

The Social Construction of Rodrigo Roa Duterte's Visit to UPLB: Thematic Analysis of Facebook Posts Associated with #DuterteVisitsUPLB

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Abstract - *The run-up to the last Philippine national elections saw several political candidates visit colleges and universities. One of the most notable visits was Rodrigo Duterte's visit to the University of the Philippines Los Baños and the disrespect he allegedly received from at least one student. The days succeeding the visit, dubbed by some as the "Duterte - VS- UPLB War", was marked with numerous comments in various social media regarding the event and its consequences from various stakeholders. This study aimed to describe the different themes of comments produced by Facebook users regarding the event with the aim of describing the potential social reality which can be constructed by those who would make use of the hashtag to read about, and make sense of, the event. All publicly-viewable posts in Facebook bearing the #DuterteVisitsUPLB hashtag were obtained and subjected to thematic analysis. The results showed that the Facebook comments associated with the hashtag are mixed. Six major categories containing a total of 53 themes were identified. Results point to a potential socially-constructed reality of the event where the narrative of a champion of the people arriving at UPLB only to be met with morally-deficient students which the people's champion eventually forgave is salient. This narrative, however, is fraught with allegations of media irresponsibility, blind fanaticism, and contestations of the identity of the righteous and the immoral. Other observations and reflections of the authors are also presented in the study.*

Keywords: UPLB, Social Media, Duterte, Facebook, Thematic Analysis

INTRODUCTION

The run-up to the last Philippine national elections saw several political candidates visit colleges and universities in the country in order to rally support

from the youth voting bloc. The drive to court the youth voting preference stems from the characteristically young population of the country where the youth sector comprises 20 million out of the 54.6 million registered voters, or 37% of the electorate, during the last Philippine National Election 2016 [1]. One of the most notable visits is Rodrigo Duterte's visit to the University of the Philippines Los Baños for a forum last March 11, 2016 entitled, GE* Conversations with a National Leader: A Forum on Governance, Transparency, and Social Transformation. In the said forum, then-Presidential candidate Rodrigo Roa Duterte was allegedly disrespected by at least one student during the event's Question and Answer session. The days succeeding the visit was marked with numerous comments in various social media regarding the event and its consequences (such as the death threats received by students) from people of opposing views.

The GE Conversations with a National Leader Forum Series

The GE Conversations with a National Leader was a series of fora that featured political leaders who were invited to talk about the central theme of "governance, transparency, and social transformation". The forum's structure invites the guest speaker to give a lecture to an audience comprised of students coming from different disciplines, even those who are not currently taking General Education (GE) program courses related to the social sciences and those who are not students of the academic unit hosting the event. Prior to the Rodrigo Duterte entry in the forum series, a handful of other notable national leaders have already been featured. Most notable of the early entries in the forum series is then-Presidential Candidate Jejomar Binay's experience. In what will eventually be dubbed

in social networking sites, particularly Facebook and Twitter, as the #BinayBwitsUPLB event [2], Binay's experience in UPLB captured national attention after Binay was reported to have been figuratively "grilled" and subsequently "roasted" by students during the Question and Answer part of the event which was held in September 15, 2015 [3]-[4].

*General Education. This pertains to the Revitalized General Education Program (RGEP) of UP. Each undergraduate student is required to have 45 units of RGEP in his/her curriculum to be awarded a degree. The alleged "roasting" of Binay was the topic of many posts with the hashtag #BinayVisitsUPLB and was received positively not only within the walls of the campus but also in the World Wide Web with netizens lauding what happened to Binay in the event [5]-[6]. The event was then followed by another entry in the forum series in February 9, 2016 with Walden Bello who was then a Senatorial candidate, though this received less national attention perhaps due to the lesser stakes in play when the guest is not a presidential candidate. The third entry in the forum series is Duterte's March 11, 2016 visit.

Rodrigo Roa Duterte's Visit to UPLB

Similar to the previous GE Conversations with National Leader Forum events, the event was publicized through publicity materials shared around the campus and online in order to invite the students of the various degree programs. Unlike the previous fora, however, the Duterte visit was met with numerous attentions from non-UPLB constituents who shared the publicity materials beyond the UPLB population. Preparations by supporters of the candidate were observed beforehand, with announcements for free shirt printings of statements of support for Duterte being shared on Facebook. The actual forum was scheduled to start at 2 PM and end by 4 PM with the venue being UPLB's D.L. Umali Hall. In order to facilitate the entrance of the audience, students were advised to fall in line at the doors of the building by 1 PM or earlier. The area, however, was observed to be already filled with supporters and aspiring members of the audience hours prior to the event. Due to the sheer number of students who came (some of whom voluntarily came and others required by some courses or promised incentives in exchange of participation) as well as the non-UPLB constituent Duterte supporters, the building was unable to accommodate everyone within its walls, necessitating the installation of live screens online and outside the

D.L. Umali Hall. The competition for seats inside the hall was intense, with both UPLB students and non-UPLB audience clamouring for seats. Given the nature of the event as an academic activity, students were given priority as well as PWDs and the elderly.

Despite being slated to start at 2 PM, Duterte's detours to other areas of the campus prior to the event to meet and greet other UPLB constituents resulted in him arriving at least an hour later than the scheduled start of the event. After Duterte gave a speech, the event arrived at its open forum session which was popularized in Binay's earlier visit. Very few members of the audience were able to ask questions despite the high number of members of the audience wishing for a chance to be able to ask their query directly to Duterte, and Duterte eventually had to express his need to leave – it was getting late and it would be difficult to fly out in a helicopter when it is already dark. The hint that he needs to leave, however, was met with requests for some more questions to be accommodated. At this point, the much talked about part of the event transpired. UPLB student Stephen Villena asked Duterte about how he plans to prioritize the educational sector should he become president even when Duterte also expressed intent to strengthen the country's police and military capabilities, to which Duterte gave an answer. The answer, however, appeared to have been deemed by the student to be long-winded, especially in the context of the forum being extended only by a short time to accommodate a few more questions, and asked Duterte to provide a direct answer,

"Sir, sana pakisagot lang po ng direktso kasi nagtatanong po kami ng direktso dito para po makauwi na kayo." [Sir, I hope you answer the question directly because our questions are also direct, so that you can already go home afterwards.]

The remark was noted by both the audience and the media covering the event. Hours after the event, news about the perceived rudeness directed to Duterte became widespread in social media.

The "Duterte VS. UPLB War"

The days succeeding the event bore witness to an intense exchange of often inflammatory posts among social media users who have differing opinions about the event. The exchange generally formed two opposing groups: those that support UPLB and those that criticize UPLB or its students and support

Duterte. Aside from the direct and indirect exchanges of posts between the opposing sides, death threats have also been hurled towards particular UPLB students, particularly towards three students of the campus at the time. One female student was mistaken by the angry social media users to be the one who allegedly disrespected Duterte because she was featured in one of the news articles that brought the events of the forum to national attention[7]. In the said news article, the female student was the first student quoted, though the content of the quote was from an interview done with her and had nothing to do with the alleged disrespect that happened during the Question and Answer section of the event. It appears that she was merely mistaken as the rude student because hers was the first name that can be seen in the article, especially when one merely skims through the article rather than read it in full. The second student

who became the object of online abuse was a male student who, though being one of the students who was able to ask a question during the event, was not the one who gave the allegedly rude comments against Duterte. Rather, he only appeared to be the student with the allegedly rude comment because of the way by which Rappler edited the video coverage of the event which was included in their online news article. The student subsequently published an open letter regarding the issue as given in Figure 1.

The third student bore the brunt of the online abuse after it became clear that he was the one who allegedly disrespected Duterte. The online abuse were found in the comments, in death threats allegedly received by the student through his mobile phone and social networking accounts, and through Facebook pages which were made to call for his punishment or coerce him into suicide.



Ronald Gem Celestial

Yesterday at 4:57am · 🌐

AN OPEN LETTER TO Rappler AND TO THE SUPPORTERS OF PDP-LABAN PRESIDENTIAL BET AND DAVAO CITY MAYOR HON. RODRIGO DUTERTE

"Happy Birthday, Gem!"

Today, I was expecting to receive birthday greetings and wishes but due to a misleading video report by Rappler, I have been receiving curses, hate messages, and death threats from some of the supporters of PDP-Laban Presidential bet and Davao City Mayor Hon. Rodrigo Duterte.

Last 11 March 2016, the University of the Philippines Los Banos, through the initiative of the Department of Social Sciences and its partner organizations held a GE conversation on transparency, good governance, and social transform with Mayor Duterte as guest speaker where several media agencies were present to cover the said event.

