

Research Article

Anti-Intellectualism in the Facebook Comments Surrounding President Duterte's Criticism of U.P. Student Protests

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Abstract

Anti-intellectualism is a weapon in the arsenal of political discourse, particularly in American politics. While evocations of anti-intellectualism have always plagued Philippine political discourse, these became more pronounced on social media with the rise to power of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte. This study examined the manifestations and categories of anti-intellectualism in Philippine political discourse on social media, particularly on the comment thread of Rappler's Facebook post about President Duterte's remarks against UP student protests.

Through textual analysis using two levels of coding, with reference to Hofstadter's (1963) and Scott's (2014) earlier categories of anti-intellectualism, the researchers came up with operationalized categories of anti-intellectualism that were manifested in the comment section of the Facebook post. These localized categories were analyzed vis-a-vis Maggay's (1999) concept of ambiguity as a communication style among Filipinos. It was found out that the root of anti-intellectual and anti-discursive mindsets, especially in the Filipino context, is not just the ambiguity of Filipino interpersonal communication but also a certain closed-minded assumption that, when engaged in a conversation online, one is merely presenting the correct answer rather than involved in a discourse with an evolving response to the issue at hand.

Keywords: *Anti-intellectualism, ambiguity, social media, online incivility, networked publics, Philippine political discourse, Philippine politics*

Introduction and Rationale

As with any major political process, Rodrigo Roa Duterte's rise to the Philippine Presidency reflects the dominant ideological formations that permeate the period. In this case, it reveals no less than the functional agreement of more than 16 million Filipinos to the kind of rhetoric espoused by the man they have democratically elected as their leader.

It may be difficult to try and interrogate the discursive shifts embodied by Rodrigo Roa Duterte's rise to national power without unconsciously falling into the biases of populist politics and the strongman rhetoric. After all, the Duterte revolution itself is heavily grounded on attitudes that are antagonistic not just towards traditional conceptions of what is and is not presidential but also on the entire value-laden epistemologies. The dominance of these value-laden epistemologies has been subconsciously regarded as the main cause of socio-political and economic hardships.

We suppose, one can begin, by maintaining awareness of the always-present threat of devolving into auto-pilot analysis when undertaking such an interrogation of discursive formations and shifts, careful not to devolve into reductive, essentialist binaries. Through this, we find it necessary to begin, carefully, with a preliminary (re-)evaluation of the value-laden "logic-reason" concept, and its consequent "anti-intellectual/intellectual" binary, at the core of this so-called conflict.

Historically, anti-intellectualism has been used as a weapon by authoritarian and totalitarian governments and their supporters to spread misinformation and, as such, manipulate information and public opinion. This outright dismissal of rational thought formation only serves to build a layperson's mistrust in intellectuals in his/her society and in the exercise of rational thought and intellectual inquiry, thereby making the population more vulnerable and susceptible to the misinformation and manipulation of its governments. It is in this context that we wish to contribute and claim, proleptically, the hoped relevance of the scholastic endeavor we have undertaken.

Statement of the Research Problem

Recent studies have found strong correlation between engaging in the realm of social media and engaging in the political, positing claims that perhaps social media truly are the “great equalizers” with how they have managed to democratize discourse participation (Xenos, Vromen, & Loader, 2014). The existence of a significant anti-intellectual sentiment on Facebook then might point to anti-intellectualism as a larger political force in the Filipino context. Thus, the study aims to answer the following question:

How is anti-intellectualism manifested in the top Facebook comments of the Rappler news article surrounding President Rodrigo Duterte’s comments on U.P. student protests?

Specifically, the study aims to further explore the following:

How does the manifestation of anti-intellectualism in the top Facebook comments of the Rappler news article vary from, and exceed, the traditional definition provided by Western scholars?

What do the top Facebook comments surrounding President Rodrigo Duterte’s comments on U.P. student protests reveal about the nature and the prevalence of anti-intellectualism among Filipino social media users?

Research Objectives

This study primarily aims to uncover anti-intellectualism through the comment section of Rappler’s Facebook post concerning President Rodrigo Duterte’s remarks against UP student protests. To summarize, we aim to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To identify and categorize the instances of anti-intellectualism in the top Facebook comment threads in response to President Rodrigo Duterte’s comments on U.P. student protests; and
2. To contextualize anti-intellectualism in the Philippine social media setting with regard to the style of rejection of Filipino Facebook

users in the top comment threads of the Rappler news article regarding President Duterte's anti-protest remarks.

Significance of the Study

"Anti-intellectualism", or perhaps more carefully, "the calling out of anti-intellectualism", has become a common, if not altogether prevalent, sentiment among Filipinos. It has been asserted to be apparent in previous elections, in colloquialisms as a form of insult ("*Ang dami mong alam*" ["You know a lot of things"], "*Kaysa naman wala!*" ["Better than nothing!]) and seems to be present in the arena of public discourse as well. This is seen through the recent upswing in the volume and frequency of social media posts made to combat so-called "smart shaming".

In his book *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, Richard Hofstadter (1963) defines the phenomenon of "anti-intellectualism" as the "resentment and suspicion of the life of the mind and those who are considered to represent it, and a disposition constantly to minimize the value of that life" (p. 7). Additionally, for Hofstadter, anti-intellectualism is an inherently hostile disposition that sets up tensions between "the real world" or "regular folk" and the world of intellectuals, putting a wedge between academics who help make public policy and the public who experiences these policies.

To maintain strict fidelity to Hofstadter's more than half-a-century-old definition of anti-intellectualism, with its arguably essentialist provisions of a binary between "the world of intellectuals" and "regular folk", as well as implicit attitudinal privileging of the former, is to fall to the dangers of binary thinking mentioned previously.

Furthermore, another reason why we cannot simply abide by Hofstadter's definitions of anti-intellectualism is that his research, as a product of its time, focused solely on understanding anti-intellectualism specifically within the American context. He enumerated the rise of the American conservative right, a decline in the quality of public education and an increasing disengagement among politicians from intellectualism during the 1950s and early

1960s as causes for the emergence of anti-intellectualism as a political force.

In the Philippine context, however, though the elements and nature of anti-intellectualism could mirror much of the American phenomenon that Hofstadter observed, particularly in the “importance” of populist politics in the formation of anti-intellectual attitudes, the specific causes of it and the scenarios around which anti-intellectualism occurs could be different.

As such, we instead intend to proceed with a cautious re-evaluation of anti-intellectualism. While the study remains anchored on and builds on the ongoing discourse on anti-intellectualism initiated by Hofstadter (1963), it is also a re-evaluation informed by the rigorous process of contextualizing anti-intellectualism for the Philippine context.

Henceforth, it is this notion of anti-intellectualism in this Philippine context that we seek to preliminarily investigate in this research. Particularly, we are interested in how it manifests within the realm of social media, where, as earlier mentioned, there is a general prevalence of posts that call out other posts and comments for “smart shaming”.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

In particular, and in response to temporal, spatial and contextual limitations to the study that we cannot control, we limit our study to the examination of the existence and the nature of anti-intellectualism in Facebook comments by Filipinos responding to President Rodrigo Duterte’s criticisms of scholar-activists of the national university, the University of the Philippines Diliman.

The president made such statements on 1 February 2018 during the Leaders’ Summit at the Naval Station Felix Apolinario in Panacan, Davao City. This pronouncement is the primary incident from which the unit of analysis of our research, the Facebook comments, emanate. The University of the Philippines Diliman is recognized globally as a university that fosters the ideals of academic excellence, nationalism and progressive thinking. It is also historically known to be a bastion

for student activism and dissent (Dabu, 2017). In this instance, the divide between the “world of intellectuals” and the “real world” is a relevant subject as a criticism of the students of the Philippines’ national university could also be an attack on the nation’s brightest young minds, if, and we must be careful here, framed as anti-intellectualism, which is, needless to say, a problematic sentiment for our country.

