Fighting Words and Fiery Tone: The Interaction of Political Incivility and Psychological Conflict Orientation

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ABSTRACT

The majority of Americans think that politics has an "incivility problem," and that the problem has grown in the past few decades. They wouldn't be wrong—research demonstrates that negativity and incivility have been increasing since the 1980s (J. G. Geer, 2012; Weber Shandwick, KRC Research, & Powell Tate, 2013). Citizens underestimate, however, the impact that this uncivil tide has on their reactions to political media coverage and to their political behavior. While political scientists have pointed to both positive and negative outcomes of uncivil political communication, for the most part they assume that these behaviors are similar across all individuals.

This dissertation complicates the relationship between incivility and behavior by introducing a key individual predisposition—conflict orientation—into the equation. I first grapple with the challenge of defining incivility, concluding that it should be understood as a synonym for politeness and tying it to linguistic characteristics rather than the substantive message being communicated. I then introduce the notion of conflict orientation. I argue that individuals all experience conflict in different ways; some people enjoy arguments and are perfectly comfortable entering a shouting match in a public place while others become uncomfortable at the sight of an argument and avoid face-to-face confrontation whenever possible. Using six different surveys and survey experiments, I examine the effects of the interaction between conflict orientation and incivility on perceptions of incivility, emotional reactions to political media coverage and political engagement. These tendencies to be conflict-approaching or conflict-avoidant do not make individuals any more or less likely to see media messages as uncivil, but they do produce divergent emotional responses in the face of civil or uncivil messages. The conflict-avoidant recoil from incivility, reporting feelings of disgust and anxiety. The conflict-approaching relish it, reporting greater feelings of enthusiasm and amusement when watching uncivil news clips.

The interaction of conflict orientation and incivility also produces different patterns of media consumption and political participation across Americans. Citizens try to ensure congruence between their predispositions and their environment, preferring media outlets and political activities that will provide a level of conflict and incivility that is tolerable given their conflict orientation. The conflict-approaching will turn towards talk radio, cable news channels and blogs while the conflict-avoidant report preferences for social media and network television. When making decisions about how to engage in politics, conflict-approaching individuals are more likely to report participation in communicative activities that raise the risk of exposure to incivility, activities like commenting on a blog, attending a protest, or persuading others to vote.

These findings raise several important questions about the nature of American politics, particularly whether individuals' conflict orientation has the potential to exacerbate existing participatory inequalities and what role incivility should play in our democracy. Those who are conflict-avoidant are also likely to be members of minority groups that struggle to find equal political voice—women, racial and ethnic minorities, the poor—and an increasingly uncivil media environment could widen the gap between those who can get involved and those who cannot even further. However, I caution against cries for greater civility, as it can be a wolf in sheep's clothing. When anti-democratic messages are conveyed using incivility, citizens recognize their anti-democratic nature. It remains to be seen if they can similarly identify anti-democratic sentiments conveyed in the cloak of civility.

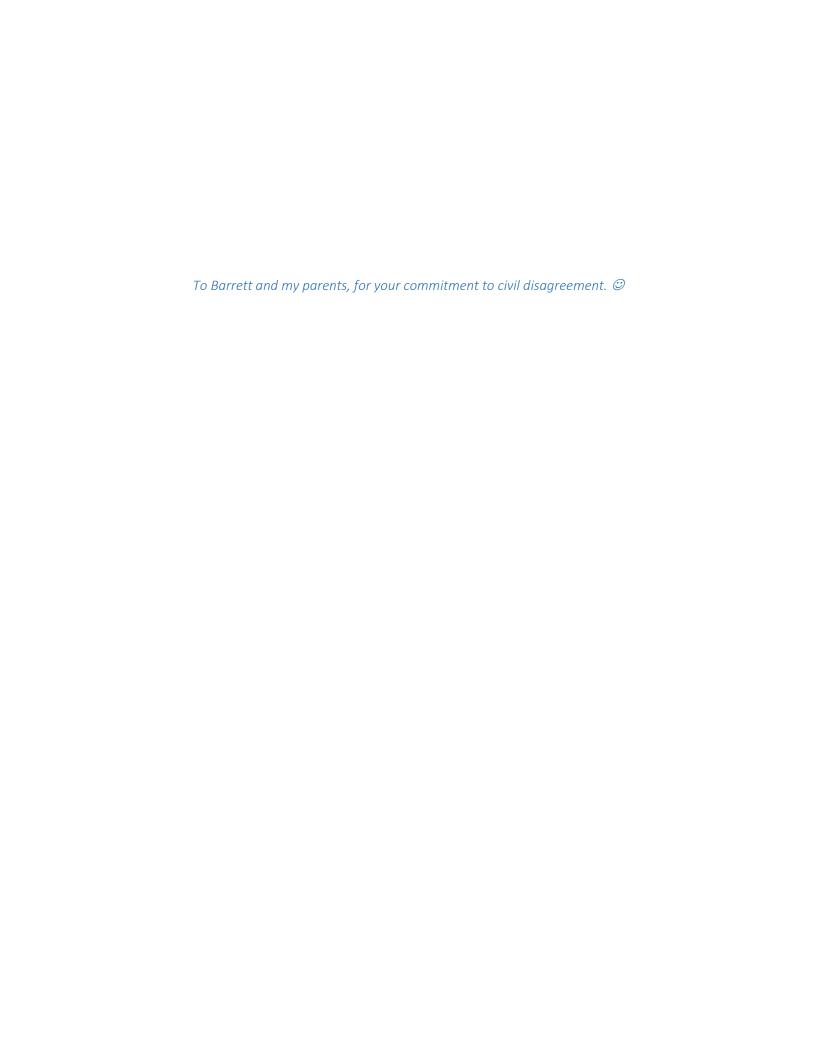


Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	i
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Conflict Communication in Politics	2
Overview of the Dissertation	5
Chapter 2: Is Incivility "Hurting America?"	7
Political Incivility: The Tone's the Thing	8
Description of the Studies	16
Chapter 3: Understanding Psychological Conflict Orientation	23
Experiencing and Reacting to Conflict	23
Measurement of Conflict Orientation: The Conflict Communication Scale	26
Characteristics of Conflict Orientation	33
Conflict Orientation Is Distinct from Political Affiliation	38
Conclusion	39
Chapter 4: Citizens' Perceptions of Media Incivility	41
Variation in Mediated Incivility	42
Literature: Perceptions Matter in Politics	46
Expectations	47
Experiencing Incivility	49
Changing Platforms, Changing Reactions	50
Conflict Orientation Doesn't Change Perceptions	57
Conclusion	60
Chapter 5: Responding to Incivility: Emotion	62
Literature: Emotion in Politics	63
Expectations	63
Methods	65
Results	66
Conclusion: Differential Emotional Responses and Behavior	73
Chapter 6: Responding to Incivility: Behavior	75
The "Conflict-Reducing Exposure" Hypothesis	76
Making Decisions: Choosing Media and Political Activities	81
Results: Media Consumption	84

Results: Political Participation	91
Compounding Existing Participatory Inequalities	93
Conclusion	97
Chapter 7: Conclusion	98
The Impact of the Conflict Orientation-Incivility Interaction	98
Moving Forward: Directions for Future Research	100
Civility and Incivility: The Angel and Devil on Our Shoulders?	102
Works Cited	104
Appendix A	119
Distributions and Correlations for the Conflict Communication Scale	119
Appendix B	122
Additional Study Information	122
Study 1: Perceptions of Civility (Mechanical Turk)	122
Study 2: Survey Sampling International	124
Study 3: Project Implicit	137
Study 4: MTurk	144
Study 5: Mechanical Turk	153
Appendix C	163
Full Regression Tables for Chapter 6: Responding to Incivility	163
Analyzing the Behavior-Conflict Orientation Relationship Using a 10-item CCS Measure	172
Appendix D	174
Codebook for Content Analysis of Cable and Network News Segments	174

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Chapter 1: Introduction

"Without a doubt, America has a civility problem" —Civility in America 2013 Report, Weber Shandwick and Powell Tate

If the first step to overcoming a problem is to acknowledge you have one, American democracy should be well on its way to rehabilitation. Americans are not afraid to admit that they have a "civility problem," that our political leaders and the mass public struggle to be polite or respectful to those with whom they disagree, or that they would prefer our Congressmen stand their ground over compromise. In fact, elected officials and citizens alike acknowledge the problem. In 2010, Lanny Davis, founder of the Civility Project and former White House Counsel to President Clinton, commented that the level of vitriol was the worst he'd seen in his forty years in Washington ("Uncivil War," 2010). Eighty-three percent of respondents to the 2013 Civility in America survey say they believe that politics have become increasingly uncivil and that incivility in government is harmful to the future of the country. Furthermore, when pressed to allocate blame for increasing incivility, individuals surveyed point to both the politicians and the media (Weber Shandwick et al., 2013).

Americans are quick to acknowledge that incivility is a nationwide problem, but most report that it has little effect on their own behavior. Public relations firm Weber Shandwick reports that Americans encounter some form of incivility about 17 times in an average week, or about two times per day. Half of these experiences are offline, or "in real life," while the other half are experienced online (Weber Shandwick et al., 2013). Citizens acknowledge that incivility has become a daily part of their lives and are quick to point fingers to politicians and the media as the cause. However, only a quarter of those respondents state that they have taken any action in response to that experience. Americans are concerned about incivility, but when faced with it they claim to be making few changes to their behavior.

Or are they? In this dissertation, I argue that incivility shapes Americans' political behavior. But incivility doesn't affect everyone equally or in the same direction. Instead, its power depends on how an individual is predisposed to react to conflict—whether they find it exciting, feel uncomfortable, or avoid it at all costs.

This interaction between incivility and conflict orientation, in turn, shapes how citizens perceive incivility in the news media, their emotional reactions to that content, and ultimately their decisions about political news consumption and engagement in traditional political activities like campaign donation, attending protests, or writing to their Congressmen. From this perspective, the rise of incivility in political media—critical institutions that inform and motivate citizens—has transformed the nature of who gets involved by changing the resources needed to successfully engage with the style and structure of political discourse. Specifically, citizens now need to be able to regularly tolerate or even welcome incivility in the political sphere. Citizens with a conflict-approaching orientation, who enjoy conflict, have the ability to navigate political media and certain types of political activities in a way their conflict-avoidant counterparts do not.

Conflict Communication in Politics

Harold Lasswell (1936) stated that communication was about "who says what, to whom, in what channel, with what effect" and that "Politics is who gets what, when, and how." If both of these statements are true, then political communication is conflictual, as people seek to use an increasing range of interpersonal and mediated platforms to persuade others that resources should be distributed in their favor. Policy arguments are still made on the op-ed pages of newspapers, but they are also found in citizens' tweets at their Congressional representatives and the back-and-forth discussion of guests and journalists on cable news channels. It is easier than ever for individual citizens to connect to political elites directly through social media and express their opinions about the allocation of political resources. The news media also make it easier for political elites to go head to head in making their public case for specific policies, programs, and political decisions. Political communication is frequently the communication of disagreement, of competing perspectives, and of conflict.

And yet we can think about political conflict communication as having two dimensions—the degree of disagreement over substance and the degree of tonal conflict, or incivility. While incivility can take many forms and definitions, I use it as a synonym for politeness, a continuum of language and tone that ranges from the polite to name-calling and insults to racial slurs and obscenities. Political communication can vary in substantive disagreement and incivility simultaneously. For example, imagine that NBC's *Meet the Press* invites Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Mitch McConnell (R-KY) on to the show to discuss the government's response to increased militarization in the Middle East. The two could agree on the substantive issue and solutions to the problem at hand (unlikely, in this case) or disagree. However, they could also convey their agreement or disagreement in more or less civil ways. It is one thing to say "I do not think that sending troops is the most effective strategy," and another to say "You're insane to think sending troops is a remotely effective strategy!" The second approach is uncivil.

Figure 1 displays the two dimensions of conflict communication along a continuum demonstrating that individuals can be exposed to high or low levels of incivility and high or low levels of disagreement. While the two components are portrayed here as orthogonal to one another, it is more likely that there is a relationship between them. As more contrasting perspectives are added to the conversation, the conversation could take a more uncivil tone¹—these types of conversations would be clustered in the top right side of the figure. As Figure 1 shows, contemporary cable news programming could be seen as high-incivility/high-disagreement communication. Similarly, those familiar with high school debate competitions or Robert's Rules of Order that govern many legislative bodies can envision conversations in which there is a large range of competing perspectives but minimal incivility. These examples of political communication would fall in the lower right quadrant. The more challenging types of conflict communication to imagine are those that minimize disagreement, only showing one perspective on an issue. However, a document like a press release is often written from a single point of view and in civil, respectful terms. We can turn to history for an example of communication that was high in incivility but low in disagreement. The partisan newspapers of the early 1800s presented their

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¹ Although they don't have to be—Diane Rehm's NPR show, for example, frequently offers many different viewpoints but does so in a civil manner. This show, however, would fall closer to "high school debate" on Figure 1 than to the top right quadrant.

perspective on the day's issues but did not hold back in their vehement expression of disgust and disdain for the other side (Ladd, 2011; Schudson, 1981).

Partisan Newspapers (1840s)

Incivility

Press Release High School Debate

Disagreement

Figure 1: Dimensions and Examples of Communication Conflict

As the examples in Figure 1 suggest, conflict communication can be experienced in a range of social interactions. It can be interpersonal, like in a high school debate or conversation with a friend, where two or more individuals express their personal opinions face-to-face. It can be mediated, in which a viewer watches, reads, or listens to other individuals' disagreement and incivility. Considering all the ways in which discussion varies across both dimensions of communication conflict could fill volumes. Therefore, while I recognize the importance of substantive disagreement in shaping political behavior, in this dissertation I focus on a single dimension of communication conflict—incivility—as expressed in a single communication sphere—the mass media.

I emphasize incivility in the media for three primary reasons. First, the media are citizens' primary source for learning about politics. Downs (1957) notes that the rational voter does not have the time to devote to learning about every facet of government, and subsequent research on voting behavior demonstrates that, regardless of the cognitive processes by which they arrive at political decisions, the media are a well-worn path to political information (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1980; Lau & Redlawsk, 2006; Lupia, 1994). Delli Carpini and Keeter add that "much of one's observed knowledge about politics must come, at least initially, from the mass media" (1996, 185). People turn to the media to learn the details and tenor of the political climate, so it is important to understand how the media's tone might influence citizens' perceptions and decisions.

Second, research by Mutz and Martin (2001) suggests that citizens are exposed to the greatest amount of cross-cutting exposure—what I've been calling substantive disagreement or conflict—

through attention to media. Disagreement is taken as a given in the contemporary media environment, even when one side is held up as a straw man to be attacked and easily taken down. Americans expect political debate on important issues to include disagreement and they expect to encounter this disagreement when they turn on the television or read an article. By grounding my research in political media, then, I am investigating communication conflict in the form citizens are most likely to encounter it.

The media's role as a source of disagreement also opens it up as a likely source of uncivil messages. And indeed we see that as general negativity increases in political ads and news coverage, so too does incivility. Sobieraj and Berry (2011) find that cable news programs, blog posts, and talk radio shows had at least one "outrage incident"—the presence of one of thirteen different types of rude or uncivil behavior. These incidents include mockery, misrepresentative exaggeration, insulting language and name-calling. These types of language are manifestations of incivility that I argue are shaping citizens' reactions to media that are found across different media formats.

Conflict communication is not expressed in a vacuum. When political elites debate one another on cable news shows or express their dissatisfaction with a policy decision on their Facebook accounts, citizens react. Some people will be drawn into the fray while others will change the channel or scroll over a nasty post. In short, incivility in political media interacts with individuals' predispositions towards conflict. As individuals, we experience and respond to conflict in different ways. This conflict orientation, defined as one's experience of argument, confrontation and disagreement, is a reaction to both dimensions of conflict. One's conflict orientation shapes how he or she feels when faced with someone who disagrees with them—regardless of whether the disagreement is expressed in a civil or uncivil manner. But more important for this project, it also shapes how one feels in an environment with low disagreement but high or low incivility. The studies in the following chapters attempt to isolate content from tone, varying the presence of incivility but not disagreement, it is possible to tease out the ways in which conflict orientation is a response to the tone of disagreement, rather than disagreement itself.

For example, return to the hypothetical discussion between Nancy Pelosi and Mitch McConnell on *Meet the Press*. Both of the statements—"I do not think that sending troops is the most effective strategy," and "You're insane to think sending troops is a remotely effective strategy!"—express disagreement, but the first does so in a civil manner while the other invokes uncivil language. Citizens will react differently to the first statement than the second. However, while the political science literature suggests that citizens will have uniformly more negative responses to the uncivil statement, I argue that their responses will differ on the basis of their conflict orientation. Those people who have a negative reaction to conflict—who dislike argument and are uncomfortable when they witness fighting—will respond poorly to the uncivil version of the comment. They will feel anxious or disgusted by what they have just seen. However, those who enjoy conflict—who find argument exciting and are entertained by the couple across the restaurant who are shouting at one another—will feel amused and entertained by the same uncivil statement.

I then hypothesize that these initial affective reactions translate into differences in political behaviors. Substantial research in political psychology has explored the connections between affect and political decisions, from vote choice to media attention to candidate evaluation (Brader, 2006; Huddy, Feldman, & Cassese, 2007; MacKuen, Marcus, Neuman, & Keele, 2007). The buildup of these affective

links—both positive and negative—between particular political activities, media platforms, and incivility leads conflict orientation to have an impact on individuals' decisions to participate in certain political activities and to consumer particular types of political media. Specifically, individuals who like conflict are more likely to participate in political activities in which they might have to express or defend their own opinions and to report greater preference for high-incivility media like blogs and cable television.

The current literature misses interesting and important heterogeneity in the affective and behavioral effects of political incivility, as these effects vary with the conflict orientation of the individual experiencing uncivil communication. These heterogeneous effects are important to the extent that incivility has the potential to mobilize those individuals who enjoy argument and disagreement—the conflict approachers—while discouraging those who have a negative association with conflict from pursuing certain information sources or political activities. The fact that the conflict-approaching are more involved in certain elements of politics raises concerns about democratic equality—specifically given that the conflict-approaching are more likely to have additional political resources because of their demographic and social characteristics. Ultimately, the results presented in the following chapters demonstrate not only the ways that individual psychological differences can impact people's choices, but also an awareness of the broader political patterns that come out of these individual reactions.

Beyond the substantive contribution of this work to literature on political participation and media effects, it also represents one of the first uses of large-n surveys to extensively measure conflict orientation and evaluate the Conflict Communication Scale as a measure of conflict orientation in the political arena. While the scale was validated using undergraduate students in psychology labs, this work examines conflict orientation and its connections to other demographic and social characteristics using much more diverse sets of individuals and more sophisticated measurement techniques.

Overview of the Dissertation

Decades of research across several disciplines have yielded a range of definitions of incivility, tying the concept not only to the use of specific language but also to democratic action, power, and interpersonal relations. In chapter 2, I outline several of these understandings of what it means to be uncivil. Drawing on literature in linguistics, I lay out my definition of incivility as equivalent to politeness and mutual respect and situate it in the language and institutional structures of American media. In examining incivility, I focus solely on the tone of communication rather than the substance. The tone of mediated communication is central to understanding citizens' reactions to incivility within the context of routine political communication—that which occurs in everyday media coverage and political discourse. I then develop the connection between conflict orientation and incivility to argue for the use of this psychological predisposition as a means of understanding the heterogeneous effects of political incivility. Chapter 2 also introduces and describes the six original studies from which the empirical material in this dissertation is collected.

In Chapter 3, I more fully elaborate on the concept of conflict orientation, drawing on research in social and organizational psychology to differentiate between this trait-based orientation that captures how individuals experience conflict and more situation-based psychological constructs that focus on strategies for resolving specific types of conflict. I present the Conflict Communication Scale (Goldstein, 1999), developed by psychologists to measure conflict orientation, and demonstrate that an adapted, shorter version of the scale continues to capture the underlying latent variable. After examining how each of the items in the adapted scale connects to the others, I analyze data from each

of my studies to describe the relationships between orientations toward conflict and other relevant political, social and demographic variables.

Chapter 4 explores the way in which media type influences citizens' perceptions of incivility. Much content-analytic research has documented variation in the presence of incivility across different platforms. However, knowing how much incivility is objectively present in media coverage of politics only matters if individuals are perceiving incivility in the same way that it is being objectively assessed. In the first section, I review the research on media incivility in order to categorize media platforms as more or less civil. I then present the results of a survey experiment that show which characteristics of incivility identified in content analysis are frequently perceived in television, radio, and news clips. Furthermore, I argue that while affective and behavioral responses are influenced by one's conflict orientation, perceptions are not. Those individuals who are uncomfortable with conflict are not more likely to identify a particular act or communication as uncivil, they simply have a stronger negative response to it.

These negative responses (and the corresponding positive responses for the conflict-approaching) drive the research presented in Chapter 5. In the first of two chapters focusing on the heterogeneous affective and behavioral impacts of incivility, I present experimental results demonstrating that while conflict-avoidant individuals experience greater negative emotions in response to incivility, their conflict-approaching counterparts have much more positive reactions. Chapter 6 focuses on the behavioral implications of conflict orientation, drawing on survey results to show that certain media outlets and participatory activities are less appealing to the conflict-avoidant than the conflict-approaching. These differences, taken into consideration in conjunction with traditional arguments about the role of socio-economic status in political participation, suggest that the interaction between the current media landscape and conflict orientation has the potential to exacerbate existing political inequalities.

Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation with a review of the theoretical expectations and key results. I discuss the implications of this work for political psychology and political science more broadly by investigating conflict orientation's potential to exacerbate existing inequalities in political participation.

Chapter 2: Is Incivility "Hurting America?"

"I made a special effort to come on the show today, because I have privately, amongst my friends and also in the occasional newspapers and television shows, mentioned this show as being bad...And I wanted to—I felt that that wasn't fair and I should come here and tell you that I don't—it's not so much that it's bad, as it's hurting America."—Jon Stewart on CNN's Crossfire, October 2004

When Jon Stewart appeared on CNN's *Crossfire* and delivered the scathing indictment that ultimately led to the shows' demise, he emphasized that the show was "bad" because of both the tone and substance of its debate. "Why do we have to fight?" he asked immediately upon arriving on the show.

In explicitly challenging the approach that *Crossfire* took to covering the news, Stewart was highlighting a trend that has been growing since the 1980s—that towards adversarial, negative political media coverage. The increase in incivility, and communication conflict can be traced to institutional changes in both government and mass media, and have been well documented by others (e.g. Berry & Sobeiraj, 2011, 2014; Patterson, 2011). The effects of incivility, negativity, and oppositional framing on political behavior have also been documented with conflicting results: negative advertising has been found to both positively and negatively affect political participation (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1997; Freedman, Franz, & Goldstein, 2004), incivility both mobilizes citizens and lowers perceptions of government legitimacy and political trust (Brooks & Geer, 2007; J. Geer & Lau, 2006; Kahn & Kenney, 1999; Mutz & Reeves, 2005).

These sometimes-oppositional behavioral outcomes represent the challenges of balancing deliberative and participatory democratic ideals as well as the manifestation of heterogeneous citizen preferences and personalities. Democracy hinges on citizen participation as well as on the exchange of ideas and expression of opinions. But the institutional structures that encourage one of these components frequently do so at the expense of the other. As the research above suggests, the use of uncivil language by the media or political elites arouses emotions and passions that encourage participation but make it difficult to develop the mutual respect and shared community that lead to expression of opinion. What is more, every citizen has different engrained, apolitical personality traits and personal predispositions that lead them to gravitate towards certain forms of political engagement and expression over others. For example, extraversion and openness, two personality traits, are associated with individuals' enjoyment of political discussion (Gerber, Huber, Doherty, & Dowling, 2010). These personal psychological traits—extraversion and openness, but also characteristics like one's need for cognition or reactions to conflict—interact with the institutional environment to produce nuanced variation in political behavior. Here, I specifically focus on individuals' responses to incivility and communication conflict to argue that citizen participation will depend on how they respond to conflict more generally in their daily lives.

