEC has to undergo to examine the candidates' qualifications. The ballot box is a sealed container used for collecting the votes. This box connotes that once the COMELEC has its final official list of candidates, it will be put in the box. Those names that are not part of the official list will be tagged as nuisance candidates and be disqualified from running for the position.

The myth behind this poster, the Philippine Constitution, provided that anyone can run for the election as long as they have satisfied the qualifications. However, there are still aspiring Filipino citizens whose aims for running for the said position are undetermined. Some might be mocking the process, some confuse voters by having similar names, or some might have committed an act that proved that the candidate has no bona fide intention to run for the position (Omnibus Election Code of the Philippines, 1985).

5. CONCLUSION

This present study aimed to deconstruct the myths in editorial cartoons by analyzing the editorial cartoons related to the filing of the candidacy of the aspiring politicians in the Philippines. The study revealed that the common signifiers present in the editorial cartoons were the men in barong and wearing salakot, which represents the Filipino citizens, alligator, lion, and pig, on the other hand, it represents the candidates, and finger-pointing that connotes blaming. Another significant finding that emerged from this study were the nine deconstructed myths inferred from the signifiers: political feud, hiding true intentions, political colors, election promises, power tripping, social media influence in electoral campaigns, foreign influence, honesty in an election, nuisance candidates. Taking these findings altogether, it seems that from the perspective of the cartoonists of different media outlets, the election situation in the Philippines is negatively framed. Thus, the researchers would like to forward the following recommendations. First, research that would measure the impact of these cartoons on the Filipinos' voting decisions should be conducted to establish how the constructed images of the cartoonist can affect the public's eye. Second, a study related to the common signifiers used to portray the election should be conducted to understand the related concepts tied to each signifier. Lastly, a comparative analysis of editorial cartoons related to elections from different periods should be conducted to provide information on how the Philippines' election process is framed.

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