The choice of targeting specifically only Facebook comments also allows us to examine what seems to be the current most common medium of public discourse. Within communication scholarship, work on anti-intellectualism has focused primarily on the form of discourse: word choice, syntactic complexity, word length and sentence length (Scott, 2014). For our research, we draw on such methodologies for the deconstruction of anti-intellectual speech, but recalibrated in certain regards, in order to fit the purpose of contextualizing for the Filipino.

It is our aim to provide enough preliminary departure points to open further studies on anti-intellectualism in the Philippines. Not only this but hopefully along the way, we are able to accomplish a thorough endorsement of new, “more careful” attitudes in approaching the anti-intellectual concept itself. This is part of our scholarly pursuit of eventually closing the gap and ultimately abolishing the false binary between “the world of intellectuals” and “regular folk of the real world.”

STUDY FRAMEWORK

Maggay (1999) on Understanding Ambiguity in Filipino Communication Patterns

One of the objectives of this research is to contextualize anti-intellectualism in the Filipino social media setting. The initial plan of simply categorizing the types of anti-intellectual remarks in the comment section of Rappler’s Facebook post concerning President Rodrigo Duterte’s statements on UP student protests seemed lacking in localized perspective.

With this, we looked for a theory or framework that could explain the unique communication practices and patterns of Filipinos. Studies on our communicative conduct such as Montemayor's (2015) research on Filipinos' communicative behavior in knowledge sharing explicitly expressed the need to refine Western concepts in communication studies using local Filipino lens. Western models do not encapsulate the uniqueness of Filipino discursive practices.

In Maggay's book *Understanding Ambiguity in Filipino Communication Patterns* (1999), she expressed the linguistic problems of Western people who deal with Filipinos, especially when words familiar to the former in English do not seem to have the same definition in the Philippines. Here, she discussed the high-context culture that Asian countries have where there is "a high degree of implicit interactive pattern" (p. 12). She borrowed the idea from anthropologist Edward Hall (1976) who initially explained the difference between high-context and low-context messages. He identified high-context message as "one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message" (p. 79). This non-direct, non-confrontational manner of communicating became Maggay's anchor in her contextualization of the concept into Filipino ambiguity or "*pagpapahiwatig*". It contrasts with Western cultures with low-context messages that rely on explicit code and transmission.

Maggay (1999) defined ambiguity or "*pagpapahiwatig*" as the indirection in Filipino communicative patterns which exhibit high degree of complexity and elaborateness. It is regarding the social interactions of Filipinos and our concept of "*kapwa*". She described it as "*rich, delicate, and intricate expressiveness born out of culture whose social grammar and vocabulary is subtly and infinitely nuanced*" (p. 21). The classifications of ambiguity as a characteristic of Filipino communication patterns does not only involve accommodative values but also confrontative ones. Here, she argued that ambiguity is not only manifested on statements that are positive in nature but also those with negative connotations which Filipinos can only sheepishly express.

The concept of “*pakikiramdam*” or decoding the meaning of the message subtly hidden in various combinations of context and nonverbal cues is the process in which we can interpret “*pahiwatig*” (Maggay, 1999). Kinds of “*pahiwatig*,” which includes “*paglalambing*” and “*paglalangis*,” were also described as our unique way of facing painful aspects of social relations where we put much importance on our “*mukha*,” or face. This is where the idea of confrontative values of Filipinos is argued as part of the ambiguity in our communication patterns. Our deliberate and calculated way of missing the central point when we start firing on our target shows our non-confrontational behavior in deflecting others’ idea or words. For instance, “*padaplis*,” “*pasaring*” and “*pahaging*” display an indirect confrontational mechanism that needs a great deal of “*pakikiramdam*” before it gets interpreted accurately. The ability to interpret cues that are hidden beneath a “*pahiwatig*” requires a deep understanding on the cultural and societal contexts of the message, as well as the degree and intensity of the emotion being put in the discourse. This mentalrole-play makes it even more difficult to understand the real context of the message if the one who interprets is “*ibangtao*” or other people. The interwoven concepts of ambiguity and “*kapwa*” have a big part on the power-play of relations within the discursive event, as ambiguity is then argued to vary directly with the intimacy of relationship of the participants.

Ambiguity in Filipino communication patterns justifies our decision to look at anti-intellectualism through a lens that embodies Filipino culture and behavior. In the analysis part of the paper, a deeper understanding of ambiguity and its relation to our own categories of anti-intellectualism will be discussed (see **Figure 1**).

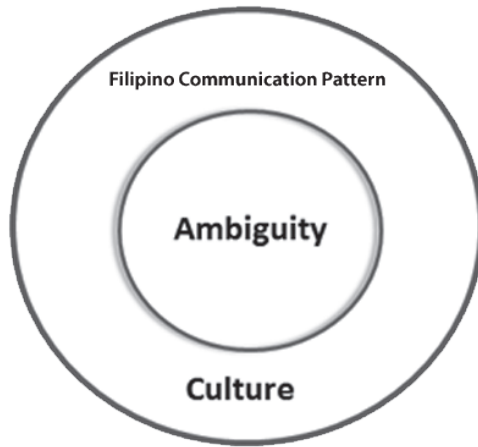


Figure 1. *Theoretical Framework of Ambiguity Boyd (2011)*

In justifying the use of social media as a valid avenue of discourse, particularly public discourse wherein political discourse might most lead to anti-intellectual sentiment, we turned to *Social Network Sites as Networked Publics* by Boyd (2011). According to Boyd, the online public is a networked public in that it is “the space constructed through networked technologies and the imagined collective that emerges as a result of the intersection of people, technology, and practice”(p. 39). In this networked public, people interact both with the environment, in this case, the social media site, and each other in an exchange of cultures, ideas and presentations of self-identity (Boyd, 2011).

A networked public, as opposed to a physical public space, is not limited by the size of the area of the public and the timing of the interactions among involved people. The size of the area refers to the actual physical space of the public which, in networked publics, is unlimited digital space where every facet is visible to all participants in the space equally. In addition to this, interactions on digital networked publics may be both synchronous and asynchronous, meaning participants in a discussion need not even have to send and receive messages within the same time context to be able to communicate with one another (Boyd, 2011).

Boyd (2011) defines four properties of digital spaces that make this sort of flexible structure possible for networked publics: *Persistence*, *Replicability*, *Scalability* and *Searchability*. For *Persistence*, comments and posts on social media are recorded as text on the site instead of being temporary verbal occurrences as with face-to-face communication, allowing for conversations and other exchanges to be preserved as they occurred. For *Replicability*, as with printed text, text in the digital space is easily replicated to the point where copies are indistinguishable from the original which both simply contain the same arrangement of data. Networked publics are also *Scalable*, meaning every message is broadcasted and distributed widely throughout the space, often even beyond the intended target of the original communicator of the message. However, according to Boyd (2011), "the internet may enable many to broadcast content and create publics, but it does not guarantee an audience. What scales in networked publics may not be what everyone wishes to scale" (p. 48). Lastly, *Searchability* refers to the way in which archived text in the digital space is easily searched by internet users due to the way that Google and other search engines index almost all the existing content on the Internet.