This reaction to conflict—one's conflict orientation—is a personal predisposition that leads each person to have a different affective and behavioral response to uncivil discourse. Specifically, those citizens who are conflict-avoidant will avoid incivility in their political and personal lives by selecting activities, information sources and social groups that will minimize their exposure to rude or nasty conversation. When they are exposed to incivility, the most conflict-avoidant citizens will have a

negative emotional reaction to the source of the conflict. Their association of this source with high-conflict communication will lead them to avoid repeating similar experiences. In this way, the interaction between incivility and conflict orientation produces a sort of selective exposure—to media, to political activity, and to forms of political discussion.

While the conflict-avoidant will tune out when faced with incivility, the conflict-approaching—those individuals who positively experience conflict—will have the opposite reaction. For these individuals, exposure to incivility will trigger positive emotional responses. Because individuals seek to recreate experiences where they feel happy, excited and similarly positive emotions, these citizens will participate in political activities and engage with political media that invoke incivility in order to feel those emotions again. The repeated association of positive or negative emotions with the experience of political incivility will produce divergent behavioral outcomes for citizens across the spectrum of conflict orientations.

In this chapter, I explore each component of the theory while placing particular emphasis on incivility, its definition, and its evolving role in media coverage. I argue for an understanding of incivility that divorces the concept from the substantive message being conveyed, making it possible to evaluate tone separate from content. I then elaborate on the interaction between incivility and conflict orientation described above and the affective and behavioral outcomes this interaction produces. To conclude, I outline each of the studies used in this dissertation to marshal evidence in support of this theory of conflict orientation-incivility interaction.

Political Incivility: The Tone's the Thing

In this section, my purpose is to clarify the manifestations of incivility I am interested in analyzing and those that, while equally important, are not the primary focus of this dissertation. Linguistic research on politeness and public perceptions of what qualifies as incivility lead me to construct an understanding of incivility that is based on the language and tone used in political communication, rather than the substance of that communication.

After identifying the kinds of language I consider uncivil, I use two primary criteria for distinguishing which forms and contexts of incivility will be considered through this work. First, I differentiate between the deployment of incivility as a tool to achieve specific political ends and individuals' reactions to that deployment. Keith Olbermann had identifiable motivations in calling presidential candidate Sarah Palin "an idiot" or opponents of Obama's health care bill "ghouls" and "subhumans." Uncovering those motivations is not my goal here. Instead, I focus on how this type of language shapes the perceptions, emotions and behavioral reactions of those that hear it. I draw on work in political theory on the politics of recognition to differentiate between questions of why people use civil and uncivil language and how citizens response to that use. Second, I emphasize "everyday" incivility in the context of standard political communication. Rather than examining the ways in which incivility manifests in revolutions, social movements, or times of governmental upheaval, this investigation focuses on incivility as it is manifest in daily discourse and the conventional coverage of political events in the news media. To better articulate this distinction, I briefly venture into the past to explore the ways in which incivility has been presented in media coverage over time.

What Counts as Uncivil Language?

Political scientists typically view civil discourse as a normatively desirable characteristic of democratic government. This agreement about the value of civility has not eliminated confusion about the concept. Civility has been defined in so many ways that it becomes difficult to parse out what it really means to be civil or uncivil. For example, George Washington is known for carrying with him a list of "Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior" that included maxims such as "use no reproachful language against anyone neither curse nor revile." Washington's rules are the mirror image of a more modern definition of incivility: "gratuitous asides that show a lack of respect and/or frustration with the opposition". Others see incivility as tied much more closely to democratic values and specifically disregard for community, elected officials and the truth (Jamieson & Hardy, 2012; Maisel, 2012). Washington's definition facilitates the arrangement of discourse from completely civil—no reproachful language, to borrow his words—to completely uncivil—curses, revulsion, and more. The second definition conflates the tone and substance of the message, suggesting that if someone is polite but still derogatory towards a group or individuals, they are being uncivil. Each understanding of incivility has its benefits and its shortcomings for capturing the relationship between the concept and political behavior.

For the purposes of this project, incivility is equivalent to impoliteness. I am interested in the effects of incivility independent from substance, in understanding individuals' responses to discourse not because the conversation is negative, partisan or demeaning towards an individual or group but because it violates acceptable social norms for the tone of communication. Incivility manifests in the tone and style with which a speaker attacks their addressee's "face," or public self-image. Uncivil or impolite communication, therefore, is any statement that is not respectful of an individuals' desire to maintain their self-image, while polite and civil discourse suggests respect for the person listening and their desires or needs (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Culpeper, 2011). For example, one could say it is either uncivil or impolite to use obscenities or character aspersions in conversation. Table 1 lists the types of language that I consider civil and uncivil throughout the course of this project²

Table 1: Language and Tone that Demonstrates Incivility

A range of "fighting	g words and fiery tones" signal	incivility. These include:
Obscenity	Criticism	Blame
Name-calling	Hostility	Disparaging hyperbole
Interruption	Dismissal	Accusations of Lying
Belittling	Shouting	Name-Calling
Sarcasm	Open emotion	Character assassination
Pointing		
There are also spec	cific types of language that I ide	entify as signaling civility:
Praise	Acknowledgement of common ground	Respect for opposition

² Incivility defined in these terms is not equivalent to the expression of emotion. To be sure, much incivility is characterized by high emotional intensity, but this is distinct from the concept of incivility itself. Future studies will need to assess the interaction between emotional intensity and incivility.

This focus on tone and word choice as key to identifying incivility aligns with citizens' perceptions of what constitutes uncivil communication and behavior. Two recent surveys asked Americans what constituted incivility and over three-quarters of respondents emphasized cursing, belittling, personal attacks, shouting, and interruption (Shea et al., 2010; Weber Shandwick et al., 2013). Research by Huckfeldt and Sprague (1995) demonstrates that objective identification of conflict—in this case, substantive disagreement or cross-cutting exposure—matters less for behavioral outcomes than individuals' perceptions of that conflict and its existence. Therefore, any definition of incivility that helps us understand political responses should take into account what Americans think incivility is.

Incivility includes language that is consistently viewed as outside social norms—racial slurs and obscenity—but also less obvious aggressions like sarcasm and finger-pointing. The citizen-identified characteristics of incivility discussed above also align with what Sobieraj and Berry call "outrage," which "differs conceptually from its more frequently examined compatriot, incivility, because the discourteous gestures implied by incivility...are considerably less dramatic and demeaning than the remarks and behaviors we define as outrageous." However, I emphasize incivility, rather than outrage, because the less dramatic, discourteous gestures should also be considered an important part of conflict communication. Eye-rolling, for example, is not considered an outrageous behavior by Sobieraj and Berry but is used in experiments run by Mutz and Reeves (2005) to suggest uncivil interaction between two political candidates. These sorts of low-drama gestures are more socially acceptable—Joe Wilson would likely have received less coverage if he had rolled his eyes or sighed during Obama's 2009 address to Congress instead of yelling "You lie!" While the media's tendency towards entertainment and sensationalism favors the more dramatic shouting, reactions like an eye roll, finger-pointing or sarcastic comeback are more likely to be included in everyday coverage and conversation. Citizens react to these minimal cues in much the same way they react to highly demeaning language, obscenity and namecalling. We can therefore think of incivility as a continuum: civil language is on one end, moderately uncivil language and tone like sarcasm or eye-rolling falls somewhere in the middle, and highly uncivil language like racial slurs and obscenity towards the other end.

In order to delineate the boundaries around language I deem uncivil, it is useful to briefly discuss the definitions to which I do not ascribe. Many definitions of incivility go beyond the understanding of the concept as simply equivalent to impolite tone and language. These definitions tie the concept to more substantive articulations of disagreement and value-laden content reflective of shared civic and social norms. The same survey respondents who stated that they thought cursing and shouting were incivility also stated that incivility included comments about someone's race or ethnicity (89%), comments about someone's sexual orientation (81%) and questioning someone's patriotism because they have a different opinion (73%; Shea et al., 2010). These responses suggest that incivility can also be defined as tied to democratic ideals and notions of equality. Papacharissi accepts this definition in her work, arguing that incivility requires "disrespect for the collective traditions of democracy" (2004, 267). She lists three ways for a person to be labeled uncivil in their online commentary: verbalizing threats to democracy, assigning stereotypes, and threatening others' rights. This approach to incivility effectively separates the concept from impoliteness but also complicates it. Now, civility and incivility have a substantive component rather than being solely dependent on tone, and one can be uncivil while also remaining polite. One can imagine the "polite racist" who denies African-Americans service in a restaurant or admission to a theater while using techniques of politeness—optimism, apology, reciprocity—"I'm really sorry, sir, but you understand that while we

would like to help you, we cannot serve you here." Polite expression can convey an anti-democratic, exclusionary message that denies civil and political rights. But, because the expression is polite, such a message—as offensive and anti-democratic as it is—is not uncivil in my strict sense of violating the norm of politeness in public discourse. Its rude, off-putting content is not matched in its tone, which, to the contrary, is perfectly polite. Thus, despite its content, I hypothesize that citizens will not hear the comment as jarring.

Under Papacharissi's definition, the statement above is uncivil; the speaker is threatening an individual's rights. However, I argue that while this person's comment is anti-democratic, it is not uncivil. Like me, Chafe (1980) emphasizes the distinction between uncivil and anti-democratic discourse. He draws on the experience of African Americans in the Jim Crow South as an example of anti-democratic civility. He notes, "Blacks also understood the other side of civility--the deferential poses they had to strike in order to keep jobs, the chilling power of consensus to crush efforts to raise issues of racial justice. As victims of civility, blacks had long been forced to operate within an etiquette of race relationships that offered almost no room for collective self-assertion and independence" (8-9). This portrait of race relations suggests that white citizens of Greensboro were polite to their African American counterparts, but that they were using that politeness to prevent African Americans from gaining equal rights and access to services. If their discourse had shifted towards increasingly vulgar language to express African American identity, however—using racial epithets, casting aspersions on their intelligence—then the scenario becomes uncivil as defined here.

Deployment of and Reactions to Incivility

I use the excerpt from Chafe above to specify the confines of this dissertation's research enterprise. Many examples of specific language that ordinary observers deem civil or uncivil are politically important. With the particular research focus I adopt here, I highlight the importance of tone and word choice over the substance of the communication. "Fighting words" and elevated volume sound uncivil to survey respondents and they count as uncivil in my definition. But as Table 1 shows, they do not exhaust the forms that political incivility can take. Nor does this focus engage the ways that polite-sounding words can be deployed in politically oppressive ways. Chafe's example of polite racism also expresses an important area of research into incivility—the deployment of civil and uncivil language to achieve specific aims. It is not a primary pursuit of this dissertation but deserves brief treatment here. Specifically, it highlights the decision—by citizens as well as media and political elites—to deploy civil or uncivil language and the goals these actors hope to achieve in communicating this way.

Susan Herbst captures this understanding of language deployment in her discussion of "strategic civility:" "Civility is best thought of as an asset or tool, a mechanism, or even a technology of sorts" (2011, 4). This perspective easily encompasses Chafe's argument that politeness was used to maintain the status quo in 1950s America. It can be used to explain why, for example, talk show hosts like Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity spend time lambasting their political "opponents"—they see incivility as a tool to instill group boundaries and build community among their followers (Berry & Sobeiraj, 2014).

Considering the deployment of civility and incivility as tools to achieve specific political ends also requires an acknowledgement of what Charles Taylor calls the "politics of recognition." The politics of recognition requires that we recognize each person's basic human dignity as a unique individual as an equal member of the human race (Honneth 1995, Taylor 1994). From this perspective, a democratic

society demands that civility be deployed as a means of treating people with respect and acknowledging their equality. As Sarah Buss explains, politeness expresses respect "in the only way possible. We are, in effect, saying 'I respect you,' 'I acknowledge your dignity'" (quoted in Conover, 2009, 178).

Viewed from this perspective, the decision to use uncivil language is an importantly antidemocratic behavior. However, this project does not seek to investigate when and under what conditions individuals decide to communicate about politics in a civil or uncivil manner. Instead, I accept that civil and uncivil language are deployed for a range of political purposes and instead focus on how individuals react to that language once it is presented through the news media. Is incivility damaging citizens' ability to act authentically and with autonomy, as theorists of the politics of recognition argue?

Empirically, the findings are a mixed bag. Conover (2009) argues that political theories of the politics of recognition align with some (but not all) of the empirical findings from political psychology. Specifically, she points out that political psychology has documented the existence of misrecognition and confirms that it produces harm, manifest in the myriad findings on the impact of stereotype and prejudice on individuals' self-esteem, feelings of efficacy, and engagement. She writes, "The incivility of misrecognition discourages citizens from exercising their rights in public life by making public spaces uninviting, social relations unappealing, and mutual trust unavailable" (2009, 197). This assessment of the impact of incivility (and its frequent counterpart, stereotyping) has been empirically documented by many studies of political behavior. Incivility is linked with decreased trust in government, a decline in mutual respect between discussant, and lower perceptions of government legitimacy (Fishkin, 1991; Kahn & Kenney, 1999; Mutz & Reeves, 2005). From this perspective, incivility influences citizens' reactions, and it does so in ways that harm democracy and fail to achieve a politics of recognition.

However, I argue that Conover's findings suggest that civility can facilitate democratic outcomes but is not required to achieve them. She notes that "even without civility, many citizens are able to safeguard their self-esteem using a variety of [psychological] strategies" (2009, 197). I would take this claim a step further, and state that for some individuals, incivility can induce positive behaviors, encouraging participation and the articulation of divergent viewpoints (J. Geer & Lau, 2006; Mill, 1989; Mouffe, 1999). The goal of this dissertation will be to determine how a psychological trait that makes people more or less disposed to enjoy conflict situations provides some citizens with the resources to better safeguard their self-esteem. These "conflict-approaching" individuals can effectively translate their positive reactions to incivility into positive engagement in the political sphere while leaving others in this world where political space is uninviting and uninviting. The focus here is on citizens' reactions to incivility, to these fighting words and fiery tones, rather than the conditions leading to the use of incivility.

Routine Political Communication

Citizens are quick to spot conflict and incivility at the extremes of politics and in the midst of upheaval. Shea and Sproveri (2012) use the prevalence of references to "mean" and "nasty politics" in American history to suggest that writing about uncivil politics has varied greatly over the past 200 years and that the peaks in these references occur in tandem with the "critical elections" proposed by many historians and political scientists (see, for example, Burnham, 1970; Key, 1955; Sundquist, 1983). These historical observations raise the possibility that incivility is at its most prevalent when a fundamental economic or social issue is forcing the political parties to reconsider their platforms and make substantial changes to their policy stances. Beyond these critical elections, which have occurred

relatively infrequently throughout American history, other forms of political upheaval and extremism facilitate the use of uncivil communication. We certainly expect to see a high volume of shouting, character assassination, and other fighting words during times of political upheaval.

But citizens do not hear shouting and fighting words only during political turmoil, and this project does not focus on incivility as it is manifest in the highly contentious politics of protest and social change. Political conflict communication isn't just found in reactions and revolutions but occurs all the time in routine political discourse. In recent years, the level of negativity in presidential campaigns has increased, politics is increasingly described as "nasty," "hateful," and "bitter," and a majority of survey respondents note that politics have been less civil since the election of President Obama (J. G. Geer, 2012; Shea & Sproveri, 2012; Wolf, Strachan, & Shea, 2012). Routine political commentary and political conversation are now perceived as uncivil, particularly when presented by the news media.

We can further examine the importance of the media in highlighting "everyday incivility" in politics by examining historical use of incivility by media outlets and elites. There are dozens of examples of politicians engaging in uncivil discourse in routine interactions with one another, from Alexander Hamilton describing John Adams as having "great and intrinsic defects in his character" (character assassination) to Representative Joe Wilson's shout of "You lie!" during President Obama's address to a joint session of Congress (shouting, accusations of lying; Grim, 2009; The Miller Center, 2013). Like with most political exchanges throughout history, however, Americans didn't witness either of these comments or actions first-hand, but instead heard them over the radio, through the newspaper, or through some other form of mass media.

Focusing on mediated incivility highlights the importance of the media for citizens' understandings of politics while also confining incivility to the set of verbal and physical characteristics highlighted in Table 1. Delli Carpini and Keeter note that, "much of one's observed knowledge about politics must come, at least initially, from the mass media," (1996, 185) and the media have been shown to expose viewers to a more diverse set of perspectives than conversations with one's friends, family, or coworkers (Mutz & Martin, 2001). Incivility and impoliteness are most likely to arise from disagreement over substantive issues, and much media coverage of politics is focused on these disputes (Bennett, 2002; Graber, 2001; Patterson, 2011). The focus on the horse race, the desire to get a catchy sound bite, and the need to pit opposing perspectives against one another ensure that the media serve as mirror and magnifying glass, reflecting the tenor of political discourse and augmenting the incivility that is already present.

Throughout history, then, media coverage of politics has only compounded perceptions of politics as uncivil, introducing or quoting others' rude, impolite language to articulate standard political information. The partisan newspapers of the early 1800s were unabashed in their mockery and disdain for the opposition. These papers were quick to dismiss perspectives that did not align with their own, and to do so in rude and confrontational ways. For example, one Wisconsin newspaper reported that "Mr. Lincoln is fungus from the corrupt womb of bigotry and fanaticism" (Clayton, 2012). The goal was to undermine the opponent by whatever means necessary, leading to a media that was willing to privilege particular perspectives while denigrating their opponent through uncivil dialogue.

At the turn of the 20th century, the press adopted a norm of journalistic independence and objectivity, advocating "principles and ideas rather than prejudices and partisanship" (Emery, Emery, &

Roberts, 2000). Here, different perspectives were encouraged, often in the same articles, but politicians and journalists still managed to interject the sensational and uncivil into the daily paper, particularly in the editorial section. Early media mogul William Randolph Hearst focused on the principles behind what he called the "Raw Deal" and wrote to his editors that "President [Roosevelt]'s taxation program is essentially Communism. It is, to be sure, a bastard product of Communism and demagogic democracy, a mongrel creation...evolved by a composite personality which might be labeled Stalin Delano Roosevelt" (Proctor, 2007, 192). In the everyday discussion of policy and politics, incivility became a way to express dissatisfaction and disagreement with the establishment and status quo.

The era of broadcast television and radio was the most likely of these three historical periods (early 1800s, early 1900s and the mid-1900s) to minimize incivility and maximize viewers' exposure to diverse viewpoints, primarily due to the implementation of the Federal Communication Commission's Fairness Doctrine, which was operative from 1949 to 2011. The doctrine was designed to ensure that all political discussion over the airwaves—so all programming on network television and radio—did not exclude any particular point of view. Broadcasters were also required to alert individuals of personal attacks against them and give them a chance to respond (Federal Communications Commission, 1948; Matthews, 2011). Not only were media outlets trying to incorporate as many perspectives on debates as they deemed necessary, they were also presenting that information in a relatively polite manner. As one writer for *Fortune* magazine noted in 1960, "American political debate is increasingly conducted in a bland, even-tempered atmosphere and extremists of any kind are becoming rare" (Seligman, 1960). Incivility as a component of everyday media coverage has ebbed and flowed throughout history as norms and resources have evolved.

The advent of cable news channels and the internet has served to fragment the media environment and encourage a subset of media outlets to return to the partisan perspectives common in the 1800s. The increasing number of news sources and the ease with which citizens can access them only reinforces the perception that incivility is increasing and the media are to blame. Forty-eight percent of those surveyed as part of the 2010 Allegheny College Survey of Civility and Compromise in American Politics stated that they believed civility had declined in contemporary politics, and over half of these respondents pointed to radio talk shows and television news programs as playing a major role in the decline (Shea et al., 2010).³ Content analysis of "outrage incidents"—a set of characteristics that overlap in many ways with my understanding of incivility—in newspaper columns, talk radio, cable news, and internet blogs, finds that this type of discourse is more common in radio talk shows and cable television than in newspapers and blogs, with an average of 23-24 incidents per radio or television show compared to 6 per blog or newspaper column (Sobeiraj & Berry, 2011). As the examples sprinkled throughout this chapter suggest, modern political coverage is rife with inicivility in day-to-day political communication.

This quick review of the presence of incivility in media discourse throughout history serves to remind us that modern dialogue is less distinctive than we might think. Variation in the presence of

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³ Sixty one percent of participants attributed the decline in civility to both radio and television news. Other mediarelated causes included blogs (42%), Glenn Beck (40%), late night talk shows like Stewart and Leno (38%) and Rachel Maddow (25%). It is also indicative that six of the 12 options are media-related, even if they were selected by the researchers rather than provided by the respondents.

incivility both within and across historical periods demonstrates that uncivil discourse can be an effective way to reach specific groups of followers (as was the case in the era of the partisan press) or to garner increased media coverage (as cable shows and internet sites hurry to replay outrageous messages). No matter the era, certain types of media could be considered more disposed to publish incivility than others.

Incivility varies across time and source, but each of these historical examples highlights the presence of "everyday" or "routine" incivility that is a part of political communication. None of the speakers referenced above are considered extremists presenting views outside the "acceptable" range of their time. Several of them, like Alexander Hamilton and William Randolph Hearst, were members of a core group of political elites using incivility not in an environment of protest and revolutionary action but in the course of regular political exchange with their peers.

As I outlined in the last section, the focus here is not on elites' decisions to use uncivil rhetoric in their routine political discussions, nor the media's decision to report these sound bites or add their own uncivil rhetoric. Instead, I am examining the responses of American citizens to this "everyday" use of incivility in standard political communication. While it is impossible to go back and assess the personal characteristics of readers of the partisan press or muckraking journalism, enduring psychological constructs like the response to conflict likely led certain individuals to seek out those information sources in the same manner that today's citizens' media choices are shaped by their predispositions. Despite the enduring nature of these traits, little research has been done into how and why individuals' respond to incivility. I argue that incivility provokes different responses across individuals, and these differences can be attributed to one's willingness to engage in confrontational or argumentative communication.

Making Incivility Congruent with Conflict Orientation

Incivility is an enduring component of political communication with implications for citizen behavior, effecting trust in government, perceptions of legitimacy, and participation. Previous research has predominantly assumed that incivility has homogenous effects across individuals, but there are some indications that its impact is dependent on characteristics of the individual. Specifically, Mutz and Reeves (2005) find that the relationship between incivility and trust in government is moderated by an individual's conflict orientation—their comfort when experiencing conflict in social settings. Mutz and Reeves experimentally manipulate the expression of incivility in a televised debate, and they do so while attempting to hold the political content of the debate constant. In other words, they conceive of incivility in the same way that I do here; as a tone distinct from the political messages being conveyed. When they interact this experimental condition with individuals' conflict avoidance, they find that people who have moderate to high levels of avoidance trust the government much less when exposed to incivility. However, those who are low in conflict avoidance report slightly greater levels of political trust in the uncivil condition than the civil condition. Building on this work, I argue that the interaction between incivility and conflict orientation extends to behavior beyond trust in government, influencing decisions about where to get one's political news and how to get involved in political activities.

Why would conflict orientation shape citizens' reactions to incivility? Conflict orientation is a stable personality trait that determines how one experiences and reacts to conflict (Bresnahan, Donohue, Shearman, & Guan, 2009; Goldstein, 1999; Testa, Hibbing, & Ritchie, 2014). I will elaborate

further on conflict orientation and the strategy for measuring it across individuals in the next chapter, but I stress here that it is about a person's feelings when faced with conflict, rather than the explicit strategies he or she uses to resolve that conflict. When a person is exposed to conflict in the form of incivility, their reaction will be colored by their conflict orientation.