During the open forum, members of the audience were given a chance to ask Mayor Duterte questions and I was one of the few students who were lucky enough to deliver our question. The question is as follows:

"Ano po 'yung konkretong aksyon o step by step plan nyo po on realizing your promises kasi sa tingin ko po, sawang sawa na po kasi kaming mga Pilipino sa nakakailang Pangulo na paulit-ulit na lamang po yung mga pangako pero lagi na lamang pong napapako. So ngayon po, ang tanong ko po, how would you materialize all of your promises within the first 6 months as you claim. Thank you." (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwE1ubg-Z-0>)

However, in a video report by Rappler, it seemed that I was the one who said the following: "Sir, sana pakisagot lang po ng direktso kasi nagtatanong po kami ng direktso dito para po makauwi na kayo." (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvNa3gXGJY>)

It's quite disappointing that after ABSCBNnews.com's erroneous news articles on a similar event featuring UNA Presidential bet and Vice President Hon. Jejomar Binay last September 2015, Rappler failed to learn from it and even published a misleading video report. Rappler's video have misled the netizens and viewers that I, as some of his supporters would say, "disrespected" their bet. This resulted to several of them sending me curses, hate messages and death threats.

I would like to appeal to everyone to go beyond personal attacks and criticize the real problems that are plaguing our society. If in anyway, I have offended anyone, my sincerest apologies. It was not and will never be our intention to disrespect anyone. I believe that forums with national leaders should be used as an avenue to get to know our candidates beyond what they are being portrayed in the mainstream media. I call everyone to maximize these opportunities to know, understand and scrutinize the plans and platforms of our aspiring leaders.

As the 2016 Presidential Election draws near, I call Rappler and the mainstream media to stop sensationalism and be genuine vanguards of the society by reporting the struggles of the Filipino people and calling everyone to action.

Sincerely,

RONALD GEM A. CELESTIAL

Figure 1. An open letter published by a UPLB student regarding the events that transpired during the event which became known as #DuterteVisitsUPLB [8]



Figure 2. Screenshot images of pages and posts created against the UPLB student who allegedly disrespected Duterte [9]-[10].

This “flame war”, as internet conflicts are often called, was further exacerbated with frustrations with the media which some believed to have contributed to the poor contextualization and subsequent conflict that the event has caused. This is not the first time that media was criticized by netizens and the UPLB constituents. In the first entry in the forum series, during Binay’s visit, the #ABSCBNsaysorrytoUPLB trended in social media after one of the news site’s reports indicated that members of the UPLB audience shouted “Trapo! Trapo!” against Binay when the actual word uttered were “Sample! Sample!”[11]-[12]. This time, the criticism against the media were directed towards Rappler after their botched video editing that led to UP Student, Celestial being at the receiving end of slurs and threats on the eve of his birthday. The issue became sorer for social media users when they perceived Rappler’s simple apology in a comment section and in the original article as insufficient in rectifying the situation.

The so-called Duterte VS UPLB War started to subside when Duterte and Peter Laviña called for the Duterte supporters to calm down and let the issue rest. These calls happened several days after the event [13]-[14]. The posts with the hashtag #DuterteVisitsUPLB started to die down in the succeeding days.

The Power of the Hashtag Phenomenon in Social Media

A hashtag, which operates in various social networking sites by adding the symbol “#” prior to a concept, was reportedly first utilized in popular social networking sites in August, 2007 [15] but its existence in the internet goes all the way back to 1988 in Internet Relay Chat or IRC [16]. It functions as a form of a marker with which posts made by various users of a particular social networking site regarding the same topic can be consolidated and referenced. It allows for ease of access when searching for content regarding the tagged topic and also for ease of connecting with

users of similar interests and/or values. Various social networking sites then adopted the hashtag's linguistic marker function into their interface. The impact of this adoption into the social media interfaces soon became the topic of scientific inquiry. Previous studies have recognized the power of hashtags to diffuse ideas [17] for purposes such as aiding in the building of communities between geographically dispersed people of same sentiments and interests [18]-[19], improving business production [20], supporting research activities [21]-[22], understanding and raising awareness about diseases [23]-[24], talking about countries [25], activism and dissent [26]-[27], and participating and understanding politics [28]- [31].

The recognition of the power of hashtags in a society that is highly dependent on the World Wide Web for its information serves as the inspiration of this study. Given the power of hashtags in today's population that is highly exposed to social networking sites such as Facebook, it can be very influential in forming the sense of reality of people regarding a particular phenomenon and can have a subsequent effect on their thoughts and actions. The question with which this study revolved around, then, is this: what is the sense of reality that is formed when a Facebook user looks at the posts that bear the hashtag, #DuterteVisitsUPLB?

This inquiry into the Facebook posts bearing the hashtag of #DuterteVisitsUPLB is guided by the ideas of social constructionism [32]. According to Berger and Luckmann, social reality is socially-constructed. As a result, there is no objective social reality but rather a multitude of realities constructed by various groups of people which compete for the perception of being the "truth". Salient in this construction of social reality and the subsequent competition among the multiple truth claims is the importance of communication as the process by which truth claims are formed and subsequently shared. People's interpretation of an event cannot become a competing version of reality unless it is shared and made widespread for other people to accept as their own sense of reality as well. In light of this, the power of social networking sites becomes very important: in a world where people hear about events which they do not necessarily have first-hand experience in, they will have to rely on the truth claims of other people who talk about the event and subscribe to which one appears to them as convincing. The basis of the convincing power of the truth claim, on the other hand, may either be anchored on one's preconceived notions of the event or the individuals or parties

involved in the event akin to confirmation bias, or on the truth claim that is most often encountered, akin to bandwagon effect. This study focuses on the social reality formed by those who, in the absence of first-hand experience regarding the event, may fall prey to the latter as a function of informational conformity.

METHODS

The study made use of qualitative research, particularly a content analysis approach. Content analysis enabled the researchers to systematically classify and analyze the textual information captured by #DuterteVisitsUPLB. In utilizing content analysis, the researchers manually classified and analyzed such text data. On coding, the researchers had initially developed general categorization before imploring a hierarchical coding which led to the creation of sub-categories.

The goal of the study is to analyze the socially-constructed reality which can be obtained from the contents posted in Facebook about Duterte's lecture at UPLB. The researchers opted to limit the study's scope on Facebook due to the following reasons. First, several of the posts which later became important elements contributory to the Duterte vs. UPLB war (e.g. Facebook posts of people involved in the event, the news links of news groups such as ABS-CBN and Rappler Philippines, and the proliferation of pages and groups for Duterte and against Villena) were posted on Facebook. While these posts may have been eventually circulated in other social networking sites, they originated in Facebook.

The researchers recognize, however, that this will be limited by two important issues: first, not all posts about the event were tagged by the posters with the #DuterteVisitsUPLB hashtag. This is also made more problematic by the fact that Facebook users can filter who can access the content of their posts through Facebook's privacy options. In light of these two issues, the researchers opted to focus on those which are publicly viewable. All publicly-available Facebook posts bearing the hashtag #DuterteVisitsUPLB were gathered and subjected to thematic analysis. The data gathering was conducted during May and June 2016. Given that the data gathering was conducted months after the event, the researchers are confident that no additional posts bearing the hashtag would be made during and after the data gathering.

A total of 876 publicly-available Facebook posts were gathered for the study. The researchers observed during the initial analysis that this population of posts

includes posts by news outlets, private Facebook users, and the university accounts regarding advertisements for the event, updates on the event, and links of the event's livestreams. These were regarded by the researchers as miscellaneous posts that need not be included in the analysis since they contribute little to the construction of social reality that is the concern of this study. After the removal of the miscellaneous posts, the remaining contents were analyzed and general themes were constructed. It should be noted that while many of the posts are short and does not offer a complex mixture of ideas, there are also posts which offer different sentiments. In the case of the latter, the post is analyzed for the different themes it may have. Out of the 876 publicly-available Facebook posts, 439 posts were subjected to analysis after the removal of the miscellaneous posts. Three major parties were found to be the usual subjects of the posts: Duterte, UPLB, and the media. It was agreed upon that six different general themes can be obtained from the posts based on the subject matter and the general attitude of the posts: (1) Positive Duterte, (2) Negative Duterte, (3) Positive UPLB, (4) Negative UPLB, (5) Positive Media, and (6) Negative Media.

