Toppling the Ivory Tower:
Coded Anti-intellectualism in American Political Discourse

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Abstract

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Anti-intellectualism has a long history in U.S. public debate, and in the 21st century it is not uncommon for politicians to emphasize themes of anti-intellectualism in their public communications. This study proposes a new approach to understanding how anti-intellectualism is communicated in the political arena, and why it matters. Specifically, this study conducted both content analysis and rhetorical analysis to examine discourse emphasizing intellectualism in four U.S. Senate races in 2012 in Massachusetts, New Mexico, North Dakota, and Missouri. Findings show that coded anti-intellectual communications span party and gender lines.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Politicians in America have a complicated relationship with intellect, at least when speaking to the public. Many politicians are highly educated, but they nonetheless sometimes are critical of the pursuit of formal intelligence. Some are explicitly hostile: in 2012, Republican Party presidential candidate and former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum called President Barack Obama "a snob" for wanting "everyone to go to college" (in Sonmez, 2012). Other political leaders are subtly critical. For example, some crack jokes—occasionally at their own expense—about intellectual prowess. Former President George W. Bush, while delivering the 2001 commencement address at his alma mater Yale University, said, "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" (Bush, 2001). Other politicians emphasize alternatives, such as folk wisdom, to formal education or intellect. In his 1992 speech accepting the Democratic Party's presidential nomination, Bill Clinton (1992) declared:

> My grandfather just had a high school education—a grade school education—but 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.

Finally, some politicians paint opponents as out-of-touch ivory-tower denizens. On the 2012 presidential campaign trail, Republican presidential hopeful Mitt Romney said, "We have a president, who I think is a nice guy, but he spent too much time at Harvard" (in Seitz-Wald,

2012). The forms of distancing differ, but American politicians rarely embrace the pursuit of formal intellect or higher education.

How politicians communicate about any important matter is significant because these leaders are in position to shape public views of issues and ideas. Communication, as understood by Dewey (1958) and Carey (1992), has two primary purposes: one is transmission, to send or receive messages between people over distance with a goal of controlling impressions; a second is ritual, in which acts of speaking, writing, and listening bring individuals into a common culture of shared meanings. Both purposes are at work in the public communications of leading U.S. political actors, who promulgate new ideas *and* foster communal understanding when they communicate in stump speeches, advertising, media essays, and, increasingly, via Websites and on social media. In all cases, communication matters. As Rodgers (1987) puts it, words "inspire, persuade, enrage, mobilize With words minds are changed, votes acquired, enemies labeled, alliances secured, unpopular programs made palatable … Through words some of the most potent forces of modern politics are wheeled into motion" (p. 4). While the means and methods vary over time and contexts, when politicians communicate with the public a shared culture is both the foundation and the goal. Communications, particularly public ones by leaders, are an important step in how we define society.

In this research, I am interested in the ways in which politicians criticize the formal pursuit of intellect. Research has been conducted on "anti-intellectualism" (e.g. Hofstadter, 1963; Lim, 2008; Shogan, 2007), but relatively little scholarship has examined how differing strands of this ideology manifest in political discourse. I am interested in five potential forms of anti-intellectualism in contemporary U.S. political discourse: outright denigration, sharp humor, embracing alternatives, intellectual labeling, and elite symbolization. Outright denigration is

explicit criticism of intellect or intellectualism. In contrast, sharp humor, embracing alternatives, intellectual labeling, and elite symbolization *implicitly* suggest that intellect is over-rated: as something to not take seriously, that can be replaced, to view with suspicion, or as indicative of elitism. Outright denigration is explicitly critical of intellect, but the latter four—sharp humor, embracing alternatives, intellectual labeling and elite symbolization—are more subtle; the hostility towards intellect communicated in these forms is implied, not stated, an approach that offers rhetorical and political value. That said, each form of anti-intellectualism creates discursive distance between politicians and intellectualism, and suggests citizens should act in the same way. I seek to understand how candidates in campaigns for higher office employ such communications—and in so doing, both encourage certain conceptions of intellect and seek political gain.

With this in mind, I examined four U.S. Senate campaigns in the 2012 election. The first was in Massachusetts, between incumbent Republican Senator Scott Brown and Democrat Elizabeth Warren; the second was between Democratic incumbent Claire McCaskill and Republican Todd Akin in Missouri; the third was between Democrat Martin Heinrich and Republican Heather Wilson for an open seat in New Mexico, and the fourth was between Democrat Heidi Heitkamp and Republican Rick Berg for an open seat in North Dakota. In each campaign, I analyzed multiple candidate debates to see if these potential sub-themes of anti-intellectualism were present. It turns out that outright anti-intellectualism in such venues was absent, but that implicit anti-intellectualism was employed by politicians to critique opponents while seeking to avoid the intellectual spotlight themselves.

Conceptual Framework

In his canonical work *Anti-intellectualism in American Life*, Richard Hofstadter (1963) initiated a dialogue about anti-intellectualism in the United States that has resonated for half a century. He wrote that his work was "conceived in response to the political and intellectual conditions of the 1950s" (p. 3), an era in which the value of intellect was under public scrutiny. In that decade, two presidential campaigns between Dwight Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson in 1952 and 1956 pitted in competition a military hero and a cerebral governor. Stevenson called for "eggheads of the world to unite" at a press conference and claimed the mantle of intellectualism, while Eisenhower—even though he had served as president of Columbia University—crafted a very different self-image more in line with average Americans. At a 1954 press conference, Eisenhower defined an intellectual as "a man who takes more words than necessary to tell more than he knows" (in Shogan, 2007, p. 297). This decade saw the spread of McCarthy-era distrust of intellectualism, targeting many academics, politicians, and media (Hofstadter, 1963). The shock of Sputnik (in 1957), signaling potential Russian dominance in space, refocused attention towards building American scientific advancements, but did not "disperse anti-intellectualism as a force in American life" (Hofstadter, 1963, pg. 5). It was a decade in which intellectualism and elite education were on trial, politically and nationally.

To Hofstadter, anti-intellectualism was inherently hostile. He defined the concept as "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" (Hofstadter, 1963, p. 7). He argued that hostility to intellect was a political force in America in the 1950s and early 1960s for three reasons: the rise of the conservative right, a decline in the quality of public education, and an increasing disengagement among politicians from intellect. In particular, Hofstadter

suggested that conservative Protestant evangelicalism provided a well of cultural and political morality that was grounded in anti-intellectual sentiment. Many scholars have adopted Hofstadter's definition of anti-intellectualism (an early example was White, 1962; see also Postman, 2006; Marsden, 2006), but surprisingly little research has sought to further develop the concept's manifestation in U.S. politics. Most contemporary anti-intellectualism scholarship focuses on perceived declines in the U.S. public education system; Howley, Howley and Pendarvis (1995), for example, argue that schools have moved away from nurturing intellectual growth and curiosity and toward an economy-driven goal of building a workforce. For scholars in this body of research, the education system has embraced rejection of intellect in favor of advancing worker training (Claussen, 2004; Howley, Howley & Pendarvis, 1995; Brameld, 1955; Jones, 1996). My research is oriented within political communication, and seeks to expand the concept of anti-intellectualism in American politics.

Within communication scholarship, work on anti-intellectualism has tended to focus primarily on the *form* of discourse. Lim (2002; 2008), for example, examined how politicians speak: word choices, syntactic complexity, word length, and sentence length. He claimed that the modern presidency is marked by a sharp decline in complicated discourse, especially logical argument, which he measured by applying the Flesch readability scale to presidential rhetoric. This reduction in complexity is obvious at a glance. For example, Lim draws a comparison between William Henry Harrison (who served, briefly, in 1841) and George H. W. Bush. Harrison, in his inaugural address, likened liberty to "the sovereign balm for every injury which our institutions may receive." In his inaugural address in 1989, George H. W. Bush used simpler language: "Freedom is like a beautiful kite that can go higher and higher with the breeze." Lim showed that simplicity in presidential rhetoric has increased over time, and he claimed,

"[P]residents have taken the rhetorical path of least resistance by serving up simplistic sentences to citizens" (p. 54). For Lim (2002), a presidency of increasingly simplistic discourse is a presidency of increasing anti-intellectualism.

My work focuses primarily on the *content* of anti-intellectualism discourse—on what themes are present in anti-intellectual communications. I wish to suggest that we can gain further insight about the cultural presence and import of anti-intellectualism by looking at the meanings in politicians' communications, rather than just examining the complexity of word choices. In communication, content is the term ascribed to the shared cultural meanings of the messages. Such meanings are always contested and not fully shared or mutually interpreted, of course, but it is nonetheless the case that the content of a message is widely understood and received in many instances. With this in mind, I contend that what is said in specific regard to formal intellect and education—either distinctly about it or in reference—is highly important, particularly when the speakers are leading political figures and capture the attention of hundreds, thousands, even millions of people. Their words, and how they deliver those words (directly, indirectly, through humor, through labels) matter, in both explicit and implicit ways. For example, for political leaders to employ simple words, as Lim has identified, is a noteworthy thing; for these same individuals to declare or even subtly suggest that simple is right, better, more pure, more American is—following in the Hofstadter vision—hostile to the western ideal of knowledge and learning. Form and content are related, yet are distinct pieces of an anti-intellectual outlook. I suggest that the content of anti-intellectualism manifests in five ways in contemporary U.S. political discourse.

First is *outright denigration*. This discourse communicates overt, unapologetic disparagement of, and distain toward, formal intellect and intellectualism. For example, Ronald

Reagan when President called university professors "self-indulgent snobs ... contemptuous of middle class values" (in Dalleck, 1999, p. 46). There is nothing subtle about these words: Reagan characterized intellect, intellectuals, and, more broadly, those in higher education as selfish, unworthy, perhaps even fundamentally flawed or un-American. Beyond that, the form of this delivery practically spits hostility—the sibilant alliteration exudes antagonism. Most importantly for this research, Reagan's words were public communications, not merely thoughts or feelings held by the nation's leader. This disparagement of intellect and the life of the mind became manifest through his public discourse. These public communications were unequivocal, straight-to-the-character criticisms without any nuance, and the words were delivered in (and to) the public arena. Intellectualism in this moment was not merely an approach to life that citizens could choose or not, without moral evaluation; instead it was presented by the nation's leader as despicable and alien, an outcome and worldview to be avoided at all costs.