Like incivility, conflict orientation can be thought of as being arrayed along a continuum, with some individuals having a very strong avoidance reaction to conflict, others being very willing to approach conflict, and most falling somewhere in the middle with a "conflict ambivalent" response. When these individuals are placed in a high-conflict environment, they will react in different ways. Because people try to minimize their experience of negative emotions while repeating events that produce positive emotions, conflict will produce divergent emotional responses across the range of conflict orientations (Cacioppo, Priester, & Berntson, 1993; Fredrickson, 2002). The conflict-avoidant will try to minimize the presence of incivility in their lives because it elicits negative emotions and reactions while the conflict-approaching will create positive, enjoyable associations with conflict. In politics, attempts to minimize or emphasize the presence of incivility will manifest in behavioral choices—decisions about from which media to seek political information and in which political activities to participate.

In addition to determining that emotional responses to stimuli affect behavior, psychologists have found that people want congruence between their personal predispositions and their environment and will take action to increase that congruence (Deutsch, 1985). In the context of political participation, both affective response and the need for congruence serve as mechanisms by which the interaction between conflict orientation and incivility translate into different participatory habits for avoidant and approaching citizens. Those individuals who are conflict-avoidant will avoid activities where they are more likely to be exposed to incivility or open themselves up to criticism from others: protests, commenting on blogs, persuading others to vote or working for a campaign, for example. Those who enjoy and embrace conflict—the conflict-approaching—will be more likely to participate in these sorts of activities. They will employ similar strategies when choosing what media they use to collect political information and how frequently they do so. The conflict-avoidant will turn to forms of media that citizens perceive as more civil, while the conflict-approaching will look to shows and sites that are willing to take a more impolite tone.

Description of the Studies

To test these claims that incivility interacts with conflict orientation to influence affective and behavioral reactions, I fielded a series of six surveys and survey experiments between March 2012 and August 2014 using three different online recruitment services: Project Implicit (PI), ⁴ Amazon's Mechanical Turk, and Survey Sampling International. Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and PI both provide non-representative convenience samples of individuals who have registered to take studies or complete tasks, while Survey Sampling International uses a quota system to achieve a more balanced but non-probability-based sample of individuals registered through their site. With the exception of the PI study, which was hosted on Project Implicit's servers, the surveys were run through the open-source

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⁴ Project Implicit is a non-profit that supports collaborative research concerning thoughts and feelings occurring outside of conscious awareness or control (www.projectimplicit.com).

survey platform Limesurvey. Table 2 provides a general summary of the sample size, procedure, and relevant empirical chapters for each of the six studies.

Project Implicit and Mechanical Turk both invite interested parties to sign up to participate in tasks. In MTurk, these tasks can range from completing an academic survey to labelling elements of a picture, to many other quick activities, and Mechanical Turk participants get paid a small amount of money for completing the task. In the studies described below, participants were paid between five cents and one dollar, depending on the difficulty and length of the survey.

On Project Implicit, participants are not paid for their participation, but can take one of over a dozen standard Implicit Association Tests designed to measure individuals' unconscious associations between various target groups. For example, the Race IAT presents pictures of African American and White faces and good and bad words on the screen, and asks participants to categorize the faces into groups listed in the top corners of the screen. People participate in several trials where they are asked to correctly sort the words and faces. In some trials the "good" words and African American faces are sorted together, while other trials group "bad" words and African American faces. If an individual sorts words faster when good and African American are paired together than when bad and African American are paired together, they are showing an implicit bias towards African Americans. Appendix B explains the IAT in greater detail. If visitors to Project Implicit register and fill out some optional demographic information, they can be randomly assigned to participate in one of a number of studies in the site's research pool. For these studies, individuals likely complete an IAT, but they are also asked other questions relevant to specific researchers' interests. The study described below was part of the research pool on Project Implicit, which means that participants were randomly assigned to complete it, rather than choosing a task that interested them like Mechanical Turk workers did.

The final service I used to recruit participants was Survey Sampling International (SSI), an organization that will sell panels of survey respondents who complete surveys online, through their mobile phones, using landlines, and through the mail. The samples are more diverse than those found in convenience samples because researchers who use SSI's samples implement their own quota system. Using this system, the demographic characteristics of the final group from whom data is collected should reflect a distribution selected by the researchers—in our case, that of the 2010 Census.

As can be seen from Table 3, the quota system employed by SSI was marginally better at reflecting nationwide distributions of gender and race, but fails to capture variation in education, particularly at the low end. It is unsurprising that all three formats fail to recruit participants with a high school diploma or less, given that those individuals are also much less likely to use the internet (US Census Bureau, 2013). Each of the three sampling strategies, however, produces substantial variation across key demographic variables even when that are not accurately reflecting the distribution of those characteristics across the national population.

Much of the recent research on the effectiveness of online convenience samples has focused on Mechanical Turk. Amazon's online "marketplace for work" has been found to be a relatively inexpensive means of providing political scientists with experimental participants, but it also has many of the same limitations found in other frequently used convenience samples, like college students (Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz, 2012; see Druckman & Kam, 2011; Sears, 1986 for concerns about student samples). That being

said, respondents recruited through Mechanical Turk tend to be more representative of the U.S. population than similar in-person samples, suggesting that findings drawn from samples of MTurk workers are also likely to occur in other groups (Berinsky et al., 2012). Further research comparing crowd-sourcing sites like MTurk to more nationally representative online samples also demonstrates that while these samples display demographic differences, the experimental findings from both samples remain very similar (Weinberg, Freese, & McElhattan, 2014).

This research provides evidence of the external validity of MTurk samples, reducing my concerns about the effects of demographic differences or other individual-level characteristics of the sample affecting experimental results. Ultimately, these samples allow me to test the theoretical connections outlined in this chapter on a group of people that are more diverse than the traditional laboratory sample.⁵

Study 1: Perceptions of Incivility across Media Platforms

To test expectations about the differences in evaluations of tone, disagreement and the presence of incivility, 600 individuals were recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk. These participants were first asked several questions about their attitudes towards conflict and compromise, then randomly assigned to one of six different experimental treatments that were based on 30-second edited excerpts from either MSNBC's *Dylan Ratigan Show* or *Morning Joe*. The material was presented as the original video, as audio with the visuals removed, or as a transcript of the exchange. Both excerpts were on economic topics: *Morning Joe* interviewed then-Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-VA) about the controversy surrounding bonuses for AIG employees, while *Dylan Ratigan* featured a round table discussion of tax reform and the budget deficit. In a pretest conducted on a different sample of MTurk workers, the video versions of these treatments were ranked as moderately uncivil, and there was no statistical difference in the average perceived incivility of the *Dylan Ratigan* clip in comparison to that of *Morning Joe*⁷. For this reason, the analyses conducted using this study will only compare findings across platforms, rather than making distinctions between the two shows.

After exposure to the first treatment, participants completed a series of questions about the levels of incivility and disagreement found in the material, as well as their emotional responses to it. They were then shown a second version of the treatment, matched on the show but varying the platform. For example, if a participant saw the video clip from *Dylan Ratigan* first, he or she would then be asked to read the transcript or listen to the audio version. Not only does this within-subjects design improve the power of the study, but it allows for comparison of reactions to the different formats by the

⁶ See Study 2 description for more information about the videos and Appendix B for examples of visuals and the text of the exchange.

⁵ Full question wording and details of experimental treatments are available in Appendix B.

⁷ In the pretest, 300 MTurk participants were randomly assigned to watch one of six videos—a civil or uncivil clip from *Morning Joe, The Dylan Ratigan Show,* or *Hannity*. They were then asked, "To what extent was the clip you just watched uncivil?" They could respond on a scale from one to five, with one indicating "not at all uncivil" and five representing "extremely uncivil." *Morning Joe* and *The Dylan Ratigan Show* were found to be statistically indistinguishable in both the civil and uncivil conditions. The uncivil clips used to build the treatments in this paper were evaluated as follows: M_{MorningJoe}=2.89, M_{Ratigan}=2.98, p<0.69. Both the civil and uncivil clips from *Hannity* were seen as more uncivil than their MSNBC counterparts (Morning Joe and Dylan Ratigan) and were therefore excluded from the treatment set.

same individual, thereby holding constant any effects of individual-level variables that might vary across treatment groups.

Study 2: Emotional Responses to Incivility

The data for this chapter was collected as part of a multi-researcher survey experiment conducted on a nationally representative sample of 600 participants by Survey Sampling International (SSI). In order to fill sampling quotas, participants first filled out demographic questions about their age, race, education, gender and partisanship. If they met eligibility requirements, they completed three other researchers' brief surveys and a series of two screening questions to ensure that they were reading and paying attention to the survey.⁸ The questions and treatments for this experiment were the third set out of four.

After participants filled out the shortened version of the Conflict Communication Scale, they were told that they would watch a short clip from a recent political newscast and then be asked a series of questions based on the video. Participants were assigned to one of four treatments that varied in their level of civility. The clips were either civil or uncivil and came from either MSNBC's *Morning Joe* or *The Dylan Ratigan Show*. Because a pilot test of the treatments suggested that the clips from the two shows were viewed similarly across key measures, the analyses in this paper focus only on the difference between the civil and uncivil treatments and not on distinctions between those participants who saw *Morning Joe* and those who saw *Dylan Ratigan*.

As with any experimental treatment, the videos used here represent a balance between the desire for ecological validity and a realistic experience on the part of participants and the need to control as much of the content as possible to ensure that the treatments differ only on the construct of interest (Druckman & Kam, 2011; Kinder & Palfrey, 1993). To encourage realism, the clips are excerpts from live cable news broadcasts, with the same two to three minute segment edited in two ways to highlight the civil or uncivil components of one overall conversation among the same set of commentators. The segments from both *The Dylan Ratigan Show* and *Morning Joe* dealt with major economic debates from 2009 and 2011—the AIG bonus scandal and the budget deficit.

Study 3: Frequency of Media Consumption and Political Participation

The third study was conducted online through Project Implicit with 1,800 U.S. adults between March 13 and April 3, 2012. Project Implicit has a demonstration site, on which users can take any of a number of highlighted tasks, as well as a research site, on which users must register and provide demographic information before being randomly assigned to one of the studies being conducted by PI

⁸ This researcher's questions came at the end of the series of four sets of questions. However, each of the projects was on a distinct topic that was unrelated to the research questions at play here. Furthermore, any randomization of participants for experiments taking place earlier in the survey was done separate from randomization for this survey. Taking both of these factors into consideration, I do not believe there are strong reasons to be concerned about order effects or priming of particular effects through participation in the three quarters of the survey. For

the full questionnaire, including treatments and questions asked by other researchers, see Appendix X.

19

researchers at that time. This study was run through the research site and included a pilot test of an Implicit Association Test (IAT) of reactions to conflict.⁹

The study was randomized to begin either with the IAT or with the explicit survey measures. Once the participants reached the survey component, they answered the Conflict Communication Scale, including five questions from the avoidance/approach subscale and three questions from the public/private subscale. They also answered questions about their media consumption patterns, participation in recent political activities and other relevant political habits.

Studies 4 and 5: Preferred Media Sources and Political Activities

The fourth survey was conducted with my colleague Nicole Pankiewicz with grant assistance from the Political Psychology Working Group at the University of Virginia. Between December 27-28, 2012, workers registered on Amazon's Mechanical Turk site selected to complete our task for 75 cents. A total of 625 participants filled out the adapted Conflict Communication Scale and reported their political participation and media consumption¹⁰. Rather than focusing on the frequency of their media consumption, as in the Project Implicit study, this study asked participants to rank their favorite programs in order of preference. As a distractor, they were given basic arithmetic problems to solve, then asked to read a New York Times story about a mentally ill criminal and a randomized treatment text. After the treatment, they responded to questions about it and filled out basic social and demographic information.

A final set of survey data was collected as part of a third MTurk survey experiment, this time a pilot test of the effects of incivility on political knowledge. This study was conducted on June 11, 2013, with 150 participants choosing to complete the task for one dollar. While the experimental treatment was too weak to produce the desired effects¹¹, the participants were once again asked to complete the Conflict Communication Scale and questions about their political and media engagement. The questions asked in this survey were identical to those in the previous MTurk study, and so for the purposes of analysis, the two sets of participants will be analyzed together.

⁹ While the IAT never moved past the pilot-testing phase, I mention it here because it played a role in the participants' procedure.

¹⁰ MTurk participants were also asked Ulbig and Funk's (Ulbig & Funk, 1999) question on conflict avoidance—
"Some people try to avoid getting into political discussions because they think that people can get into arguments and it can get unpleasant. Other people enjoy discussing politics even though it sometimes leads to arguments. What is your feeling on this--do you usually try to avoid political discussions, do you enjoy them, or are you somewhere in between?" The CCS is highly and significantly correlated with individuals' responses to this question (0.45), and the CCS provides a more substantially nuanced measure of conflict orientation. Furthermore, it avoids the tautology of measuring the effect of conflict orientation on political communication through a measure that incorporates political communication. Therefore, Ulbig and Funk's measure is not used throughout the analysis of effects of conflict orientation.

¹¹ A full description of the procedures, designs and goals of all three studies, including the experimental manipulations and IAT tasks, is available in Appendix B.

Table 2: Summary of All Studies

#	Sample Source	N	Date Collected	Description	DV	Relevant Chapter
1	Mechanical Turk (online convenience)	600	August 2014	Respondents filled out the brief version of the CCS and were then randomly assigned to one of three uncivil media clips—a video, an audio clip, or a text transcript. After answering questions about the components of incivility present in the content and their emotional reactions to the content, they then saw a second version of the same information (so if they saw the video first, they'd listen to the audio or read the transcript in the second round).	Perceptions of Incivility	4
2	Survey Sampling International (nationally representative)	600	April 2014	As part of a larger omnibus survey, participants filled out one subsection of the CCS, viewed either a civil or uncivil clip, and then answered questions about their emotional reactions to those clips and their recall of the issues discussed in the clips.	Emotional Response	5
3	Project Implicit (online convenience)	1,800	March 2012	Respondents completed a Brief IAT (BIAT), then filled out the CCS and answered questions about the frequency of their media consumption and about political participation habits.	Media habits, Political participation	6
4	Mechanical Turk (online convenience)	625	December 2012	Citizens filled out the CCS, reported their political participation and their media consumption. This study asked participants to rank their favorite programs in order of preference. As a distractor, they were given basic arithmetic problems to solve, then asked to read a <i>New York Times</i> story about a mentally ill criminal and a randomized treatment text. After the treatment, they responded to questions about it and filled out basic social and demographic information.	Media habits, political participation	6
5	Mechanical Turk (online convenience)	150	June 2013	Respondents filled out the CCS, read a news article about food stamps that had been edited to either be civil or uncivil, and were then asked about their recall of the article's content, their political engagement and media preferences.	Media habits, political participation	6

Studies 4 & 5 are frequently referred to jointly, as they use the same questions to get at the relationship between conflict orientation, media habits, and political participation. Each of these studies has been approved by the University of Virginia Institutional Review Board as project numbers 2014-0273-00 (Study 1), 2014-0123-00 (Study 2), 2003-0173-111 (Study 3), 2012-0361-00 (Study 4), and 2013-0234-00 (Study 5).

Table 3: Representativeness of the Five Studies

	Mechanical Turk (Study 1)	Survey Sampling International (Study 2)	Project Implicit (Study 3)	Mechanical Turk (Studies 4&5)	National Population
Median Household Income	\$30-45,000	\$42,000	N/A ¹²	\$30-45,000	\$53,046
Education					
<h.s. diploma<="" td=""><td>1.4%</td><td>5%</td><td>7%</td><td>2%</td><td>14%</td></h.s.>	1.4%	5%	7%	2%	14%
H.S. grad/some college	38%	46%	41%	47%	57%
College grad +	60%	49%	53%	51%	29%
Race/Ethnicity					
White	81%	66%	78%	73%	78%
Black	10%	13%	10%	7%	13%
Hispanic	7%	14%	8%	8%	17%
Sex					
Female	41%	52%	64%	46%	51%
Median Age	31	35-44	32	32	37

Note: National data are from U.S. Census estimates for 2012, except age (U.S. Census estimates for 2010).

¹² While the registration process for the Project Implicit research site asks for participants' income bracket, this question is optional, and only 21 of 1800 participants chose to answer this question.

Chapter 3: Understanding Psychological Conflict Orientation

"I hate conflict so much that I find myself agreeing with pretty much everything that everyone says."

—Anonymous interviewee, Humans of New York blog

Incivility is a form of conflict, and individuals will respond to it as such. But what guides these responses? Reactions to conflict are shaped by the environment and the other individuals involved in an uncivil exchange, but they are also rooted in an individual's psychological predispositions towards conflict. This conflict orientation—a stable personality trait that determines how one experiences and reacts to conflict—dictates the initial response to conflict communication. Based on this starting point, individuals then work through the best responses and strategies for reducing or engaging with a particular conflict.

Conflict orientation exists along a continuum, with some individuals having a very strong avoidance reaction to conflict, others being very willing to approach conflict, and most falling somewhere in the middle with a "conflict ambivalent" response. When these individuals are placed in a high-conflict environment, they will react in different ways; psychologists have found that people want congruence between their personal predispositions and their environment and will take action to increase that congruence (Deutsch, 1985). Therefore, while individuals who enjoy conflict will be content in a highly uncivil or argumentative environment, their conflict-avoidant counterparts will adapt their behavior and environment to minimize incivility. People also try to minimize their experience of negative emotions while repeating events that produce positive emotions. Therefore, the conflict-avoidant will try to minimize the presence of incivility in their lives because it produces negative emotions and reactions while the conflict-approaching will create positive, enjoyable associations with conflict. In politics, attempts to minimize or emphasize the presence of incivility will manifest in behavioral choices—decisions about from which media to seek political information and in which political activities to participate.

In this chapter, I draw on research in cultural, organizational and social psychology to offer a definition of conflict orientation: the way one experiences and reacts to a conflict situation, particularly conflict communication. I then review approaches used to measure conflict orientation and present analyses validating an adapted version of the Conflict Communication Scale used in the dissertation studies. Finally, I explore the relationships between conflict orientation and several demographic and political characteristics that also influence political behavior, relationships that may moderate or exacerbate the effects of these characteristics on political engagement.

Experiencing and Reacting to Conflict

Conflict orientation is a stable personality trait that determines how people experience and react to conflict—whether they are excited by arguments, uncomfortable when others fight in public, or happy to handle a disagreement face-to-face (Bresnahan et al., 2009; Goldstein, 1999; Testa et al., 2014). At one extreme, an individual can be highly conflict-avoidant, finding disagreement and argument uncomfortable and anxiety-inducing. These people will dislike confrontation and face-to-face resolution of conflict and will ultimately institute strategies in their personal and political lives to minimize their exposure to potential conflict situations. At the other extreme are the conflict-approaching people, who have no problem expressing disagreement, are excited by the prospect of a

debate, and are happy to air their arguments face-to-face in any environment. These people are not disturbed by the presence of conflict around them, and can even thrive in a high-conflict environment. Therefore, they will not shy away from disagreements in their personal social networks, nor from environments that will expose them to conflict between other people. Most people, as I will show below, fall somewhere in the middle—leaning slightly towards conflict avoidance.

While this orientation is a relatively entrenched component of one's personality by a young age, it is shaped by cultural and social factors. For example, individuals raised in East Asian cultures tend to be more conflict-avoidant overall, specifically preferring private and non-confrontational airing of disagreements. Americans are more willing to approach and handle conflict through face-to-face discussion (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988). As one ages or becomes more educated, he or she can become more comfortable and accepting of conflict (Birditt, Fingerman, & Almeida, 2005; Eliasoph, 1998). However, these changes are small fluctuations around an initial stable point; an individual who is predisposed to be highly conflict-avoidant is not going to become incredibly conflict-approaching simply by growing older and becoming highly educated.

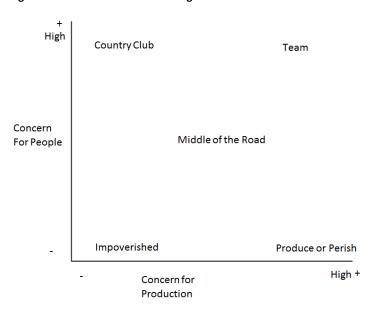
One avenue towards understanding conflict orientation is to highlight what it is not. Conflict orientation is not the same as one's strategies for conflict resolution. Conflict orientation is a psychological characteristic of an individual; it is entrenched in an individual's personality and only differs marginally across environments. Conflict resolution strategies, as I explain below, are situation-dependent. They vary based on the environment in which individuals are responding to the conflict. I briefly elaborate on research into conflict resolution here in order to better identify what I mean by conflict orientation.

Much of the psychological research on responses to conflict focuses not on this individual predisposition, but on conflict resolution strategies and outcomes in specific interpersonal settings—dating, marital conflict, and organizational or managerial situations. The majority of research in this discipline builds on Blake and Mouton's managerial grid theory, which argues that differences in conflict-handling approaches stem from relative concerns for production and for people. As Figure 2 shows, these relative concerns produce five types or styles of handling office conflict: impoverished, country club, dictatorial or "produce or perish," middle-of-the-road and the team (Blake & Mouton, 1964). For example, an employer who is more concerned about ensuring high production than the well-being of his employees will handle conflict in a dictatorial style. He will force the resolution of any disagreements and do so in a way that does not damage his firm's output but likely leaves his employees unhappy and unsatisfied. Alternatively, a manager who cares about both production and people will take a team-building approach to conflict resolution, encouraging his team to air disagreements in a way that does not sacrifice either their happiness or the success of the organization.

In this and similar types of conflict resolution instruments, participants are asked to choose between two statements that describe behavior; for example, "I try to find a compromise solution" and "I sometimes sacrifice my own wishes for the wishes of the other person" (Kilmann & Thomas, 1977). These solution-oriented measures are effective in determining how people attempt to problem-solve in the face of conflict, but choosing one statement over the other does not clearly represent that person's conflict orientation. For example, an individual who doesn't enjoy conflict might immediately try to find a compromise solution in order to stop an argument, but someone who is conflict-approaching could also report that they try to find a compromise solution because they enjoy working through all of the

differences between their opinion and that of others. Similarly, concerns for people and production explain why one might choose a particular conflict resolution strategy in a "country club" environment and behave differently in a team-based situation, but these motivations are orthogonal to one's disposition towards conflict itself. Focusing on the strategies for resolving conflict does not adequately capture the stable personality trait that guides individuals to those strategies.

Figure 2: Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid



Political scientists have tried to measure individual predispositions towards conflict in a variety of ways, many of which focus on conflict as it is specifically expressed in politics. In one of the earliest papers on the relationship between conflict orientation and political behavior, Ulbig and Funk (1999) conceptualize conflict orientation as variation in an individual's desire to engage in interpersonal conflict. While this understanding reflects a similar interpretation to that offered here, the measurement of this preference raises some concerns when considering its relationship to political engagement. Specifically, Ulbig and Funk argue that an individual is conflict-avoidant if they report that they try to avoid political discussion because it raises the potential for argument, and conflictapproaching if they enjoy political discussion. Using a measure specific to political activities raises initial concerns about whether the question captures a general personality trait, and not something unique to the political sphere. This measure also makes it difficult to tease apart conflict orientation and simple enjoyment of political activity. This enjoyment may be because of one's comfort with conflict, but it may also be related to political interest, the people with whom one typically discusses politics, or myriad other individual-level characteristics that are related to political discussion. This measure assesses citizens' aversion to political conflict by asking them if they avoid political conflict, rather than determining what psychological traits might lead them to avoid that conflict.