Both researchers were then furnished with a separate copy of the compilation of the posts. The posts were thematically analyzed by the two researchers independently to ensure inter-observer reliability. Both researchers were tasked to assign the posts into one of the six general themes. In some cases, a post contains a complex sentiment which necessitates its assignment into more than one general theme. After the Facebook posts were thematically analyzed separately, the results of their independent analyses were compared for similarities and differences. Similar results of the independent analyses were accepted as is while those where the researchers differed were discussed until a consensus was reached. The posts assigned to each of the general themes were then subjected to further thematic analysis to generate the specific themes presented in the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis provided a mixture of 24.54% posts classified under the general theme of Positive Duterte, 5.71% Negative Duterte, 1.83% Positive UPLB, 14.95% Negative UPLB, 0.34% Positive Media, and 2.74% Negative Media. These general themes each bear more specific themes which will be expounded upon in the succeeding pages. To

aid in the appreciation of the themes, examples of the comments are provided. In respect of the subjects' privacy, however, the posters were not identified.

A. Positive Duterte

The general theme of Positive Duterte comprises the largest proportion of posts analyzed bearing the hashtag #DuterteVisitsUPLB. In order to effectively organize the specific themes under Positive Duterte, the researchers saw fit to categorize them into five: those that are (1) expressing support for Duterte, (2) describing Duterte, (3) expressing optimism about the future, (4) campaign-related messages, (5) comments about the event, and (6) justifying their support for Duterte.

1. Expressions of Support (32.65%)

The largest category of posts under the Positive Duterte general theme is comprised of different messages expressing support for Duterte.

a. *Solid Duterte* (20.93%)

Under this theme, posters expressed their firm support to Duterte in spite of the controversies and the criticisms he faces. One of the issues that challenged Duterte's campaign is the continuous attack of his critiques against his tactlessness. However, some posters asserted that they will remain loyal to Duterte despite his personality "*walang iba kahit ano pa ugali nya*" [No one else no matter what his personality is like]. Others expressed that they will not be affected by the attempts to pull him down such as "*sa mga naninira kay mayor teka hanapin ko lang yung pake ko*" [to those who criticize the mayor wait I just need to check if I care]. On the other hand, there are those who simply stressed their unwavering support to Duterte "*basta taga-UP du30*" [As long as one's from UP, in favor of Du30 (Duterte)], "*solid na solid... My future president*".

b. *The President and the Vice-President* (6.51%)

Posts under this theme showed people's unwavering support for Duterte and his campaign. Although several posters showed their loyal support to Duterte and Cayetano as the standard bearers of the PDP-Laban party such as "*DUTERTE-CAYETANO PARA SA TUNAY NA PAGBABAGO*" [Duterte-Cayetano for true change], others expressed that Marcos, a candidate under the People's Reform Party is a better vice-president for Duterte since the said duo will be able to successfully implement changes that will make the country prosperous: "*Duterte-Marcos*".

2016 para sa pagbabago at kasaganaan” [Duterte-Marcos 2016 for change and prosperity].

c. *Submission (5.21%)*

Under this theme is the sentiment that people should submit in order to pave the way for Duterte to do his job properly. This is found in posts such as “*Anung silbi ng pangulo kung hindi naman masusunod utos mo?*” [*What is the point of being president if your orders aren't followed?*]. This post presents varying ways of interpretation. On one hand, the post may imply that the president should always be followed and unopposed in his exercise of power. On the other hand, such a post can be construed as a sentiment that a president cannot be effective without the cooperation of the people. The submissive sentiment of some posters are further expressed in posts such as “*No Questions asked. Do what you have to do para sa bayan*” [*... for the country*]. Unlike the first quoted post in this theme which has a more ambiguous message, this quoted post is direct in its submission of the poster's right and willingness to question the decisions of Duterte because the poster believes that it is for the country.

2. Descriptions of Duterte (20.95%)

Different characterizations of Duterte were also obtained from the posts. In several cases, the descriptions may look as if they should all be merged together into just one theme. The researchers, however, argue that while all the descriptions are positive and may therefore be highly associated with each other, certain nuances in the descriptions necessitate differing themes.

a. *Man of virtue (3.26%)*

Posts under this theme claims that Duterte is a man of virtue since he was able to remain composed in spite of being asked a question (which some posters deemed as impractical and unreasonable) by a student in a tone that other posters described as arrogant and disrespectful. An example of such post is: “*My takeaway from #DuterteVisitsUPLB: My presidential candidate is isn't pikon about honest albeit silly questions. What about yours?*”.

b. *Future president (2.79%)*

Under this theme, supporters expressed their confidence that Duterte will definitely be the next President of the Philippines. Examples of such posts are: “*The next president*” and “*...ilang araw nalang paguwi ko ng pinas may bago ng president si Rodrigo*

Roa Duterte” [*...just a few days from now, when I return to the Philippines there'll be a new president and that is Rodrigo Roa Duterte*]. The confidence of such supporters is possibly inspired by the fact that the forum was jam-packed with Duterte supporters and that the #DuterteVisitsUPLB continues to trend online due to the heated engagements of Duterte supporters, UPLB constituents, and others concerned.

c. *People's hope (2.79%)*

Due to his promise that change will come to the Philippines if he wins the elections, some Duterte supporters have identified him as the embodiment of hope for the country. “*Mabuhay ka mayor duterte ikaw lang pag asa namin at para sa susunod na henerasyon tungo sa pagbabago ng ating bansa*” [*Long live mayor Duterte you are our hope and the hope of the future generations towards change in our country*] is an example of a post which maintains that Duterte and the change he aims to implement is the remaining hope of the present generation and that him winning will also be beneficial for the next generation of Filipinos.

d. *Passionate leader (2.33%)*

According to some posters, Duterte's enthusiasm as a leader who protects is unparalleled. “*He might look unpresidentiable but no one can match his passion to protect Filipinos*”. The “*he might look unpresidentiable*” part of the post pertains to the physical appearance of Duterte since unlike other presidentiables, Duterte is the only candidate who would wear old or worn-out shirt, pants, and shoes. Despite his appearance, many of his supporters maintain that his passion to serve matches no other candidate. Aside from his passion to lead and serve, some of Duterte's supporters expressed that he is also passionate about other social issues: “*Duterte is really passionate about the environment*”, as mentioned by one of the posters.

e. *Political will (2.33%)*

Similar to his passion to lead, many Duterte supporters believe in his unflinching political will. According to one of the posters “*none of those presidential candidates have a REAL CONFIDENT to make the country federal because they know that many big illegal and corrupt people will get affected by duterte's plans. Only duterte have the guts to do it*”. Duterte pushes for the Philippines to have a federal system of government and although the chances of implementing such change is very slim,

many of his supporters believe that nothing is impossible as long as it is Duterte who pushes for change since unlike others, he has a strong political will.

f. *Rockstar* (2.33%)

“The venue is too small for the rock star Mayor Digong!” Under this category, Duterte is referred to by his supporters as a rockstar since he is able to inspire fanatical admiration similar to that inspired by popular performers or celebrities. A post under this category mentions that Duterte’s popularity is unmatched even by the popular local celebrity couple “KathNiel” who campaigned for Mar Roxas, the standard bearer of the Liberal Party: *“walang binatbat ang kathniel... laos ang mga artistang sumusuporta kay mar roxas at binay... si mayor ngaun ang boxoffice hitmaker...hahahahaha duterte!!!!!!! Duterte....duterte!!!!!”* [KathNiel cannot hold a candle to him... other artists supporting Mar and Binay... Mayor (Duterte) is the box-office hitmaker...]. The said post could be interpreted in a way that even though other presidentiables make use of popular celebrities to boost their campaigns, no celebrity can ever match Duterte’s charisma.

g. *Grassroots leader* (1.86%)

Duterte is perceived by many of his supporters as a grassroots leader since unlike other presidentiables who carry with them the surnames of influential oligarchs and tycoons, Duterte came from the masses. As mentioned by one of the posters *“Mula sa bayan, para sa bayan.”* [From the country, for the country]. His humble familial and political background made him more relatable to the masses and this inspired his supporters to claim that *“He’s one with us!”* His supporters are also convinced that Duterte’s humble campaign indicates that he did not receive any “donation” from the rich who have personal interests: *“Siya ay simple lang ang campaign structure at machinery, walang malaking pondo o malaking donasyon na galing sa mayaman na maaaring may personal interest”* [His campaign structure and machinery are simple, no huge funding nor huge donations from the rich who may have personal interests]. Posts under this category could be interpreted as the shared sentiments of Duterte supporters who aim to install a grassroots leader embodied by Duterte to fight and end the triumph of the rich, powerful, and influential who are governed by their personal or selfish interests.

h. *Infallible or almost infallible leader* (1.86%)

Many of Duterte’s supporters believe that he is perfect or at least an almost perfect leader. As mentioned earlier, one of the main criticisms against Duterte is his tactlessness such as his insensitive remarks against women and various minority groups, and his constant use of vulgar words in his speeches. However, for some of his supporters, the only reason why Duterte’s critiques are too focused with his vulgarity and tactlessness is because they cannot think of any other bad deed Duterte has done. *“Wala kasing maisip na bad image ni duterte kundi ung pagmumura lang. putanginang yan hahahahaha”* [They can’t think of anything to put a bad image on Duterte aside from his cussing. Son of a bitch, hahahahaha]. Similar to the aforementioned quote, some of Duterte’s supporters would laugh at those who are too concerned with Duterte’s tactlessness since for them, this only proves that his critiques cannot find any flaw out of Duterte and would rather be reduced to the obsession with trivial things such as his language.