Most anti-intellectual rhetoric is not so outright, however. Politicians also sometimes display anti-intellectualism in more subtle ways, either unintentionally or intentionally, providing in function what scholars have called "coded" discourse (Mendelberg, 2001). Coded messages are communications that convey sub-texts of meaning for those who are inclined to hear such meaning, but can be denied by the speaker if politically expedient[1]. For example, in the 1988 presidential election, George H. W. Bush identified his opponent, Michael Dukakis, with furloughed murderer Willie Horton, who was African American. Horton's race was not directly mentioned, but he was repeatedly shown in menacing photos. Bush's connection of Dukakis and

[1] There is also something known as "multivocal communication." Albertson (2014), writing about communications and religion, writes that "multivocal communication…might be particularly effective because it targets those predisposed to respond favorably to the message and goes over the heads of those who might be turned off by it." (p. 2). However, Albertson distinguishes between multivocal communication and coded communication by stating, "coded appeals are those that make deniable references while multivocal appeals need not be deniable" (p. 4). That is, multivocal appeals have multiple meanings, like coded communications, but are not necessarily potentially politically problematic if rendered explicit, and thus do not need to be denied.

Horton both resonated generally as it emphasized a decision for which Dukakis was to blame, and subtly carried racialized meaning (Mendelberg, 2001). But because race was not overtly discussed, the racialized content was implicit; whether it was intentional was a hotly debated matter in the campaign and in years since. Scholars have also examined implicit messages in political discourse about religion (Albertson, 2006), immigration (Domke, McCoy and Torres, 1999) and gender (Anderson, 2002; Winter, 2010). In the context of anti-intellectualism, politicians may unintentionally or intentionally offer implicit anti-intellectual emphases. Mendelberg (2001), in focusing on racial communications, put it this way: "Implicit racial appeals convey the same message as explicit racial appeals, but they replace the racial nouns and adjectives with more oblique references to race" (p. 9). A similar effort, I suggest, occurs with anti-intellectualism. The general message remains of hostility, but the explicit content of the communication is replaced by something subtler. I identified sub-types of anti-intellectualism by examining anecdotal evidence of this discourse from other scholars (notably Gitlin, 2000; Shogan, 2007), as well as campaign debates to determine how politicians invoked anti-intellectualism. Within discourse previously identified by scholars as "anti-intellectual," a more complicated range of emphases exist. Based on this indicative approach, I propose four such types of implicit anti-intellectualism in U.S. politics.

One subtle form of anti-intellectualism content potentially common in today's U.S. politics, I suggest, is *sharp humor*. This is anti-intellectual sentiment communicated through humor, sometimes self-deprecatingly, and lacks the overt contempt outright denigration carries. In this approach, the words still disparage intellect, but that viewpoint is less confrontational because the employment of humor helps to endear the speaker to audiences. Within organizational management research, scholars have examined the many uses and outcomes of

humor (e.g. Fine & Soucey, 2005; Meyer, 1997; Romero & Cruthirds, 2006). Humor perhaps works even better in politics because the speaker wants to deliver a critique in a public context but yet strongly seeks to avoid backlash or fallout. For example, research shows that humor supports efforts to build group cohesion and enhance communication (Meyer, 1997), an obvious benefit to a political candidate trying to draw voters into a coalition. With humor, a leader can simultaneously undermine an external threat by making fun of it—in this case, formal intellect or an obviously intellectual opponent—and elevate himself or herself above the threat, because he or she is seen as being more clever (Henman, 2001). Others with the same worldview are invited to share in the joke, enabling politicians to strengthen bonds with supporters. This subtle mockery has potential benefits, therefore, by creating a strong sense of insiders and outsiders through implicit anti-intellectual language.

This implicit anti-intellectualism contains hostility towards intellect, but the presentation is displayed through different means than open antagonism. Much of George W. Bush's anti-intellectual rhetoric—a common trope in his presidency and in years since—fits in this category of sharp, often self-deprecating, humor. For example, here's a typical Bush statement, delivered while a supportive policy expert joined him onstage at multiple campaign events in 2004 and regularly greeted with laughs: "I'm a C-student. He's the Ph.D. He's the adviser. I'm the President. What does that tell you?" (in Leibovich, 2005). He employed nearly identical language when publicly joined by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice: "When I'm with Condi I say, she's the Ph.D. and I'm the C student, and just look at who's the President and who's the adviser" (in Benen, 2011). This comment was certainly not outright malicious—and in one instance was "targeted" at a friend—but it critiqued intellect, suggested some humility by Bush, and likely went some distance to create a bond between him and supporters, who might see a

humble-yet-confident leader in the communications. In enveloping disdain towards intellectualism with sharp humor, politicians display scorn with a subtlety that encourages anti-intellectualism but does so in a potentially more likeable way.

A second implicit type of communication of interest is *exalting alternatives* to intellect by directly trumpeting non-traditional forms of education or learning as superior. Politicians in their public communications embrace alternatives to intellectualism to shape their image, to influence the way they are seen by voters, to suggest that the politicians themselves—despite commonly having attended prestigious academic institutions—are everyday, lunch-pail Americans. This is all part of what scholars call "personal branding" by politicians. Jamieson (1996) shows that politicians often leave aside policy and issue questions to focus on creating personal brands—a set of feelings and attributes—with which voters want to be associated (see Lilleker, 2006). For a corporation or non-profit, a distinct branding focus might emphasize reliability and good community citizenship; for politicians, it could be any number of positive qualities including honesty, trustworthiness, or strength (Corner, 2003). For politicians who wish to avoid or pre-empt a cultural stigma of intellectualism, they may cast themselves as street smart rather than book smart, as having learned more outside of schools than in them. This may include highlighting alternative information sources to seem more connected to voters. In short, U.S. politicians may choose to emphasize other, not-remotely-formal learning approaches in their rational development and information sources to distance themselves from intellectualism as a quality.

History shows many U.S. politicians have crafted anti-intellectual alternatives to traditional education. In his 2007 presidential announcement speech, Barack Obama introduced himself to Americans as a possible leader. In doing so, he downplayed his elite, private school

education and highlighted everyday experiences. Speaking of his work as a community organizer in Chicago, he said, "It was in these neighborhoods that I received the best education I ever had, and where I learned the true meaning of my Christian faith." Obama went on to say, "I became a civil rights lawyer, and taught constitutional law, and after a time, I came to understand that our cherished rights of liberty and equality depend on the active participation of an awakened electorate." With these words, Obama skimmed past his years at Columbia University and Harvard Law School, and emphasized the centrality of his community work to his understanding of liberty and equality over his legal training and teaching. Obama's message was that it was not his formal education that taught him the lessons he learned about America, but other experiences; he explicitly stated the "best education I ever had" was in neighborhoods, not his Ivy League schooling. This was an emphasis on alternatives.

The third and fourth types of implicit anti-intellectual rhetoric that I suggest are present are discursively similar. *Intellectual labeling* and *elite symbolization* are distinctive means of connecting opponents to formal or elite education, and in so doing suggesting the opponent is out of touch with "regular" Americans. Popkin's (1992; 1996) work shows that voters make inferences about candidates' personalities based on what they see and read. If voters are told that a candidate is an intellectual or has pursued elite education, they may then become likely to understand that candidate as someone associated with intellectualism. This connection may be made by discursively linking the opponent to elite symbols. Elite symbols are often specific institutions (or related metaphors) that represent intellectualism or stand for elitism in the abstract. In his study of elites, Mills (1956) finds attending an elite school is "the most important agency for transmitting the traditions of the upper social classes, and regulating the admission of new wealth" (p. 64-65). In American society, some institutions are so heavily symbolic that they

come to have deep meaning. In similar ways, aligning an opponent with intellectual values saddles him or her with a potentially negative association that can be difficult to shed. Intellectually labeling an opponent and tying an opponent to elite symbols are discursively related forms of making an opponent seem out of touch.

Frequently, educational elitism and intellectualism are tied together. For example, during the 2004 presidential campaign, the ultra-conservative Club for Growth placed an advertisement in Iowa attacking Democratic candidate Howard Dean as a "tax-hiking, government-expanding, latte-drinking, sushi-eating, Volvo-driving, *New York Times*-reading, body-piercing, Hollywood-loving, left-wing freak show" (in Cowie, 2004). The ad creators associated Dean, governor of northeastern and liberal state Vermont, with intellectual activities and specific elite symbols that extended beyond intellect to a scheme of privileged activities and preferences. This implicit messaging is difficult to counter directly. Similarly, connecting an opponent to an elite symbol may emphasize that opponent's lack of common touch. Politicians use these elite intellectual symbols for deeper meaning. While campaigning for president in 2011, Mitt Romney said, "I didn't learn about the economy just reading about it or hearing about it at the faculty lounge at Harvard or debating it in Congress" (in Amira, 2012). The line was so potent that he revisited it a few months later, stating at a Veterans of Foreign Wars convention, "That may be what they think in the Harvard faculty lounge, but it's not what they know on the battlefield!" (in Sarlin, 2011). Notably, Romney has significant personal ties to the school: he received two degrees there, and three of his sons attended Harvard Business School. But he nonetheless recognized that Harvard occupies a unique symbolic space in how Americans understand the educational pursuit of intellect. By drawing on that symbolic understanding, he attempted to set himself up

on contrast. Again, like intellectual labeling of others, the implicit meaning of elite intellectual symbols is difficult to counter directly, giving additional power to the latent message.

With these typologies I seek to offer an important conceptual development to anti-intellectualism—a long running, deeply embedded ideology in American politics. Politicians work hard to distance themselves from intellectualism, or to attach it to opponents. In all cases, there is antagonism toward intellect, intellectualism, and some types of formal education. In my framework, formal education and intellectualism are related yet distinct concepts. I see intellectualism as an ideology in which a life of the mind (intellect) is valued, embraced, indeed pursued. In contrast, I see education as a formal system of learning that is more concrete. For the majority of the U.S. population, attending school is not a choice. It is not until higher education—baccalaureate, advanced or professional degrees—that a student actively chooses to participate. At these more advanced levels of education, education and an embrace of intellect begin to overlap. It is likely, therefore, that critiques of intellectualism will overlap with statements about higher education, but not necessarily all education. This seems especially likely for higher education institutions that are seen as representing the most extravagant—financially and mentally—of intellect. By speaking with outright denigration of intellect, a politician displays explicit contempt for the values associated with intellect, and elite educational pursuit of those values. Other politicians may be subtler, either by chance or because they seek to intentionally offer approaches that help them without hurting their brands. Some politicians may suggest disdain with sharp humor, others may embrace alternative experiences as powerful learning moments, and others may seek to lambaste opponents with an intellectualizing labeling or via elite symbolization. All of these denigrate and diminish intellect, but it is plausible that

they might be differentially present and distinctly employed in U.S. politics. These are the focus of my research.