In this research, we intend to make use of these four properties in our methodology, in that the *Searchability*, *Persistence*, and *Replicability* of conversations in social media allow us to locate an inorganic but accurate record of the discourse that took place in response to the Rappler article on President Duterte's comments on UP student walkouts. *Scalability*, on the other hand, allows us to consider each comment as a broadcasted message, as well as a direct message to a second party in a conversation, meaning, we may treat the discourse as a public one in which every commenter that contributes is involved in the entirety of the discourse. It is by this concept that we frame the comment sections of our target Facebook post as valid records of public discourse regarding the subject (see **Figure 2**).

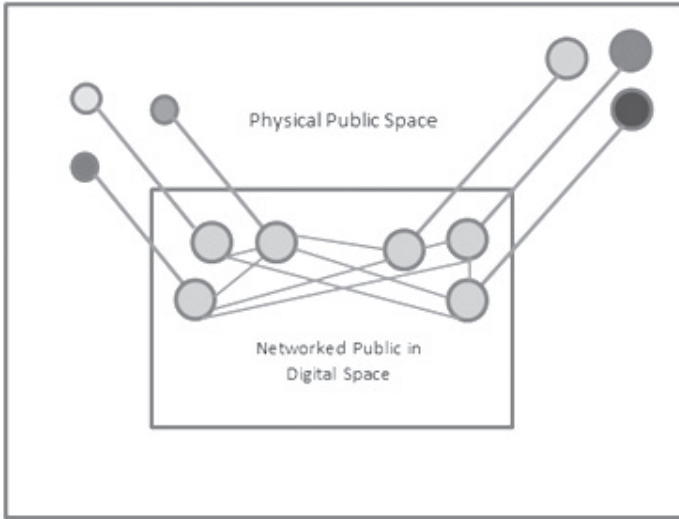


Figure 2. *Theoretical Framework of Social Network Sites as Networked Publics Approaching Anti-Intellectualism*

For our research, we approach the concept of anti-intellectualism by building on the ongoing trend of studying anti-intellectualism by categorizing suspected utterances of anti-intellectualism.

Daniel Rigney's (1991) research, *Three Kinds of Anti-Intellectualism: Rethinking Hofstadter*, a critical expansion of Hofstadter's earlier book, can be considered as one of the main proponents of anti-intellectualism in terms of types or categories, particularly three, namely:

Religious anti-rationalism, or the insistence on the binary between rationality and faith, intellect and essential morality;

Unreflective instrumentalism, or the insistence that education's purpose is no more than practical training in preparation for the undertaking of labor; and

Populist anti-elitism, or the insistence that education beyond pragmatic use, that is, for labor, is nothing more than excess, indulgence, and therefore elitist, detached from the plight of the common man.

By providing categories of anti-intellectualist manifestations, Rigney (1991) arguably shifts the field of study away from simple historical review, towards positivist trends and, more importantly, offers the idea of using such categories as bases of potential studies centered on the premise of addressing the issue of anti-intellectualism.

Scalmer (2005), in his study, *“Understanding Intellectualism,”* further builds on this by departing from the tradition of simply providing abstract categories drawn from the period’s sociopolitical climate, in favor of investigating categories as reinforced by specific instances and utterances of anti-intellectualism, on the basis of his assertion that “[anti-intellectualism] is not simply an attitude, prejudice or moral lapse but an outcome of material relations and struggles (emphasis ours)” (Scalmer, 2005, pp.7-8).

Scalmer (2005) bases his categories on the idea that anti-intellectual utterances can be classified in terms of their aim, as oriented in relation to two axes (See Table 1):

Field-orientation, or whether the utterance looks to defend the spaces of the so-called “regular people”, or go on the offense with regards to reclaiming territories from the “world of intellectuals” (p.8), and **Form of articulation**, which refers to whether the utterance itself is manifestly expressed or merely projected (pp. 7-8).

Table 1. Scalmer’s (2005) Varieties of Anti-Intellectualism

		Field-Orientation	
		Offensive	Defensive
Form of Articulation	Expressed	Threat	Limit
	Projected	Intervention	Discipline

However, Scalmer’s project still relies on force-fitting these grammatic instances and textual utterances on pre-established categories—something our study, if we are to maintain relevance to the Filipino context, cannot responsibly do so due to the lack of non-Western-centric or, more importantly, Filipino-context-driven categories.

Despite the extensive history of scholarship tackling anti-intellectualism, there exists no pre-existing models of categorization that we can use to assess the presence and state of anti-intellectualism in Filipino discourse. As such, the need to further open this field of inquiry by provisionally creating a Filipino-relevant categorization model becomes even more pronounced (see **Figure 3**).

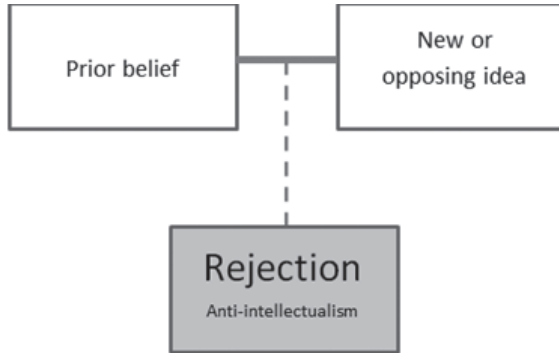


Figure 3. *Theoretical Framework of Anti-Intellectualism*

Integrated Conceptual Framework

The figure below (**Figure 4**) shows our integrated conceptual framework. We tried to connect three key concepts in this research to come up with a contextualized and “Filipinized” version of anti-intellectualism that could perfectly describe the discursive event in the comment section of Rappler’s Facebook post concerning President Rodrigo Duterte’s remarks of UP student protests.

We incorporated the concept of ambiguity in the Filipino communication pattern with anti-intellectualism. We used Maggay’s (1999) concept of *non-confrontational characteristic of Filipinos* in localizing the Western interpretation of anti-intellectualism. Moreover, we used the premise of *Social Network Sites as Networked Publics* as our grounds for using the Facebook comments section as the shared public space where the discursive event took place.

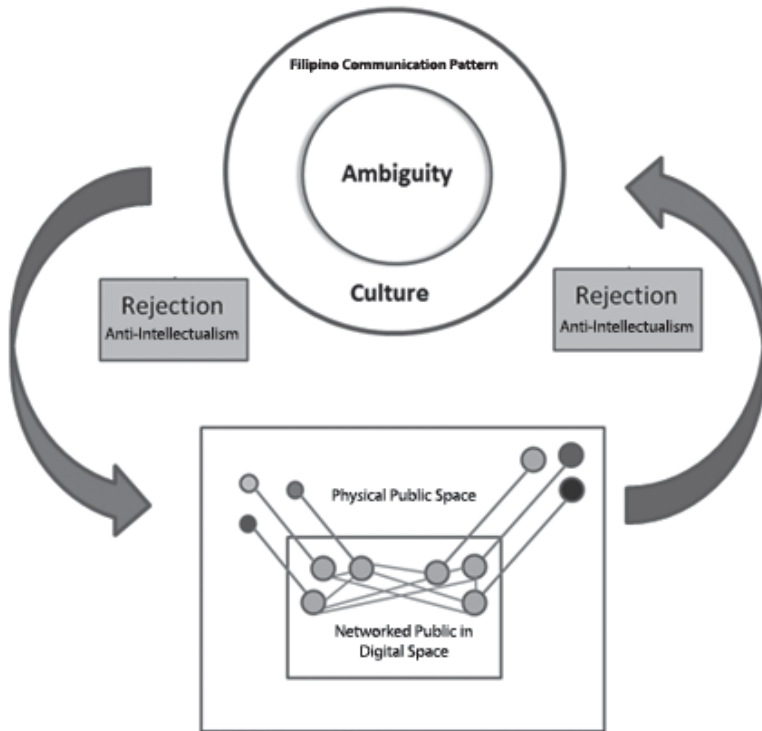


Figure 4. *Integrated Conceptual Framework*

Due to the nature of our selected text as a recorded open conversation among participants in the digital space (Boyd, 2011), we opted to use the term *anti-discourse* interchangeably with Hofstadter's (1963) *anti-rationalism*, with anti-discourse exhibiting the same spirit of rejection of new ideas but being more easily identified to target back-and-forth arguments or conversations.