On the other hand, there are Duterte supporters who are cognizant that he is an imperfect leader. A post of a Duterte supporter mentions that *“Kahit mataas pa yang crime rate but the people feel safe and happy, ibig sabihin maayos ang pamamalakad. Efficient ang government and police nila.”* [Even if the crime rate is high yet the people feel safe and happy, it means the government and the police are efficient.]. The said post pertains to the situation in Davao, a city in Mindanao that Duterte had served for more than three decades. Many of Duterte’s supporters claim that Davao is crime-free; however, many of his critiques invalidated such claim by citing Davao’s recorded crime-rate. Some critiques even made use of the presence of the Davao Death Squad (DDS) and the extra-judicial killings in Davao to strengthen their case. Nevertheless, many of Duterte’s supporters such as that quoted above are aware that Duterte is not a perfect leader, but would still remain supportive of him since for them Duterte is able to regulate his office efficiently and effectively.

i. *Parental figure* (1.40%)

This category revealed that Duterte’s supporters look him more than just a presidential candidate, but recognizes him as a parental figure as well. It was found in this study that some of his supporters would call him *“TATAY Duterte”* or *“angkul digong”*. Contextualizing the parental figure in the Philippine setting, Duterte’s supporters calling him *“tatay”* (father) or *“angkul”* (uncle) may symbolize

that the respect they have for Duterte is as high as the respect that they give to their parents. Another way of looking at it is that his supporters are willing to give him the right to discipline and punish them the way a father does to his children, and still they will remain respectful of their father.

3. Expressing optimism about the future (19.07%)

Many posts bearing the hashtag also bore the sentiment of having a brighter outlook in the future of the Philippines.

a. *Retribution against perceived evils* (7.91%)

One of the images or characteristics Duterte has exuded during his campaign is his intolerance of injustice and on the evil deeds done by society's evil-doers. Under this category, Duterte supporters shared their opinions in identifying the present evil-doers and/or how Duterte will punish those that they perceive as society's evil-doers. An example of a post under this category is, "*Dahil inisnob ni Digong mga network provider yan wala makuha livestream. Bulok na internet services. Pagnanalo si Digong tapos pagsasamantalaga nyo sa mga subscribers*" [*Because Duterte insulted the network provider, there would be no livestream. Flawed internet services. If Duterte wins, the abuses of these (network providers) to their subscribers will come to an end.*]. The poster identified network providers as opportunists. One reason could be that since the nature of the service network provider industry in the Philippines is oligopolistic, subscribers are left with no other option but to subscribe or purchase the limited, unimpressive, yet costly services these providers offer. Since Duterte warned these service provider companies to "*shape up or face foreign competition*", the poster is confident that these companies will pay the price once Duterte is installed into office.

Other posts related to this category are, "*he build hope not to destroy he will bring change not chance to those criminals...*" and "*Patay mga bwaya dyan*" [*the crocodiles will die*]. These sentiments are also inspired by Duterte's promise to change the nation by being intolerant to criminality and other forms of injustices.

b. *Action-oriented Governance* (5.58%)

One of Duterte's selling points in his "less talk and more action" attitude towards social issues. Posts under this category advocates for Duterte since he immediately gives action to issues. An example of

such posts is: "*Matapat na solusyon, mabilis na aksyon*" [*Honest solution, quick action*]. Some even compared Duterte's action-orientedness to another presidentiable: "*kitang kita na si du30 nangangampanya pa lang pero inuumpisahan na ung mga solution sa mga problema ng bansa. Si Mar puro papogi ginagawa.*" [*It is clear that Duterte is campaigning right now but he is already starting the solutions to the problems of the country.*]. The said post is followed by comments comparing Duterte and Roxas. Some made use of the Typhoon Yolanda issue to compare Duterte's immediate response during the emergency situation while Mar Roxas, who was then the country's Interior Secretary acted unhurriedly.

c. *Change is coming* (5.58%)

Change is coming is the central theme of Duterte's campaign for presidency. Duterte won the hearts of many Filipinos by promising the end of the prevailing injustices in the country such as corruption and drug use and abuse. Hence, under this category, the sentiments of posters revolve on demanding for the end of wrong-doings in the country and advocated for national reform such as: "*Tama na, sobra na, pagbabago na!*" [*Enough, we need a change!*]. There are some posts such as "*Mga iskolar ng bayan sya na ang hinihintay nating pagbabago*" [*To the iskolar ng bayan (a title of UP students), he is the change we are waiting for*] that urged UP students to support Duterte since for his supporters, he is the much-awaited catalyst for change in the country.

4. Campaign-related Messages (16.28%)

One very noticeable pattern that can be observed from the posts bearing the hashtag is that the content of their comments are no longer limited to the actual event that transpired in UPLB but are instead general discussions of Duterte and the then-upcoming Philippine national elections. Aside from these, however, are posts that offer little content but are instead blatant campaign posts. These posts include those that have no other content but:

a. *Images of Duterte election paraphernalia* (11.63%)

The images below are some examples of campaign paraphernalia utilized by Duterte supporters during the forum in UPLB. The image on the left is a car plate with the official publication material made use by the forum's organizers to promote the event, while the image on the right is a hat worn by a group of Duterte supporters who attended the said event.

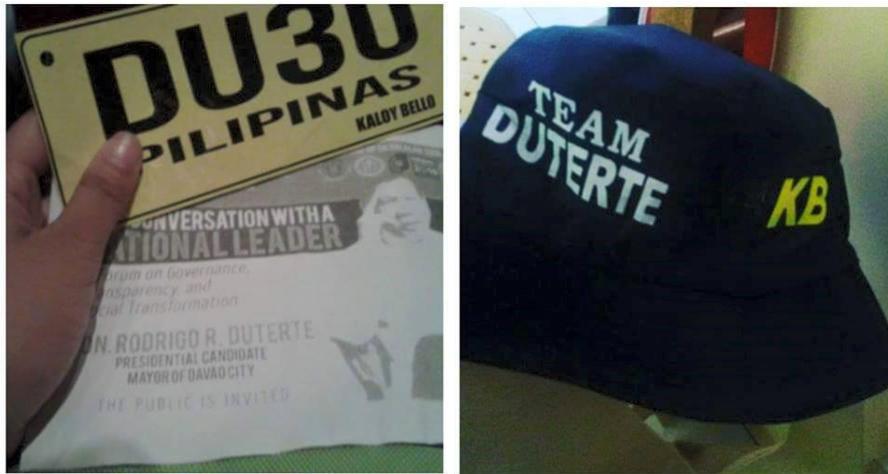


Figure 3. Images of Duterte Election Paraphernalia shared with the #DuterteVisitsUPLB

Aside from the abovementioned, majority of the images shared with the #DuterteVisitsUPLB are unrelated to the event. Comments such as *“PRINT AND DISTRIBUTE DUTERTE FLYERS TO THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE INTERNET ACCESS. Click on the link and download the flyer. Please post and share”* were also found.

b. One or several other hashtags (4.65%)

The following hashtags were found in posts that are either related or no longer related to the forum that transpired in UPLB: #VoteDuterte2016, #VoteDuterte, #DuterteForPresident, #YesToFederalism, #Duterte2016, #Du30Fan, #TunayNaPagbabago, #PHVoteDuterte, and #Du30fan.

5. Comments about the event (13.03%)

The contents of some of the posts bearing the hashtag #DuterteVisitsUPLB pertain to their comments on the event itself. Five specific themes are under this category.

a. Jam-packed and sought after (4.65%)

Posts under this category described how crowded the forum’s venue was such as *“DL Umali Bldg jampacked with student supporters of Duterte”* and how Duterte was sought after by his supporters, especially his student supporters: *“Gaano po kainit ang pagtanggap ng mga estudyanteng uhaw sa #TunayNaPagbabago.”* [How warm the welcome of the students who thirst for true change].