Chapter Two

Research Design

To explore how politicians might emphasize these strands of anti-intellectualism, I analyzed candidate communications in debates from four U.S. Senate campaigns in 2012. In this chapter, I begin with an overview of the selection of these races, and why I focused on debates. I then describe why I employed both content analysis and rhetorical analysis to examine these communications.

Selection of Senate Campaigns

This study examines whether, and if so how, politicians employ anti-intellectual discourse during campaigns. I analyzed public communications in four U.S. Senate general election campaigns in 2012: the Massachusetts contest, pitting Democrat Elizabeth Warren against Republican incumbent Scott Brown; the Missouri Senate contest pitting Democratic incumbent Claire McCaskill against Republican Todd Akin; the New Mexico contest for an open seat, pitting Democrat Martin Heinrich against Republican Heather Wilson; and the North Dakota contest for an open seat, pitting Democrat Heidi Heitkamp against Republican Rick Berg. Four rationales drove the choice of elections for this study: political party representations, candidate gender, level of campaign, and a state's educational attainment. I discuss these in the following paragraphs.

First, I wanted to account for the potential impacts of political ideology. In the words of Hofstadter (1963), "If there is anything that could be called an intellectual establishment in America, this establishment has been, though not profoundly radical (which would be unbecoming in an establishment), on the left of center. And it has drawn the continuing and implacable resentment of the right" (p. 39). In general in modern U.S. politics, those of

conservative ideology align with the Republican Party and those with liberal ideology align with the Democratic Party (see Pew Research Center, 2011; Gallup, 2012), and one way I sought to approximate political ideology, at least partially, was to examine communications of candidates of differing political parties. Shogan (2007) and Gitlin (2000) analyzed anti-intellectualism among Republican Party presidents—Dwight Eisenhower, Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush for the former, George W. Bush for the latter—and identified significant patterns of hostility. Lim (2002; 2008), in contrast, examined both Democrats and Republicans and found patterns that included presidents of both parties. In the same vein as Lim, I am interested in whether anti-intellectual discourse is employed by leading politicians in both major U.S. parties, and if so, what types. With this in mind, candidates from each major political party within selected election contexts were analyzed.

Second, it is plausible that the gender of candidates may matter in anti-intellectual political discourse. Research suggests that male and female candidates may communicate and campaign in different ways. Specifically, men tend to be seen as more aggressive, confident, and assertive, for example, and women are seen as displaying more warmth, compassion, and congeniality (Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Banwart, 2010; White, 2012; Meeks, 2013). Dow and Tonn (1993) see a "feminine" style as personal, likely to use anecdotes and examples as evidence and inductive reasoning, and likely to encourage identifications between a speaker and audience. Similarly, Meeks (2013) has suggested that men and women candidates may consciously adopt and implement gendered communication styles for political benefit. It seems possible, therefore, that women and men approach intellect in patterned ways, in general, and to be specific may communicate anti-intellectualism in distinct ways. For example, male candidates might communicate outright hostility given the more direct masculine style of

speaking, while female candidates may be more subtle by embracing alternatives through anecdotes, a common feature in feminized communication. With this in mind, I selected campaigns that had one man and one woman, with some variance in the partisan identities of those candidates.

Third, I am interested in how anti-intellectual discourse manifests in high-profile campaigns with national implications. By this I mean presidential, U.S. Senate, and U.S. House of Representatives races. Previous scholars have focused on presidents, and I hope to gain a broader picture of the nature of the political conversation by looking at congressional campaigns. Several conceptually relevant elements distinguish Senate and House campaigns. For one, there are fewer Senators, and their terms are three times longer than terms of House members, which makes the stakes higher. Second, Senators are elected on a statewide basis, which means that candidates must speak to a wider range of people than House candidates. It seems plausible that a range of discourses would be more likely in higher-stakes elections, and elections that contain multiple and diverse receptive audiences (see Mendelberg, 2001; Ceccarelli, 1998). These factors make it possible that if candidates see value in anti-intellectual messages, they will be likely to put it forward at some point publicly in a campaign. For these reasons, this study focuses on Senate races.

Lastly, the presence (or lack thereof) of anti-intellectualism in Senate campaigns may potentially be related to the education levels of citizens in a state. With this in mind, I took into account levels of educational attainment in states, drawing on 2009 U.S. Census Bureau data for people 25 years and older. I focused on bachelor degrees and advanced degrees (meaning any degree past the baccalaureate level, including professional degrees). For states that included (a) 2012 Senate elections with (b) one Democratic and one Republican candidate *and* (c) female and

male candidates, Massachusetts had the highest level of bachelor degree attainment, at 38% of adults, and the highest advanced degree attainment, just over 16%. North Dakota was at the other end of the spectrum, with 25% of adults holding bachelor degrees, and under 7% advanced degree attainment, the latter being the lowest in the nation. In a mixed middle ground were Missouri, with 25% bachelor degree attainment and 9% advanced degrees, and New Mexico, with 25% attainment of a bachelor degree and just over 10% attainment of advanced degrees. I also noticed the geographical distribution of these states in the Southwest, New England, upper Midwest, and lower plains. I do not claim there is regional representativeness among these states, but the varied locales offer potential insight into anti-intellectual discourse more broadly in American politics. Collectively these four criteria guided the selection of the campaigns.

Candidate debates

To examine whether and how 2012 U.S. Senate candidates emphasized anti-intellectualism, I focused on campaign debates, for four reasons: they are platforms for voter information; they are high-profile communication moments; debate texts offer fairly comparable communication contexts; and they offer a rare setting for candidates to interact directly. I begin by addressing debates as venues for information. Debates are learning moments for voters. For example, scholars find that debates convey important information about candidates. According to Chaffee (1978), the top three motivations cited by viewers for watching debates were a desire to learn about candidates' issue positions; to compare candidate personalities; and to gain information to make a voting decision. Voters are watching debates to learn about the candidates, and sometimes that exposure impacts voters' minds. Indeed, scholars have found that debate exposure influences viewer perceptions of candidate character or image traits (e.g. Benoit, Webber and Berman, 1998; Benoit et al. 2001; Benoit, McKinney & Stephenson, 2002).

Through debates, audiences learn not only what a candidate stands for, but also who that candidate is. The information conveyed is about both personality and issues, and is an important part of how voters make decisions.

Second, debates are major communication moments of the campaign. This is in part because debates reach larger audiences than any other campaign event (McKinney & Carlin, 2004) and in part because debates attract the greatest media coverage of any single campaign event (Kaid, McKinney, & Tedesco, 2000). The result is the communications that occur in debates continue to resonate in public attention long after they occur. Sheets et al. (2011), writing about presidential campaigns, stated that debates serve as "epicenters…surrounded by a whirlwind of news, commentary, and public attention" (p. 767). In the midst of the 24-hour news cycle, increased social media, and the explosion of special interest money in campaigns, debates remain critical opportunities for candidates to connect, without filters, with audiences. The combination of potency of message along with range of impact means that debates are crucial communicative moments in campaigns.

Third, debates are also valuable places of analysis because they follow proscribed formats that facilitate comparison. Debate formats vary, but within the formats there are predictable, specific styles of communication. In a town hall debate, for example, candidates are questioned directly by "citizen questioners" (Gulati, Just, & Crigler, 2004). In contrast, a single moderator debate consists of both candidates being questioned by a single person, often in the "traditional candidates-behind-podium" format (Gulati, Just, & Crigler, 2004). In a panel of moderators, several people, usually with specific areas of expertise or from specific demographic groups (for example, a panel of journalist questioners; see McKinney & Carlin, 2004) pose questions. Scholars have found that debate format shapes candidate interactions within debates

(McKinney & Carlin, 2004). Within each type, though, debates are essentially the same everywhere; a town hall-style debate in North Dakota is quite similar to a town hall-style debate in New Mexico. Within the types of debate, the format will be recognizable and comparable. Across the four campaigns, the consistent internal format makes content analysis a useful approach because the format is relatively consistent within types.

Finally, debates between candidates are almost unique among campaign events because candidates interact face to face with each other in a shared space. This is one of the few opportunities for an audience to compare candidates directly, and for the candidates to engage directly with each other. In the words of Jamieson and Birdsell (1988), "Debate gains its vitality from direct challenge. Advocates who disagree meet one another face to face to argue their differences" (p. 11). Lanoue and Schrott (1991) point out that campaign debates are, above all, attempts to persuade—with candidates appealing to citizens for the ultimate prize, their vote. Thus candidate debates are forums in which candidates seek to accentuate differences through their messages. These four rationale—the voter learning that can occur from debates, the magnitude of debates as media and communication events, the consistency of format in debates, and direct interaction between candidates attempting to distill differences—guided my choice of debates as valuable contexts in which to examine potential anti-intellectualism emphases by leading American politicians.

Video archives of debates from each selected Senate campaign were available at the website of C-SPAN. A total of nine debates were held across the four selected campaigns; the unit of observation was each debate. Each Senate election had at least two debates during the general election: in North Dakota, debates were held on October 15 and October 25; in Missouri,

debates were held on September 21[2] and October 18; in New Mexico, debates were held on October 17 and October 25; and in Massachusetts debates were held on September 20, October 1, and October 10. A fourth debate in Massachusetts was scheduled for October 30, but was cancelled due to Hurricane Sandy. With the exception of the first North Dakota debate, each debate ran 60 minutes; the debate held October 15 in North Dakota was approximately 25 minutes. To analyze the debates, I watched the video recordings of each debate. I watched each debate at least three times in order to make certain I captured all variables.

Content analysis

To examine how politicians employ anti-intellectual rhetoric within the context of a campaign debate, I first conducted a content analysis. Content analysis, according to Graber (2004), is the "systematic analysis of selected written, spoken, or audiovisual texts" (p. 50). Content analysis enables a sustained examination of communications to tease apart the different forms of defined concepts. This is a widely used method in political communication research (Graber, 2004) and is well suited to assess the frequency of certain communication elements to examine underlying trends (Neuendorf, 2002). For this work, content analysis furthers understanding of "typical patterns or characteristics" or identifies "important relationships" among content from leading political figures, when more qualitative approaches may be less revealing (Riffe, Lacy & Fico. 2005, p. 3). Other scholars have conducted content analysis to examine discursive themes in political debates (Riley & Hollihan, 1981; Carlin et al., 1991; Sheets et al., 2011). Because this study is concerned with how candidates emphasize anti-intellectualism, the quantitative quality of content analysis allowed me to analyze whether and how themes of anti-intellectualism emerge across multiple candidate debates.