Other research has also examined conflict orientation through the lens of political conflict. Testa et al (2014) argue that conflict approaching and conflict avoidant tendencies should be conceived

as two separate dimensions of conflict orientation. ¹³ In other words, it is possible for an individual to score highly on both the conflict-avoidant and conflict-approaching scales, or enjoy talking about politics and simultaneously be hesitant to do so. Testa and his colleagues use responses to a series of statements about citizens' interest in or their reluctance to talk about politics as measures of these two dimensions. While this measure improves upon Ulbig and Funk's in that it requires respondents to articulate why they like or dislike political talk, it falls into a similar tautological trap by using self-reported reasons for liking or disliking political discussion to explain individuals' likelihood of engaging in political discussion. The measure captures individuals' perceived motivations for approaching or avoiding conflict, rather than the mental experience of conflict. This measure should be highly correlated with those deployed in this dissertation. However, because I see conflict orientation as an apolitical trait that develops before one's political opinions and shapes political motivations, this measure does not capture the general psychological trait of conflict orientation.

Mutz uses several different, non-political measures of conflict orientation in her work on substantive disagreement, individual-level predispositions, and political behavior (Mutz, 2006; Mutz & Martin, 2001; Mutz & Reeves, 2005). Each of these measures draws on social psychological scales to assess individuals' feelings about conflict situations, the appropriateness of controversial discussion, and tendency to avoid conflict. Mutz tends to focus exclusively on those individuals who avoid conflict. However, she measures conflict avoidance through statements about one's reactions to conflict, argument and disagreement in a non-specific environment, thereby capturing the concept independent of its connections to any political activities. I adapt these measures to assess not only conflict avoidance but also the enjoyment of argument and confrontation.

Measurement of Conflict Orientation: The Conflict Communication Scale

Building on Mutz's use of social psychological scales of conflict orientation for political science research, I use a subset of questions from the Conflict Communication Scale (CCS; Goldstein, 1999) throughout the research in this dissertation. The CCS is not as widely used as traditional managerial grid approaches to conflict resolution, but it is designed to measure the variability in the experience of conflict rather than strategies for reducing it. It is designed to provide measures that are relevant for conflict intervention such as mediation, but also broad enough to assess both cultural and individual differences in communication style in conflict situations. The CCS is designed around five subscales drawn from cultural research on the dimensions of conflict response: confrontation, public/private behavior, self-disclosure, emotional expression, and conflict approach/avoidance. While not widely cited in social or organizational psychology literature, it has previously been adapted to political questions (Mutz & Reeves, 2005).

The full scale shows high reliability, discriminant and convergent validity, and minimal influence of social desirability (Goldstein, 1999). To assess each of these scale characteristics, Goldstein asked 350 student participants to complete a 150-item version of the CCS, from which the 75-item scale was

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¹³ To measure conflict orientation, Testa et al specifically ask: "People choose to talk or not talk about politics for a variety of reasons. Please tell us which of the following statements apply to you (True/False): I am sometimes reluctant to talk about politics: (N1) Because I don't like arguments; (N2) Because it creates enemies; (N3) Because I worry about what people would think of me. When I talk about politics I do so: (P1) Because it is enjoyable or entertaining; (P2) Because I like to debate and argue about politics; (P3) Because I want to share my views and convince others.

ultimately developed. Participants were also randomly assigned to complete either the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale, the Conflict Resolution Inventory, the Self-Disclosure Scale, or the Personality Research Form (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Jackson, 1974; Jourard, 1979; McFall & Lillesand, 1971). The Conflict Resolution Inventory and the Self-Disclosure Scale serve as independent measures of a similar trait for purposes of convergent validity. The Personality Research Form, an assessment of willingness to persevere on difficult tasks, was used as a measure of discriminant validity. Both the CCS subscales and individual items correlated minimally with the Marlowe-Crowne scale, demonstrating minimal social desirability bias. The subscales of the CCS correlated with the Conflict Resolution Inventory, Self-Disclosure Scale and Personality Research Form in the expected directions, demonstrating convergent and divergent validity. Thirty of the students in the initial sample were also asked to take the 150-item CCS again three and a half weeks after the first administration. Looking just at the 75 items ultimately used in the scale, the five subscales all demonstrated test-retest correlations over 0.80 and each correlation was significant at p<0.001. Each of the 75 items also showed strong scale reliability, with item variance greater than 1.5 and Cronbach's alphas greater than 0.80 for each subscale.

The scale is designed to pick up differences on both an individual and a cultural level. Culturally, Americans skew slightly towards one end of each subscale; for example, they are frequently expected to speak directly to one another about a dispute (confrontation) or to share their feelings or emotions about that dispute (emotional expression) (Goldstein, 1999; Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988). In contrast, Eastern cultures tend to encourage non-confrontational strategies for dispute resolution and to refrain from emotional expression. However, individuals can still vary widely on these same measures, as everyone does not find it equally easy to have a face-to-face conversation about uncomfortable arguments or to openly express their emotions.

Adapting the CCS to Survey Research

While each of the five subscales measures a component of individuals' responses to conflict, it is not feasible to include the full 75-item CCS in studies that take place outside of the traditional social psychology laboratory. Little has been done, however, to adapt the scale into a shorter version that is more useful for surveys and online experiments where time constraints and participant attention require a brief assessment. With this in mind, I use only a portion of the scale in my research, focusing on the three subscales that seemed most relevant to political outcomes and particularly to mediated political conflict: confrontation, public/private behavior, and conflict approach/avoidance. Within each subscale, I selected questions that captured an individual's experience in a conflict situation and minimized their motivations or behavioral strategies used to resolve conflict. For each item, participants were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement and how strongly they did so. Table 4 shows the specific items selected from each subscale.

In this section, I demonstrate that the smaller sets of items used throughout the next three chapters capture the latent concept of conflict orientation. I focus primarily on the 15-item version of the scale that was used in Studies 4 & 5 with a Mechanical Turk sample, as that adaptation is the most extensive of the three I used. Studies 1 through 3 each contain a smaller subset of the items¹⁴. Each analysis in this chapter is replicated with data from Studies 1 (Mechanical Turk), 2 (Survey Sampling

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¹⁴ Studies 1 and 2 were 5-item versions of the CCS that only used questions from the approach/avoidance subscale, and Study 3 was an 8-item version of the scale that also includes questions from the public/private subscale.

International) and 3 (Project Implicit) in Appendix A. As can be seen in Figure 8, all of the samples collected for this project demonstrate substantial variance across the CCS.

Table 4: Adapted Conflict Communication Scale Question Wording

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

Approach/Avoidance Scale‡
I enjoy challenging the opinions of others.
I find conflicts exciting.
I hate arguments.
Arguments don't bother me.
I feel upset after an argument.

Public/Private Behavior

I avoid arguing in public.

I feel uncomfortable seeing others argue in public.

It wouldn't bother me to have an argument in a restaurant.

I don't want anyone besides those involved to know about an argument I've had. **

I would be embarrassed if neighbors heard me argue with a family member. **

Confrontation**

I feel more comfortable having an argument in person than over the phone.

I prefer to express points of disagreement with others by speaking with them directly rather than by writing them notes.

When I have a conflict with someone I try to resolve it by being extra nice to him or her.

After a dispute with a neighbor, I would feel uncomfortable seeing him or her again, even if the conflict had been resolved.

I prefer to solve disputes through face-to-face discussion.

‡ Studies 1 (MTurk) and 2 (SSI) only included questions from the Approach/Avoidance scale **Asked of Mechanical Turk respondents only.

The conflict approach/avoidance scale is designed to gauge individuals' willingness to tolerate and engage in conflict at all. Do they ignore or avoid issues? Do they attempt to change the situation to minimize conflict or address it directly? In politics, like most situations, citizens have a choice about whether they will embrace conflict manifest as incivility—by listening to Rush Limbaugh or by joining a protest—or change the channel to avoid the situation altogether. In her research on the effects of televised incivility on trust in political leaders and institutions, Mutz (2005) uses one of the five questions I include from this subscale to measure conflict avoidance: "I find conflicts exciting." Beyond this item, I add four questions that further assess individuals' feelings when faced with conflict or argument.

Each of the five statements from the approach/avoidance scale captures individuals' general feelings when they face a situation with conflict communication. Two of the items acknowledge positive responses to argument or disagreement—enjoyment or excitement—and two associate conflict with negative feelings of hate or being upset. Agreement with the final statement, "Arguments don't bother me," suggests at minimum a neutral attitude towards conflict. As Table 5 demonstrates, all five items

hang together relatively well, using the Pearson correlation coefficient as an index of the degree of association between items. The strongest inter-item correlations are between pairs that express similar emotions. Hating arguments and feeling upset after an argument have a correlation of 0.63, and both have an even higher correlation with the statement "arguments don't bother me" (0.70 and 0.67, respectively). The positive statements—that one enjoys challenging others or is excited by conflict—correlate with one another at 0.62, but have correlations closer to 0.5 with each of the other items. Judged against normal standards, these correlations are all quite strong, suggesting that the difference experiences articulated by the items do represent a coherent psychological reaction.

Table 5: Inter-item Correlation, Approach-Avoidance Subscale

	Challenge	Excite	Hate	Bother	Upset
Challenge others					
Conflicts excite	0.62				
Hate arguments	0.52	0.59			
Arguments don't bother	0.50	0.55	0.70		
Upset after argument	0.40	0.45	0.63	0.67	

Source: Studies 4 & 5, Mechanical Turk. Note: Statements are given in full in Table 4.

Beyond its ability to evoke positive or negative feelings, mediated political conflict is inherently public. While in some ways it might feel private—the viewer or reader can absorb the information in the privacy of their own home—the willingness of media elites to air disagreements in front of other guests on the program or to their audience generally pushes this conflict into the public sphere. Therefore, it seems possible that political incivility and other forms of political conflict communication tap into the dimension of one's conflict orientation that makes distinctions between situations. Specifically, the public/private subscale evaluates individuals' reactions to public argumentation. Most of these items deal with how one feels when personally involved in a public argument, but one deals with the response to witnessing strangers' arguments in a public place.

These five items are associated more weakly than those in the approach/avoidance subscale, with the greatest shared variance falling between 0.49 and 0.51. The highest correlations are between logically congruent items. For example, an individual who experiences embarrassment when neighbors hear him have a disagreement would also likely avoid arguing in public and want to keep arguments secret from others. The first item on the scale, "I avoid arguing in public," blurs the theoretical line between behavioral decisions made because of conflict and the psychic experience of that conflict. While this could explain the overall lower correlations in comparison with the approach/avoidance items, the public avoidance item is not any weaker than the other public/private items. The statement "It wouldn't bother me to have an argument in a restaurant" has the weakest relationship with all of the other items on the subscale, with correlations ranging from 0.27 to 0.36. However, even though these relationships are weaker than those in the first subscale, the correlations are still strong enough to suggest they represent a single underlying concept.

Table 6: Inter-item Correlation, Public-Private Subscale

	Public	Others	Restaurant	Secret	Embarrassed
I avoid arguing in public					
Dislike others arguing in public	0.49				
OK with argument in restaurant	0.36	0.27			

Don't want others to know about argument	0.50	0.42	0.27		
Embarrassed if neighbors hear argument	0.51	0.47	0.31	0.51	

Source: Studies 4 & 5, Mechanical Turk. Note: Statements are given in full in Table 4.

The confrontation subscale measures an individual's willingness to engage in face-to-face discussion of conflict, something that cable news coverage of political events tends to do particularly well. The adversarial relationship between press secretary and journalist or Democrats and Republicans encourages political elites and media personalities to directly challenge each other's beliefs and opinions. Not only should this subscale play a role in responses to mediated conflict because those discussing politics in the media are frequently confrontational, but also because individuals experience mediated discussion in much the same way they would experience a face-to-face discussion. Tight camera angles and close-up shots in television and video clips, in particular, mimic a confrontational, face-to-face discussion (Mutz, 2015; Reeves & Nass, 1996).

Given that confrontation itself is a behavior, some items on the confrontation subscale do not clearly distinguish between the psychological experience of conflict and the behavioral resolution of conflict. As Table 7 shows, the relationships between several of these items are substantially weaker, and in some cases are non-existent. Three items do demonstrate high interconnectedness—preference for in-person argument over phone calls, a preference for face-to-face resolution of disagreements, and a willingness to speak to someone directly rather than write notes. It is unsurprising that these three demonstrate high correlation. While using different language, they each capture an individual's preference for in-person discussion of issues over the use of an intermediary technology. The other two statements capture individuals' preferences for behavior after an argument—the type of conflict resolution behavior I argue should be distinct from one's conflict orientation. The decision to be extra nice to someone after a fight is clearly a behavioral strategy, and it is most strongly correlated with the other behavioral strategy—avoidance of the person with whom one disagreed. It has almost zero (-0.01 to 0.06) relationship with the other items. The decision to avoid others after arguments is still somewhat connected to the other items, with correlations ranging from 0.15 to 0.23.

Table 7: Inter-item Correlation, Confrontation Subscale

	In-Person	Direct	Extra Nice	Avoid	Face-to-Face
Prefer in-person argument					
Disagree directly	0.48				
Be extra nice	-0.01	0.06			
Avoid after argument	0.23	0.23	0.15		
Prefer face-to-face	0.56	0.70	-0.04	0.21	

Source: Studies 4 & 5, Mechanical Turk. Note: Statements are given in full in Table 4.

While it is useful to think about each of these subscales individually, I am ultimately only interested in whether the items cohere into a larger measure of conflict orientation generally. Therefore, it is necessary to examine not only how items relate to the others in the same subscale but to the items in the other scales as well. Table 9 shows the Pearson correlations between every item in the adapted CCS measure used in Studies 4 and 5. This larger matrix of relationships connects items across

the subscales. The approach/avoidance and public/private items all have correlations between 0.23 and 0.70, with an average correlation of 0.41. The confrontation items fair much worse, with each item demonstrating much less consistent relationships with the others and in many cases, much weaker relationships. The highest correlation between a confrontation item and another outside of that subscale is 0.39: between the statements "I feel upset after an argument" and "After a dispute with a neighbor, I would feel uncomfortable seeing him or her again, even if the conflict had been resolved."

Beyond comparisons of the relationships between individual pairs of items, Cronbach's alphas for both the subscales and the full scale suggest that the items in the index co-vary with one another at a reasonably strong rate, making it likely that they are collectively representative both of the latent constructs measured by the subscales and the overarching latent concept of conflict orientation. The alphas for the full scale and for the approach/avoidance and public/private subscales are respectably strong ($\alpha = 0.85$, $\alpha = 0.87$, and $\alpha = 0.77$, respectively). Even the alpha for the confrontation items $(\alpha = 0.63)$ is in the range deemed acceptable by conventional standards. In addition to high covariance between the items within each subscale, there is also relatively strong correlation between the three subscales, but not so much that we might expect them to be measuring exactly the same components of conflict orientation. As Table 8 shows, each of the subscales correlates with the others between 0.23 and 0.59. Therefore, while the Pearson correlation values for the confrontation items might encourage their exclusion from the shortened CCS, the alpha values, as well as the potential theoretical connections between the psychological experience of conflict and its occurrence face-to-face or otherwise, suggest that the items should remain in the scale. Ultimately, the inclusion or exclusion of the confrontation items from the scale does little to change the empirical results of the interaction between conflict orientation and incivility. 15 Therefore, I keep the confrontation items in the full scale when possible because of the theoretical connections between the psychological response to confrontation and the prevalence of confrontation in political communication.

Table 8: Correlations between the CCS and its Subscales

	Mech	Mechanical Turk						
	F	Α	Р	С				
Full Scale (F)								
Approach/Avoidance (A)	.87							
Public/Private (P)	.79	.59						
Confrontation (C)	.65	.37	.23					

31

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¹⁵ When I use Studies 4 and 5 to explore the relationship between conflict orientation, media consumption, and political behavior in chapter six, I run all relevant statistical tests using a CCS measure that includes confrontation and one that does not. The inclusion of the five confrontation items does not substantially impact the findings, but both set of data analysis can be found in Appendix C.

Table 9: Inter-item Correlation, All items

				Don't		Avoid	Dislike				Prefer		Extra	Avoid	Face-
	Challenge	Excite	Hate	bother	Upset	in	others	Restaurant	Secret	Embarrass	in-	Direct	Nice	Neighbor	to-
				botilei		public	arguing				person		NICE		Face
Challenge															
Excite	0.62														
Hate	0.52	0.59													
Don't Bother	0.50	0.55	0.70												
Upset	0.40	0.45	0.63	0.67											
Avoid in public	0.30	0.33	0.48	0.41	0.39										
Dislike others	0.27	0.20	0.44	0.42	0.42	0.40									
arguing	0.27	0.30	0.44	0.42	0.42	0.49									
Restaurant	0.23	0.24	0.30	0.36	0.31	0.36	0.27								
Secret	0.26	0.32	0.41	0.36	0.39	0.50	0.42	0.27							
Embarrassed	0.24	0.31	0.43	0.41	0.42	0.51	0.47	0.31	0.51						
Prefer in-	0.16	0.21	0.10	0.10	0.16	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.07					
person	0.16	0.21	0.19	0.19	0.16	0.03	0.08	0.09	0.00	0.07					
Direct	0.05	0.16	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.01	0.08	0.05	0.00	0.05	0.48				
Be extra nice	0.06	0.08	0.19	0.15	0.16	0.17	0.10	0.06	0.15	0.19	-0.01	0.06			
Avoid after	0.18	0.23	0.35	0.33	0.39	0.22	0.32	0.18	0.25	0.35	0.23	0.23	0.15		
Face-to-face	0.09	0.16	0.14	0.14	0.13	0.00	0.02	0.09	-0.01	0.03	0.56	0.70	-0.04	0.21	

Source: Studies 4 & 5, Mechanical Turk. Note: Statements are given in full in Table 4.

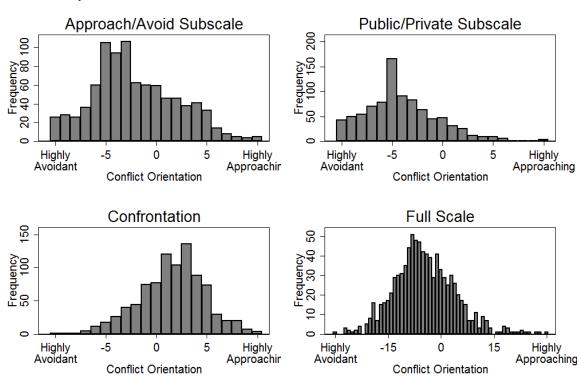
Characteristics of Conflict Orientation

As Goldstein found in her assessment of the 75-item scale, the adapted 15-item scale displays strong enough correlations between items and Cronbach's alpha statistics to conclude that the items cohere into a relatively strong measure of a single dimension, conflict orientation. When we combine these items into a single scale, participants fall across the entire range of possible values, from the most conflict-avoidant (a score of -30 for Studies 4 and 5) to extremely conflict-approaching (a score of 30). In each scale, zero indicates the neutral mid-point; people scoring here could be classified as conflict ambivalent. Each subscale has a range from -10 to 10, with -10 indicating high avoidance, high preference for private conflict resolution, and high distaste for confrontation.

While the use of online samples prevents me from drawing conclusions about the distribution of conflict orientation across the U.S. population more generally, it is still helpful to get a sense of the range of orientations found in the participants. The participants in all studies tend to fall on the more avoidant or private sides of the approach/avoidance and public/private subscales, but they are much more likely to report confrontational responses to conflict. While the distributions for the full scale and each subscale are skewed, there is substantial variation across each scale, with participants scoring across the entire range of values. Figure 3 shows the distribution of participants in the Mechanical Turk samples (Studies 4 and 5) across the three subscales and full Conflict Communication Scale; the distributions for each other sample are available in Appendix A.

Figure 3

Participant Scores on the Conflict Communication Scale



Source: Studies 4 & 5 (Mechanical Turk)

Use of this adapted CCS can be further justified by demonstrating that the scale produces expected relationships with individual personality traits and demographic characteristics. Specifically, research in social, cultural and political psychology has found conflict orientation to be related to one's age, race or minority status, gender, education, and personality. In this section, I examine each of these relationships in turn, using samples from both Mechanical Turk and Project Implicit.

Conflict Orientation Is Tied to Other Psychological Traits

Conflict orientation is categorized here as a psychological trait that is pre-political—developed and engrained in one's personality throughout childhood and relatively firmly entrenched by the time one enters adulthood. As such, it is expected to be closely related to other personality measures, specifically the "Big Five" traits that are thought to present a holistic assessment of an individual's personality (McCrae & Costa, 2008). These five traits—extraversion, openness to new experience, emotional stability, conscientiousness and agreeableness—are heritable and stable over time. Because they are determined by biological differences, where conflict orientation has been shown to vary with cultural and other demographic characteristics, the Big Five can be thought of as causally prior to both an individual's conflict orientation and his or her political behaviors (Mondak, 2010).

Research into the influence of Big Five traits on disagreement in political discussion reinforces this expectation of a connection. Looking at interpersonal relationships, Graziano et al (Graziano, Jensen-Campbell, & Hair, 1996) find that individual differences in agreeableness are systematically related to patterns of conflict and conflict resolution. Specifically, individuals that received a low score on a scale of agreeable tendencies were also more likely than highly agreeable individuals to see "power-assertion" tactics as solutions to conflict. While this finding highlights the connection between agreeableness and a behavioral strategy for resolving conflict, it nonetheless suggests that an individual high in agreeableness should have a negative reaction to a conflict situation. Findings in political science reinforce this hypothesized relationship. In a study of personality's impact on an individual's exposure to disagreement on topics ranging from politics to sports, researchers find that higher levels of agreeableness are weakly associated with increased willingness to engage in discussion (Gerber, Huber, Doherty, & Dowling, 2010).

Beyond agreeableness, political scientists also find that openness to new experiences, extraversion and emotional stability are also related to the willingness to engage in political discussion where there may be disagreement (Gerber, Huber, Doherty, & Dowling, 2010; Gerber, Huber, Doherty, Dowling, & Ha, 2010; Testa et al., 2014). A highly open person should find conflict stimulating and exciting, while an extrovert's tendency to be more assertive and outgoing should also lead them towards more comfort in experiencing conflict. Those high in emotional stability are also more likely to have high self-confidence, ultimately making them feel less threatened by conflict. Finally, while there is less conclusive evidence about the relationship between conscientiousness and political disagreement, highly conscientious people are likely to be highly aware of violations of social norms (Mondak, 2010). Therefore, they should be particularly attuned to the use of conflict communication like incivility that infringes on conversational norms of politeness.