Although some of Duterte’s supporters translated attendance to the forums as students’ way of showing support to Duterte, those internal to the university where the forum has transpired could interpret the attendance of students differently. Although it could

be the case that some students came to the forum to support Duterte, there are other students who attended the forum not to support, but to know and understand Duterte’s platform as a candidate running for the highest position. On the other hand, several students who attended the forum did so simply because they were required by their professors or since they are given incentives if they do so.

The translation of Duterte’s supporters to the attendance of students as representation of their support to him may have been due to their own personal biases or it could have been influenced by the erroneous information published by ABS CBN news while giving an update on the forum. ABS CBN published an image with the caption: *“UPLB’s DL Umali Bldg jampacked with student supporters of Duterte”*.

b. Powerful and genuine Digong speech (2.33%)

Under this category, posters commented on how much they admired Duterte’s speech during the forum. Examples of such comments are *“sumakit kamay ko kakapalapak kay Duterte”* [my hands are painful after clapping for Duterte so much] and *“Kahit bitin yung open forum, nakakaproud yung pagiging powerful and genuine ng speech ni Digong kanina.”* [even when the open forum is lacking, it gives me pride because of the powerful and genuine speech of Digong earlier].

c. Star-struck (2.33%)

Posts under this category revolve on how people are awed by the presence of Duterte. Examples of such comments are: *“Maka-starstruck gud. Huhu.Sayang wala mi picture duha.”* [I felt star-struck! Too bad I wasn’t able to take pictures],

“Closest I got to Mayor Rody. Hahahaha. Anghirap maging Security escort nya. Andami nyang fans...” [... Hahahaha.it’s difficult being his security escort, so many fans...] and “Such a great opportunity to be the only student to take an official selfie with Mayor Rodrigo Duterte.”

d. *Willing and able to answer all questions (1.86%)*

Posters under this category aimed to explain what transpired in the forum’s controversial question and answer portion. While there are those who detailed that Duterte was willing to answer more questions, but failed to do so due to time constraints such as: “Actually I heard that he is willing to entertain some more questions but the time constraint”, other comments focused on the fact that Duterte has already given his answer on what was asked of him: “sinagot lng po ni duterte kung ano yung tinanong sa kanya...” [Duterte only answered what was asked of him]. The latter post also addresses the comments of Duterte’s critiques that his answers during the question and answer portion were empty or that his answers were irrelevant to the questions being asked of him.

e. *Wishful-thinking (1.86%)*

Under this category, Duterte’s supporters expressed their desire to see him personally. They also expressed how hopeful they are for Duterte to come and visit their provinces so they can showcase how strong the support of their respective provinces is for him. Examples of such comments are: “Sana lang madalaw din ni Pangulong Duterte ang Camarines Sur” [I hope President Duterte will also visit Camarines Sur] and “sna mkapunta d2 si DUTERTE lapit na calamba para Makita din gano kadami ang may gusto sa kanya gogogo ...DOTERTE TYO” [Hopefully Duterte can come to Calamba, it’s near, so he can see how many here likes him. Go go go, we are for Duterte].

6. Justifications for Duterte (9.31%)

Another category of the posts which were classified as positive for Duterte are different explanations offered by the Facebook users on why Duterte is their choice for president of the country.

a. *Jadedness and cynicism (3.26%)*

Posts under this category such as “san mo ipagkakatiwala kay roxas na palpak?” [to whom will you put your trust, to Roxas the failure?] and “Ituloy ang daang kulubot? Edi wooow” [Continue the wrinkled path (of the then incumbent

administration)are mostly sentiments of exhaustion and pessimism with the then-incumbent Aquino administration. Roxas was the standard bearer of the administration’s party, while the “daang matuwid” [straight path] is associated with the Aquino administration. The said tag line was also used by Roxas, Roberedo, and other candidates under the Liberal Party as their official campaign tag line. “Daang kulubot” [wrinkled path] in the latter quote could be interpreted as the symbolism of the poster’s distrust with the administration.

b. *Personal experience and the Davao precedent (2.79%)*

Davao is known as one of the most-disciplined cities in the Philippines and it has received numerous awards at the national and international level. Posts under this category are mostly shared personal experiences of Duterte’s supporters who are situated in Davao or had an experience staying in Davao. Other posts under this category urged Duterte’s critiques to look at what he has done instead of criticizing the content of his answers during the question and answer portion of the forum. An example of such post is: “YUNG IBANG MGA STUDENTS NADISMAYA DAHIL HINDI SILA NASAGOT MABUTI YUNG ISA BASTOS KUNG MAGTANUNG KUNG MATATALINO KAYO WAG NYO TINGNAN ANG SAGOT TINGNAN NYO ANG RESULT NG KANYANG MGA NAGAWA NAPAKADALI PONG SUMAGOT NG MAGANDA PERO HND KAYANG GAWIN NG TOTOHANAN...” [The other students were upset because they were not given answers but that one is rude in his way of asking questions. If you are really intelligent you won’t look at the answers but rather at the results of what he has already done. It’s very easy to give beautiful answers (to forum questions) but cannot do it in practice].

c. *“Research monalang” [Just research about it] (1.86%)*

During the question and answer portion of the forum several netizens pitched in their questions hoping that these questions will be read and be asked by the audience who are able to enter the auditorium. Some posted questions online in threats pertaining to the event in order to generate online discourse. These questions were often answered by Duterte’s supporter with “research mo na lang” [just research about it], “research research rin pag may time” [do research when you have time] or “He has plans on that matter. Research mo na lang o follow mo pages or groups na

sumusuporta sa kanya.” Although such responses could indicate that Duterte’s supporters are already tired of answering frequently asked questions, another way of looking at it is that maybe they are also not well-informed with Duterte’s plans.

d. *Innocents vs. Criminals (1.40%)*

Critiques of Duterte often associate his name with extra-judicial killings. Although there was an instance during his campaign that Duterte admitted the existence of the Davao Death Squad (DDS) – an infamous vigilante group accused of killing suspected addicts and criminals in Davao, and even confirmed his ties with the said group [33], he immediately retracted this statement of his[34]. Posts under this category contains the approval of Duterte supporter’s on the extra-judicial killings of suspected criminals since for these supporters, the death of alleged criminals is better than putting the lives of the innocents in peril. Examples of such posts are: *“Criminals were killed gusto mo ba mabiktima balang araw ang family or relatives mo ng mga wala ng pag-asa tumino n criminal?...”* [*criminals were killed, do you want your family or relatives to be the victims of criminals who have no hope of getting better?*]and *“hahahaha mamili ka na lang kung gusto mo yung criminal yung namamatay o yung inosente ang namamatay?”* [*hahaha, you need to choose if you want the criminals to die or would you prefer that the innocents are the ones to die?*].

B. Negative Duterte

While the number of posts expressing a positive take on Duterte commands the largest proportion of the posts analyzed in the study, there is also a sizable number of posts which has a negative view of Duterte. These posts are either pertaining to Duterte himself as a person, as a political figure, or towards his supposed actions and his supporters.

1. *Attack on capability (28.00%)*

One of the promises Duterte made during his campaign was to ensure the eradication of crimes in the Philippines within six months if ever he is elected into office. However, many of his critiques remained skeptical to his promises. Some posts under this category such as *“Do you really believe that he can stop crime? That’s impossible dream in six months?????”* urged others to be skeptic of Duterte’s proclamations as well. In the aforementioned post, the poster perceives Duterte’s statement as merely an empty promise. Other posts under this category

deliberately attack Duterte’s capability to deliver his promises. An example of such post is: *“Huwag kayong magpapaloko diyan, fantastic na naman sasabihin nan, wala naman laman puro hot air lang.”* [*Stop being fooled (by Duterte), he’ll just say fantastic things but it’s all hot air*]. The said poster urged others to avoid falling to Duterte’s antics since all of his proclamations are merely fueled by his conceit.

2. *Attack on integrity (26.00%)*

Many of Duterte’s critiques question the integrity of his statements especially since he was known to give inconsistent stances and statements during the campaign period. An example of a post under this category is, *“How can a communist talk about good governance, transparency and social reform when Duterte supports extra-judicial killings and even admits to his death squads?”* The support Duterte gives to the New People’s Army (NPA) earned him the label communist; however, although many of his critiques would label him as a communist, Duterte claimed that he is only a socialist[35]. Nevertheless, many of his critiques argued how conflicting Duterte’s interest in winning the position of President is with his stance to acknowledge or legitimize leftist organizations and to allow some of its members to penetrate the government upon winning the elections.