[2] A third candidate, Independent Jonathan Dine, participated in this debate; however, he was not considered a strong candidate. Both McCaskill and Akin addressed each other exclusively, and Dine was not included in the second debate. For these reasons, I did not code any of his responses.

For this research, the unit of analysis was an evocation of anti-intellectualism. I defined this as any expression of outright hostility or implicit hostility toward intellectualism at any given time in a debate. To be specific, I defined an evocation as the smallest possible segment of speech with discursive meaning. This may have been one word, multiple words, a phrase, a clause, or even a complete statement. Some scholars have used specified words or sets of words to define a unit of analysis (for example, Lim, 2002; Sheets et al., 2011), but that research has generally been concerned with named constructs (for example, Sheets et al. focused on "nation invocation", which the authors identified as a set of words naming the nation), which is not applicable in this study. I anticipated and found many instances of anti-intellectualism to be evoked through subtle communications, in which it was impossible to rely upon a context-free dictionary of words.

To examine how politicians employed anti-intellectualism within a campaign debate, I created variables and operational definitions. These definitions draw upon scholarship and my own reading of some of the debates (see Appendix A for the complete codebook). Both descriptive and content variables were included.

Candidate communications uttered during debates occur in a specific discursive context. Because this context may impact how candidates speak, I created several *descriptive variables* to better understand whether and how anti-intellectualism might manifest. First, I included two debate type variables to capture the format of each debate: *Debate Type: Candidate* and *Debate Type: Questione*r. The first identified how the candidates faced the audience, and contained the categories of (1) candidates at podium, (2) candidates seated at tables, (3) candidates able to move freely, and (4) other. The second identified how questions were posed to the candidates, and contained the categories of (1) a single moderator, (2) a panel of moderators, (3) audience

questions in person, (4) audience questions via social media, and (5) other. It is also possible that candidate communications operate differently depending in which part of a debate they occur. For instance, a candidate rebutting an opponent's point may use different language than a candidate presenting his or her closing statement. For this reason, I included a *Communication Type* variable to capture the debate context preceding each communication. This variable contained the categories of (1) moderator question, (2) audience question, (3) question via social media, (4) rebuttal, (5) open debate, (6) closing statement, and (7) other.

In general, I defined *anti-intellectualism discourse* as communication that is critical of a robust life of the mind, and/or those people or institutions that are considered to represent it. The following *content variables* operationalized the sub-types of this concept:

- Outright denigration: defined as explicit, overt denigration of, or disparagement toward, intellect or intellectualism. This did not include references to specific institutions.
- Sharp humor: defined as any evocations of anti-intellectualism communicated through humor, sometimes self-deprecatingly, and lacking the overt contempt of outright denigration.
- Exalting alternatives: defined as any evocation highlighting other forms of education, formal or informal learning, and/or information gathering that are in direct contrast to traditional educational models.
- Intellectual labeling: defined as any evocation that labels a candidate as an intellectual or pursuing intellectual values, in a negative way. This includes teaching at the baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate levels.
- Elite symbolization: defined as any evocation that mentions a specific institution or congruent metaphor that clearly and contextually suggested elitism in a negative way.

I also wanted to capture *anti*-anti-intellectualism, so that I could see whether candidates spoke explicitly in favor of traditional intellectual pursuits. I created the variable of *positive intellectualism*: as any evocation that is a positive mention of formal education, intellect, or intellectualism. This includes any mention of formal education undertaken by the candidate, the candidate's family, or a positive mention of formal education in the abstract.

Each of these variables contained broad categories of individual words, phrases, and contextually driven content. Because these message fragments relied on subtlety, and not a specified set of words, this study employed hand coding. Multiple coders conducted pilot rounds of coding on debates to assess the strength of the variables, and then conducted a round of testing to establish inter-coder reliability. Two coders then analyzed an overlapping portion of the debate content covering a range of campaigns to assess inter-coder reliability. I divided the campaigns into half hour segments, and randomly selected four segments. Inter-coder reliability testing was conducted on these segments. I compiled inter-coder assessments by using Scott's *pi* (Merrigan & Huston, 2009), which corrects for agreement by chance. The standard social science minimum of 80% agreement after correcting for chance was the standard I required. Reliability between coders was generally strong. Overall agreement on instances of either anti-intellectualism or positive intellectual references was strong (Scott's *pi*=.89). Agreement about *outright denigration*, *exalting alternatives*, and *sharp humor* was perfect (Scott's *pi*=1.0 for each). *Intellectual labeling* was also strong (Scott's *pi*= .95). Although slightly lower, agreement about *elite symbolizing* (Scott's *pi*=.85) and *positive intellectualism* (Scott's *pi*=.8) were both within the acceptable range. The data, as a result, have the potential to offer a great understanding of how politicians employ discourse about intellectualism, and the emergent patterns suggest opportunities for further research in this area.

Rhetorical Analysis

To further understand the anti-intellectual themes, I conducted a rhetorical analysis of a key moment within one of the debates. Rhetorical analysis is a useful tool to identify the available means of persuasion within a text (Leach, 2000). It is a manner of analysis that includes a critic's interpretation of the orator, the communication, context, and the audience (Neuman, 2006; Rybacki & Rybacki, 1991). This form of analysis is "an effort to read interpretively, with an eye toward understanding a message fully and how that message is crafted to earn a particular response" (Selzer, 2003, p. 282). Other scholars have used rhetoric-centered approaches to understand how politicians construct their arguments (e.g. see Frank & McPhail, 2005; Rowland & Jones, 2011; Zarefsky, 2004, among many others). The focuses of these studies, as in this thesis, were close readings of a selected text or texts that contained larger discursive themes. In this study, a rhetorical analysis of one moment within the selected debates allowed me to more fully consider the question of why candidates employ anti-intellectual rhetoric.

In the selected instance, my goal was to understand how Scott Brown and Elizabeth Warren—with a notable contribution from moderator David Gregory—employed the rhetorical resources at their disposal to further their electoral aims. What I found was that certain words, the inflections of those, and non-verbal communications revealed some compelling components of how intellectualism discourse manifests. As Selzer (2003) notes, when critics "engage in rhetorical analysis, they not only react to the message, but they appreciate how the producer of that message is conveying the message to a particular audience" (p. 282). My purpose was not to determine the "success" of each orator; rather it was to understand their use of anti-intellectual or positive-intellectualism themes. To do so, I watched one specific debate segment multiple times,

paying close attention to each individual's words, motions, inflection, and reactions. My reading was influenced by my knowledge of how the two candidates had interacted in the other debates, and how previous interactions in this specific debate had occurred. This analysis, therefore, can best be described as a contextualized rhetorical analysis.

Chapter Three

Results

This study focuses on three aspects of intellectualism-focused political communication in American political culture: (a) whether anti-intellectual discourse is present in high-level political campaigns; (b) if so, how politicians construct anti-intellectual messages; and (c) whether politicians offer outright positive intellectual sentiments. I examined candidate debates. Each interaction between candidates within a debate is influenced by the previous interactions; for this reason, a smaller unit of observation within the debates (for example, each question and answer segment) would lose an important contextual aspect of the candidate interactions. For these reasons, the unit of observation for my analysis is each debate in each of four U.S. Senate campaigns in 2012. In my content analysis I focused on the presence or absence of several variables related to intellectualism. Four of the eight observed candidates were female, four were male, four identified as Democrats, and four as Republicans. I examined nine debates across four campaigns. In this chapter I first present a general overview of the quantitative data, then analyze my central variables of interest, and then finish with a rhetorical analysis of one debate moment.

Content Analysis

Across the nine debates, I identified 194 evocations that were about intellectualism as defined in this study. Of these evocations, 76 were anti-intellectual in some form—either sharp humor, exalting alternatives, intellectual labeling, or elite symbolizing in their content—and 118 conveyed a positive view of intellect or intellectualism. As a first step, I examined differences in

how candidates across the debates employed anti-intellectual or positive intellectual discourse. Table 3.1 shows a summary of the data.

Table 3.1
Anti-intellectualism and positive intellectualism in U.S. Senate campaigns 2012

	Anti-intellectualism (N=76)	Positive intellectualism (N=118)
Massachusetts	84.2% (*n*=64)	49.0% (*n*=58)
Warren	*0%*	*82%*
Brown	*100%*	*18%*
Missouri	14.5% (*n*=11)	22.0% (*n*=26)
McCaskill	*73%*	*65%*
Akin	*27%*	*35%*
North Dakota	0.0%	8.0% (*n*=9)
Heitkamp	*0%*	*44%*
Berg	*0%*	*56%*
New Mexico	1.3% (*n*=1)	21.0% (*n*=25)
Heinrich	*0%*	*76%*
Wilson	*100%*	*24%*
Totals	100%	100%

Data in Table 3.1 show that both anti-intellectual and positive-intellectualism themes were present across the debates, and that positive discourse was actually more prevalent. Positive intellectualism made up 60% of the total identified themes, while anti-intellectual themes made up 40%. This indicates that, while anti-intellectual sentiment was present, discourse that conveyed a positive understanding of intellect was more predominant. The data also show that both anti-intellectual and positive-intellectual discourses were differentially present across the analyzed campaigns. Of the anti-intellectual discourse, over 80% occurred in the Massachusetts Senate campaign, in debates between Scott Brown and Elizabeth Warren. In

contrast, in North Dakota, candidates Rick Berg and Heidi Heitkamp did not employ any of the identified forms of anti-intellectualism. Among the positive intellectual discourse, just about half was present in Massachusetts, with North Dakota again the lowest at 8% of these communications. In the following paragraphs, I discuss these patterns in depth.

Looking first at the anti-intellectual discourse, the Massachusetts election emphasized this far and away more than other campaigns. An overwhelming 84.2% of the identified anti-intellectual themes occurred in Massachusetts debates. Further, within this campaign, Brown was responsible for all of it—an astounding 100% of anti-intellectual remarks, compared to no anti-intellectual remarks from Warren. Although the content of the debates was not focused primarily on education, Brown squeezed anti-intellectual commentary—specifically against Warren—into a significant portion of his communications, regardless of topic. A far smaller amount of anti-intellectual messaging occurred in the other campaigns. Almost 15% of anti-intellectual communications were found in Missouri debates, while just 1.3% of anti-intellectual discourse was present in New Mexico debates. Differences in volume extended to these campaigns, as well. In Missouri, Claire McCaskill delivered 73.0% of the anti-intellectual evocations, compared to Todd Akin's 27.0%. In New Mexico, Heather Wilson offered the only evocation of anti-intellectualism. Across campaigns, therefore, when anti-intellectualism was present in the debates, one candidate dominated this discourse.