Ultimately previous research suggests that a conflict-approaching orientation, measured as positive values on the adapted CCS, should be positively associated with extraversion, emotional stability and openness but negatively associated with agreeableness and conscientiousness. In the Project Implicit (Study 3) sample, participants were asked to complete the Ten-Item Personality

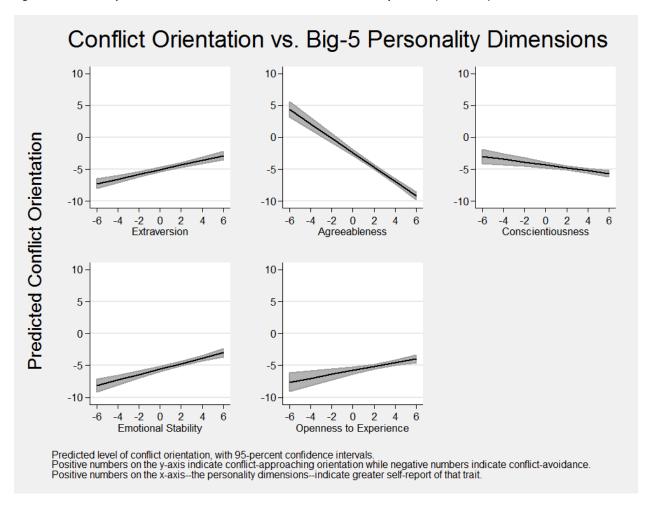
Inventory (TIPI), which gives them scores from -6 to 6 on each of the five personality factors, with -6 indicating low levels of that trait and six indicating high values (Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003). I test the relationship between these characteristics and conflict orientation by examining the correlations between each of the five factors and the full CCS and the results of bivariate regressions of conflict orientation on each characteristic. As Table 10 shows, the Pearson's correlations between each personality trait and the scale are in the expected direction and all are significant. Extraversion and agreeableness are correlated more strongly than the other three traits. These relationships hold in the regression results, as seen in Figure 4. The higher an individual's score on emotional stability, extraversion or openness, the higher that individual's predicted conflict orientation. In other words, an individual who is extraverted, open, or emotionally stable is more likely to be conflict-approaching, holding the other factors constant. The greater one's score on agreeableness or conscientiousness, however, the lower the predicted CCS score, or the more likely to be conflict-avoidant. This effect is particularly strong for agreeableness, where there is a 15-point change in the likely CCS score of individuals on the two extremes of the personality factor. These results are consistent with previous findings by psychologists and political scientists, suggesting that the shortened scale still captures the same underlying construct as the 75-item version. Furthermore, it indicates that conflict orientation may mediate the relationship between these standard measures of personality, political communication and political behavior.

Table 10: Pearson's Correlations between Big Five Personality Traits and the adapted CCS

	Correlation: Full CCS
Extraversion	0.22*
Agreeableness	-0.37*
Conscientiousness	-0.11*
Emotional Stability	0.11*
Openness	0.12*

Source: Project Implicit. *p<0.01.

Figure 4: Relationship between Conflict Orientation and the Five Personality Factors (Source: PI)



Conflict Orientation Is Conditioned by Key Demographic Characteristics

In chapter 1, I suggested that conflict orientation serves to exacerbate existing inequalities in political participation, an argument I will explore more fully in chapters 6 and 7. However, this argument rests on the assumption that conflict orientation is connected to political and demographic characteristics that shape political behavior. Specifically, I am concerned with the relationship between conflict orientation and age, gender, race, education and income.

Years of political science research has found that these demographic characteristics are correlated with an individual's likelihood of participating in politics, both by voting and by engaging in more effortful political acts like donating money, working for a campaign, or protesting. Those in the highest income quintile are more likely to vote, more likely to donate their time, and substantially more likely to contribute financially to a political candidate than those in the lowest quintile (Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995; Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 2012; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). Citizens are more likely to participate as they get older (with a drop-off as they approach the oldest 10 percent) and as they gain more education (Rosenstone & Hansen, 2002; Verba et al., 1995). And finally, men are

more likely to participate than women, while white citizens are more likely to participate than minorities (Schlozman, Burns, & Verba, 1999; Verba, Burns, & Schlozman, 1997; Verba et al., 1995).

According to psychological research, these demographic characteristics are also related to conflict orientation. Literature on aging and developmental psychology suggests that as people age, they experience fewer problems and tensions in their interpersonal relationships. They become less aggressive, more conciliatory, and are more capable of regulating their reactions to problems (Birditt et al., 2005; Blanchard-Fields & Cooper, 2004; Carstensen, Isaacowitz, & Charles, 1999). In other words, citizens should become more conflict-avoidant as they age.

Women are generally more conflict-avoidant than their male counterparts. Tannen suggests that the U.S. education system trains students to stake out a position in opposition to another, but also notes that this particular form of learning—directly criticizing or contradicting colleagues' or authors' perspectives—is not always as effective in teaching women as it is men. She concludes, "clearly, women can learn to perform in adversarial ways...[it is not written in stone that] individual women may not learn to practice and enjoy agonistic debate or that individual men may not recoil from it" (Tannen, 1998). If conflict avoidance deters political participation, as I hypothesize, and women are also more likely to be conflict-avoidant, as Tannen suggests, then gender is one area where we would expect conflict orientation to exacerbate existing political divides.

Tannen's argument also suggests that education should be positively associated with conflict-approaching behavior. As one spends more time in an adversarial education system, they should become more comfortable with conflict, particularly conflict as expressed through academic practices like debate. However, increased education also serves to delineate social expectations for speech and tone so that those with greater education may be less tolerant of incivility. A similarly ambivalent expectation holds for the relationship between conflict orientation and income. On one hand, Income is something one acquires in adulthood, at which point one's conflict orientation is relatively established. However, income is also closely related to education, so that if education influences conflict orientation in predictable ways, it is possible income follows the same pattern.

Finally, research on the cultural differences in conflict orientation suggests that racial minorities in the United States may react differently to conflict than whites (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; Leong, Wagner, & Tata, 1995; Trimble, Fleming, Beauvais, & Jumper-Thurman, 1996). Therefore, we would expect African-American and Hispanic participants to be more conflict-avoidant than their white counterparts. This relationship, like that for gender, has the potential to exacerbate existing political inequalities.

Table 11: Pearson's Correlations: Conflict Orientation and Demographic Characteristics

	Study 1 (MTurk)	Study 2 (SSI)	Study 3 (PI)	Study 4 (MTurk)
Age	-0.11*	-0.11*	-0.08*	-0.09*
Female	-0.25*	-0.24*	-0.30*	-0.28*
White	-0.01	0.11*	-0.02	-0.01
Education	0.08*	0.15*	0.01	0.02
Income	0.07*	0.04		0.03

^{*}indicates statistical significance at p<0.05.

Pearson's correlations from all five studies buttress these findings. Linear predictions of the relationship between age and conflict orientation in Study 1 suggest that conflict orientation moves from an average score of -4 (slightly conflict-avoidant) for an 18-year-old to -6 (more conflict-avoidant) for a 65-year-old in the PI study. An examination of 18-year-old and 65-year-old MTurk participants yields a similar difference in conflict orientation, with scores of -3.5 and -6.5, respectively. This change occurs for both men and women.

The correlations in these studies provide further evidence of this claim of gender differences, with the gender-CCS relationship matching only the strength of political interest and the personality trait agreeableness. A female MTurk participant scores, on average, around a -7.2 on the full CCS while her male counterpart scores -2.4. Similarly, male and female PI participants score -2.3 and -6.3 respectively, demonstrating that women in these studies are substantially more conflict-avoidant than men.

For the most part, the adapted CCS used throughout this dissertation mirrors the relationships with key demographic variables that have been found in other research. These correlations with personality and gender buttress the case for the adapted CCS. They also raise questions about the relationship between conflict orientation and other demographic characteristics that are linked to disparities in political engagement, which I will address in chapter 6.

Conflict Orientation Is Distinct from Political Affiliation

I am arguing that conflict orientation shapes individuals' political behavior and patterns of media consumption by affecting individuals' emotional responses to mediated incivility. However, one's response to political incivility may depend on who the rude language is directed towards. For example, Republican citizens may respond negatively to incivility when it is directed towards Republican politicians, but find it entertaining when likeminded political commentators are uncivil towards their political opponents. Furthermore, this reaction could be stronger for those who strongly identify with a particular party than for weak identifiers. Given these possibilities, it is important to demonstrate that conflict orientation is distinct from certain political variables; specifically partisan identification, the strength of that identification, and political interest.

Recent research into a trait-based understanding of ideology suggests that conservatism is strongly connected to an individual's risk aversion or threat sensitivity (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003). Although I do not simultaneously measure conflict orientation and risk aversion in any of the studies presented here, one could imagine that there is a relationship between the two, such that those who are conflict-avoidant are also more likely to be risk averse or sensitive to threat. These hypothesized relationships in turn suggest that conflict avoidance could be correlated with conservatism and Republican partisan identification.

There is an additional argument to be made for the connection between conflict orientation and partisan strength. Those who are stronger partisans could be more likely to embrace conflict because they are more invested in a particular party or set of policy preferences. Incivility also appears to be more prevalent among media outlets that present strong partisan perspectives, suggesting that individuals who tune in to Hannity or Rush Limbaugh are not only accepting of their political perspective but also the tone in which they deliver that perspective (Jamieson & Cappella, 2008; Sunstein, 2011).

However, there is little evidence of a relationship between ideology, partisan identification, or partisan strength and conflict orientation in any of my studies. Across all four samples, the full Conflict

Communication Scale and the three political characteristics have essentially no correlation, as measured by Pearson's correlation coefficients. This provides strong evidence that conflict orientation is not tied to these specific political characteristics

Table 12: Pearson's Correlations between Conflict Orientation and Political Characteristics

	Study 1 (MTurk)	Study 2 (SSI)	Study 3 (PI)	Study 4 (MTurk)
Republican	-0.03	-0.01	0.01	-0.01
PID Strength	0.06	-0.01	-0.03	-0.03
Pol. Interest	0.23*	n/a	0.23*	0.17*
Conservative	0.03	-0.03	-0.04	-0.01

^{*} indicates statistical significance at p<0.05. Study 2 did not ask participants to report their interest in politics.

This argument is more compelling if conflict orientation does not strongly correlate with other political characteristics that might also shape these emotions and ultimately individuals' engagement, specifically party identification (and the strength of that identification) and political interest. We know that partisan identification, and the strength of that identification, can determine to which media citizens turn for their political news, for which candidates citizens vote, and many other political attitudes (Arceneaux, Johnson, & Murphy, forthcoming; Iyengar & Hahn, 2009; Rosenstone & Hansen, 2002; Stroud, 2011). Furthermore, we know that political interest drives the decision to vote (Brady et al., 1995). Given these almost overpowering relationships between partisanship, political interest, and political behavior, it is important to distinguish conflict orientation as a psychological trait that is independent from an individual's decision to affiliate with a party or their interest in politics generally.

Political interest is the only political variable that approaches the level of correlation with conflict orientation and gender. It is significant across almost every subscale in both studies, the exception being the MTurk public/private subscale. Across all three subscales and the full scale, there is a significant positive correlation between the two variables, so that as an individual reports greater interest in politics, they are also more likely to be conflict-approaching: tolerant of conflict, willing to air disputes publicly, and willing to confront their opponent head-on. This relationship could raise concerns about the theoretical relationships I outline in the dissertation—if the conflict-approaching individuals are also the most politically interested, then it's possible that any relationship between one's conflict orientation and political behavior is confounded by that individual's high political interest, which we know leads to greater political engagement and media consumption (Verba et al., 1995).

In the analyses in the following chapters, I examine the relationship between conflict orientation and political engagement across different levels of political interest—particularly the most politically interested. While political interest does play a major role in shaping political participation, conflict orientation continues to have an independent effect, a phenomenon I will discuss more in chapters five and six.

Conclusion

Individuals' predispositions towards conflict—their reactions to and experience of disagreement and argument—are stable, trait-based characteristics that are tied to several key demographic characteristics, specifically gender, age, personality and political interest. One's conflict orientation is established in child- and early adulthood, making it a pre-political trait that has little influence on one's partisan identification or the strength of that identification. Furthermore, conflict orientation is distinct

from decisions about how to resolve conflict. Instead, it is about the ways one experiences and reacts to a conflict situation, particularly conflict communication. As I will demonstrate in the coming chapters, conflict orientation can moderate or exacerbate the role these characteristics play in citizens' political engagement and influences the affective response individuals have to political incivility.

However, in order to establish these relationships between predispositions and behavior, we must have a strong approach to measuring conflict orientation across individuals. The analyses in this chapter draw on an adapted version of the Conflict Communication Scale, a set of 75 items designed to capture an individual's psychic experience of conflict while taking into consideration cultural and individual differences. The 15-item version of the Conflict Communication Scale, better suited to the survey setting, still produces relatively high inter-item correlations and Cronbach's alpha scores, suggesting that it is capturing a single latent concept. The adapted Conflict Communication Scale adequately measures an individual's experience of conflict. Next, we will explore the ways in which conflict orientation affects perceptions of incivility and then interacts with the tone of communication to affect emotional and behavioral outcomes.

Chapter 4: Citizens' Perceptions of Media Incivility

"If the meaning of the news lay only in the 'objective' physical movements of people, currency, bombs, welfare checks, and so on, this model of the physical world would make some sense. But the premise is plainly absurd. It is only the meanings people attribute to observations...that make them important or irrelevant."—Murray Edelman, Constructing the Political Spectacle (1988, p 95)

In chapter 2, I postulated that Americans attempt both consciously and unconsciously to align their political and media environment with their personal predilection for conflict. In order to do this, they must perceive different media sources as varying in their level of incivility; outlets need to be mentally categorized as high- or low-conflict. Once this categorization has occurred, citizens can make the decision to engage with sources on the basis of their likelihood of introducing incivility into political discourse. Furthermore, it is possible that mediated incivility is viewed through the lens of one's conflict orientation. The conflict-avoidant are predisposed to negative responses in the face of conflict but they could also be more sensitive to conflict, picking up on language and tone that denotes incivility in ways that those who are comfortable with conflict fail to notice. The extent to which citizens notice different types of incivility across media formats and the ways in which conflict orientation influences these perceptions move us a step closer on the quest to understand the relationship between conflict orientation, incivility, and political behavior.

While it appears to be on the rise in the media generally, incivility is not present in the same quantity or forms across all types of media (J. G. Geer, 2012; Shea & Sproveri, 2012). Sobeiraj and Berry (2014; 2011) conclude that almost 90 percent of the blogs, cable television and talk radio segments they sample contain at least some form of "outrage," with television ranking as the worst offender. One hundred percent of the cable television and 98.8 percent of talk radio programs they evaluated contained some form of outrage. They find that blogs contain outrage less frequently than cable and talk radio, but not "radically less" (Berry & Sobeiraj, 2014, 45). Papacharissi (2004) also investigates incivility in online forums, and even when separating uncivil and impolite talk into two categories finds that around 50 percent of messages contain either impolite or uncivil commentary.

Research on exposure to disagreement suggests that what matters for behavioral outcomes is not the factual presence or absence of particular perspectives, but the *perception* of those viewpoints that shapes behavior (Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1995; Mutz & Martin, 2001). I argue that the same can be said of incivility—what matters most is the consumers' perception of civility, not just its existence. Documenting the presence of incivility is a helpful endeavor, but in order to understand individuals' responses to this tone, we must examine how they notice and interpret it.

A further complication is that uncivil language—like name-calling and insults—may not be perceived equivalently when expressed in text, on the radio or on television. Audio and video provide additional cues to consumers that an uncivil tone is being used. For example, sarcasm and shouting are not easily discerned when reading a traditional news story, but are clearly conveyed through the tone of voice when listening to an audio or video clip. Beyond audio, video exposes the gestures, like eye-rolling

41

¹⁶ Outrage, according to Sobeiraj and Berry (2013) "differs conceptually from its more frequently examined compatriot, incivility, because the discourteous gestures implied by incivility...are considerably less dramatic and demeaning than the remarks and behaviors we define as outrageous." However, I interpret outrage as operating on the same continuum as incivility and treat it as equivalent to highly uncivil communication.

and pointing, that frequently accompany and signal uncivil language. These added layers of information make it easier for citizens to identify uncivil language and react accordingly.

In this chapter, I review previous research on uncivil content and present findings from a small content analysis of cable news media in order to categorize different types of media as high- or low-conflict. I then use a survey experiment to assess people's perceptions of incivility across three of these media formats—text, audio, and visual—and to determine how media type shapes perceptions of incivility and individuals' identification of its characteristics. I find that on most occasions, text is perceived as the most civil and video as significantly less so. With some outcomes, individuals respond to audio like they do to video—both are seen as less positive than text, for example. Other times, audio is perceived more like text; the two are reported to be less emotional than video coverage of the same information.

Within-subjects comparisons of two treatments shown to the same individual indicate that order of exposure can also influence these perceptions. Once a citizen has been exposed to video or audio, they report that the same information conveyed solely as text appears comparatively more positive and contains fewer of the characteristics of incivility. Furthermore, evaluations of the material's entertainment, information and emotional value shifted significantly, with participants reporting portraying higher levels of each when audio and video were shown after text.

My experiment also establishes that conflict orientation does not influence perceptions of incivility. For the most part, conflict-avoidant and conflict-approaching individuals are equally likely to identify characteristics of incivility in the media and uniformly perceive the treatments as uncivil. In other words, the conflict-avoidant are no more likely to see incivility in a news story than their conflict-approaching peers. However, conflict orientation does play a role in individuals' more general perceptions of the news story—that is, how emotional, interesting and entertaining the story is.

The association of incivility with audio and video reinforces the content-analytic findings that radio and cable television news are high-conflict media sources while text-based sources like newspapers are low-conflict. However, it also demonstrates that further research is needed to explore the effects of text in the digital age. Online communication is characterized by a different type of incivility than is seen in traditional written news—for example, comment trolling, insulting and obscene language, and the use of capital letters—and these traits are not incorporated into this experiment. By establishing that individuals perceive incivility differently across platforms, these findings imply that citizens may make choices about their media on the basis of incivility. These choices—reading newspapers or mainstream blogs instead of watching cable television, for example—not only lead some citizens to be exposed to more incivility than others but also have implications for citizens' political behavior that I will explore in chapter 6.

Variation in Mediated Incivility

Media coverage of politics emphasizes conflict—between parties, policy solutions, and candidates—making political news the most likely source of citizens' exposure to uncivil discourse (Bennett, 2002; Graber, 2001; Mutz & Martin, 2001; Patterson, 2011). However, all media are not equal offenders. Certain programs and formats are more likely to contain incivility than others. Rush Limbaugh, for example, is notorious for using his radio show to malign the Democratic perspective and doing so in a rude and vitriolic manner. In a 2013 discussion of President Obama's proposal to offer subsidized birth control as part of the Affordable Care Act, Limbaugh claimed that law student and activist Sandra Fluke's support of the policy "makes her a slut, right? It makes her a prostitute. She wants to be paid to have sex" (Puschak, 2013). This comment demonstrates uncivil discourse because it

attacks Fluke's character, demeans her, and uses slurs like "slut." Radio commentators and cable news anchors like Limbaugh or Keith Olbermann¹⁷ are infamous for this language.

Limbaugh and Olbermann are not alone in their crudeness. Overall, television, radio and internet blogs are found to contain relatively high levels of incivility. Sobeiraj and Berry (2014; 2011) develop 13 categories of language and expressions that comprise outrageous behavior to reach their conclusion that cable news and talk radio are much more likely to introduce uncivil discourse than blogs (Berry & Sobeiraj, 2014, 45). Papacharissi (2004) also investigates incivility in online forums, and even when separating uncivil and impolite talk into two categories finds that around 50 percent of messages contain either impolite or uncivil commentary. In other words, citizens are most likely to experience incivility on cable news programs or talk radio. Online sources like blogs and discussion forums take a close second.

While "new" media like cable, talk radio and blogs are frequently uncivil, traditional forms of political media do not demonstrate the same level of rude and impolite language. Sobeiraj and Berry (2014) use newspapers as a control in their evaluation of outrage on blogs and cable television, finding that newspaper columnists are likely to have about 6 instances of outrage in a column (in comparison, television and radio segments contain, on average 23-24 incidents). However, they do not explore the differences in the language and tone found on network and cable television programs.

To address this gap, a colleague and I conducted content analysis of 666 television news segments from MSNBC, Fox, CNN, NBC and ABC.¹⁸ We found that network television is also less likely to use uncivil language than cable programs. We assessed the presence of civility and incivility by looking for language similar to that coded by Sobieraj and Berry. We recorded whether each source, throughout the course of the segment, used any of three civil and four uncivil communication strategies. Specifically, we measured the presence or absence of the following civil approaches: indication that an opponent's policies would positively change American values or institutions, acknowledgement of common ground, and use of complementary language or praise of an opponent. Incivility was coded as present if a source placed blame on his or her opponents, used hyperbolic language to characterize his or her opponent ("outrageous"), used pejorative language ("racist," "liar"), and/or described the opposition with derogatory adjective ("reckless," "weird"). From these seven items, we created additive

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¹⁷ Olbermann regularly had a "special comments" section on his *MSNBC* show, in which he would offer a monologue on an issue that outraged him that day. Incivility was a frequent component of these comments; for example, "Michelle Bachmann's only rival for 'least stable member of the House of Representatives:' Steve King, R-lowa, 5th District and 17th Century...who is amazingly let out of the house each day without adult supervision" (Olbermann & msnbc.com, 2008).

¹⁸ The transcripts used in this content analysis were pulled from a LexisNexis search of coverage of the Arizona immigration law (SB 1070) and the Congressional debate over healthcare reform (specifically, the passage of the Affordable Care Act) from March 1 to April 30, 2010. The initial search of television coverage of these two issues resulted in over 2000 articles, and we randomly sampled from this population to produce a set of 666 program transcripts, 267 on healthcare and 399 on immigration. Within each of these transcripts we coded any segment—a section of the program typically beginning with a return from commercial break and ending with the host shifting to a new topic or cutting to commercial again—that dealt directly with immigration or healthcare. The full coding scheme is available in Appendix II.

measures of incivility and civility for each segment, counting the total number of uncivil and civil incidents present, regardless of type.

In this analysis, I find that certain types of uncivil language are used more frequently across all television news outlets, while other types are much more prevalent on cable news. Table 4 shows the percentage of segments that contain at least one use of each type of language. While not approaching Sobeiraj and Berry's finding of outrage incidents in 100 percent of the cable television news sample, I did find that 70 percent of my sample contained at least one of the five measures of uncivil language. Sources were most likely to use blame in dealing with their opponents, and least likely to accuse others of lying. There was substantially less evidence of civil language, with only 18 percent of the total sample demonstrating any of the three types of language on which we focused. Of those three, sources were most likely to acknowledge common ground with their detractors.

Table 13: Percentage of Segments with Civil or Uncivil Language, by Media Outlet

	Fox	MSNBC	CNN	ABC	NBC	Total
Any Uncivil Language	78	80	68	55	50	70
Blame	63	54	48	31	39	51
Hyperbole	37	54	30	24	24	34
Accusations of Lying	17	24	9	6	2	12
Name-Calling	39	47	21	22	19	28
Threatens American Values	26	35	20	14	11	22
Any Civil Language	17	23	20	20	7	18
Praise	7	5	7	2	4	6
Common Ground	11	18	14	12	4	13
Bolsters American Values	4	4	4	6	2	4

The table above notes what percentage of segments contained particular types of civility and incivility. It does not capture how frequently multiple forms of incivility were present within the same segment. It is one thing to blame one's opponent for political problems, but another to do so while also calling them lying idiots who are destroying America. Segments were not likely to contain multiple identifiers of civil language. On average, across all five news outlets, a segment contains less than one incident of civil language ($\overline{x_{civil}} = 0.25$). However, when incivility was used, it was frequently used multiple times. Cable and network news averaged two types of uncivil language per segment ($\overline{x_{uncivil}} = 2.0$). However, the distribution of uncivil incidents per segment is strongly right-skewed; while the averages for both types are relatively low, 25 percent of segments contain more than three uncivil incidents.

There is also variation in the prevalence of highly uncivil segments across media outlets, with Fox and MSNBC containing averages of 3.2 and 2.5 incidents per segment, respectively. CNN, NBC and ABC contain, on average 1.7 or fewer incidents of uncivil language. Cable networks had ten percent

44

 $[\]overline{x_{CNN}} = 1.7$, $\overline{x_{NBC}} = 1.5$, $\overline{x_{ABC}} = 1.2$. In a one-way ANOVA, there was no statistically significant difference between the number of incidents found on MSNBC and Fox or the number of incidents found on NBC and CNN, but there was a difference between MSNBC, Fox, and the other three outlets.

more overall uncivil language than network television as well. These results show that network news programming is more civil than the shows on cable news. This distinction reinforces previous findings that television news is highly uncivil and provides clear evidence that it is cable, not network television, which drives this association.