The truthfulness of his statements as a resource speaker in a forum about good governance, transparency, and social reform is also being put into question by others since as discussed earlier; Duterte declared his support to extra-judicial killings and even confessed the presence of the Davao Death Squad (DDS) although he later retracted the aforementioned.

3. *Perceived fanaticism (14.00%)*

Posts under this category are dedicated to the supporters of Duterte. Some of his critiques would call Duterte supporters as *“dutertards”* or *“duterte-natics”* since for them his supporters are already blinded by their fanaticism with Duterte that they have already become incapable of seeing his flaws or being rational on discourses related to him. *“This is what fanaticism does kids. Duterte-natics attacking w/o any consistency with their own candidate”* is an example of a post under this category. The aforementioned pertains to posts made by Duterte supporters on the issue.

4. *Attack on political stance (10.00%)*

Under this category, several of Duterte’s critics voiced their utmost disapproval to some of his

political statements and/or stances. An example of which is *“Honoring KaParago is the biggest bullshit that Duterte has done. Why honor a terrorist who extorts money and destroys one’s property and it’s a big slap in the face of the fallen men of AFP and PNP and their families.”* Ka Parago is the leader of the New People’s Army (NPA), the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). Many of Duterte’s critiques such as the aforementioned poster asserts that Ka Parago being the leader of the NPA is a terrorist and having Duterte a presidentiable honoring an NPA leader is in conflict with the office he aims to occupy given that the president heads both the AFP and the PNP – the offices in-charge of hunting down terrorists and in maintaining peace and stability within the country.

5. Extra-judicial killings (10.00%)

One of the biggest issues that challenged Duterte’s campaign was the critique against his stance on extra-judicial killings. Posts under this category are mostly opinions against extra-judicial killings such as *“For me murder is murder regardless of who is the victim. Even if he is a drug pusher, holdupper, rice smuggler, they all deserve a day in court.”* This post asserts that as long as an alleged suspect is not proven guilty in court, an extra-judicial killing is unjustified; it is murder regardless of the victim’s identity of what the victim has done. Other posts under this category assert that since Davao, a city that Duterte governs has many cases of extra-judicial killings and given the fact that extra-judicial killings is a crime, then Davao is not the safest place as many of Duterte’s supporters would claim: *“Is summary killing or murder counted as a crime in the crime statistics? Then Davao is not the safest place as you claim it to be. 60 underage or minors were killed in 2007 alone according to a CNN report and this cases are unresolved murders.”* The said post is also related to the discussion of the Davao Death Squad (DDS) mentioned earlier since it is believed that the DDS is responsible for the summary executions in Davao.

6. Attack on personality (4.00%)

Under this category, many of Duterte’s critiques showed antagonism against the different aspects of his personality. Some heavily criticized the fact that Duterte aims for the position of President – the head of state and the chief executive, yet he shows no reservations in breaking the laws: *“How do you intend to keep respect and implement the laws of the state when you yourself have no qualms in breaking it?”*

The said post could be related to the allegations that Duterte implements extra-judicial killings in Davao through his Davao Death Squad or it could also pertain to the catcalling issue since Duterte implemented an ordinance against catcalling in his city and yet he continuously did so during his campaign to several women and women’s groups, he clearly violated the law he even implemented in his own city. Also related to his continuous catcalling during his campaigns are posts against his lustfulness such as: *“His brain is not inside his head, but in his pants. Dito mo ba ipagkakatiwala ang bansa at ang anak mo?Hindi mapigilan ang sarili parang kuneho. #NotoDuDirty” [His brain is not inside his head but in his pants. Is this the one to whom you will entrust the country and your children? He can’t event stop himself, he’s like a rabbit.]*

7. Other candidate is better (2.00%)

Majority of posts under this category compared Duterte to other presidentiables such as *“Coz ur from Davao right Miriam is way better than Duterte”*. The said post is a response to a Duterte supporter who came from Davao as well. It could be interpreted as since the supporter is from the Davao, then the poster sees him as biased in favoring Duterte who is also from Davao; hence, for the poster, the supporter is unable to see that another presidentiable such as the standard bearer of the People’s Reform Party Miriam D. Santiago is a better option.

C. Positive UPLB

Despite being the host of the event in question, UPLB was a less popular subject of the posts bearing the hashtag. One very notable observation of the posts which depicted UPLB in a positive light is that the posts are most often made by those who are currently or formerly associated with UPLB, the UP System as whole, either as a student or a faculty.

1. Clarification of the events that transpired (43.75%)

Majority of the posts classified under positive UPLB are those clarifying what has transpired in the forum. While there are posts and statements that clarified what has transpired during the question and answer portion of the forum, other posts focused on clarifying the identity of the student who asked Duterte the contentious question. *“Basa basa bago bash” [read first before you bash]* is one of the most common posts under this category and it is directed to the bashers of UPLB and its constituents. The said post could mean that bashers should read first the

news, released statements, and other related posts regarding the event that gives light to what has transpired before they bash the constituents of UPLB or it could also mean that the posts of the bashers are irrational therefore they should educate themselves first on what has transpired in the forum before they give their comments on the event.

2. Criticisms against hasty generalization (25%)

Many of those who criticized UPLB and its constituents mentioned that the university failed to teach its students “good manners and right conduct” hence the “arrogant” tone of one of its students during the question and answer portion of the forum. However, the said claim is too fallacious for several UP students. *Tularan si Isko [Be like Isko]*, a popular page among UP students released the image below (Figure 4) as response to those who hastily generalized UP students as arrogant and immoral.



Figure 4 Image shared by UP students as rebuttal to hasty generalizations [This is Isko. He does not generalize 15,000 people using a sample size of $n=1$. He is intelligent in STAT 1. Be like Isko.]

Aside from defending themselves from being hastily generalized as arrogant and immoral, another way of interpreting fig. 3 is UP students showcasing their intellectual superiority against their non-UP bashers by using statistics to debunk hasty generalizations. “*Matalino siya sa Stat 1*” [he is intelligent in Stat 1] and “*tularan si Isko*” [be like Isko] can be interpreted as a way of UP students to urge others to be rational like them.

3. Defence of cyber-bullied students (18.75%)

Posts under this category are mostly sentiments against cyber-bullying and defence in behalf of those who are bullied online. Within this category, defence for the student who was labelled by bashers as “arrogant” and “disrespectful” was most salient. An example of a post defending the said student is: “A student persistently asked a presidential candidate to explain his budget priorities. I don’t see the problem.” For posters such as the one quoted above, it is only natural for students to ask Duterte about his plans such as his budget priorities since he is running for president.

4. Naïve Duterte Supporters (18.75%)

Posts under this category are mostly from those internal to the UP system. Most sentiments under this category describe how unknowledgeable or inexperienced the critiques of UPLB are since they are expecting UP constituents to be lenient and kind to Duterte because he is Duterte. Some posts cited how Jejomar Binay (presidentiable running under the United Nationalist Alliance) was treated unsympathetically when he visited UPLB, hence Duterte and his supporters are naïve to expect that UPLB will treat him nicely: “To be honest #BinayVisitsUPLB has more “rude” students per se. So are we really expecting #DuterteVisitsUPLB will have screaming fans all over him for support? Naïve!”

5. Contesting the framing of reality: Duterte Supporters as “bastos” [ill-mannered] (12.5%)

UPLB constituents were labelled as “arrogant” and “ill-mannered” by Duterte supporters. However, posts under this category beg otherwise such as, “To the media who sensationalized #DuterteVisitsUPLB thank you. To all those who generalized every UP student as rude thank you. To all those who trolled/cyberbullied/threatened our fellow UP student from the Thursday forum thank you. We now conclude that you people are the real “bastos” and “walang modo.” A reason for the poster to label the media as ill-mannered could be rooted from the fact that several news groups released incorrect updates (intentionally or unintentionally) regarding that event which made the forum more controversial and the Filipino people more confused; this made the event more sensational. The poster also labeled those who generalized UP students as rude and those who trolled, threatened, or cyberbullied other UP students as the ones who are truly ill-mannered. The poster contested the framing that UP students are ill-mannered by citing the ill-

mannered conduct of Duterte supporters in treating UP students online.