Positive intellectual discourse, like anti-intellectual discourse, also varied across campaigns and candidates, but in this case it was present in all campaigns. North Dakota, where the focus of debate was predominantly the Farm Bill and agriculture, showed the least engagement with this discourse, at 8.0% of the comments. All of this occurred in one North Dakota debate, in which candidates were also asked about education platforms. Missouri and

New Mexico debates contained almost equal emphasis on positive intellectualism: 22.0% occurred in Missouri, and 21.0% in New Mexico. Again, Massachusetts was a different story. Almost half of all positive intellectual discourse was employed in Massachusetts debates. Of this, over 80% was offered by Warren, compared to 18.0% by Brown. This was not as imbalanced as the emphasis on anti-intellectualism, but it does further indicate that the campaigns and candidates employed the discourse differently.[3]

The next step was to dive deeper into the anti-intellectual sub-types of interest. Data in Table 3.2 show that the identified anti-intellectual variables were present in different degrees across campaigns, and candidates, with of course the vast majority in the Massachusetts debates. There are several points to highlight. First, outright denigration, operationalized as explicit, overt denigration of, or disparagement toward intellect or intellectualism, was not found in any of the examined texts. Across nine debates, no candidates ever made a statement that was overtly or explicitly contemptuous of intellect.

[3] Massachusetts had three Senate debates in 2012, compared to two in the other campaigns I examined. This differential might partially account for Massachusetts having more of this discourse, but it is clear that across individual debates, significantly more of it was present in Massachusetts.

Table 3.2
Anti-intellectual themes in U.S. Senate campaigns 2012

	Outright Denigration (N=0)	Sharp Humor (N=3)	Exalting Alternatives (N=4)	Intellectual Labeling (N=51)	Elite Symbolization (N=18)
Massachusetts	0.0%	100.0% (*n*=3)	0.0%	98.0% (*n*=50)	61.0% (*n*=11)
Warren		*0%*		*0%*	*0%*
Brown		*100%*		*100%*	*100%*
Missouri	0.0%	0.0%	100.0% (*n*=4)	0.0%	38.0% (*n*=7)
McCaskill			*25%*		*100%*
Akin			*75%*		*0%*
North Dakota	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Heitkamp					
Berg					
New Mexico	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0% (*n*=1)	0.0%
Heinrich				*0%*	
Wilson				*100%*	
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Second, sharp humor, defined as anti-intellectual sentiment communicated through humor, sometimes self-deprecatingly, appeared three times across the 194 identified evocations. Only Brown, against Warren, employed this form of discourse. For example, when asked by the moderator to say something nice about his opponent, Brown responded, "She's a hardworking, accomplished professor. She's such a good professor I'm going to do everything I can to keep her there." In another instance, he responded to a criticism Warren had voiced of him by saying, "I'm not a student in your classroom, Professor." Each of these instances indicated humor—with a decided edge and an implied critique—and Brown made the statements while smiling or

laughing. In addition, these remarks were greeted with laughter in the debate hall. That is exactly what Brown sought to accomplish: to both tie Warren to her intellectual title and to do so with an implied critique of intellect, presented through humor and seeming goodwill.

Third, exalting alternatives was to highlight other forms of education, formal or informal learning, and/or information gathering, in direct contrast to traditional education models. This variable comprised 5.0% of the identified anti-intellectual discourse, all of it appearing in Missouri. Both McCaskill and Akin employed this form of discourse, with Akin responsible for three-fourths of its emphasis, which was a total of three evocations. All of his evocations highlighted other forms of knowledge gathering, with two specifically tied to his personal decision to homeschool his children: "I support giving people the right to choose the kind of education they want," and when talking about choosing schools, he stated that "a mom and dad who love their kid" should determine a child's learning more than education systems. He also stated, "No matter how much you work and prepare and study, you're going to get issues you don't know that much about," then indicated other ways he has prepared for decisions as a legislator. For Akin, academic preparation was not essential in office. Another example of this form of anti-intellectual sentiment was McCaskill's statement, "The Lord gave us intelligence to discover scientific advancements." Scientific discoveries and intelligence, as conceptualized by McCaskill in this comment, are a divine gift, not the product of years of study and effort. Although exalting alternatives was infrequent, the contrasts drawn between traditional, formal education and gaining knowledge were explicit.

Fourth, I examined how candidates tied themselves and opponents to elite symbols. This variable was defined as any mention of a specific institution or congruent metaphor that clearly and contextually suggested elitism, and did so in a negative way. This variable comprised 23.6%

of the identified anti-intellectual discourse, was present in two campaigns (Massachusetts and Missouri), and employed by two candidates (Brown and McCaskill). Of this, 63.0% of the discourse was in Massachusetts. Brown was responsible, again, for all of it. Throughout their three debates, Brown referred frequently to Warren's position at Harvard, the benefits she received from Harvard, and her experience with Ivy League institutions. For example, when discussing the rising cost of education, he criticized "the zero interest loan she got from Harvard"; when asked by the moderator why he called her "Professor Warren," he replied, "She's earned that title, she's now a sitting professor at Harvard Law School." In these communications, Brown's emphasis on Warren's academic credentials was almost certainly deliberate, intended to construct her as elite and out of touch. Another example of this variable was McCaskill's comment: "I really think having someone on the Supreme Court that went to a really good state school, that didn't go to an Ivy League school, would be good for the court." In this case, the connection to elitism as out of touch was explicit; not attending an Ivy League school was presented as a preferential benefit for society.

Finally, I examined intellectual labeling, which was any evocation that labeled the opponent as an intellectual or pursuing intellectual values—including teaching at the baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate levels, and not including positive evocations of intellect. Intellectual labeling was by far the most prevalent form of anti-intellectual discourse, constituting 67% of it. Two candidates (Brown and Wilson) in two states (Massachusetts and New Mexico) employed this discourse. It was most common in Massachusetts, where 98% of intellectual labeling discourse took place, and entirely by Brown, who was responsible for all of the evocations therein. Brown employed this discourse consistently while debating Warren, referring to her exclusively as "Professor Warren" or "Professor"—in their first debate, he

characterized her this way an astounding 21 times. Brown also tied Warren discursively to academia, referring to her teaching, her classroom, and her students. His use of her academic title, as well as other connections to the academic world, was not connected to debate content; he simply called her "Professor Warren" at every opportunity. This use of her title so consistently indicated a concerted effort to push this discourse. His consistent emphasis on it produced the most common form of anti-intellectualism in my analysis of the four Senate campaigns.

I next examined how candidates employed positive messages about intellectualism. No candidate, across any of the campaigns, directed positive intellectualism at their opponent. That is, when emphasizing positive intellectualism, all of the candidates touted themselves or education in general. Table 3.3 shows the data across all campaigns and candidates.

Table 3.3
Positive intellectualism in U.S. Senate campaigns 2012

Positive intellectualism (N=118)			
	Positive intellectualism *toward self* (*n*=52)	Positive intellectualism *toward opponent* (*n*=0)	Positive intellectualism *in general* (*n*=66)
Massachusetts	59.7% (*n*=31)	0.0%	40.9% (*n*=27)
Warren	*74%*		*89%*
Brown	*26%*		*11%*
Missouri	11.5% (*n*=6)	0.0%	30.4% (*n*=20)
McCaskill	*100%*		*55%*
Akin	*0%*		*45%*
North Dakota	5.8% (*n*=3)	*0%*	9.0% (*n*=6)
Heitkamp	*67%*		*60%*
Berg	*33%*		*40%*
New Mexico	23.0% (*n*=12)	0.0%	19.7% (*n*=13)
Heinrich	*50%*		*100%*
Wilson	*50%*		*0%*
Totals	100%	100%	100%

The volume of candidate communications conveying positive intellectualism was slightly more balanced than what we saw with anti-intellectualism. The majority of this theme was again expressed in Massachusetts, both when referring to self and in general. While just over 40% of positive intellectualism in general was employed in the Massachusetts debates, Missouri came fairly close, with 30.4% of the discourse occurring in those debates. Almost 20% of this theme

occurred in New Mexico, while North Dakota trailed with 9.0% of this discourse. References to positive intellectualism in general focused almost always on the importance of education for the good of society. For example, in Massachusetts—where, in this case, Warren dominated with 89% of the identified evocations—Warren said, "We should be investing in educating our kids." Similarly, Brown said, "We need an educated student population." In Missouri, McCaskill said, "The other countries of the world look to our country for our emphasis on public education." Akin stated, "Education is absolutely critical." In North Dakota Berg said, "North Dakota is a state that supports education." In the same debate, Heitkamp said, "We need to make sure that our students have the opportunity to go to college." In New Mexico, Wilson emphasized that "college continues to be accessible and affordable," while Heinrich stated, "So many people make their living off science, and so many Ph.D.s work in our national labs." Across campaigns, candidates made it clear that education as a general principle was valuable, in their eyes.

Candidates also made it clear that education mattered for them personally, and in many instances accounted, in their words, for their success. Massachusetts dominated the discussion of positive intellectualism with regards to self, with almost 60% of it in Bay State debates. Within the campaign the candidates differentially employed the discourse, a pattern that was mirrored in other campaigns. Again Warren dominated in Massachusetts, with 74.0% of the discourse. This balance looked similar across the other campaigns. In Missouri, McCaskill was responsible for the entirety of this discourse; Akin did not emphasize it at all. In North Dakota, Berg was responsible for one of three evocations, while Heitkamp was responsible for two of them. New Mexico was more balanced, with Heinrich and Wilson each responsible for half of the discourse, the most balanced among the campaigns. References to positive intellectualism specific to the candidate tended to emphasize the candidate's roots in the public school system. Warren

highlighted a humble academic beginning by saying, "I went to a commuter college." Brown invoked local institutions with, "I went to Wakefield High, Tufts University, and Boston College Law School." In North Dakota, Heitkamp said, "I wouldn't be standing here if it wasn't for my public school education," while Berg emphasized how much he learned by making his own "way through college." In New Mexico, both candidates mentioned their educations as well as education within their families. Heinrich said, "My son Carter and my son Micah both go to public school," and Wilson mentioned her two daughters, "one of whom is about to go off to college," while the other remains "queen of her universe in high school." Missouri was the exception within this variable. McCaskill played up to the hometown crowd, saying, "I'm a proud graduate of the University of Missouri," whereas Akin did not make any positive intellectualism comments tied to himself. In general, though, positive intellectualism statements directed to one's own educational attainment were fairly common.