Unlike evaluations of the tone of traditional news sources or the internet, research on political conflict and incivility as conveyed through social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook is almost non-existent, in spite of the fact that roughly half of Facebook and Twitter users—amounting to about 30 percent of American adults—report getting news from the sites (Guskin, 2013; Mitchell, 2013). Although these sites primarily link to other outlets such as blogs and traditional news organizations' websites, networked individuals frequently share these links while adding their own opinions, commentary, or reactions. These comments and reactions are where incivility is likely to be used. Because data on incivility in social media commentary and news analysis is not yet available, I assume that users express opinions on Facebook and Twitter the same way they would "in the real world," or in face-to-face conversations with their friends. Like in face-to-face social networks, users control who they are "friends with" on Facebook or "following" on Twitter and these connections are frequently driven by real-life acquaintance or shared interests. While these sites might slightly increase the diversity of one's social network (Kim, Hsu, & de Zúñiga, 2013), other research suggests that Twitter users, in particular, tend to seek out clusters of other users that are politically homogenous (Himelboim, McCreery, & Smith, 2013). While homogeneity does not preclude the use of uncivil language, in many cases it reduces the presence of incivility. This relationship allows me to categorize social media as a low-conflict source of political information.

To summarize, the research outlined above establishes that political media can be divided into high- and low-conflict sources. High-conflict sources include cable TV, internet message boards, blogs such as the Daily Kos or Huffington Post, and talk radio. These three forms of political communication regularly allow—and in fact encourage—program hosts and guests to use uncivil language. On the other hand, research finds newspapers and network television to be comparatively low in their presentation of uncivil language, landing them in the low-conflict category. While less has been done on the presence of incivility in social media, the ability of the individual to control from whom they get their news suggests that its use leads to less exposure to incivility as well. . The first claim of my conflict-reducing exposure hypothesis is that citizens select the media they use to gather political information on the basis of a particular format's likelihood of introducing information in an uncivil, confrontational manner. For some citizens—the conflict-avoidant—the fact that a media personality is known for her vitriolic approach to the news will dissuade them from seeking her perspective. For others, this information will be enough to draw them in. While some citizens are capable of making this distinction on a show-byshow basis, others form more general, format-based assessments of the likelihood of exposure to incivility. In other words, Americans' preferences for newspapers or cable television are shaped not only by factors like gender and age, but also by their perceptions that these types of media are more or less uncivil.

Table 14 condenses this categorization of the six broad types of media into low- and high-conflict sources based on content analytic research.

Table 14: Categorization of Media by Level of Conflict

High-Conflict Media	Low-Conflict Media
Cable Television	Newspapers (including their online versions)
Internet News/blogs	Network television
Talk Radio	Social Media (Twitter, Facebook)

These findings do not address whether individuals perceive variation in sources' use of incivility (Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1995). However, survey results suggest that people do distinguish between sources, emphasizing certain sources as more uncivil than others. Americans believe civility is declining in American politics, and they blame the media, especially talk radio and cable television, for the decline (Shea et al., 2010).²⁰ Television and radio are distinguished from other media because, as I have found, there is more incivility being used on these platforms and because the audio and visual components of these media make it easier for citizens to perceive this incivility.

Literature: Perceptions Matter in Politics

To understand why television and radio are perceived as more uncivil than more traditional, text-based news coverage, it is important not only to consider the presence of uncivil language, but the ways in which the audio-visual components of TV and radio might exaggerate the salience of that language. Much research has focused on how the visual images central to television news set it apart from other media. Early experimental research found little to no difference in the persuasive effects of the same message presented across different platforms and concluded that visuals did not uniformly or automatically improve learning, recall or understanding (McGuire, 1969, 1985; Trenaman, 1967). However, more recent research suggests that television content is made more memorable because of the pictures. In two 1988 experiments, participants reported that visuals made the stories seem more "realistic," provided clarification and made an emotional impact (Graber, 1988; Tsuneki, 1988).

Graber finds that viewers' recall of stories is enhanced by visuals, especially when unusual sites or human figures are pictured (Graber, 1990, 2001). She argues that pictures do not provide the types of information that social scientists typically measure, but instead allow the viewer to judge personality. Meyrowitz sees this as a good thing; television lets the citizen into the inner sanctuary and lets them see politicians as the "average man, writ large" (Meyrowitz, 1985). However, Graber also cautions against the power of visuals to arouse emotion around an individual's personal experience, drawing on lyengar's (1991) research into episodic framing to demonstrate the ability of visuals to change individuals' perceptions of the issues and attributions of responsibility for those issues (Graber, 2001). Visuals, according to this line of research, can increase the viewer's understanding of politicians' personalities and their responsibility for particular events while encouraging him or her to feel as if they have a personal connection to the elites on television.

Druckman (2003) examines the differential effects of television and radio presentations of political news through the use of the famous 1960 Nixon-Kennedy debate, presenting one set of experimental participants with the audio version (radio) and the other with the televised presentation. He finds that

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²⁰ Sixty one percent of participants attributed the decline in civility to both radio and television news. Other media-related causes included blogs (42%), Glenn Beck (40%), late night talk shows like Stewart and Leno (38%) and Rachel Maddow (25%). It is also indicative that six of the 12 options are media-related, even if they were selected by the researchers rather than provided by the respondents.

television images have significant effects on evaluations of the debate, encourage viewers to rely on personality in their evaluations of candidates and increase learning.

For all the positive benefits associated with the visual component of television, the audio and text also play a necessary role in consumers' understanding, learning, and emotional response to political news. While video determines how much people learn from the visuals specifically, the audio component of television tends to carry most of the information, and viewers tend to pay closer attention to text when the visual data is also available (Crigler, Just, & Neuman, 1994; Graber, 1990). Crigler et al (1994) find that audio alone can be just as cognitively satisfying as audiovisual stimuli. While the "multichannel" effects of audio and visual are better than those of a single channel, they argue that audio is the most effective single means of conveying the meaning of a story, carrying more cognitive and emotional weight.

Fewer researchers have focused on the differences between the comprehension and responsiveness evoked by television or audio and textual presentation of information, such as newspapers or online news articles. Much of the focus has been on differences in use—television reaches groups of people who traditionally lack political knowledge (young people, people of low socio-economic status, and the less politically interested) but newspapers do more to close knowledge gaps and are sought out more frequently by the actively engaged (Chaffee & Frank, 1996).

Intuitively, there are other differences between the three media that are also likely to affect perceptions and interpretations of audiovisuals in comparison to text. The audio available in radio and television allows the listener to pick up on variation in intonation, the use of sarcasm, and other things that would change the substantive meaning of a message in a way that they can only impute when reading a text. Because these differences seem particularly relevant in the context of incivility and disagreement, this study also examines individuals' responses to a message conveyed solely as a transcript of a video clip, in order to evaluate the extent to which the audio and visuals both augment affective response to and awareness of incivility.

Expectations

I argue that audio and visuals have distinct effects on individuals' perceptions of and responses to the tone of the message, specifically their awareness of incivility. Audio and video add layers of nuance and cues about incivility that cannot be picked up in textual communication—gestures like finger-pointing or eye-rolling, or a tone of voice signifying sarcasm or disdain. These increased perceptions of incivility, in turn, affect individuals' choices when seeking out political information and participating in political activities.

Given that audio and visual stimuli are offering additional information to citizens about whether communication is civil or uncivil, I expect the television clips to produce the strongest perceptions of negative tone, followed by audio clips and finally text. While participants will be able to identify the textual portrayal of an uncivil exchange as relatively uncivil, the additional ability to hear the speakers' voices—their shouting, their interruptions—will strengthen participants' assessments of the material as rude or impolite. Adding the visuals and allowing viewers to not only hear voices but read body language will further augment their perceptions of the exchange as uncivil. The reverse is true for positive tone. Because the material selected for this experiment is designed to be uncivil, perceptions of positive tone—respect, civility—will be strongest in the textual condition, where audio and visuals cannot undercut the relative politeness of the words themselves.

 H_1 : Perceptions of negativity will be strongest in the video condition, followed by audio and then text.

 H_2 : Positive perceptions will be strongest in the textual condition, while audio and visual will be perceived as less positive.

 H_3 : Video will elicit the strongest levels of emotion, interest and entertainment in participants, followed by audio and text.

Beyond general perceptions of tone, however, it is also possible that specific characteristics of incivility are more or less obvious when presented visually or audibly than through the written word, or that the components of incivility that people notice and respond to are not those expressed through words—name-calling, aspersions, obscene language—but the expression of those words through raised voices, gesturing, and other expressions that can best be captured through audio and video. I argue that video will again be the superior medium for identifying characteristics of incivility, followed by audio and lastly text.

*H*₄: Participants will report the presence of more characteristics of incivility in the visual condition than the audio condition, and a greater number of characteristics in both video and audio than text.

Table 15: Summary of Perception Hypotheses summarizes the outcomes from these three hypotheses, stating in which condition the outcomes will be most noticeable (or perceived at higher levels) and in which conditions citizens will be least aware of incivility.

Table 15: Summary of Perception Hypotheses

Incivility is	Negativity (H₁)	Positivity (H ₂)	Interest/Emotion/	Number of
			Entertainment	Characteristics
			(H ₃)	(H ₃)
Most noticeable	Video	Text	Video	Video
	Audio	Audio	Audio	Audio
Least noticeable	Text	Video	Text	Text

While the type of media should affect individuals' perceptions of incivility by highlighting or masking certain characteristics, an individual's conflict orientation should not influence the extent to which they perceive communication as civil or uncivil. As explained in chapter 3, conflict orientation is an individual predisposition that shapes citizens' reactions to and willingness to engage with conflict. It does not lead certain individuals to see more incivility in everyday conversation. Instead, there is a culturally understood norm of what qualifies as incivility—in this case the use of language that casts an impolite tone—and conflict orientation dictates an individual's reaction when exposed to that incivility. Therefore, we should expect the null hypothesis to hold true here:

 H_5 : Conflict orientation does not influence perceptions of incivility on its own nor through an interaction with media type.

Finally, it is important to consider how these perceptions might change in a media environment where people consume information across all types of platforms with relative frequency. Citizens who read about an issue and then watch a clip with similar information and tone will perceive incivility and react to it in a different manner than someone who first watches a video and then reads more information. Exposure to the visuals or audio first allows citizens to encode the images or tone of voice

into the schema associated with a particular issue or communication (Graber, 2001). Therefore, if a participant sees the visual or hears the audio and then reads the text, they will draw on visual and audio information stored in their minds to impute a tone on the text that they might not have otherwise assumed without prior exposure. The reverse does not hold true; if an individual reads the text and then sees the video or listens to the audio, they will not have the same prior information to incorporate into their understanding of the sounds and images. The order in which Americans are exposed to different media formats can affect the extent to which they notice incivility; therefore, individuals' preferred media sources—those they turn to first for political news—not only shape their initial exposure to incivility but can increase or decrease their perceptions of incivility in subsequent sources.

H₆: The order in which individuals are exposed to the material on different platforms will affect their assessment of incivility.

Experiencing Incivility

MTurk participants in Study 1 (see Table 2) were first asked several questions about their attitudes towards conflict and compromise, then randomly assigned to one of six experimental treatments that were 30-second edited excerpts from either MSNBC's *Dylan Ratigan Show* or *Morning Joe*. The material was presented as the original video, as audio with the visuals removed, or as a transcript of the exchange (See Appendix B for examples of visuals and the text of the exchange). Both excerpts were on economic topics: *Morning Joe* interviewed then-Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-VA) about the controversy surrounding bonuses for AIG employees, while *Dylan Ratigan* featured a round table discussion of tax reform and the budget deficit. In a pretest conducted on a different sample of MTurk workers, the video versions of these treatments were ranked as moderately uncivil, and there was no statistical difference in the average perceived incivility of the *Dylan Ratigan* clip in comparison to that of *Morning Joe*.²¹ For this reason, the analyses conducted below will only compare findings across platforms, rather than making distinctions between the two shows.

The two videos both present a political discussion between three to four people around an economic issue. In the *Ratigan* clip, all of the participating individuals—two men and two women--are sitting around the same table. On *Morning Joe*, the hosts are in the television studio together, but Lawrence O'Donnell and Eric Cantor join remotely. Throughout the course of the clip, individuals in the uncivil condition regularly interrupt each other, shout, and gesture in ways that indicate incivility. In the civil condition, most of these interactions were conveyed in a more polite manner.

After exposure to the first treatment, participants completed a series of questions about the levels of incivility and disagreement found in the material, as well as their emotional responses to it. They were then shown a second version of the treatment, matched on the show but varying the platform. For example, if a participant saw the video clip from *Dylan Ratigan* first, he or she would then be asked to read the transcript or listen to the audio version. Not only does this within-subjects design improve the power of the study, but it allows for comparison of reactions to the different formats by the

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²¹ In the pretest, 300 MTurk participants were randomly assigned to watch one of six videos—a civil or uncivil clip from *Morning Joe, The Dylan Ratigan Show,* or *Hannity*. They were then asked, "To what extent was the clip you just watched uncivil?" They could respond on a scale from one to five, with one indicating "not at all uncivil" and five representing "extremely uncivil." *Morning Joe* and *The Dylan Ratigan Show* were found to be statistically indistinguishable in both the civil and uncivil conditions. The uncivil clips used to build the treatments in this paper were evaluated as follows: M_{MorningJoe}=2.89, M_{Ratigan}=2.98, p<0.69.

same individual, thereby holding constant any effects of individual-level variables that might vary across treatment groups.

Measuring incivility

I used a variety of measures to assess individuals' perceptions of incivility and the tone of the piece more generally. First, participants were asked to use a five point scale (from one, "not at all" to five, "extremely") to evaluate the extent to which they found the material to be civil, rude, respectful, childish, interesting, emotional, or entertaining. From these, I constructed additive measures of positive and negative perceptions. Positivity included assessments of civility and respect, while negativity was calculated from participants' evaluations of the materials' rudeness and childishness²². Evaluations of the content's entertainment, interest or emotional value are considered separately.

In addition to offering their general evaluation of the level of civility found in the news coverage, respondents were also asked to identify whether they had noticed specific characteristics thought to define incivility in the material. They checked boxes to identify whether any of 13 characteristics had been present, including obscene language, hostility, interruption, shouting, respect for opposing viewpoints, and name-calling. These responses were then added together to create a count of the total number of characteristics each respondent identified in the treatment.

Changing Platforms, Changing Reactions

This experiment was designed to test the effect of three media platforms—video, audio and text—on individuals' perceptions of incivility in the material. Across each measure of perceived incivility, a video clip that expressed incivility through both audio and visuals was expected to have the greatest impact. Compared to audio and text, video should increase perceptions of negativity, the total number of uncivil characteristics found, and emotional reactions. Looking at the outcome variables solely for the first set of materials to which participants were exposed, the survey results provide support to many of these hypotheses, but with only small effects and frequently without statistical significance. Responses to the textual portrayal of information look more distinct from the audio and video presentations when the hypothesized differences across platforms are explored within subjects by comparing responses to the first treatment to those with the second.

Let's first compare respondents' perceptions of positivity, negativity, emotion, interest and entertainment across the three platforms. I had predicted that video condition would result in the highest assessment of the material as negative, emotional, interesting and entertaining, while the text condition would be viewed more positively. However, as Figure 5 shows, results of a one-way ANOVA indicate that both the positivity index and the perception of the material as "interesting" fall well short of statistical significance across any of the three conditions (F(2, 741)=2.16, p<0.12; F(2,740)=0.46, p<0.63, respectively).

For each of the other outcomes—evaluations of negativity, emotion, and entertainment—one-way ANOVAs suggest significant differences between the conditions²³. Looking closer at the differences

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²² Alpha tests of both scales indicate that rudeness and childishness have a strong inter-item covariance (0.95) while civility and respect have a lower average covariance (0.58). However, both pairs have stronger alphas when measured independently than when combined into a four-item scale from positive to negative (0.51).

²³ The results of the one-way ANOVAs for each model are as follows: Negativity (F(2,741)=3.94, p<0.020); Entertainment (F(2,739)=3.32, p<0.037); Emotion (F(2,740)=4.99, p<0.007).

between conditions, post-hoc estimations using Bonferroni's method suggest the text condition looked significantly different from one of the other conditions in each evaluation, but there were no clear differences across all three categories. As Figure 5 shows, video was rated as significantly more negative than text, although this change is small—one-third of a point, not even equivalent to a shift from responding "slightly negative" to "moderately negative" (M_{video} =1.85; M_{text} =1.58, p<0.016). Perceptions of the material's entertainment value demonstrated a similarly small shift. While the material was reported as not particularly entertaining regardless of the platform, video was statistically significantly more entertaining than the text version (M_{video} =1.15; M_{text} =0.92, p<0.033). Interestingly, the audio clip was seen as the most emotional—significantly more so than the text—although we cannot reject the hypothesis that the video clip was perceived as equally emotional as the audio clip (M_{audio} =2.13; M_{text} =1.79 p<0.005). Figure 5 displays the finding that while visuals seem to set video clips apart from text, audio falls somewhere in the middle, not quite distinguishable from text in some cases or from video in others when evaluating for negativity, emotion and entertainment.

Perceptions also change in the expected directions based on the order in which the subjects see the material. As the first panel in Figure 6 shows, participants who read the text and were then exposed to the audio or video reported the second treatment as significantly less positive than the first—0.2 or 0.3 less positive than the text. Given that the text was already rated very low on positivity (M=0.82, SD=0.87), there is likely a floor effect on this difference. This floor effect means that most people were evaluating the positivity somewhere between 0 and 2, making a 0.2 or 0.3 drop more substantively meaningful. However, the text was not seen as significantly more positive when read after the audio or video. Once the information was processed with the sound and visuals, reading it again without those cues did not change how individuals perceived the tone. Ultimately, participants' first impressions shaped their interpretations of the messages that followed, making the second treatment appear more or less positive based on what they saw first.

Order effects matter for assessment of positivity but less so for the other evaluations. The order effects on negativity, emotion and entertainment reinforce the between-subjects findings. When text is followed by video, participants report that the video clip is more negative and more emotional than the text ($t_{negativity}$ =-2.17, p<0.05; $t_{emotional}$ =-2.86, p<0.01). The reverse is also true—those participants who saw the video and then read the text described the text as less emotional, less negative and less entertaining ($t_{negativity}$ =-3.82, p<0.01; $t_{emotional}$ =-3.59, p<0.01, $t_{entertaining}$ =2.89, p<0.01). The participants who saw both audio and text perceived the audio as more emotional, regardless of which treatment was shown first. However, audio was only seen as more negative than text when it was shown first.

Both the within- and between-subjects findings suggest that individuals' perception of message tone do vary across platforms in expected ways. The starkest comparison is between text and video, with participants identifying video as more negative and yet more entertaining and emotional. This finding holds across participants and regardless of which platform participants were shown first. While audio was frequently indistinguishable from video, it was found to convey more emotion than text both across and within participants. In other words, these results reinforce past findings that audio and visuals can provide additional information to media consumers about journalists' tone. Uncivil messages that use sarcasm or character assassination can be reinforced by the visual of a guest point her finger or hearing the person shouting. Television is found to be one of the most uncivil media because of norms about what people can say on cable news programs, but also because the audio and visual serve to enhance the insulting words people chose to say.

Figure 5 Participants Evaluate Text Differently than Audio, Video

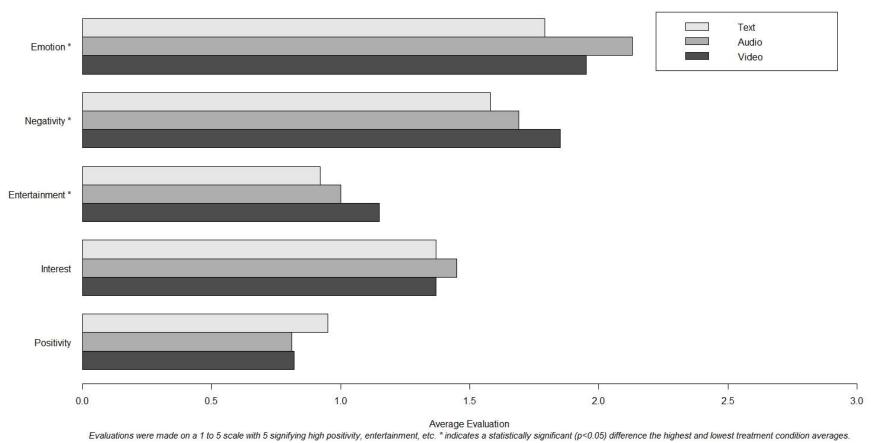
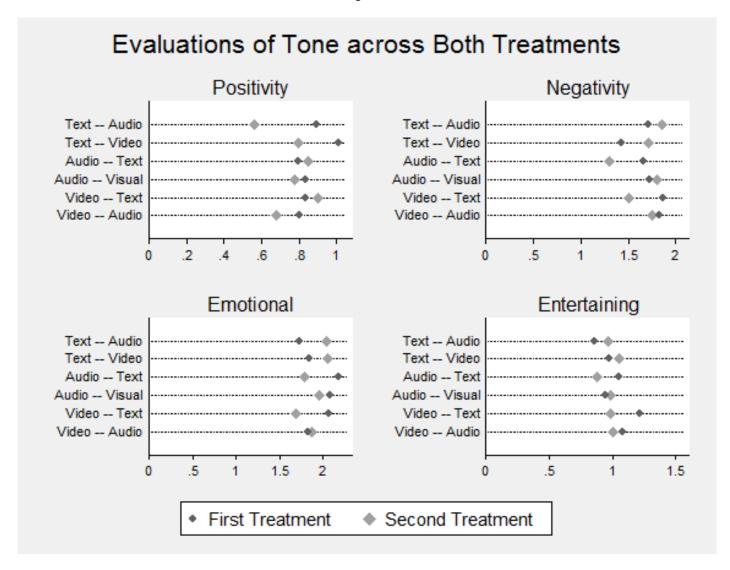


Figure 6



All evaluations were done on a 1-5 scale with 5 indicating the highest level of evaluation.

Video could be perceived more negatively than text because participants notice more characteristics of incivility when they watch political news than when they listen to or read it. However, the results are mixed. A one-way ANOVA indicates that there are differences between the average number of characteristics identified across the three treatments (F(2,776)=3.02, p<0.045), but post-hoc estimation reveals that there is only a statistically significant difference between the video (M=4.61 SD=2.47) and audio (M=4.14 SD=2.66, see Table 16) conditions. The difference is very small—about a half of an additional characteristic, on average, is noticed in video over audio—and the number of characteristics identified in the textual condition is statistically indistinguishable from either video or audio. However, the gap widens when the three treatments are compared across the second round of treatment (F(2, 776)=15.5, p<0.01). People who read the text as the second condition identified a little over 3 characteristics in the material, significantly fewer than in either the audio or video conditions.

Table 16: Average Number of Incivility Characteristics Identified Across Treatments

	Video	Audio	Text
Treatment 1	4.61*	4.14*	4.18
	(2.47)	(2.66)	(2.09)
Treatment 2	4.32 ^t	4.30*	3.29* ^t
	(2.49)	(2.57)	(2.23)

Cell entries represent the average number of incivility cues reported in each treatment, with standard deviations in parentheses. * and t indicate a significant difference between the two conditions at p< 0.1.