At the end of the research, the discussion on whether Maggay's (1999) concept of ambiguity also manifests in the digital space has also been considered.

METHODOLOGY

Proceeding from our earlier established need to generate, develop and unpack specific categories of anti-intellectualism within the Filipino

context, we have chosen to pursue coding, specifically clustering, as our preferred qualitative analytical tool.

This was a key critical decision on our part, grounded on the research as an attempt to build on the existing scholarship that tackles anti-intellectualism in terms of categories of recurring theme. The analysis of which, as discussed in previous sections, is hoped to combat anti-intellectualist trends in the country.

Furthermore, our decision also draws a certain degree of inspiration from an earlier project by Kiana Scott (2014) who, in her Master's Thesis in University of Washington titled *Toppling the Ivory Tower: Coded Anti-intellectualism in American Political Discourse*, forwards the idea of studying how anti-intellectualism is coded in political debates, and the ongoing conversations surrounding these debates.

Research Methods

We used textual analysis as a method, with coding as the analytical tool. As such, two levels of coding were used: First, was axial coding to further divide the comments based on whether they exhibited any rejection of an idea or discourse. Comments that we have established as having instances of rejection were used in the second level of coding while the rest were discarded. This proceeded from our earlier established working definition of anti-intellectualism as preliminarily oriented as rejections.

The second level of coding was in the form of clustering, again, based on our refusal to force-fit Filipino utterances into categories established for a different culture which has its own distinct discursive context, formations and practices. Here, we clustered different comments based on the way they manifest their rejection but without closing our minds to the idea that perhaps, even as it offers a rejection, the comment itself may not necessarily be anti-intellectualism, as proceeding from our operational definition provided in the previous section.

Finally, each cluster was further fleshed out and established as categories of anti-intellectualism fit for use in investigations within the Filipino context, by analyzing these categories of manners of rejection through existing scholarship on Filipino communication, primarily through Maggay's (1999) notion of ambiguity, as established in her book *Understanding Ambiguity in Filipino Communication Patterns*.

Sampling Technique

Initially, we gathered the 20 top comments (unfiltered) from the Facebook post of Rappler on this news item, posted on February 1, 2018: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/195048-duterte-up-lumad-slots-protest-students> (see **Figure 5**).

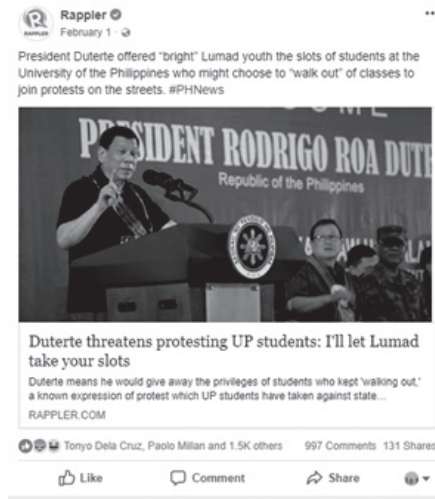


Figure 5. Rappler's Facebook post on the February 1, 2018 news item

The Rappler news item revealed how President Rodrigo Duterte criticized the scholar-activists of the national university, the University of the Philippines - Diliman (UP Diliman), on 1 February 2018, during the Leaders' Summit at the Naval Station Felix Apolinario in Panacan, Davao City. This remark, in turn, was in response to the news of nationwide mass walkouts that student-activists from UP Diliman were to mount for 23 February 2018, to protest several policies of the Duterte administration such as the war on drugs, the proposed shift to

federalism, the martial law in Mindanao, issues of press freedom and the jeepney phaseout and modernization, among other policies.

We gathered all the replies from these top 20 comments (unfiltered). We were multiple coders working independently on the collection of the same units of analysis, which increased the reliability of data and minimized the likelihood of errors. Commenters' names have been removed, although some names were retained since their names were part of the comment itself, as "mentions". The top 20 Facebook comments and their corresponding replies thread have been collected as of 2:00 p.m. of 18 April 2018.

The top 20 Facebook comments were reduced to five, still including all the replies, as we noticed that a majority of the audience engagement and discussion were happening in the top five Facebook comments. Beyond these top five Facebook comments, replies began to taper off, with some comments having no replies at all or with little to no actual direct discourse. For the purposes of this research, it was more important for us to gather a significant mass of replies to Facebook comments rather than standalone Facebook comments as we believe that the discourse happened in the continuous back-and-forth traffic of replies in each individual comment thread or the sub-replies to individual comments made on the original post.

We employed coding as a research method to aid in the data collection, categorization and analysis of anti-intellectualism evoked in our chosen text—the Facebook comments and replies on this news item.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overall, this research established the intersection between existing scholarship on anti-intellectualism, the increased prominence of studying networked publics in communication research, and, most importantly, the tradition of examining Filipino communicative patterns. As such, we staked out the purpose and relevance of this study on the promise of providing a substantive local research from which to build subsequent attempts at addressing the epistemological

differences and sociopolitical conflicts that can arise from anti-intellectualism.

Initial Coding Based on Scott's (2014) Anti-Intellectualism Categories

To be able to meet our first objective, we initially conducted individual coding using the coding categories developed by Scott (2014) in her master's thesis. Scott, expanding on Hofstadter's (1963) seminal albeit limited categorization, developed the following categories of anti-intellectualism in the context of modern American political discourse:

Table 2. Scott's (2014) Categories of Anti-Intellectualism

Coding Category	Nature	Description	Example
Outright Denigration	Explicit	Overt denigration or disparagement of intellect or intellectualism	Rick Santorum: "President Obama once said he wants everybody in America to go to college. What a snob."
Sharp Humor Embracing Alternatives	Implicit	Anti-intellectual sentiment communicated through humor, sometimes self-deprecatingly, and lacking the overt contempt of explicit denigration A favoring in communication of other forms of education, formal or informal learning and/or information gathering that are in direct contrast to traditional educational models	George W. Bush: "To those who received honors, awards, and distinctions, I say, well done. And to the C students—I say you, too, can be President of the United States." Bill Clinton: "In that country store he taught me more about equality in the eyes of the Lord than all my professors at Georgetown, more about the intrinsic worth of every individual than all the philosophers at Oxford, more about the need for equal justice under the law than all the jurists at Yale Law School."

Coding Category	Nature	Description	Example
Intellectual Labeling	Implicit	Any evocation that negatively labels a candidate as an intellectual or pursuing intellectual values and does so in a negative way. This includes teaching at the baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate levels.	Scott Brown: "She's earned that title, she's now a sitting professor at Harvard Law School."
Elite Symbolization	Implicit	Any mention of a specific institution or congruent metaphor that clearly and contextually suggests elitism and does so in a negative way.	Mitt Romney: "We have a president, who I think is a nice guy, but he spent too much time at Harvard."

The primary difference between Scott’s (2014) and Hofstadter’s (1963) categories of anti-intellectualism is Scott’s inclusion of subtle and implicit anti-intellectualism; according to Hofstadter, the hallmarks of anti-intellectualism is its inherent explicitness and hostility. Additionally, for Scott, educational elitism and intellectualism are tied together.