Finally, I examined several other factors when examining these themes of anti-intellectualism. First, I examined whether candidates' political ideologies might be related to differential employment of anti-intellectual discourse. Table 3.4 examines political ideology and anti-intellectualism.

Table 3.4
Anti-intellectual themes in U.S. Senate campaigns 2012 by political ideology

	Outright Denigration (N=0)	Sharp Humor (N=3)	Exalting Alternatives (N=4)	Intellectual Labeling (N=51)	Elite Symbolization (N=18)	Total Anti-intellectualism (N=76)
Democrats	0.0%	0.0%	25.0% (*n*=1)	0.0%	38.9% (*n*=7)	10.5% (*n*=8)
Heitkamp			*0%*		*0%*	*0%*
McCaskill			*100%*		*100%*	*100%*
Warren			*0%*		*0%*	*0%*
Heinrich			*0%*		*0%*	*0%*
Republicans	0.0%	100% (*n*=3)	75.0% (*n*=3)	100% (*n*=51)	61.1% (*n*=11)	89.5% (*n*=68)
Berg		*0%*	*0%*	*0%*	*0%*	*0%*
Brown		*100%*	*0%*	*98%*	*11%*	*94%*
Akin		*0%*	*100%*	*0%*	*0%*	*5%*
Wilson		*0%*	*0%*	*2%*	*0%*	*1%*
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The data in this table show that anti-intellectual themes were much more prevalent in discourse by Republican candidates, but that anti-intellectual themes did occur in communications by Democrats. Democrats made just over 10% of the identified anti-intellectual remarks, while Republicans made almost 90% of these comments. Of the Democratic candidates examined, McCaskill was the only one who conveyed identified anti-intellectualism, exalting alternatives to education and emphasizing elite symbols. Anti-intellectualism used by Republican candidates showed a similar imbalance across candidates. Brown made a total of 64 anti-intellectual evocations—the majority were intellectual labeling—to account for 94.0% of the discourse by Republicans. More Republicans used anti-intellectual discourse of some kind in the debates, however: Wilson made one statement, while Akin made three statements. In sum, Republicans employed anti-intellectual discourse more than Democrats in these Senate campaigns, although the predominance of Brown necessitates caution about any conclusions.

The gender of the candidates also possibly related to candidates' anti-intellectual discourse. Much scholarship demonstrates that male and female candidates communicate and campaign in different ways, so I examined the relationship between candidate gender and anti-intellectual discourse. Data are in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5
Anti-intellectual themes in U.S. Senate campaigns 2012 by gender

	Outright Denigration (N=0)	Sharp Humor (N=3)	Exalting Alternatives (N=4)	Intellectual Labeling (N=51)	Elite Symbolization (N=18)	Total Anti-intellectualism (N=76)
Male candidates	0.0%	100% (*n*=3)	75.0% (*n*=3)	98.0% (*n*=50)	61.1% (*n*=11)	88.1% (*n*=67)
Berg		*0%*	*0%*	*0%*	*0%*	*0%*
Brown		*100%*	*0%*	*100%*	*100%*	*95%*
Heinrich		*0%*	*0%*	*0%*	*0%*	*0%*
Akin		*0%*	*100%*	*0%*	*0%*	*5%*
Female candidates	0.0%	0.0%	25.0% (*n*=1)	2.0% (*n*=1)	38.9% (*n*=7)	11.9% (*n*=9)
Wilson			*0%*	*100%*	*0%*	*1*
Heitkamp			*0%*	*0%*	*0%*	*0*
McCaskill			*100%*	*0%*	*100%*	*8*
Warren			*0%*	*0%*	*0%*	*0*
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The data in Table 3.5 show that anti-intellectual discourse was employed more by male candidates than by female candidates. Men, across political parties, made just over 88% of the identified anti-intellectual remarks in the debates. Of the male candidates examined, half employed anti-intellectual discourse. Both Brown and Akin made anti-intellectual comments, although Brown made an overwhelming 95.0% of the identified comments. Patterns looked somewhat similar with female candidates: one made the majority of the comments. Of the

women studied, half—Wilson and McCaskill—employed anti-intellectual discourse. The amount of identified anti-intellectual discourse was smaller for women than it was for men, and somewhat less imbalanced. McCaskill made 88.0% of the anti-intellectual comments, while Wilson made 12.0%. These results are suggestive of gender differences, but again any hard and fast conclusions are not possible.

As a last step in this analysis, I considered several structural factors that I thought might be related to an emphasis on anti-intellectualism. First, I examined whether differential staging of the debates mattered. Findings for this variable were not particularly explanatory. All debates, with the exception of the second Massachusetts debate, had candidates stand at podiums, facing the moderator and audience. I next examined whether candidates evoked anti-intellectualism differentially depending on the person posing questions. To assess this possibility, I examined whether there was a difference in how candidates responded to questions from a single moderator, a panel of moderators, an in-person question from the audience, or a question from the audience via social media. Results were not compelling: the majority of candidate evocations were in response to a question from the moderator, but the specific bent of some questions complicated the idea of this variable. For example, in the first Missouri debate, a high school student from the audience asked the candidates about their education platforms. These answers yielded a significant portion of the positive intellectualism from that campaign, but the important factor here was the question itself, not who asked it. I was also interested in whether candidates employed anti-intellectualism in response to particular types of communication immediately preceding their answer: for example, a question from the moderator, a rebuttal, open debate, opening or closing statement, or audience questions. Again, this was not conclusive. Brown, for instance, used Warren's academic title beginning with his

opening statement, through all types of communications, and until his closing remarks. He called her "Professor Warren" during open debate, during rebuttals, when speaking to her, and when speaking about her. His use of her title did not seem tied to any specific factors within the debate. Overall, these variables gave negligible insight into how politicians employ anti-intellectual discourse.

In summary, the data show that themes of intellectualism—negative and positive—were employed by politicians across the examined campaigns, but manifested differentially across and within campaigns. For anti-intellectualism, candidates conveyed subtle forms of discourse, rather than overt, explicit critiques. Politicians appeared to construct these messages predominantly through tying their opponents to elite-seeming institutions and values—either through elite symbols or by labeling their opponents as intellectuals, although other forms of the discourse were present. At the same time, findings also show that candidates often spoke glowingly about formal education, especially their own. A common idea throughout the campaigns was candidates speaking of the benefits of public school education for themselves and for America in general; these candidates seemed not to consider public education, especially at the primary level, to be connected to the same intellectualism they sometimes disparaged. Anti-intellectualism and positive intellectualism, therefore, seem to have different specific targets and to exist in tension, two points to which I return in the following chapter.

Rhetorical Analysis

To examine this anti-intellectualism further, I conducted a rhetorical analysis of a conceptually important moment in one of the Massachusetts debates between Elizabeth Warren and Scott Brown. A central argument of this thesis is that anti-intellectualism functions as a

coded discourse, meaning that it is most appealing for politicians when it is presented in subtle ways that can be denied if rendered explicit. In this section, I unpack the only instance across the nine examined debates in which a candidate—Brown—was openly accused of offering an anti-intellectual perspective, and he notably denied the charge. This moment is conceptually different from the rest of the debates, a difference that is reinforced by the verbal and non-verbal communications of the candidates as well as the moderator. For these reasons, I decided to submit this portion of the Massachusetts second debate to closer consideration.

In this interaction, debate moderator David Gregory began by asking Warren how she felt about the subtle communications that I have identified as implicit anti-intellectualism. Warren responded briefly, saying she was not bothered. Brown then immediately inserted himself into the communication flow and emphatically countered the idea that he was seeking to turn Warren into an elitist intellectual. At the same time, in his words he implicitly cemented his anti-intellectual perspective by repeatedly tying Warren to elite institutions, even as he denied such effort. For this analysis I first looked at the context in which this conversation took place, both in terms of the campaign and this specific debate. I then examined Gregory's language before turning to an analysis of each candidate's words. I finished by considering what this section of this debate suggests about Brown and coded anti-intellectualism.

This interaction occurred about ten minutes into the debate on October 1, 2012, with the candidates seated at a table, facing the moderator. Gregory opened the interaction by separating it from the rest of the debate through his communicative acts. Specifically, he leaned forward, looked at Warren, and said, "I've got to ask you this; he always calls you Professor Warren. Do you think he's needling you, trying to cast you as an elitist professor in the eyes of the voters, does that bother you?" Together, these verbals and non-verbals were important for two reasons.

First, they suggested that Brown's communications had made this a question begging to be asked, and second, they set apart this moment as interpersonally rich—almost like friends or co-workers talking about a relationship situation that one assumed simply *had to annoy* the other person. The word "needling"—akin to teasing—further contributed to this framing. At this point in the campaign, news media had raised Brown's constant use of Warren's title, including in the first debate when Brown repeatedly referred to Warren as "Professor" and highlighted her ties to Ivy League schools. In this second debate, Brown had already called Warren "a qualified academic" and a "good teacher," mentioned her recruitment "to Ivy League schools," and noted her tenured position at Harvard. Both candidates were almost certainly ready for some kind of question about Brown's discourse. All of this heightened the sense that this moment was important within the debate.

Here is a full transcript of this portion of the debate, after which Gregory immediately shifted to an unrelated policy question:

> ***Moderator Gregory***: I've got to ask you this; he always calls you Professor Warren. Do you think he's needling you, trying to cast you as an elitist professor in the eyes of the voters, does that bother you?
>
> ***Warren***: It doesn't bother me. You know, I've worked hard for this.
>
> ***Brown***: Can I just say something?
>
> ***Warren***: And it doesn't bother me.
>
> ***Brown***: Listen, the *Boston Globe* reported today that she's very proud of being a professor. Whenever I see my professors from school, I say, "Hello Professor Gittleman or Professor So-and-so." It's certainly meant as—She's earned that title, she's now a sitting professor at Harvard Law School.

Debates are spaces in which candidates present their arguments to citizens with the goal to win votes. In this interaction, both Warren and Brown made appeals to voters through their responses to Gregory's question. Starting with Warren, we see that she invoked her credibility

and character in answering, and offered nothing else. Her reply to Gregory's question was succinct: "It doesn't bother me. You know, I've worked hard for this." Rather than engage in this conversation, or deny that she is an elitist professor—thereby reinforcing the label—Warren emphasized that her work, and career, was valuable. Her body language and demeanor supported her character argument; when Brown interrupted to address a question directed at her, Warren sat calmly, spoke in even, measured tones, and simple repeated her point: "And it doesn't bother me." Although the question was directed to her, Warren's response—16 words, in three sentences, with the same point made twice—was far shorter than Brown's denial (53 words, four sentences). Warren was responsible for the vast majority of positive intellectualism discourse in the three Massachusetts debates. In this segment, she conveyed such a view by emphasizing pride in her own achievements. Interestingly, she did not let Brown off the hook, so to speak, by showing surprise at the question: her response suggested that she indeed thought Brown was seeking to do what Gregory asked about. Her response also challenged the stereotype of women as sensitive: she did not rise to the anti-intellectual bait. All in all, Warren's response was highly suggestive that she was prepared for this moment.