D. Negative UPLB

Another observation is that in the proportion of posts bearing #DuterteVisitsUPLB with UPLB as the subject, the number of posts which depict UPLB in a negative light outnumber those which depict UPLB in a positive light.

1. Moral deficiency (45.8%)

Several posters under this category urged UPLB to discipline its students by adding Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC) in its curriculum such as, *“Walang modo...nakakahiya naman sa nagpalaki sau... ughhh UPLB pakisali sa curriculum ninyo ang GMRC”*. The said post also mentions *“walang modo...nakakahiya naman sa nagpalaki sau”*[no respect... this is a disgrace to the one who took care of him as a child] could mean that the student should be ashamed of his parents for being ill-mannered given that traditionally for most families in the Philippines, it is the parents responsibility to ensure that their children will be well-mannered. Other posts under this category advised UPLB to discipline the *“arrogant”* student or else they will ensure that he will be disciplined. An example of such post is: *“UPLB DISIPLINAHIN NIYO YUNG ISANG ESTUDYANTE DIYAN. WALANG MODO! Makapambastos siya parang tambay lang ang kinakausap ah. Mayor naming yun. Disiplinahin niyo yun UPLB kung ayaw niyo kami mismo ang didisiplina nun.”* [UPLB discipline your student, he has no respect! He disrespects as if he is talking to a bystander; he’s our Mayor! Discipline him UPLB if you do not want us to do the disciplining for you.]. The poster is also angered by the fact that the student acted rudely to Duterte, his mayor.

2. Insults, slurs, and accusations (16.79%)

Posts under this category are insults, slurs, and accusations directed to the student who asked Duterte during the forum, the event organizers, and/or UPLB in general. An example of slurs directed to the student is *“humingi na ba ng tawad ang putanginang yan”* [has this son of a bitch asked for forgiveness already?]. The poster demands the student to give an apology probably to Duterte for asking a question in an *“arrogant”* manner. An example of an accusation directed to the student is *“bayaran naman yan ng dilaw”*[paid by the yellows]. The said post can be interpreted as the student acted *“arrogantly”* while

asking Duterte during the question and answer because he was paid by the *“yellows”* to do so. Yellow in this context pertains to the Liberal Party, the current administration, and/or the standard bearer of the Liberal Party, Mar Roxas.

3. Sanctions (15.27%)

Many Duterte supporters demanded for UPLB to punish the student who *“arrogantly”* asked Duterte during the question and answer portion. An example of such posts is: *“Tangalan ng scholarship”* [remove his scholarship]. A few even threatened UPLB that if they fail to remove the student from the university and to apologize to all Duterte supporters, they will stand against the university as well: *“Yan ang dapat hingin natin mga ka duterte!kung di nila sipain sa skul yan at mag apologies sa daang libong member ng pro duterte mag ingay tayo laban sa skul nila!”* [This is what we must clamor for, fellow supporters of Duterte! If they (UPLB) won’t kick out the student and apologize to the thousands of pro-Duterte, we must make noise against the school!]. Other posts classified under this category threatens the life of the student such as *“hahaha patayin pre”* [hahaha kill him] and *“Ano name niya pls inuulan na yun ng bala”* [what is his name please, rain bullets on him].

4. Anger and/or disappointment (12.21%)

Some Duterte supporters expressed their anger and/or disappointment to the student for being affiliated with UPLB, one of the most esteemed universities in the Philippines, while others were angered and/or disappointed with UPLB for having an *“arrogant”* student. *“Nawala tuloy ang mataas na pagtingin sa UP”* [we have lost our high respect for UP] is an example of a post expressing disappointment and lost of confidence to the university.

5. Attacks against the university (7.63%)

Given that UPLB hosted the forum and given the fact that the student being attacked by Duterte supporters is affiliated with UPLB, many directed their attacks to the university as well. Some posters began playing with the acronym of the university. Examples of such posts are: *“UPLB – UP Los Bastos”* and *“UPLB ka ba? Uneducated Persons na Laging Bastos?”* [Are you from UPLB? Uneducated Persons who are always disrespectful]. Others attacked the UP system in general by changing the lyrics of its university cheer: *“U ni ber si dad na wa lang mo do!”* there were also a few others who expressed that

other universities are better than UP: *“Mabuti pa ang di taga-UP” [those who are not from UP are better].* The said post could also serve as an attack to the *“UP and others”* claim of the university.

6. Wasted tax money (6.11%)

Since UPLB is a state university, many Duterte supporters claimed that the university is wasting their taxes by producing ill-mannered students. *“UP ADMIN ALISIN NIYO SA SCHOLAR ANG MGA BASTOS NA STUDENT WAG NIYO SAYANGIN ANG PERA NAMING MGA TAX PAYER MGA WALANG HIYA KAYO!” [UP admin, take away the scholarship of this rude student stop wasting our tax money you have no shame!]* is an example of a post under this category that urges UP administrators to remove all students who are ill-mannered since funding their education is a waste of his money, his taxes.

7. Criticisms against the organization of the event (3.05%)

A few posts under negative UPLB are addressed to the organizers of the event. Some were angered by the fact that they were not accommodated by the forum’s organizers and so they were unable to enter the event’s venue or that they were unable to secure seats. An example of such posts is: *“First come first served hindi reserved”*. Other posts under this category are addressed to the facilitators of the question and answer portion of the event: *“SINO SINO PO BA ANG NAGFACILITATE NG FORUM SA UPLB? HINDI PO BA NINYO KAYANG SALAIN ANG MGA PWEDENG MAGTANONG O KAYA ANG KANILANG MGA KATANUNGAN?” [Who were the ones who facilitated the forum at UPLB? Can’t you filter the people who can ask questions or perhaps filter their questions?].* The poster criticizes that fact that the questions or the persons throwing their questions during the forum were not pre-chosen or filtered by the organizers.

8. Activism and tactless behaviour (2.29%)

Posts under this category links activism to ill-mannered behavior such as *“Up at uplb jan nagsimula ang mga aktibista tinuturo ng mga teacher nila paano magbastos” [UP and UPLB are where activists come from. Their teachers teach them how to disrespect].* Since UP is known as a bastion of activism in the Philippines, many of Duterte’s supporters could have easily linked the *“arrogant”* behavior of the student to the behavior of activists during protests.

E. Positive Media

The least mentioned of the three major groups which became the subject of the posts bearing the hashtag is the institution of the media, often represented in the posts by the Rappler, GMA, and ABS-CBN groups.

1. This media is better than other media (50%)

Even before the controversial forum has transpired, several news groups are already being labelled by its critiques as biased. During the heat of the #DuterteVisitsUPLB, several news groups were accused as biased either because these groups are known to deliver false information in public or because certain candidates or political parties are associated with these news groups. *“Buti na lang dito ako nagbasa hindi dun sa kabila na biased” [it’s a good thing that I chose this one to read instead of the other ones, they are biased]* is an example of a post under this category which claims that a certain news group is biased.

2. Redemption (50%)

Rappler is a popular social news network in the Philippines. During the forum in UPLB, Rappler was one of the very few news groups that were given consent by the organizers to cover the entire event. However, the said news group later released a wrongly edited news clip of the event which then fuelled more disagreements online. Soon, Rappler deleted the video and issued an apology, although this apology was only dedicated to the person involved in the video. Still, this humble act of Rappler made some netizens at ease.

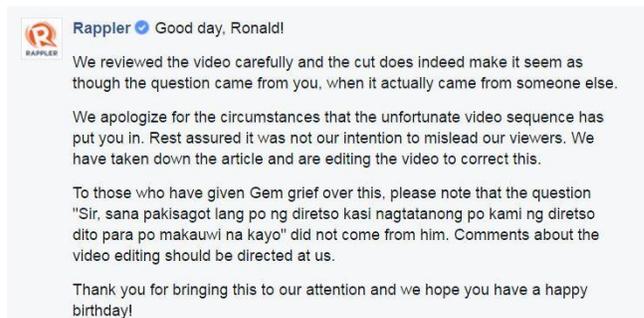


Fig. 4. Screenshot image of Rappler’s message of apology to the then UPLB USC Chairperson [36]

F. Negative Media

Similar to UPLB which became the subject of more negative instead of positive sentiments, different media groups were criticized in some of the posts

bearing the hashtag. A notable observation is that while the Negative UPLB general theme was derived mostly from Facebook users who appear to be supporters of Duterte, the media became the recipient of negative sentiments of both the Pro-Duterte and Pro-UPLB groups.