During our initial individual coding, we ran into problems categorizing the Facebook comments and replies based on Scott’s coding categories. We understood, perhaps, that Scott’s coding categories might not be an ideal fit for the Philippine context, let alone for the social media context, as they were categories developed based on the context of American political discourse particularly in the medium of televised and non-televised speeches, printed campaign material and published reactions to said texts. As such, during our initial individual coding, none of our categorizations matched and we, as a research group, had numerous heated debates to defend our choice of classification for each comment, especially where comments in the Filipino, digital or discursive context, did not align perfectly with Scott’s suggested textual codes. It was at this point that we decided to expand on Scott’s coding categories and properly contextualize our

own coding categories based on the Philippine context, especially in terms of Filipino communication styles within and outside of social media.

Developing our Contextualized Anti-Intellectualism Categories

While our first foray into individual coding might be riddled with problems and disagreements, the experience ultimately helped us gain a better grasp of the data we are grappling with. We were able to gather a total of 256 comments and replies from the top five Facebook comments on this news item.

The *walling* in cluster coding allowed us to observe and surface coding categories that were more properly contextualized and thus better reflected how anti-intellectualism is manifested in the Philippine context, especially in social media. Through this method, the repeated key themes that fell within our chosen definition for anti-intellectualism emerged as how an individual might reject discourse. The emergent categories that allowed us to classify our chosen data set were categories based on the commenter's approach to the rejection, or style of rejection, rather than the specific subject of rejection itself.

As such, two levels of coding, as shown on Tables 3, 4 and 5, were used (See details under research Methods):

Table 3. *Group Coding (First Stage)*

Coding Categories	N	%
Without Rejection	79	30.86
With Rejection	177	69.14
Total	256	100.00

Table 4. *Group Coding (Second Stage)*

Rejection Categories	N	%
Not Anti-Intellectual	41	23.16
Anti-Intellectual	136	76.84
Total	177	100.00

Table 5. *Group Coding (Third Stage)*

Anti-Intellectualism Categories	N	%
<i>Pagmamagaling</i>	30	22.06
<i>PabalangnaPagsagot</i>	29	21.32
<i>TahasangPagtangg</i>	28	20.59
<i>Pagsasalugar</i>	27	19.85
<i>Panlalahat</i>	17	12.5
<i>KontraElitismo</i>	5	3.68
Total	136	100.00

At first glance, it appeared that the contextualized coding categories that emerged showed that anti-intellectualism in the Philippines was primarily a product of socio-cultural differences rather than a solely politically-motivated endeavor, as opposed to the Western view wherein anti-intellectualism is primarily politically motivated. On the surface, it was likewise surmised that there was a lingering suspicion and distrust between and among classes, such as the educated versus the non-educated, the young versus the old, the rich versus the poor, among other social or class binaries in the Philippines. This was further strengthened by the populist and divisive sentiments of President Rodrigo Duterte on certain issues. On the surface, it begs the question of collectivism versus individualism: does a higher sense of collectivism, rather than an individualistic rational discursive practice, inform, if not ultimately dictate, public opinion in the Philippines? Can we then root Filipino anti-intellectualism in our strong sense of collectivism?

However, based on some of our observations of the Facebook comments we have gathered, anti-intellectualism, perhaps, can be better approached not in terms of simplistic, essentialist binaries, such as the suspicion of “real world” folk towards “the world of academics” but as discursive attitudes which both or any side of any argument may be prone to exhibit. The so-called “intellectuals” can even occasionally slip and devolve into employing rhetorical tactics which may be deemed anti-intellectual. This is a notion that academics and followers of the traditional paradigm of “reason” at large should be conscious and wary of, if they are truly interested in undertaking

discourse for resolution, instead of just discourse for the sake of safekeeping their privileged space.

Following the above observations, could it perhaps be time to reevaluate the concept of anti-intellectualism, again, given that most definitions of the anti-intellectualism concept today are grounded on biases favoring the academic. These biases are incapable of properly addressing and contributing to the resolution of populist resurgence—a movement bent on fighting back against the metanarrative of intellectual rulership.

This was a significant factor in the specific discourse we have chosen to study, as the two major sides of the conversation were students arguing for their right and responsibility to engage in protest and activism and non-students who hold the belief that a student's time is better used for studying. Central to this dichotomy is the government being the target, the very same institution sending the students to school.

As such, the existing literature on anti-intellectualism views anti-intellectualism as a political phenomenon rather than a rhetorical one, which confines the term to specific eras and specific geographical contexts of discourse. In our attempt to contextualize the term to the Philippines, we had to deliberately abandon these restrictions and, in so doing, naturally expanded the definition of the term from the criticism of a specific culture of intellectualism towards the rejection of discourse as a whole. We locate the spirit of intellectualism with a renewed positive outlook towards rational thought, new ideas and critical engagement with issues, in the act of public political discourse.

Ambiguity as a Filipino Style of Communication

It is generally acknowledged that communication behavior of people varies according to their geographical profile. Communication scholars argue on the reason behind these differences. For instance, Nishimura, Nevgi, and Tella (2008) argue that the difference between communication style and behavior of humans is related to their cultural differences. Awareness on these differences could minimize misunderstanding and increase mutual respect. However, cultural

differences also breed a more complex problem that plagues the communicative behavior of people. The concept of high and low context culture initially proposed by Edward Hall in 1959 could perfectly address the question why it is problematic to generalize communication patterns and behavior in transcultural perspective.

Through this lens, we see the need to contextualize the Western approach of Hofstadter and Scott on the issue of anti-intellectualism in such a way that it can encapsulate the Filipino communication experience in social media. Borrowing Hall's concept of high and low context cultures, we posit that the Philippines, like any other Asian countries, has high context culture, which creates a high degree of implicit patterns in our communication behavior which roughly translates to being non-confrontational and non-direct. This is contrary to the low context culture of Western countries like the United States, which exhibits expressive and explicit communication behavior. Thus, the manifestation of anti-intellectualism in the rhetoric of the Western people in Scott's study could be disparate from the manifestation of anti-intellectualism in Filipino discourses.

With this, we used Maggay's (1999) interpretation of Filipino communication pattern, which she described as ambiguous or indirect. Her book *"Understanding Ambiguity in Filipino Communication Patterns"* (1999) uses the term *pahiwatig* as the general term to describe the "high degree of complexity and elaborateness in Filipino social relations" (p. 8). We examined our localized categories of anti-intellectualism through the lens of *pahiwatig* in retrospect to Boyd's concept of social media as networked public. We argue that ambiguity may still be present in the social media interaction of Filipinos but the unique complexity of social media as a complex and "unlimited" space for a public. We also prepared for how the timing of the interactions among involved people could lead to alterations of Maggay's argument on the Filipino communication patterns.

In the succeeding sections, our contextualized categories of anti-intellectualism in the comment section of Rappler's post concerning President Duterte's remarks against UP student protests are integrated with our interpretation of Filipino ambiguity.

Locally Contextualized Categories

Pagmamagaling

One of the classifications we were able to define based on the emergent categories from the comments, rather than from pre-existing sets of classifications, such as Scott's (2014), was a form of anti-intellectualism that is pseudo-intellectual. In Filipino, the term we have chosen to use is "*pagmamagaling*," which roughly translates into the infinitive form of pretending or acting better than someone else. When one is "*nagmamagaling*," or pretending to be better than someone else, the understanding within the Filipino context is that that person is being pretentious in some form. Often, within the Filipino context, this will be someone who pretends to know a lot about a subject to seem useful or authoritative in a situation, despite not being as useful or as knowledgeable as he or she purports to be.