It is possible that respondents identified more components of incivility in the video clip than in audio because some characteristics can only be identified through sight. Figure 7 shows the differences across treatments for each of the 13 individual characteristics. Thirty-nine percent of participants who viewed the video clip reported that they had noticed pointing, while only 27 and 28 percent reported pointing in text and audio, respectively.²⁴ Audio-centered characteristics like shouting and interruption were also reported at higher levels in the video condition, but unsurprisingly these were statistically indistinguishable from their reported frequency in the audio condition. However, other characteristics were identified in the text and audio conditions at statistically greater rates. Hostility was identified by 64 percent of the respondents in the audio treatment—14 percent more than the text condition and 10 percent more than those who saw the video. Respondents were also more likely to pick out criticism in the audio condition (56 percent) than in text or video (50 and 48 percent, respectively).

The differences in component identification are highlighted further when we look at comparisons within subjects. As Figure 8 shows, when participants saw text before audio or video, they identified on average one-third of an additional characteristic in the second condition than they had in the first (t=-1.75, p<0.08; t=-1.80, p<0.07, one-tailed). However, when they saw text after audio or video, they reduced the number of characteristics identified by approximately one (t=5.49, p<0.001;

54

²⁴ I'm unsure if these people just imagined or inferred pointing, weren't paying attention to the question, or something else entirely. Thirty four percent of respondents in the text condition also reported having heard shouting, even though there was no indication that the words should be interpreted that way (e.g. use of all-caps in online discourse).

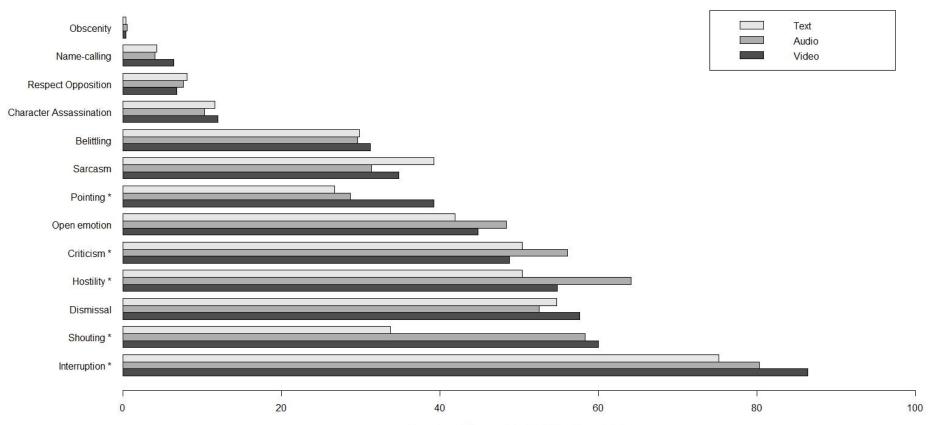
t=7.31, p<0.001, respectively). This suggests that seeing audio or video first led participants to discount incivility in the transcript. In other words, they noticed that the transcript had fewer characteristics associated with incivility once they'd seen or heard the information. Seeing the text first did not make people substantially more aware of incivility in the audio or video, perhaps because it is easier to note the absence of characteristics that were already observed than to report new characteristics.

Overall, these results demonstrate that even when information stays the same, features of the media platform can have a powerful influence over how people perceive and respond to that information. The experimental findings confirm my hypotheses that people notice incivility in text differently from audio and video. They find it less entertaining and emotional but slightly more positive in tone. They also perceive fewer characteristics associated with incivility when reading than watching or listening to a clip.

Many of these results only appear when considering the order in which participants were exposed to two of the three treatments. Results like these are likely to more accurately represent citizens' reactions to media messages. While they are not receiving exactly the same messages from multiple sources, citizens frequently turn to a range of media for their information about politics. They catch *Morning Joe* and then read about the same issue in the Huffington Post at work. Or they listen to NPR at their desk and *The Daily Show* that evening. Either way, their perception of one outlet's coverage is likely to be influenced by the information and visuals they have already seen. The order in which they are exposed to incivility matters.

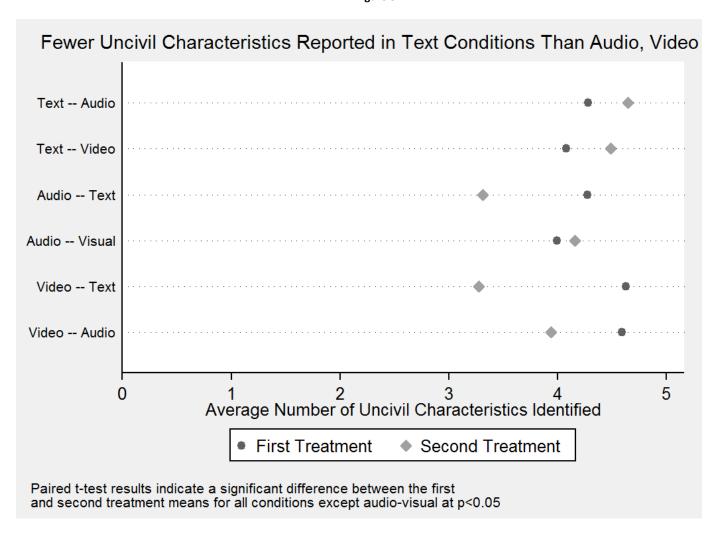
Figure 7

Incivility Characteristics Are Perceived with Different Frequency Across Media Platforms



Percentage of Respondents Identifying Characteristic
* indicates statistically significant difference between at least two treatment conditions

Figure 8



Conflict Orientation Doesn't Change Perceptions

While the results above demonstrate that both the type of media and the order in which a citizen consumes different types shapes their assessment of the presence of incivility, the experiment suggests that conflict orientation plays a minimal role in perceiving incivility. To examine the role of conflict orientation in shaping perceptions of incivility, I focus exclusively on participants' responses to their first exposure to a treatment. Specifically, in a regression of conflict orientation, the treatment conditions, and an interaction between the two on each of the measures of incivility, conflict orientation plays a statistically significant role twice. It has a small substantive effect on individuals' perceptions: the more conflict-approaching an individual is, the more likely he or she is to perceive the treatment as positive and respectful, regardless of the format.

Table 17: Linear Regression of Treatment and Conflict Orientation on Measures of Incivility

	Hostile	Childish	Negativity	Civil	Respectful	Positivity	Count, Incivility
Treatment							
Audio	0.16*	0.12	0.12	-0.12	-0.060	-0.098	-0.074
	(0.052)	(0.13)	(0.113)	(-0.091)	(0.094)	(0.085)	(0.241)
Visual	0.025	0.19	0.23 ^t	-0.17	-0.046	-0.11	0.40
	(0.049)	(0.13)	(0.11)	(0.088)	(0.091)	(0.083)	(0.238)
Conflict Orientation	-0.0065	0.011	0067	0.025	0.030 ^t	0.029 ^t	-0.026
	(0.0068)	(0.017)	(0.015)	(0.0122)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.0333)
Interaction							
Audio x C.O.	0.0064	-0.0020	0.0046	0.016	0.014	0.014	-0.020
	(0.0104)	(0.026)	(0.023)	(0.0184)	(0.019)	(0.017)	(0.0488)
Visual x C.O.	-0.012 (0.010)	-0.030 (0.026)	-0.019 (0.023)	0.010 (0.0184)	5.9 x 10 ⁻⁴ (0.019)	0.0051 (0.017)	-0.012 (0.0500)
Constant	0.49*	1.59*	1.56*	1.09*	0.91*	1.01*	4.14*
	(0.034)	(0.087)	(0.076)	(0.061)	(0.064)	(0.058)	(0.166)

Cell entries are OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *p<0.01, tp<0.05

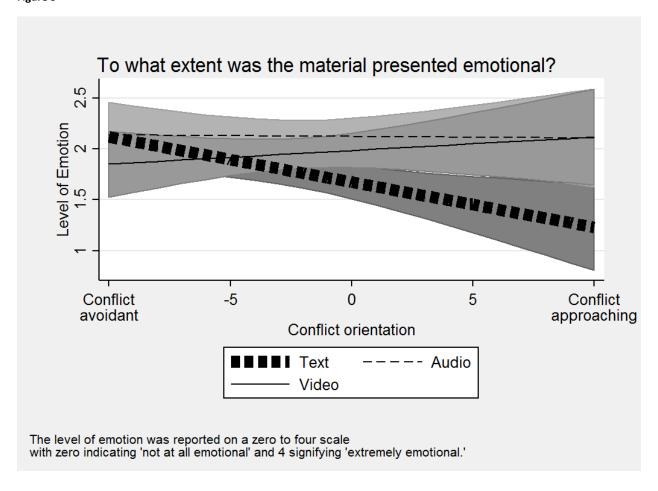
While conflict orientation does not have a clear, systematic effect on perceptions of incivility, it colors how people describe the treatment more generally. Conflict orientation has a very small but statistically significant effect on the extent to which participants describe the treatment as interesting or entertaining. In both cases, more conflict-approaching individuals found the treatments more interesting or entertaining (see Table 18). When asked about the extent to which the treatments were emotional, there is a small but significant interaction effect between the type of treatment the participant was exposed to and their conflict orientation. As can be seen from Figure 9, the primary change occurs for those in the video condition. The most conflict-avoidant individuals in the sample have a probability of rating the emotional level of the clip at a little over 2, which is equivalent to "moderately emotional." The most conflict-approaching individuals have a predicted probability of reporting the emotional level of the clip at around one, almost one unit less emotional than their peers. While the regression coefficients suggest a significant effect of the interaction between the audio treatment and conflict orientation as well, Figure 9 suggests that this difference is relatively unsubstantial across the range of the Conflict Communication Scale.

Table 18: Regression Results for General Perceptions about the News Story

	Interesting	Entertaining	Emotional
Treatment			
Audio	0.086	0.12	0.45*
	(0.111)	(0.11)	(0.12)
Visual	0.065	0.26 ^t	0.31*
	(0.108)	(0.10)	(0.12)
Conflict Orientation	0.037 ^t	0.042*	-0.044*
	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.166)
Interaction			
Audio x C.O.	-0.0020	0.0091	0.043 ^t
	(0.0225)	(0.022)	(0.025)
Visual x C.O.	0.027	0.0077	0.058 ^t
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.025)
Constant	1.44*	1.01*	1.67*
	(0.075)	(0.072)	(0.083)

Cell entries are OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *p<0.01, ^tp<0.05

Figure 9



Conclusion

Ultimately, these results suggest that an individual's conflict orientation does not alter his or her perceptions of incivility in a given media story. Conflict-approaching individuals are not less aware of incivility in the media than their conflict-avoidant counterparts. Instead, these results suggest that conflict orientation affects citizens' broader perceptions of the media coverage itself—the extent to which they see it as interesting, entertaining, or emotional. This difference in evaluations of incivility will be explored further in the next chapter, where I use another experiment to examine which specific emotions conflict-approaching and avoidant individuals feel when exposed to incivility.

Beyond the differences across conflict orientation, the findings in this chapter highlight the ways in which the medium itself can alter perceptions of incivility. Adding audio and video to a news report increases perceptions of negativity, emotionality, and entertainment, and these effects are even more obvious when the same information is conveyed by audio or video first and then shown as a text-based transcript. Video and audio were seen as more negative than text, highlighting criticism, hostility and interruption in the treatment content. These divergent perceptions reinforce the categorization of cable television and radio as high-conflict news sources, even when they are conveying the same substantive information as the textual format.

Individuals are aware of the differences in incivility across platforms. They are much quicker to blame television and radio hosts for rising levels of incivility than they are newspapers or mainstream bloggers. They notice a more uncivil tone in video and audio material than they do in text. Given this variation in awareness of incivility, it stands to reason that the potential to be exposed to incivility—real or perceived—could be a factor in choosing which news outlets to turn to for political news. In the next two chapters, I explore the ways in which conflict orientation moderates the impact of mediated incivility on participants' emotional responses to news, then suggest that one's conflict orientation shapes decisions about which media to use to collect political information and how to participate in politics.

Chapter 5: Responding to Incivility: Emotion

"Incivility at times provides wonderful entertainment, but it creates anxiety." —Susan Herbst, Rude Democracy (2010, 130)

I demonstrated in the previous chapter that the type of media being consumed can shape how uncivil an individual perceives media political communication to be. I also found that conflict orientation did not change his or her perceptions of the quantity of uncivil language, only overall perceptions of the news story. Especially among those participants who were shown video clips, conflict-approaching individuals found the story to be more emotional than their conflict-avoidant peers. These findings suggest that an individual's affective reactions to incivility and political behavior more generally are guided by their conflict orientation. In this chapter, I empirically investigate the emotional responses prompted by civil and uncivil media coverage of political events and the ways in which these responses are shaped by conflict orientation.

In a move away from an emphasis on the "rational voter" (e.g. Downs, 1957; Enelow & Hinich, 1984; Page & Shapiro, 1992), scholars of political behavior have welcomed affect into theories of political behavior. Emotions have been found to increase persuasion, shape candidate evaluations, and inspire engagement in "effortful" political activities like protest and letter-writing (Brader, 2005; Cassino & Lodge, 2007). Generally, different emotions are associated with approach and avoidance tendencies, such that an approach motivation is linked to positive feelings and negative feelings are associated with avoidance (Cacioppo et al., 1993; Elliot, Eder, & Harmon-Jones, 2013). However, anger stands out as being a negative emotion that is tied to an approach motivation. In politics, anger encourages citizens to get involved—to protest, write letters, or express their opinions—while disgust and anxiety turn citizens away from political engagement (Brader, 2006).

The general assumption behind much of this research is that all individuals have similar emotional responses to political stimuli: negative advertisements produce negative emotional responses across all study participants and positive advertisements produce positive emotional responses. I argue that in the face of incivility—a particular form of political conflict and negativity—individual citizens will have different responses and these different responses will be conditional on one's conflict orientation. Conflict-avoidant citizens will have stronger negative emotional responses to incivility than their conflict-approaching counterparts. Conflict-approaching individuals will have more positive emotional responses to the same information and tone.

These predictions are borne out in the data. This chapter reports the results from Study 2, an experiment in which participants were randomly shown either a civil or uncivil version of a television clip and asked for their reactions to and evaluations of that clip. I find that conflict-avoidant individuals recoil from incivility. The conflict-approaching, on the other hand, relish incivility. While the conflict-avoidant report greater feelings of disgust and anxiety after watching uncivil media, the conflict-approaching report less disgust and anxiety at roughly equivalent levels for both civil and uncivil video clips. Conversely, the most conflict-approaching participants reported significantly higher feelings of amusement and entertainment when assigned to watch the uncivil treatment than when watching the civil clip. The conflict-avoidant, however, were no more entertained by incivility than civil presentations

of information. In short, emotional responses to the treatments were directly connected to respondents' conflict orientation.

Literature: Emotion in Politics

Research on emotion and affect spans psychological subfields as cognitive, social and neuro-psychologists attempt to determine the extent to which emotions are conscious or unconscious, a result of cognitive processes or the inspiration for cognitive action (Frijda, 1986; James, 1884; Lazarus, 1994). There are multiple theories that seek to explain the nature of emotion and connect it to behavior and decision-making, many of which have been applied to politics. One such theory suggests that emotion sparks different motivations that ultimately shape citizen behavior. Generally, this line of research suggests that positive emotions are associated with an approach motivation while negative emotions encourage avoidance (Cacioppo et al., 1993; Carver & Scheier, 1990; Elliot et al., 2013). However, anger is often associated with both an approach motivation and negative feelings (Carver, 2004; Harmon-Jones, 2003; Harmon-Jones, Harmon-Jones, & Price, 2013). These general emotion-motivation-behavior patterns play out in a range of social and political scenarios, with emotions shaping candidate preferences, persuasion, reliance on prior beliefs and political interest (Brader, 2006; Cassino & Lodge, 2007; Huddy et al., 2007; MacKuen et al., 2007; Parsons, 2010).

I will return to this link between emotion and behavior at the end of this chapter, to suggest that the divergent emotions produced across conflict orientations will ultimately lead to differences in political behavior. However, for now it is simply important to recognize that political communication, and incivility in particular, can produce different emotional responses in citizens. For example, Brader (2006) shows that positive music in campaign ads cues enthusiasm while negative music and images evoke fear. While Brader focuses on non-verbal communication in order to ensure his effects are in response to the processing of emotions rather than a cognitive response to the substance of the message, others have focused on responses to the language used in uncivil communication (Mutz, 2015). Sociologists, interested in Australians' responses to situations of "everyday incivility" find that individuals' emotional responses to uncivil experiences are dependent on whether the person was a witness or participant in the event. In focus-group recollections of these experiences, individuals who had participated were more likely to report feelings of anger than witnesses, while observers reported more feelings of fear, unease, and disgust (Phillips & Smith, 2004).

This research establishes a starting point from which to investigate the link between incivility, emotion, and political behavior. However, much of this research assumes that everyone generally has the same emotional response to negative or positive music and images. Like Phillips & Smith, I argue that citizens' responses to political incivility are more nuanced. Incivility does not elicit the same emotions across all individuals. Instead, affective responses are shaped by individuals' conflict orientation—their desire to approach or avoid argumentative or confrontational situations.

Expectations

Conflict orientation and incivility interact to produce different emotional reactions in citizens. Specifically, more conflict-avoidant individuals will be more likely to react negatively to incivility while conflict-approaching individuals will have positive responses to the same tone. In this case, I focus on

²⁵ While I will not outline any of these specific theories here, see McDermott (2004) for a good explanation of five theories of emotion as they relate specifically to decision-making and have implications for political science.

three negative emotions—anxiety, disgust and anger—and two positive emotions—amusement and entertainment.

As I elaborated in chapter 3, individuals who are conflict-avoidant dislike arguments, particularly those that occur in public or through face-to-face interaction. When these citizens are faced with political information that is expressed in a highly conflictual or uncivil manner, they will have a negative reaction, regardless of whether they agree with the information being conveyed or the people presenting that information. The conflict-approaching, on the other hand, find conflict exciting and enjoy the experience of arguing with others, regardless of whether they are doing it face-to-face or in a public place. Therefore, they will be more likely to react with enthusiasm to the expression of incivility in political media.

More specifically, I expect conflict-avoidant individuals to report greater feelings of anxiety and disgust than their conflict-approaching counterparts. The tendency for individuals to seek congruence between their personal disposition and situational characteristics (Deutsch, 1985), coupled with theories of cognitive dissonance, suggest that individuals experience some level of anxiety when faced with contradictory information or an environment that is at odds with their personalities. Furthermore, it seems plausible that Phillips and Smith's (2004) finding that incivility provokes disgust, fear and unease would apply most strongly to those who are the most uncomfortable with conflict.

 H_1 : The more conflict-avoidant an individual is, the more he or she will report feeling disgusted by incivility.

 H_2 : The more conflict-avoidant an individual is, the more anxiety he or she will feel when exposed to incivility.

As discussed earlier, anger is a negative emotion that frequently follows a different set of patterns than other negative emotions, provoking an approach motivation where other negative emotions would elicit avoidance. Therefore, I do not believe that conflict-avoidant individuals will necessarily respond with more anger than their conflict-approaching counterparts. Instead, the hypothesis here is more mixed. On the one hand, we could imagine that exposure to incivility could prompt greater anger among the conflict-avoidant—towards the media for sanctioning this type of language, towards political elites for using it, or towards politics generally. On the other hand, given that anger is an approach-oriented emotion, it seems to contradict the conflict-avoidant individuals' desire to avoid confrontation. Furthermore, it seems unlikely that the conflict-approaching would be more likely to experience anger in the face of incivility. While it is easy to identify possible targets of conflict-avoidant individuals' anger, it is unclear who or what would be the target for the conflict-approaching. Given the lack of a clear directional hypothesis given past research and understandings of how conflict orientation should produce emotion, I have no expectation for the relationship between conflict orientation and anger.

Conflict avoidance will produce negative responses to incivility, but individuals who are more conflict-approaching will have more positive reactions. This hypothesis comes directly out of research by Mutz and Reeves (2005) that finds that individuals who are excited by conflict also report that incivility has greater entertainment value. I look to replicate that finding here:

 H_3 : The more conflict-approaching an individual is, the more he or she will be entertained by incivility.

 H_4 : The more conflict-approaching an individual is, the more he or she will be amused by incivility.

Methods

The Experimental Treatment

After participants filled out the shortened version of the Conflict Communication Scale described in chapter three, they were told that they would watch a short clip from a recent political newscast and then be asked a series of questions based on the video. Participants were assigned to one of four treatments that varied in their level of civility. The clips were either civil or uncivil²⁶ and came from either MSNBC's *Morning Joe* or *The Dylan Ratigan Show*.²⁷ Because a pilot test of the treatments suggested that the clips from the two shows were viewed similarly across key measures, the analyses in this paper focus only on the difference between the civil and uncivil treatments and not on distinctions between those participants who saw *Morning Joe* and those who saw *Dylan Ratigan*. The use of both civil and uncivil treatments allows me to compare reactions to the two treatments at the same value of conflict orientation, as well as responses to the same treatment across different levels of conflict orientation. To encourage realism, the clips are excerpts from live cable news broadcasts, with the same two to three minute segment edited in two ways to highlight the civil or uncivil components of one overall conversation among the same set of commentators. The segments from both *The Dylan Ratigan Show* and *Morning Joe* dealt with major economic debates from 2009 and 2011: the AIG bonus scandal and the budget deficit.

Measures of Affect and Political Behavior

After participants viewed the clip they were asked to evaluate its tone, to report their emotional responses to the video, and to decide whether the video made them more or less likely to tune into cable news in the future. The questions about emotional responses and likelihood of tuning in are the most relevant for the current analysis.

Because the survey was conducted over the internet and had to be completed in a limited amount of time, emotional responses to the clip were measured through self-report. Participants were asked to what extent the video they watched made them feel each of the following emotions: anxiety, anger, disgust, interest and amusement. They were also asked about the extent to which they found the clip entertaining and informative. Their responses could range from not at all (1) to extremely (5).

Most participants appeared to take the survey seriously, correctly answering the screening questions and answering the questions posed. I removed from my analysis any participants who either

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²⁶ In a pretest, 300 MTurk participants were randomly assigned to watch one of six videos—a civil or uncivil clip from *Morning Joe, The Dylan Ratigan Show,* or *Hannity*. They were then asked, "To what extent was the clip you just watched uncivil?" They could respond on a scale from one to five, with one indicating "not at all uncivil" and five representing "extremely uncivil." *Morning Joe* and *The Dylan Ratigan Show* were found to be statistically indistinguishable in both the civil and uncivil conditions. The uncivil clips used to build the treatments in this paper were evaluated as follows: M_{MorningJoe}=2.89, M_{Ratigan}=2.98, p<0.69. Both the civil and uncivil clips from *Hannity* were seen as more uncivil than their MSNBC counterparts and were therefore excluded from the treatment set.

²⁷Morning Joe has been on MSNBC since 2007. It currently airs from 6 to 9 am EST . *The Dylan Ratigan Show* aired weekdays on MSNBC from 4 pm to 5 pm EST from January 2010 to June 2012. The show focused on debate and discussion related politics, economy and business. I selected Dylan Ratigan over more well-known MSNBC shows because of his focus on the economy and in a desire to minimize partisan bias in responding to the news clip.

1) did not answer the screening questions correctly or 2) did not stay on the page with the video clip for the entire length of the clip.²⁸

Results

Experimental Manipulation check

As you can see from Figure 10, participants in the survey viewed the uncivil treatment as slightly over half a point less civil than the civil treatment, a statistically significant difference. Not only were the treatments seen as different from one another, but they were not perceived differently across conflict orientations, reinforcing my findings from chapter 4. Both the most conflict-avoidant and the most conflict-approaching participants perceived the civil treatment as equally civil and the uncivil treatment as similarly uncivil. These treatments present a hard test of my theory—if only a slight difference in incivility can produce different emotional effects, it is likely that a more extreme case would produce larger variation. Furthermore, because perceptions of incivility don't vary with conflict orientation, I can be more confident that conflict orientation is directly shaping emotional reactions, rather than orientation affecting perceptions which then influence one's affective response.