Brown's reaction was very different. Gregory directed this question to Warren, but for Brown it was essential that he offer his perspective. The power of implicit anti-intellectual discourse exists only as long as the intended sub-textual meaning remains unsaid. When Gregory explicitly drew attention to Brown's objective by describing his language as casting Warren as an "elitist professor in the eyes of the voters," Brown had to counter that idea in order for his implicit communications to remain implicit. Notably, though, Brown did not directly contradict Gregory's assertion; instead, he employed both rational and emotional appeals to elide and dismiss the accusation that he was intentionally casting Warren as an elitist professor. To

start, Brown invoked rational evidence by giving specific examples, both about Warren and about his own appreciation of professors. He reinforced his argument by evoking a news media report of Warren's feelings: "The *Boston Globe* reported today that she's very proud of being a professor." With this move, Brown used supporting evidence to suggest that his claim was true.

He then shifted to a more emotional and personal appeal, emphasizing his own support for professors to indicate his respect for intellectuals. When he stated, "Whenever I see my professors from school, I say, "Hello Professor Gittleman or Professor so-and-so," Brown used his own personal details to reinforce the idea that he respects such people. However, Brown was not accused by Gregory of not greeting his professors, or of disrespecting professors in general. Discursively, Brown's comment is off-point—except that it allowed him to repeat the academic title of Warren even more. Although Brown was outwardly using logical appeals to argue that he is not intentionally casting Warren as an elitist, he continued to emphasize the very traits he was accused of highlighting. As he rebuffed the idea that he was trying to discredit her by evoking her title, Brown used the term "professor" five times, and stated, "she's earned that title," a reference to her academic position. He continued to reinforce this connection with his final sentence: "She's now a sitting professor at Harvard Law School." The phrase "sitting professor," which he underscored with accompanying hand motions, is rhetorically awkward—it was not colloquial, but rather a phrase meant to further accentuate Warren's title. The final piece—"at Harvard Law School"—extended this effort. This hammered the connection home by combining intellectual labeling with elite symbolizing in one swoop.

Most importantly, Brown's responses fit what we would expect with coded communication. Coded statements are implicit messages that convey sub-meanings for those who are inclined to hear them, but are done in such a way that speakers can deny—or at least

dismiss—any responsibility for conveying such sub-meaning. This is exactly what Brown did: as soon as Gregory brought up this topic, Brown had to jump in and dismiss the matter, going so far as to cut off Warren in his desire to address the issue. Coded communications are most powerful in instances where politicians must "cobble together groups with clashing preferences" (Mendelberg, 2001, pg. 16), and appeal through polysemous communication to each of the groups. This goes a long way towards explaining why Brown engaged in this discourse. In Massachusetts, one of the most educated states in the country, and home to a large number of universities, explicitly alienating educated voters would be a poor electoral choice. Through his coded communications, Brown attempted to criticize Warren so that select audiences would be receptive to his argument, and other audiences would not notice or would not be able to definitively pin such responsibility on him.

The findings addressed throughout this chapter, and their potential implications for how American audiences value intellectualism, will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Chapter Four

Discussion

This thesis builds upon scholarship on anti-intellectualism, candidate messages, and political discourse, and seeks insight into how politicians construct anti-intellectualism in their public communications. Broadly speaking, the intent of this work was to examine three things: whether politicians employ anti-intellectual discourse when speaking publicly, how those anti-intellectual messages may be manifest in their communications, and whether politicians speak positively about intellectualism. Several findings emerged. First, anti-intellectual discourse was present across the texts examined, but appeared in different forms. Second, anti-intellectual themes emerged entirely from coded implicit communications, never from explicit, overt hostility. Third, politicians employed plenty of positive discourse about intellectualism, with a few consistent patterns. The varied arrays of messages by eight candidates across four campaigns, in states that differed in geographic region and educational attainment, indicate that previous understandings of anti-intellectualism as explicit hostility may be outdated, but that more implicit themes of anti-intellectualism exist. Through two forms of analysis, findings show that anti-intellectual discourse is present in candidate communications. This research has several important implications.

The first key finding is that coded anti-intellectual communication was present, but positive intellectual discourse was predominant across debates, both in quantity and in distribution. Anti-intellectual evocations made up nearly two-fifths—almost 40%—of the total identified discourse, while positive intellectual evocations made up the remaining three-fifths. This indicated more discourse around positive intellectualism, though neither type overly predominated. These themes were present in different ways. Anti-intellectual evocations were

employed in every campaign except North Dakota, and were most common in Massachusetts, where over 80% of the discourse occurred. Four of the eight candidates examined employed anti-intellectual discourse, again dominated by Scott Brown in Massachusetts, with far fewer evocations by other candidates. Positive intellectual messages, on the other hand, were present across every campaign, and every candidate. How often politicians employed this discourse ranged from Elizabeth Warren's embrace of intellectualism with 48 evocations—the high—to Heidi Heitkamp's four, the low. This indicates that while any candidate can embrace positive-intellectualism, anti-intellectual discourse may be most effective in specific circumstances, or to meet specific electoral needs. The lack of widespread use suggests that this discourse is not universally applicable.

At the same time, findings suggest that intellectual discourses may work in tandem more than anticipated. Instances of significant anti-intellectualism within a campaign seem to be balanced by significant positive-intellectualism within the same campaign. The Massachusetts campaign had the highest amount of both anti-intellectualism—84.0% of the total across campaigns, all from Brown—and positive intellectualism—49.0% of the total, with 82.0% of that coming from Elizabeth Warren. Likewise, the North Dakota campaign had the smallest amount of anti-intellectual discourse—none—as well as the least positive-intellectualism, at 8.0% of the total discourse. These findings are certainly not conclusive, but this does suggest a pattern across candidate debates about the relationship between these two discourses. Whether a positive view of intellectualism is presented, or anti-intellectual discourse is employed, these findings suggest that these two discourses may typically be employed together.

Another point present in these findings is that candidates employ different forms of anti-intellectual discourse. Across all the campaigns, no instances of outright denigration occurred,

meaning that Hofstadter's (1963) theorized idea of "anti-intellectualism" as a discourse of explicit, obvious hostility must be updated, as this work hopes to do. But the lack of explicitly hostile discourse clearly does not mean that anti-intellectual discourse does not exist. Just as many racialized discourses have moved away from explicit racism to more subtle coded communications (Mendelberg, 2001), and religious discourses have turned to multivocal communications to speak to specific audiences (Albertson, 2014), anti-intellectualism may be predominantly presented in ways that echo only to those audiences who might be receptive. These findings expand Hofstadter's notion of anti-intellectualism from something that is explicit, to a more selective, nuanced discourse. The findings also showed that communications linking opponents to elitism through intellectual labeling or elite symbolizing were by far the most common ways candidates employed anti-intellectualism. This also solidified links between intellectualism as a value and formal education. This raises possibilities that as tuition rates at both public and private undergraduate institutions increase and wealth inequality in America grows, making an opponent seem out of touch by connecting them to perceived elitist institutions or pursuits might be an effective way to discredit them. I turn now to unpacking some specific findings about how this discourse was employed.

First, this research found that candidate characteristics might play a role in whether or how much candidates employ anti-intellectual themes. Anti-intellectual themes were more prevalent in discourse by Republicans than by Democrats, and employed more often by male candidates than female candidates. Although the data is such that broad implications cannot be conclusively deduced, this trend does appear. Perceived party ownership over issues may explain this political ideology discrepancy, which fits with previous scholarship. Democrats are seen as taking the lead on supporting education (Petrocik, 1996), so it makes sense that

Republicans would take the lead on criticizing it. Findings also indicated that male candidates were more likely the employ anti-intellectual rhetoric than female candidates. This aligns with previous work on gender traits. Engaging in a discourse of hostility is a stronger fit with being strong, assertive, independent, aggressive, and confident; traits that are considered to be "masculine." "Feminine traits," on the other hand, can include nurturing, motherly, compassionate, sympathetic, and warm (Jamieson, 1995). With social pressure on women, especially women in the public eye, to fit into these gender roles, engaging an anti-intellectual discourse, while not unheard of, does seem like more of a stretch for women candidates.

This conclusion was reversed for positive-intellectualism discourse, which female candidates employed more often than male candidates. Again, this conclusion cannot be definitively verified, but this shift fits within existing scholarship on gender ownership of traits and issues. First, education is considered a feminine issue (Anderson, 2002; Herrnson, Lay, & Stokes, 2003; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993). Scholars therefore find that female candidates in general are more likely to talk about education than male candidates. Second, men and women are thought to own different character traits. These traits may influence how candidates engage with each other. For example, scholars posit that women may be perceived as warm and nurturing (Banwart, 2010; Banwart & McKinney, 2005). In contrast, men's top traits are leadership, aggressive/fighter, being action oriented, and toughness/strength (Bystrom, 2006). Since female candidates are generally considered to have these "feminine traits" of compassion and warmth, they may be less likely than male candidates to engage in hostile discourse, explicit or implicit. These two areas of gendered ownership—issues and traits—may work in tandem to influence which candidates speak more about education in general, and how candidates present their views on education. Scholarship around gendered traits and issues indicates that female

candidates are more likely than male candidates to speak positively about education, reflecting the findings of this study.

This thesis also pointed to the way politicians speak about formal education. Findings indicated that the general principle of education was something they, across campaigns and party, valued. Findings also show that education was valued in different ways: across these debates, no politician ever praised his or her opponent's educational accomplishments, for example. Instead they were consistently critical of their opponents' educations, and sometimes used education to link opponents to elitist pursuits or attempted to dismiss opponents' academic achievements. On the other hand, politicians mostly spoke positively about education in general, although they were sometimes critical. These general statements were usually widespread praise to the important role of education in America, without specific details or policy statements. In contrast, no candidate ever spoke negatively about his or her education, although they did highlight different aspects of their personal educational experiences. Politicians tended to speak of their own educations with an emphasis on the common and attainable, in apparent efforts to make themselves relatable. Candidates drew attention to their reliance on the public education system, or the individual institutions they attended (for example, both Claire McCaskill and Brown mentioned attending local schools, and Martin Heinrich emphasized his sons' public school). Candidates seemed to use conversations about their own educations to further emphasize the personal brands they had crafted.