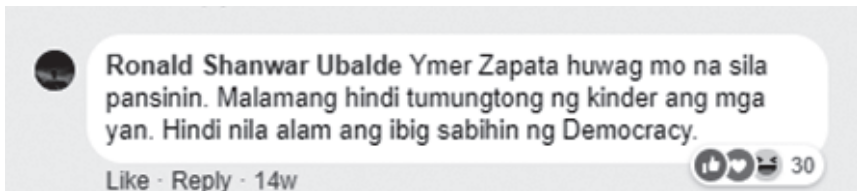


Figure 6. Example of Facebook replies that show "*pagmamagaling*"

Within the context of Filipino anti-intellectualism, this pretension takes the form of rejecting discourse by way of gatekeeping knowledge. From our text, this often took the form of participants in an argument shutting down the opposition in the discussion based on knowledge they did not have. Based on anti-intellectualism as a form of idea rejection (Hofstadter, 1963), *Pagmamagaling* is still an attempt to reject possible contributions to discourse even if at first glance, it may seem as if the person practicing "*pagmamagaling*" wants to elevate the level of discourse. By deciding who is or is not allowed to participate in the discussion, rather than contributing the gate-kept knowledge to the discussion, the discourse is halted in its tracks or, worse, derailed.

Pagmamagaling may be rooted in the concept of *pabonggahan* and *pakitang-gilas* of Filipinos. Maggay(1999) defines this as our version of bravura where we display a loud and gregarious attitude to impress or intimidate someone. This kind of *pahiwatig* in Filipino communication pattern contradicts the very purpose of indirection in our linguistic ambiguity which is to show modesty or to save 'hiya' or 'dangal o pagkatao' (personhood). Rather, *pabonggahan* and *pakitang-gilas* aim to showcase one's ability or for people to take notice of something he/she has that other people do not have. Maggay (1999) also emphasizes that this attitude is usually displayed in situations where "people do not know much about each other or one is a newcomer and under pressure to make some initial impression(p. 30)."

With this, we can see *pagmamagaling* to be the top category of anti-intellectualism among Filipinos in social media since we barely know anyone we talk to in the comment section. The distance between or among the people involved in the rhetorical situation is too big which drives the participants to leave a good impression, may it be positive or negative, to elicit discourse. We can observe here the Filipino behavior of *nanghahamon*, which roughly translates to provoking the person you are talking to.

It is good to note that this communication pattern has no direct correlation with one's academic background. Fortunato and Cuason (2017) even claim that one's anti-intellectual attitude alone does not determine the academic success or failure of a person.

However, we cannot generalize *pagmamagaling* in this context due to the complexity of its nature. Not all examples of *pagmamagaling* are gearing towards likelihood to elicit discourse. Some are shutting the exchange of communication by denigration using one's intellect. It is the Filipino nature to derive comfort from celebrating someone's ignorance and seeing high intelligence as a negative trait (Mulder, 2016). Mulder further argues this case to be an effect of the Philippines' educational system that lacks in critical understanding of humanities and philosophy that is essential in nation building. Moreover, the glamorized 'ego-driven know-it-alls' are sensationalized by the media which leads to the public's lack of self-knowledge, the inability of

accepting criticism and suffering from ignorance and arrogance. These assumed roots of *pagmamagaling* only translate to Filipinos' disregard for intellectual pursuit while finding comfort in projecting own intellectual capacity to intimidate other participants in the conversation.

Pabalang na Pagsagot

Another emergent classification of anti-intellectualism in our collated and analyzed text is the rejection of the opposing argument in a roundabout, humorous or sarcastic way. This is like the category of "sharp humor" as proposed by Scott (2014); however, the key difference would be the indirect rejection under the guise of self-deprecating humor. Scott's "sharp humor" category is for anti-intellectual comments that are not directly aggressive but still contain hostility towards intellectualism. For our category, this is an aversion to progressing the discourse on top of making a mockery of intellect or people who would attempt to further the discussion.

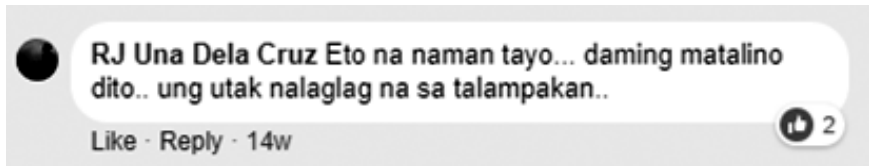


Figure 7. Example of Facebook replies that show "*pabalang na pagsagot*"

In Filipino, this kind of anti-intellectual sentiment is particularly common because of the conventionality of sarcasm in the average Filipino's everyday speech. It is common to hear such phrases as "*e di wow*" or "*ikaw na*" in Filipino, which is a sarcastic way of saying "*okay, you're smart, we get it,*" which seems like an agreement when read merely as text but the tone of which is dry. It is a form of passive-aggressive acquiescence that seeks to end the conversation without addressing the argument at hand, even offhandedly insulting the opposing speaker along the way with, one can imagine, a rolling of the eyes.

Our category of “*Pabalang na Pagsagot*,” which here means “an indirect or an off-tangent way of answering,” expands the classification to include not only clearly sarcastic comments but other roundabout ways of responding that still contain a discernible hostile tone.

Contrary to the first category, *pabalang na pagsagot* is a complete opposite of Maggay’s (1999) description of Filipino satire. This falls under her discussion of *pahiwatig* as not just an accommodative value but also a confrontative one. She describes Filipino satire using “*bato-bato sa langit, tamaan ay huwag magalit*” which is in form of a gentle chiding or humorous remark. The face-to-face confrontative values of Filipinos geared towards giving a preface that aims to sting but in a very indirect way, or as Maggay (1998) describes as a kind of stray arrow. Statements like these may elicit negative feedback but, in a way, will not hurt anyone. This is completely the opposite of how Filipinos display sarcasm or satire in social media discourse. It can be noticed that the statements are more direct and straightforward in displaying mockery, which is intended to hurt or offend the other speaker. We argue that it comes from the fact that the social distance between or among the speakers in social media is relevantly huge. The indirect and stray-arrow-way of deflecting someone through humor aims to save the *dangal* or dignity of the other speaker and in preserving someone’s concept of ‘face’. However, because there is no face-to-face interaction in social media, the concept of ‘face’ and *dangal* is not taken much into account. Instead, the low level of intimacy of the participants in the discourse encourages an increased expressiveness and casualness.

In this part, we are problematizing Maggay’s (1999) theory on Filipino communication patterns. It seems that Filipinos exhibit a more direct and expressive personality in social media compared to the ambiguous trait in face-to-face interaction. This echoes the study of Hu, Kumar, Huang, and Ratnavelu (2017), which claims that people are more likely to hide negative traits in a face-to-face interaction to avoid conflict with social norms and that the digital space provides them anonymity that fosters a freer and less restraint communication platform. Here, we can argue that Filipinos are taking advantage of this free and less constricting environment to openly and less indirectly express their thoughts. Though sarcastic or satire in nature, the intention to offend

or even malign is there. This is in sharp contrast to Maggay's (1999) claim about our concept of *hiya* and 'face' as well as her interpretation of the correlation between level of intimacy (pertaining to closeness and space) and the level of expressiveness of the Filipinos.

Tahasang Pagtangga

Of our Filipinized classifications of anti-discourse forms of anti-intellectualism, this one bears the most likeness to its original category in Scott's work (2014) but only because we could find little adjustment in the definition of "outright denigration," or "*tahasang pagtangga*" in Filipino. This form of anti-intellectualism is direct, blunt and an outright rejection of an opposing argument, discourse, or even the person on the other side of the debate. A person who makes this kind of remark makes no effort to deflect or otherwise disguise his/her contempt for the opponent and the discourse itself. It is as simple as saying "*no, you're wrong,*" with no further explanation and complete assurance, though often it is more vehement than this example.