1. *Sensationalist and irresponsible journalism (37.50%)*

Posts under this category are mostly criticisms of the sensationalist and irresponsible journalism of some social news groups that made the event viral online. Other posters under this category expressed their sympathy to the student/s who were victim/s of false information proliferated by some social news groups: *“Today’s viral Duterte news is about the so-called ‘arrogance’ of one UPLB student...this guy does not deserve the hate caused by sensationalism and irresponsible journalism.”* A poster urged some social news groups to issue a public apology to the concerned student: *“Yan kasi!!! Masabi lang nakatrending arya ng arya kawawa naman yung bata walang kamalay-malay pinapatay na sa mura. Hmp! Etchosero at etchosera...be responsible and you owe the kid a public apology.”* [Just so they (media) can be trending they just do what they want, poor innocent child (UPLB student) being bombarded by cuss words.]

2. *Lack of credibility (25%)*

Under this category, all posts are addressed to specific social news group. The said group released an edited video of the question and answer portion of the forum which became the source of false information. The said news group had issues on proliferating false information even before the forum has transpired. Hence some posts under this category such as, *“Ewan ko sayo Rappler. Lagi ka na lang may issue sa kredibilidad mo. Dapat kinakasuhan ka na.”* [I’m getting tired of you, Rappler. You always have issues with credibility. It’s high time that somebody files a legal complaint against you] expresses that the poster has already given up on expecting trustworthiness out of the said social news group. The poster even expresses that the said news group should already be legally responsible for its actions.

3. *Biased (20.83%)*

Two popular social news groups were labelled as biased by netizens that was captured by the #DuterteVisitsUPLB. The said social news groups were already labelled as biased even before the

Duterte vs UPLB issue; however, the said issue added fuel to the fire. Examples of comments under this category are: *“Ito po ang tanong ko sa inyo Rappler...Kahit po ba sa pictures na ipinopost ninyo, namimili din kayo ng ilalagay?”* [My question is this, Rappler, why is it that even in the pictures you post, you are choosing what should be shown?] and *“Gusto ko sana itanong kung bakit biased ang Rappler at Abscbn?”* [I would like to ask why Rappler and ABS-CBN are biased?]. The said social news groups are accused by Duterte supporters to be biased on the Liberal Party, the administration, and to Mar Roxas. Their accusations have ascended to a level where they already make use of *“ABiaSCBN”* and *“NA-RAPPLER”* [Rappler-ed] to describe something that is biased or someone who is victimized by false information.

4. *Insensitivity (8.33%)*

Some netizens reacted negatively upon knowing that the only course of action a particular social news group has given to the student who was victimized by their mistake was a simple apology. In the apology that the said news group has issued to the student, the group even had the fortitude to greet the student a happy birthday. Many netizens reacted violently due to the said news group’s insensitivity. Examples of such posts are: *“After receiving death threats on his birthday, bashed at social media, sorry lang?”* and *“Kaloka, babati pa hutaena”* [crazy, they even greeted him, son of a bitch].

5. *Lack of accountability (8.33%)*

Posters under this category urged social news groups in the Philippines to be legally responsible to all their actions. An example of such post is: *“Nako sa US to at sa iba pang first world country hindi enough yang sorry may danyos yan. Paano yung trauma at psychological effect at emotional effect niyan sa kanya. Death threats and natanggap dahil sa maling pagbalita tapos sorry lang?...”* [If this was in the US or other first world countries, a sorry is not enough. They should pay for damages. What if the student received trauma or psychological effect and emotional effect? He received death threats because of their faulty reporting and all they have to say is sorry?]. The said post can be interpreted as the poster expressing how fortunate social news groups are in the Philippines since they are not given legal sanctions unlike news groups in the US where giving an apology is not enough. However, although the Philippines is lenient to social news groups, they

should still be held accountable. The poster cited the psychological and emotional damages the mistake of a specific social news group has brought to the student involved and yet the only action they have given is issuing an apology.

SUMMARY AND OBSERVATIONS

What social reality would be formed from the perspective of a social media user who looks at #DuterteVisitsUPLB? Facebook posts associated with the hashtag have mixed sentiments as shown by the different themes of negative and positive reactions in this study. Based on the sentiments of the posts, a constructed reality can be made. This constructed reality will be a product of prior knowledge, if available, and the posts associated with the official hashtag consumed by the social media user.

The plethora of themes explored in this study is indicative of the rich nuances of the socially constructed reality that can be formed when looking at the wealth of posts bearing #DuterteVisitsUPLB, albeit the complexity is richer when it comes to Duterte than the perceived player from the other side of the fence, UPLB and its constituents. From what can be gleaned in the study, two major socially-constructed realities are competing as the “true” version of events that transpired when Duterte visited UPLB. In the more obscure side is the social reality that depicts Duterte as a politician who willfully disregards the law in favor of a long history of extra-judicial killings. This politician is characterized by his foul mouth, predisposition for unrealized tough talk, and connivance with rebels. He is also supported by an irrational mob of rude supporters who expect special treatment to the point of naivete.

The more salient socially constructed reality, however, is a persona that goes by the name of Rodrigo “Digong” Duterte, a man for the people, from the people, and well-loved by the people with the passion to serve the country and prioritize the good of the people over his own interests as proven by his record of public service in Davao. This man is the next president of the country, and his ascension to the presidency is brought about by the masses rather than rich elites in the country. He alone has the political will and cunning to give the country a bright future and save the country from criminals even at the cost of killing them. The only stain in this man’s character is his predisposition for vulgar words and inconsistencies. During an event in UPLB, this champion of the masses arrived but was met with the rudeness of the students of the university. In his

defense, his supporters rose up against the rude and arrogant UPLB students. Yet, in his benevolence, Duterte forgave the students of UPLB.

The researchers also made other notable observations from their experience of analyzing the Facebook posts bearing the hashtag. These are the following:

1. The posts associated with the official hashtag do not necessarily have any relation to the event itself. The hashtag was used beyond its original purpose.

It was observed repeatedly by the researchers that several posts that bore the #DuterteVisitsUPLB hashtag had no relation to the event itself. Rather, the hashtag was utilized for some parties to ride on the popularity of the hashtag in order to gain more viewership for their content. These unrelated posts came in the form of campaign advertisements and, in some instances, commercial advertisements that had nothing to do whatsoever with the event. In this respect, the hashtag functioned in the same way as television shows – a way to attract an audience whom they will subsequently expose to their differing, unrelated, agenda.

2. Very limited fruitful discourse derived from the publicly available posts.

It was also noticeable in the posts analyzed in the study that there is less than a handful of discourse that transpired in the threads that bore the hashtag. Most of the posts associated with the hashtag under study were either re-shares or copy-pasted material written by other people or a direct reaction to the title or content of an article pertaining to the event. There was limited two-way discussion amongst the users who employed the hashtag. In a sense, the threads bearing the hashtags became nothing more than a collection of one-way responses to the issue without any attempt to engage other users using the hash tag in any fruitful discourse.

3. Substantial number of posts are re-shares of the content and sentiment of others.

Aside from the limited discourse, it was also observed that several posts bearing the hashtag offered no new insight or opinions regarding the event but are rather merely re-shares of the links to articles pertaining to the issue or copy-pasted entries on how one should feel about the issue. It is unclear whether this is a manifestation of group polarization – hence the lack of perceived need to offer new input on the issue and just copy-paste a pre-constructed write-up on the matter, or a manifestation instead of non-

human users and paid propagandists being utilized to take advantage of the trending issue for political mileage as has been repeatedly contended in hindsight months after the event [37]-[47].

It must be noted at this point that the scope of this study merely attempted to understand the possible socially-constructed reality that may be formed on the basis of the Facebook posts bearing the #DuterteVisitsUPLB hashtag. It is beyond the scope of this study to determine the different camps, their identities, motivations, and structures, who might be actively trying to create this sense of social reality. The aforementioned elements in the process of the social construction of reality must be given emphasis on future studies, especially in light of allegations that this sense of reality is one that was manufactured by fake accounts with ill intent [48].

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This study had to contend with a number of limitations during the conduct of the study. First, it is limited to the analysis of publicly viewable posts bearing the hashtag in question. Second, the researchers harvested the data from Facebook several months after the conclusion of the event. The rationale behind this decision was to ensure that there would be no new entries bearing the hashtag anymore when the data are being harvested. However, it is also possible that from the time of the event to the time when the data were harvested, some posts bearing the hashtag may have been deleted. This is particularly possible when it comes to highly emotive and colorful messages – the Facebook users may have deleted such posts after the initial excitement of the moment in order to manage their online self-presentation. Future studies with similar intent should take note of these limitations and develop contingency measures to avoid the same pitfalls.

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