Together, these findings indicate that anti-intellectualism is present in American political discourse. This study builds upon the work of other scholars (including Hofstadter, 1963; Lim, 2002; 2008; Gitlin, 2000; Shogan, 2007) in conceptualizing how anti-intellectualism emerges in campaign discourse, while offering new directions for thought. That politicians employ

messages that are critical of intellect is important. Political leaders' communication matters; communication is the foundation for political power. Hart, writing about U.S. presidents, states that they "exert influence over their environment only by speaking, and it is largely through speech that their environment responds to them" (1987, p. 5). The same is true of politicians at other levels of office. Through their words, they impact the world around them. When politicians, among a culture's key thought leaders, engage is a discourse that is hostile to intellect, either explicitly or implicitly, that communicated hostility may change how others view or value intellect. As Conway and Schaller (2007) write, "repeated acts of communication shape those raw materials into the ultimate form that a culture takes." For this reason, the fact that politicians employ rhetoric that subtly dismisses intellect has the potential to shape social values.

This thesis and its findings are not without limitations. The focus on candidate debates as texts for this study, while providing valuable insight, represents only one arena of many in which candidates make public communications. Candidate communications in the modern campaign era are constant, and occur across multiple forms of media. Future research could expand on my findings and include analysis of other forms of candidate communications. For instance, investigation of candidate speeches, in regard to their coverage of both issues and candidates' personal stories, may reveal evidence of a difference or similarity in debate communication of candidate communications in different discursive environments. Future research could build on this study's premise and include a further examination of how candidate communications occur in different settings. Additionally, this study was limited in scope to four Senate campaigns in one year (2012). These findings are important, but this provides an opportunity for future research across different campaigns, and an expanded sample size. For instance, future work could consider either gubernatorial races, or U.S. House races in addition to Senate races, to

provide a more holistic view of how anti-intellectual discourse occurs across multiple levels of political communications. These limitations represent opportunities for more scholarship in an area of research that deserves further work.

Overall, this research supports the idea that coded anti-intellectual themes are present in candidates' public communications at the same time that candidates embrace the value of education. This discourse is complicated, and just one part of the complex array of messages from political candidates. It is impossible to tease out the result that use of anti-intellectual discourse may have exerted in the 2012 elections. For example, Brown's efforts to label Warren an elitist intellectual did not have the outcome he hoped for—Warren defeated Brown, becoming Massachusetts's first female Senator. However, for a Democrat to win a Massachusetts Senate campaign in a presidential election year by fewer than eight points—the closest Senate victory for a Democrat in this state since John F. Kennedy narrowly defeated Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., in 1952—indicates that this was a close, hard-fought race, and suggests that Brown's communications, at minimum, did not hurt him too substantially with voters. This continued existence of anti-intellectual sentiment, even when expressed through subtle messages, has broader implications beyond electoral outcomes for how society views and values intellect.

In 1963, Hofstadter assumed that anti-intellectualism was a concept that had reached and passed its apex in American society. In the hey-day of Kennedy's embrace of intellectuals, he wrote:

> If there was then a tendency to see…some apocalypse for intellectuals in public life, it is no longer possible, now that Washington has again become so hospitable to Harvard professors and ex-Rhodes scholars. If there was a suspicion that intellect had become a hopeless obstacle to success in politics or administration, it must surely have been put to rest by the new President's obvious interest in ideas and respect for intellectuals (p. 5).

It is telling that, half a century after Hofstadter wrote that passage, nothing has been "put to rest." If anything, the discourse of anti-intellectualism seems more widespread than ever. In fact, the perspective seems stronger and more widespread than ever. Wayne LaPierre, the executive vice president of the National Rifle Association, in 2014 stated, "This…may sound fine at an Ivy League cocktail party," but "it doesn't work very well in the real world of crime victims" (in Debrabander, 2014). Setting up tensions between "the real world" and the world of intellectuals drives a wedge between the experts who help make and enact policy, and the public who experience those policies. As politicians continue to generate anti-intellectual messages, this tension will continue. All politicians, across gender and party lines, can make intentional choices in how they present their thoughts on intellectualism, and recognize that those choices are almost certain to impact public understandings.

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Appendix A

Codebook:
Anti-intellectualism

General coding notes:

- The unit of observation and analysis for the first five variables (numbers 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11) is any evocation of anti-intellectualism, which I define as *any expression of outright denigration or implicit hostility toward intellectualism at any given time in a debate*. An evocation is the smallest possible segment of speech with discursive meaning in context. This may be one word, multiple words, a phrase, a clause, or even a complete sentence.
- Sentences may contain multiple codes, e.g. two distinct forms of anti-intellectualism may be evoked within the same sentence.
- Even though a sentence may contain multiple codes, each primary code will have a unique line in the data sheet.
- Codes may apply to remarks directed at the candidate, the opponent, or general remarks.

1. Reference Number: REFNUM
   Reference number is the numerical name of the individual reference. The first two numbers denote the individual debate number (01-09) followed by two zeros as placeholders (allowing me to code up to 999 references per debate), and then numerically ordering the reference beginning with 1 until a new debate.
   Example: "02001" denotes the first reference of the MA debate held 10/1/12.

2. Debate Number: DEBATE
   The identifying number given to each debate watched.

Code	State and Debate Date
1	MA 9/20/12
2	MA 10/1/12
3	MA 10/10/12
4	MO 9/21/12
5	MO 10/18/12
6	ND 10/15/12
7	ND 10/25/12
8	NM 10/17/12
9	NM 10/25/12

3. Candidate: CAND
   Record the code next to the appropriate candidate.

Code	Candidate Name
1	Elizabeth Warren
2	Scott Brown

3	Heidi Heitkamp
4	Rick Berg
5	Martin Heinrich
6	Heather Wilson
7	Claire McCaskill
8	Todd Akin

4. Debate Staging: DEBSTAGE

I will code how the candidates were staged for each debate.

Code	**Candidate Debate Type**
1	Candidates at podiums
2	Candidates seated at table
3	Candidates able to move freely
4	Other

5. Debate Questioner: DEBQUEST

I will code for each type person or persons responsible for the question asked.

Code	**Questioner Debate Type**
1	Single moderator
2	Panel of moderators
3	Audience question (in person)
4	Audience question (social media)
5	Other

6. Communication Type: COMMTYPE

I will code for the communication context immediately preceding each response.

Code	**Communication Type**
1	Question from moderator
2	Audience question
3	Question via social media
4	Rebuttal

5	Open debate
6	Closing statement
7	Other

The following items should be coded as either "Not Present" (0) or "Present" (1, 2, or 3), unless otherwise noted.

CD: Conceptual Definition
OD: Operational Definition

Anti-intellectualism
CD: Criticism and disparagement of the life of the mind, and those who are considered to represent it; and expressions that minimize the value of that life.

7. OutDen: Outright Denigration
OD: Explicit, overt denigration of, or disparagement toward, intellect or intellectualism.
Example: Rick Santorum: "President Obama once said he wants everybody in America to go to college. *What a snob*."

8. SharpHum: Sharp Humor
OD: Anti-intellectual sentiment communicated through humor, sometimes self-deprecatingly, and lacking the overt contempt of explicit denigration.
Example: 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."*
1: Sharp humor directed at oneself
2: Sharp humor directed at the opponent
3: Sharp humor directed generally

9. ExAlt: Exalting Alternatives
OD: 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.
Example: 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."
1: Exalting alternatives for oneself
2: Exalting alternatives at the opponent
3: Exalting alternatives in general

10. IntLab: Intellectual Labeling
OD: 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.

Example: Scott Brown: "She's earned that title, *she's now a sitting professor* at Harvard Law School."

1: Intellectualizing oneself
2: Intellectualizing the opponent
3: Intellectualizing others in general

11. ElitSym: Elite Symbols
OD: Any mention of a specific institution or congruent metaphor that clearly and contextually suggests elitism, and does so in a negative way.

Example: Mitt Romney: "We have a president, who I think is a nice guy, but he spent too much time at *Harvard*."

1. Elite symbol tied to oneself
2. Elite symbol tied to the opponent
3. Elite symbol in general

The following category refers to positive mentions of education.

12. PosIntel: Positive Intellectualism
OD: Positive mention of formal education, intellect, or informal learning. This includes any evocation of the status quo that is not negative.

Example: Elizabeth Warren, "*I'm proud of the fact that I've made it to one of the top spots in teaching*."

1. Positive intellectualism ties to oneself
2. Positive intellectualism tied to opponent
3. Positive intellectualism in general

General Education
These variables are to be coded only if included in one of the major variables mentioned above.
CD: Any mention of or related to education once a reference is coded for variables 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, or 12.

The following categories relate to education. Unless otherwise noted, code "Present" as 1, "Not Present" as 0:

13. EdPol: Education Policy
OD: Any statement in which a candidate mentions his or her policy plans for education.

Example: Elizabeth Warren: "We need to be making *an investment in those community colleges*."

1. Primary or secondary education
2. Post-secondary education
3. Advanced or professional education
4. General/not specified

14. EdEcon: Education and Economy
OD: Any statement tying education to the economy.

Example: Elizabeth Warren, "We need people who are educated in science, in technology, in engineering, in mathematics, we need people—*a well educated workforce—so we can build a strong future*."

15. PerEd: Personal Education
OD: When a candidate references his or her own education at various levels:
Example: Elizabeth Warren, "I went to a *public university*."
1. PerEdA: Primary
2. PerEdB: Secondary
3. PerEdC: Baccalaureate
4. PerEdD: Advanced/Professional
5. PerEdE: General/not specified

16. OpEd: Opponent Education
OD: When a candidate references his or her opponent's education at various levels:
Example: Scott Brown: "She went to *law school*."
1. OpEdA: Primary
2. OpEdB: Secondary
3. OpEdC: Baccalaureate
4. OpEdD: Advanced/Professional
5. OpEdE: General/not specified

17. EdCost: Education Cost
OD: Any discussion regarding the costs related to education, including college tuition, student loans, student debt, student loan interest rates.
Example: Elizabeth Warren, "*I paid $50 a semester* because America was investing in education."

18. OthEd: Other education
OD: Any discussion regarding education not included in the general education variables above.
Example: Heather Wilson, "I have *a daughter at home who is about to go off to college*."