The main difference between our categorization and Scott's (2014) is that though the hostility is the same, Scott's categories are specifically targeted towards a specific Western culture of intellectualism, which is marked by such things as level of education, presenting one's self as sophisticated, and access to and appreciation of a more critical canon of study that the ordinary masses do not have access to or appreciation for. Since our chosen operational definition for anti-intellectualism is more rooted in anti-discourse, which, as we explain, is more fitting for the nature of discourse of Filipinos, we would treat a remark such as "you're stupid" with as much anti-intellectual sentiment as a remark like "you're too smart" (which might even fall under "*pabalang na pagsagot,*" or sarcasm, in our categories).

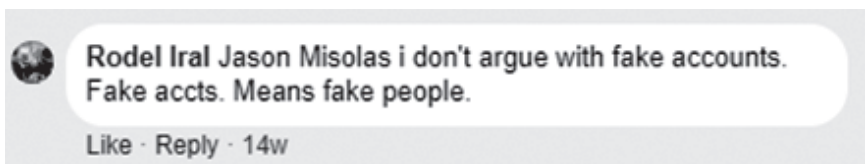


Figure 8. Examples of Facebook replies that show "*tahasang pagtangga*"

As such, this category was easy to identify within our analyzed text, because any time that a person makes remark in such a way as to explicitly (1) demean an argument or a person, or (2) exclude him/her from the discourse with no basis other than the commenter's displeasure, we considered it to fall under "*tahasangpagtangi*."

Pagsasalugar

Pagsasalugar, or in other words, to put someone in his/her place, is a category of anti-discourse that emerged from our data set but was not part of Scott's (2014) categories of anti-intellectualism. Again, this is due to our deviation from the definition of anti-intellectualism as being purely hostile towards a specific culture and movement towards a definition that is closer to anti-discourse. Among the 256 comments we analyzed, a significant number of these exhibited "*pagsasalugar*" as a means of rejecting new ideas.

In a comment, *Pagsasalugar* was defined as having the characteristics of putting someone in his/her place to invalidate the proposed ideas. In our chosen text, this occurred most frequently as commenters telling students that they are merely students and therefore do not have the experience or maturity to contribute correct ideas to the discussion. This shows anti-intellectualism because the mere assumed inferiority of one's opponent in a discourse is used to invalidate that person's point of view. It is commanding someone to accept his/her position as inferior and to cease participating in high-level discussions.

The problem, of course, is that it is fallacious to associate a person's status with the quality of the ideas one can present. Although there is some merit in pointing out that a person might not have taken into consideration all the possible factors of a debated issue, to shut that person down with no more reasonable impetus than an assumption is clearly anti-discursive. It is an attempt, once again, to exclude certain people from the discussion even if those people may have something substantial to contribute.

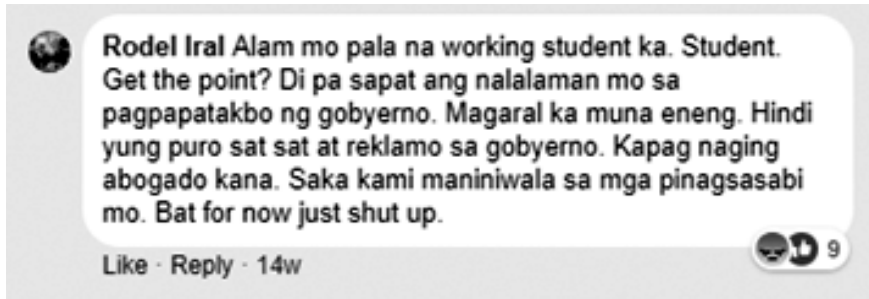


Figure 9. Example of Facebook replies that show “pagsasalugar”

The issue, for the most part, seems to be between two types of people with opposing worldviews and opposing definitions of duty, responsibility and gratitude in the context of student activism. The complexity of this disagreement, however, is diluted into a disagreement between the types of people, such as students and non-students, as opposed to the actual worldviews that underpin the argument. By attempting to put students “in their place” and thereby excluding them from the conversation is anti-discourse. The less anti-intellectual position, in this case, is to be open to the probability that even a student’s opinions might be valid in terms of (1) the discussion of an issue that is about them, and (2) as motivations to resort to activism.

Panlalahat

This classification of anti-intellectualism is a form of idea-rejection by affiliating one’s opponent in a debate with a group one already inherently disagrees with, to then disagree with all ideas that the person puts forth. In Filipino, this rejection via affiliation can be termed “*panlalahat*”, which is the Filipino-specific classification we have observed from our data set.

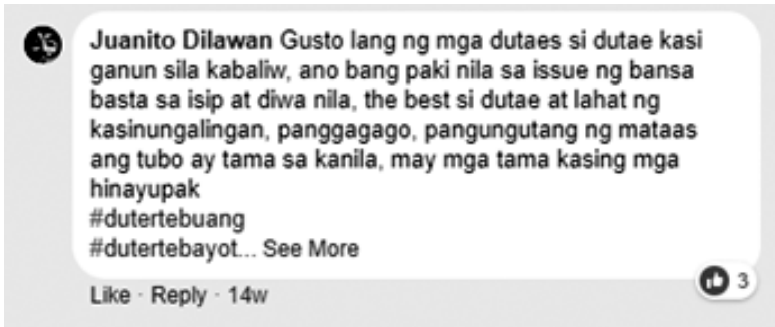


Figure 10. Example of Facebook replies that show “*panlalaha*t”

The fallacious anti-discursive perspective here is that the target of the disagreement is not any idea presented but merely the person that presented it, by way of affiliating him or her with a larger group or institution. In looking for this classification among our collected Facebook comments, we used to mention of named institutions and groups as key words for the category.

At first glance, this category seems a lot like “*pagsasalugar*” in that it assumes certain characteristics about a person and then rejects that person based on those characteristics. The difference is that in “*panlalaha*t,” there must be a specifically-mentioned institution so that the rejection is not just centered on the individual but on a larger ideology. From Scott’s (2014) categories, this is a little bit of “*elite symbolization*,” which is also coded to named institutions as code words but instead of an affiliation being used to suggest a disagreeable elitism, the affiliation is used to shut down the opposing commenter or his or her comments directly.

Kontra Elitismo

Kontra Elitismo or, in other words, anti-elitism is like Scott’s (2014) category of “*elite symbolization*” but one that is more direct. Among our categories, we found that “*kontra elitismo*” formed the smallest set from our categorized Facebook comments but this may be because it overlapped a little bit with “*panlalaha*t.” For “*kontra elitismo*,” the anti-discursive sentiment came from the intention of a remark to reject the opinion or worldview of someone assumed to belong to

a higher economic class in society, or the elite. The overlap comes from the likelihood that many institutions that may be rejected by way of “*panlalaha*” are often associated with the elite, such as high-end schools or other institutions that tend to cater to or benefit only those with wealth and power in society. The difference was that for a remark to be “*kontra elitismo*” instead of “*panlalaha*” is if the comment contained explicit or direct reference to supposed elite sectors and a negative view towards them. If the comment instead only hinted at a hostility to elitism by way of mentioning an institution, we decided to analyze the text at its most apparent level, which was the clear mention of an institution, rather than make presumptions about the commenter’s disposition towards how “elite” an institution is.

It also bears noting that this is a category we did not originally expect to have but, given the significant number of Facebook comments that fell specifically into this category and none other, we decided to assign that set of Facebook comments with its own grouping. The Philippines, after all, has just as much a modern culture of “rich-shaming” as it does “smart-shaming” and, due to the disparity of quality of education between expensive private schools and public schools, the two phenomena overlap heavily, leading to this classification as a form of anti-intellectualism.

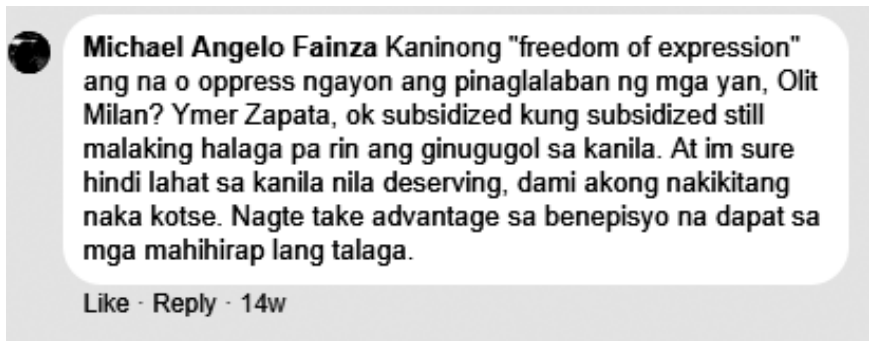


Figure 11. Example of Facebook replies that show “*kontra elitismo*”

In rejecting the contribution of a participant in the discourse based solely on so many assumptions and even a possible biased pre-existing hostility towards the well-off, no constructive argument is made, and

the opposition's arguments were dismissed off-hand regardless of the potential contribution these could make towards progressing the discourse.

SUMMARY

As previously stated, this research established the intersection among existing scholarly researches on anti-intellectualism, the increased prominence of studying networked publics in communication research and, most importantly, the tradition of examining Filipino communicative patterns. We placed a stake on the purpose and relevance of the project by providing new substantive ground for local research on similar topics, from which subsequent attempts at addressing the widespread epistemological difference and resolving socio-political conflicts that arise from these real differences may be launched.

To do so, our research focused on undertaking two key objectives. Our first main objective was to identify and develop, via the process of coding, key categories of instances of anti-intellectualism in the top five Facebook comment threads from Rappler's post about President Duterte's comments on UP students walking out of class to join protests on the streets. Our categorization model centered around manners of rejection that took place within these individual comments and established beyond the predominantly Western contextual limitations of existing literature on anti-intellectualism.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, our other main objective was to flesh out and further unpack these rudimentary categories, as well as the categorization model itself. This was achieved by running the categories through relevant literature on Filipino communication practices and patterns, particularly Maggay's (1999) privileging of the notion of "ambiguity" as one of the main sources of differentiation between Filipino and Western systems of communication.

Our approach to the first objective, in summary, has been to analyze and further define the categories of anti-intellectualism observable in the comments section of the Rappler Facebook post about the issue.

This analysis was achieved via a rudimentary form of content analysis guided initially by the existing categories of anti-intellectualism proposed by Scott (2014), before we reconstructed the intersections within our collected data to more accurately reflect the emergent categories in the text. In forming these new categories, with an awareness of the ambiguous nature of Filipino rhetoric (Maggay, 1999), we were able to gather those messages which exhibited similar methods of proposing anti-intellectual behavior or more specifically, anti-discursive attitudes, which were *Panlalahat* (affiliating and generalizing), *Pabalang na Pagsagot* (sarcasm or indirect retort), *Pagsasalugar* (putting someone in their place), *Pagmamagaling* (superiority based on gate-kept knowledge), *Tahasang Pagtanggap* (direct rejection), and *Kontra Elitismo* (disagreement based on perceived privilege).

Anti-intellectualism becomes broader when understood as anti-discourse. Additionally, we inferred that even those who may consider themselves to be intellectual may still participate in anti-intellectualism by being so assured in their correctness that dissenting ideas are simplistically rejected. In our data, the example of this was in the failure of certain pro-student-activism commenters to acknowledge that opposing worldviews may offer a unique insight into the act of walking out of class to protest a perceived societal injustice. A closed-minded approach to anti-intellectualism might see such students as bearers of the intellectual flag, even as they would irrationally or anti-discursively, reject contrary opinions for shallow reasons and thereby cutting off the possibility of constructive conversation about the topic at hand.

Based on our analysis of the collected data and the emergent categories, we discovered that Filipinos, particularly those who engage in political debate on social media, still overwhelmingly exhibit anti-discursive or anti-intellectual rhetoric, despite broader access to information in today's digital age and exposure to different worldviews. Thanks to the inclusive nature of social media and the networked public (Boyd, 2011). Based on our classification of our collected text, the number of people who exhibited uncritical thought and anti-discursive rhetoric far outweighed the number of involved

commenters that wished to contribute constructive arguments and propel the discourse towards, if not consensus, the mutual understanding of all sides of the debate. The Filipino method of communication in such argument appears to be not only inherently ambiguous but also indirect, passive-aggressive and snide, which often leads to miscommunication in online space. This expands the rift among opposing sides of a discourse.

CONCLUSION

The root of anti-intellectual and anti-discursive mindsets, especially in the Filipino context, is not just the ambiguity of Filipino interpersonal communication but also a certain closed-minded assumption that when engaged in a conversation online, one is merely presenting the correct answer rather than involved in a discourse-making. This discourse-making is oftentimes forgotten to be a process. As such, this phenomenon redounds to the depth at which anti-intellectualism has been ingrained in the online public discourse, with the misinformation and the manipulation coming from the users of the social media platforms themselves. From our coded categories and analysis, we argue that:

1. Most of the categories we defined as anti-intellectual based on the emergent groupings from our chosen text exhibited a mindset of self-assurance and stubborn sense of correctness. The distinct Filipino manner of expressing anti-intellectualism formed our specific classification of anti-intellectual remarks by Filipinos. Moreover, the underlying thread that bound these manners together are the attitudes of closed-mindedness and confident entitlement to correct and exclude others. Ultimately, this is what characterizes the anti-intellectual and his or her distrust of new ideas and possible discourse. This ultimately what allowed us to categorize comments as not just mere anti-intellectualism but, more disconcertingly, as anti-discursive as well.

2. With regard to the anti-intellectualism in the Filipino context, the communication patterns of Filipinos in the real world are also observable in the discourse in social media. Ambiguity or *pahiwatig*, was still present on some of the contextualized categories which showed that we still tend to reject new or opposing ideas indirectly. There are similarities to our communication patterns on the real world and in cyberspace. However, it is also notable that ambiguity, in some cases, is becoming less evident. Unlike face-to-face interaction, social media offered a public space with a freer and less restraining environment. Thus, Filipinos are no longer hesitant in expressing their mental and emotional states as direct as possible.

The difference in communication patterns of Filipinos in the real world and in cyberspace shows a shift in the context of culture. The Philippines, like any other Asian country, is a high-context culture where communication is implicit and reserved. However, due to the free and less restrained nature of cyberspace, ambiguity evidently decreases, and Filipinos shift from being implicit to being explicit in their expression of social media “likes and dislikes”. It can be argued that the context of culture from the physical world does shift or vary in cyberspace even if the participants in both public spaces have the same cultural background and demographics.

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Endnotes

¹ Being a high-context Filipino word, there is no direct translation of “kapwa” in the English language. However, the closest equivalent would be “neighbor” or “fellowmen.”

² The researchers express their intention to not translate all these concepts from Maggay (1999) into English due to their high-context nature in the Filipino language and, as such, has no direct equivalent in the English language.

³ The researchers wish to reiterate their intention to not translate these high-context Filipino words into the English language.

⁴ The researchers wish to reiterate their intention to not translate this high-context Filipino phrase into the English language due to the lack of a direct translation equivalent.

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