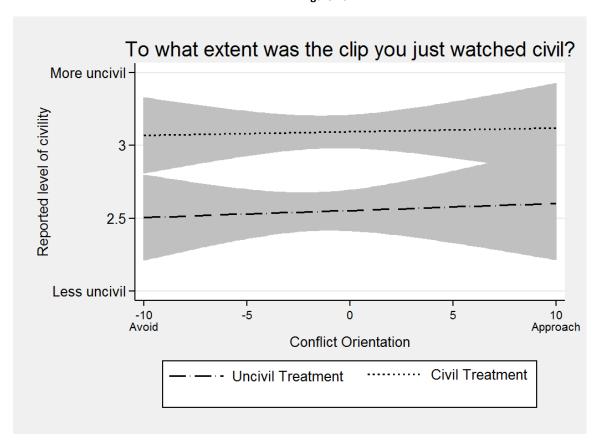


Figure 10

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²⁸ For example, if the clip was 30 seconds long and LimeSurvey recorded the participant as staying on the video page for 25 seconds, the participant was dropped from the analysis. About 25 participants were dropped from each of four treatment conditions, or about 11 percent of the entire sample.

Direct Effects of Incivility on Emotional Response

Before investigating differences across conflict orientations, I checked to ensure that my findings about the relationship between incivility and emotion. Drawing on Mutz and Reeves (2005) and Brader (2006), I expect the uncivil treatment to increase individuals' reported experience of all emotions, positive or negative.

These relationships are borne out in the data, although the results are more pronounced for negative emotions than positive ones. The graph on the left-hand side of Figure 11 shows that incivility only weakly increases individuals' positive feelings. Participants in the incivility treatment only report a significant increase in their feelings of amusement when compared to those who watched the civil clip (M_{civil} =1.89, M_{uncivil} =2.08, p<0.041²⁹). This difference is relatively small—the participants in the uncivil condition reported their amusement as, on average, two-tenths of a point higher on a five-point scale than did those participants in the civil condition. There was no significant difference in their reported entertainment.³⁰

The treatment has a greater effect on participants reported experience of negative emotions—anger, disgust and anxiety. Participants reported statistically significantly greater feelings of each negative emotion in the uncivil condition than in the civil condition. The effects are still relatively small for anger and anxiety, an increase of between two- and three-tenths of a point, ³¹ but they report much greater feelings of disgust. On average, participants report feeling a little disgusted after watching the civil treatment (M=1.90), but this average jumps half a point on the scale to 2.37, or somewhere between "a little" and "somewhat" disgusted for participants in the uncivil condition (p<0.01). Overall, these findings suggest that incivility elicits more emotional responses from citizens, both positive and negative.

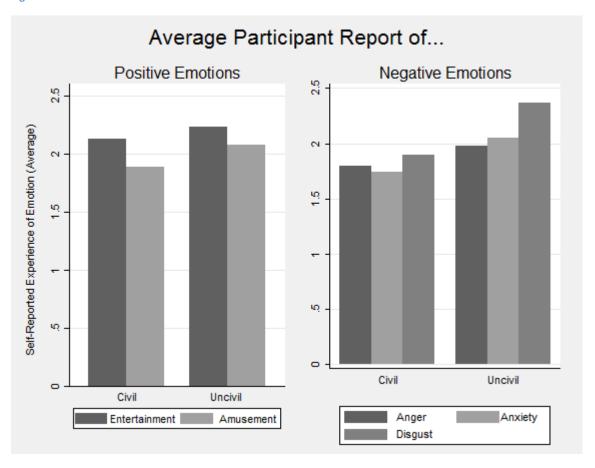
-

²⁹ Statistical significance calculated from a two-sample, two-tailed t-test.

³⁰ Entertainment: M_{civil}=2.13, M_{uncivil}=2.23, p<0.30, two-tailed two-sample t-test.

 $^{^{31}}$ Anger: M_{civil} =1.80, $M_{uncivil}$ =1.98, p<0.02, two-tailed, two-sample t-test; Anxiety: M_{civil} =1.74, $M_{uncivil}$ =2.05, p<0.001, two-tailed, two-sample t-test

Figure 11



Effects as Moderated by Conflict Orientation

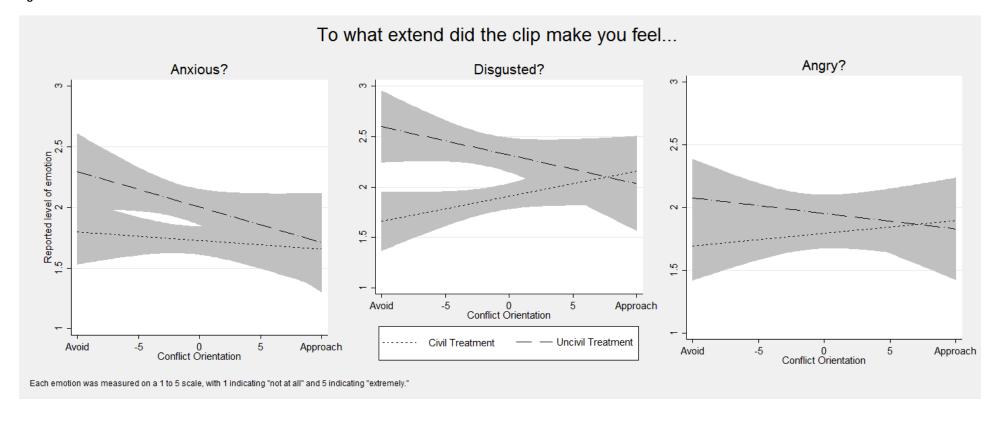
The main effects of incivility on emotional response suggest an odd tension: incivility increases reported negative feelings like anger, disgust and anxiety, but it also increases positive feelings of amusement. Breaking the results down across the range of conflict orientations reveals how incivility can produce both positive and negative emotional reactions in individuals. In comparison to civil coverage of the same issue, incivility is more likely to elicit positive emotions in more conflict-approaching individuals, while it is more likely to induce negative emotions in the conflict-avoidant.

Looking first at the negative emotions—anxiety, anger and disgust—I expected that exposure to incivility would increase feelings of anxiety and disgust among the conflict-avoidant; I was neutral in my expectations for the effects of incivility on anger across conflict orientations. When I compare the findings from the civil and uncivil treatments across the range of conflict orientations, it is clear that individuals who are more conflict-avoidant do experience greater negative emotional reactions to incivility than they do to the civil discussion of the same issue. As Figure 12 shows, a similar pattern emerges in individuals' self-reported feelings of anxiety, disgust, and anger in response to civility and incivility. Individuals who are more conflict-avoidant report greater negative emotional reactions to the uncivil clip than they do to the civil clip. However, this difference disappears when we look at individuals that are more conflict-approaching. Feelings of disgust among the conflict-avoidant are most influenced by the presence of incivility, with the highly conflict-avoidant (those that score a -10 on the Conflict Communication Scale) reporting average feelings of disgust at around 2.6 on the 5 point scale

when shown the uncivil video clip. This translates to feeling somewhere between "slightly" or "moderately" disgusted. Those conflict-avoidant individuals who viewed the civil clip reported feelings of disgust that averaged around 1.6, a full point lower than those who viewed incivility, and somewhere between "not at all" disgusted and "slightly." The gap between those who viewed the uncivil treatment and those in the civil condition declines as conflict orientation moves towards greater conflict-approaching tendencies, becoming statistically indistinguishable around the conflict-ambivalent zero point.

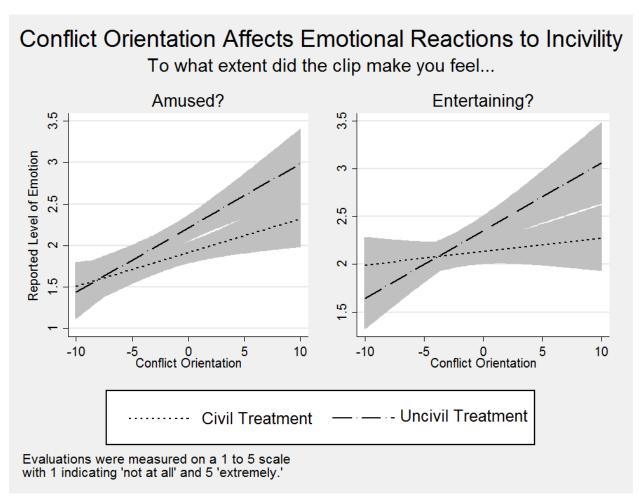
Incivility also has a greater effect on individuals' reported feelings of anxiety if they are highly conflict-avoidant. The gap between average reported anxiety for the highly conflict-avoidant in civil and uncivil treatments is about half a point on the five point scale, such that those who watched the uncivil video clip reported more anxiety than those in the civil treatment. The difference between the treatments at the highest levels of conflict avoidance is not statistically significant, but this is likely due to the relatively small set of participants who score the highest and lowest values of the CCS. The difference is clear for those participants who are slightly conflict-avoidant (those who scored between -7 and zero), and the gap between reported feelings of anxiety for these individuals is between a quarter and a third of a point. Like with reported feelings of disgust, the difference between the civil and uncivil treatments disappears for those participants who are conflict-approaching. The responses for reported feelings of anger also follow this pattern, although these differences are not statistically significant. The conflict-approaching do not experience any greater feelings of anger, anxiety or disgust when viewing an uncivil video clip than when viewing a civil clip. However, the conflict-avoidant report feeling more anxious and disgusted when they watch uncivil coverage of politics than when they watch a civil discussion of the same issue.

Figure 12



The pattern for the experience of positive emotions mirrors that for negative emotions. Here, the conflict-approaching are more likely to report feeling amused or entertained when watching an uncivil clip than when exposed to the civil treatment. However, more conflict-avoidant individuals report feeling no more positive when watching the uncivil video than when watching the civil one. The effects for both amusement and entertainment are relatively similar, with highly conflict-approaching participants in the uncivil condition reporting levels of both reactions that are about three-quarters of a point higher than those in the civil condition. In other words, the most conflict-approaching people found the uncivil clip to be moderately amusing or entertaining, while they found the civil clip to be only slightly amusing or entertaining. Those who identified as more conflict-avoidant reported no difference in their feelings of amusement and entertainment when watching the uncivil or civil video clips.

Figure 13



While these analyses allow me to compare the effects of the treatment at various levels of conflict orientation, they do not account for the impact that other characteristics might have on emotional responses to the video clips, nor do they allow us to distinguish the effect of conflict orientation within a treatment. For example, those who know more about or are more interested in politics may have stronger emotional reactions. Gender and partisanship may also affect emotional responses to media; we know, for example, that anxiety and enthusiasm interact with partisanship to influence candidate preferences (Marcus & Mackuen, 1993). And while the treatments demonstrate

that conflict orientation shapes emotional reactions to incivility in comparison to civility, they do not allow us to compare the reaction of the conflict-approaching and conflict-avoidant to incivility or civility. To investigate each of these effects and test the robustness of these findings in the context of social or demographic factors, it is necessary to use basic regression techniques.

Table 19 displays the results of five OLS regression models that investigate the relationship between each emotional response, conflict orientation, the treatment condition, and a variety of demographic and political characteristics. While I had hypothesized that political interest would could influence emotional reactions to political news, the survey did not ask participants to report their political interest. Instead, political knowledge is used as a proxy for interest, with the assumption that knowledge increases as one becomes more politically interested. Knowledge is measured through a set of five political knowledge questions that were excerpted from Delli Carpini and Keeter's (1995) scale. Gender, partisan identification and partisan strength were also included as possible characteristics that could affect the emotions experienced in watching these video clips.

Table 19: The Interaction between Conflict Orientation and Incivility Influences Emotional Responses

	Anxious	Disgusted	Angry	Amused	Entertained
Conflict Orientation	-0.0080	0.022	0.0087	0.037*	0.014
	(0.0144)	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)
Uncivil Treatment	0.26**	0.41**	0.15	0.28**	0.21*
	(0.094)	(0.107)	(0.097)	(0.098)	(0.099)
C.O. x Treatment	-0.031	-0.059*	-0.030	0.031	0.050*
	(0.021)	(0.024)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)
Political Knowledge	-0.099**	-0.041	-0.074*	-0.16**	-0.17**
	(0.036)	(0.041)	(0.037)	(0.373)	(0.038)
Democrat	-0.14	-0.26	-0.17	0.039	0.029
	(0.122)	(0.136)	(0.124)	(0.125)	(0.126)
Independent	-0.19	-0.099	-0.21	0.049	-0.072
	(0.141)	(0.159)	(0.144)	(0.145)	(0.147)
Strong Partisan	0.12	0.12	-0.011	0.26*	0.27*
	(0.111)	(0.125)	(0.113)	(0.114)	(0.115)
Female	-0.22*	-0.15	-0.24*	-0.20*	-0.14
	(0.092)	(0.104)	(0.094)	(0.095)	(0.097)
Constant	-0.22**	2.21**	2.28**	2.35**	2.60**
	(0.092)	(0.187)	(0.170)	(0.17)	(0.174)

Cell entries are regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. ** indicates statistical significant at p<0.01, * significance at p<0.05.

Once I factor in other key variables, the relationship between incivility, conflict orientation and emotion is weaker, but still plays a role in understanding who has greater emotional reactions, particularly of disgust and entertainment. For these two reactions, the main effect of the uncivil treatment and the interaction between the treatment and conflict orientation remain statistically significant in the expected directions. Feelings of disgust decrease in reaction to the uncivil treatment as we move from the conflict-avoidant to the conflict approaching. The opposite occurs with entertainment; the interaction is positive, indicating that the conflict-approaching in the uncivil treatment are more likely to feel entertained than the conflict-avoidant, even taking into consideration the role of partisanship, political knowledge and gender.

We can also see that political knowledge plays an important role in emotional responses to the clips. Specifically, greater knowledge reduces the emotional impact of the treatment on individuals in all instances but disgust. In other words, people with greater political interest are less anxious, angry, amused or entertained by either news clip. There is no interactive effect of political knowledge and treatment, which suggests that incivility is no more or less appealing to those who are more interested in or knowledgeable of politics.

To summarize, my experimental results suggest that conflict orientation and incivility interact to produce differential emotional responses in the conflict-avoidant and conflict-approaching. Specifically, participants who are more conflict-avoidant are more likely to report negative emotions such as disgust and anxiety when shown an uncivil news clip than when shown a civil portrayal of the same information. Conversely, more conflict-approaching individuals report greater amusement and entertainment when watching an uncivil clip than a civil one. These findings hold up even when controlling for other facets of individual's political lives, including their partisanship, political interest and knowledge, and demographic characteristics like gender. While these demographic and social characteristics do have an impact on individuals' emotional responses above and beyond the treatments, incivility and conflict orientation continue to play a significant role in emotional response, particularly in evoking disgust and entertainment.

Conclusion: Differential Emotional Responses and Behavior

The experimental results outlined in this chapter present a more nuanced picture of how political communication elicits emotional reactions from citizens. A general assessment of the relationship between incivility and emotion suggests that uncivil communication inspires more positive and negative emotions in individuals than civil treatment of the same subject. However, when we break participants into groups based on their conflict orientation, it is possible to discern why incivility is eliciting both positive and negative reactions. Specifically, those participants who are conflict-avoidant are reporting greater negative emotional reactions to incivility than civility, particularly feelings of disgust and, to a lesser extent, anxiety. Conflict-approaching individuals do not report experiencing greater negative emotions in the uncivil treatment than in the civil treatment, but they do report feeling more amused and entertained by incivility than civility. In contrast, the conflict-avoidant do not report this difference in positive reactions. Therefore, while incivility leads the conflict-avoidant to feel anxious or disgusted, it sparks amusement and entertainment among those who are comfortable with conflict.

While this experiment gives us better insight into the ways conflict communication interacts with our personal dispositions to produce varying emotional reactions, it tells us little about the ways in which these emotional reactions go on to effect political behavior. Looking to the literature, however, it

is clear that citizens' emotions shape a range of political behavior, from candidate evaluation to intent to vote to recall of political information (Brader, 2005; Cassino & Lodge, 2007; MacKuen et al., 2007; Phillips & Smith, 2004). Many of the emotions elicited in this study produce different political behaviors. Anxiety and fear lead to greater information search and less reliance on predispositions and in some cases to avoidance of particular environments or choices, while anger prompts the sanctioning of individuals committing uncivil acts (Brader, 2005; Marcus, Neuman, & MacKuen, 2000; Phillips & Smith, 2004). Enthusiasm, which is related to amusement and entertainment, solidifies existing preferences, increases interest in the relevant political issues and one's intent to vote (Brader, 2005). Given these connections between emotions and political behavior, I turn next to the relationship between incivility, conflict orientation and political behavior, both in terms of traditional forms of political engagement and of decisions about and patterns of media consumption.

Chapter 6: Responding to Incivility: Behavior

"At this point, and I cannot believe I am about to do this, I would like to address the Internet commenters out there directly. Good evening, monsters. This may be the moment you've spent your whole lives training for ... for once in your life, we need you to channel that anger, that badly spelled bile that you normally reserve for unforgivable attacks on actresses you seem to think have put on weight, or politicians that you disagree with. We need you to get out there and, for once in your life, focus your indiscriminate rage in a useful direction. Seize your moment, my lovely trolls, turn on caps lock, and fly my pretties! Fly! "—John Oliver, Last Week Tonight, June 1, 2014

Incivility and conflict orientation interact to affect political participation in ways that reinforce preexisting inequalities in engagement. As Schlozman, Brady and Verba (Brady et al., 1995; Schlozman et al., 2012; Verba et al., 1995) have repeatedly shown, demographic and socio-economic groups have different levels of key political resources, such as civic skills, money and free time. Variation in these political resources causes certain citizens to participate in political activities more frequently than others. In political communication, there is a similar body of literature that seeks to explain why people select certain sources of political media over others. Much of this work focuses on partisan selective exposure, or the tendency for Democrats and Republicans to turn to news that they believe fits their partisan predispositions (Arceneaux et al., forthcoming; Sears & Freedman, 1967; Stroud, 2011). Building on this research into resource effects on participation and the factors that lead individuals to tune into political media (as opposed to entertainment), I argue conflict orientation serves as a political resource. Like free time or civic skills, conflict orientation changes citizens' motivations to get involved and their ability and inclination to engage with the style and structure of political discourse. Like partisanship, it guides citizens' decisions about media consumption. Just as Democrats prefer left-leaning programming, the conflict-approaching prefer high-conflict programming. I use survey research to draw connections between conflict orientation and differences in participation and to draw connections between perceptions of incivility across media platforms and media consumption. The survey results indicate that conflict orientation is driving individuals' media choice. In order to connect the incivility-conflict orientation interaction to inequalities in political participation, I first demonstrate that they are connected to decisions to participate in and learn about politics.

Throughout this work, I have made the argument that political behavior is shaped by one's conflict orientation—specifically the ways that conflict orientation effects are moderated by the presence of incivility in the American media. My analyses have shown that conflict orientation does not influence one's perceptions of incivility, but does lead individuals to have different emotional reactions to tone. Individuals who are conflict-avoidant experience disgust and anxiety when faced with incivility. Those who are conflict-approaching, on the other hand, report greater feelings of amusement and entertainment.

Scholars have documented a variety of relationships between emotional response and political behavior. Anxiety increases information search and reduces reliance on existing predispositions, while disgust leads people to reject or distance themselves from an environment or object (Brader, 2006; Rozin, Haidt, & McCauley, 2008). Anger can propel people to take action; as John Oliver's tongue-incheek call to action above suggests, individuals who are angry about policies, procedures and politics are more likely to act to affect change than those who are anxious about the same things (Huddy et al.,

2007). Positive emotions like enthusiasm can solidify preferences, increase individuals' political interest and their intent to vote in upcoming elections (Brader, 2005; Marcus & Mackuen, 1993). Given these previously established links between emotion and behavior, we would expect the emotions produced by the interaction between incivility and conflict orientation to effect behavior in similar ways. In other words, those who are inclined to feel enthusiastic upon witnessing an uncivil media interaction should report an increased likelihood of voting while those who experience disgust in reaction to incivility will attempt to remove themselves from the offending situation.

In this chapter, I show that "conflict-reducing exposure" is an approach citizens frequently take when engaging in political activity and consuming political information. Individuals make choices about how to engage with politics—both as a viewer and a participant—on the basis of the resources they can bring to bear and the desire to reduce negative emotional and social effects. They therefore will only choose highly uncivil media or political activities if they feel they have the resources (i.e. a high tolerance for conflict) to do so or if they can avoid feelings of anxiety or social exclusion. While the available data limits my ability to truly tease apart the interactive effects between incivility and conflict orientation, I draw on survey data to show a relationship between citizens' conflict orientation and their political and media behaviors. This relationship aligns with expected differences in preferences given conflict orientation; the conflict-avoidant prefer less confrontational and uncivil forms of participation in favor of more private acts and choose to consume media that are more civil. Meanwhile, their conflict-approaching counterparts prefer high-conflict media sources like cable television and talk radio and are more likely to engage in interactive forms of political participation like protesting or persuading others to vote.

Ultimately, conflict orientation can be considered an individual resource that facilitates an individual's engagement with the political system, just like any other resource. The citizen who is comfortable with conflict has access to a wider range of sources of political information and means of political engagement because they are not turned off by the incivility that is a ubiquitous presence across many media outlets.

The "Conflict-Reducing Exposure" Hypothesis

Individuals make choices about how to engage with politics—both as a viewer and a participant—on the basis of the resources they can have access to and their desire to reduce negative emotional and social effects. Those with more resources—the skills, networks, or finances necessary in a particular situation—are more likely to remain in that environment and be successful in it. Similarly, those who derive pleasure or positive emotions from a situation will be content to repeat that experience or extend it in order to continue the positive feelings. The opposite is true for individuals who do not have the resources or confident, upbeat emotional associations with the same situation. Instead of looking to continue the experience, they will choose other activities and environments that are more likely to give them pleasure and fit their skill set. As Raney and Bryant (2002) explain in the context of communication, "the audience inputs interact with the message inputs…and the subsequent perceptions and evaluations yield judgments, which ultimately lead to enjoyment" (408). I add to Raney and Bryant's analysis by establishing that the interaction of audience and message inputs can ultimately lead to unhappiness as well.

Many scholars in the realm of political psychology and communication have found that individuals are intimidated by the prospect of engaging in public political conversation. Hayes, Scheufele

and Huge (2006) argue that political engagement, including discussing our own opinions, risks upsetting delicate interpersonal relationships. The fear of upsetting or excluding others is why etiquette experts recommend avoiding political conversation; Anna Post of the Emily Post Institute emphasizes respect and the use of civil language as a means to keep the peace (Grinberg, 2011). Participants in Conover, Searing and Crewe's (2002) focus groups reported fears of looking uneducated, facing social rejection or isolation, and encouraging social conflict when faced with the prospect of political conversation. Those who do enjoy political discussion tend to share particular personality traits (Gerber, Huber, Doherty, & Dowling, 2010; Testa et al., 2014) or seek out discussion forums that provide connections to like-minded others in an "imagined community (Berry & Sobeiraj, 2014, 135). Experiencing both enjoyment and displeasure while having a political conversation is the product of the characteristics of the environment and the individual.

Incivility has also been shown to influence political behavior. Phillips and Smith, who argued that exposure to interpersonal incivility produced different emotional reactions than being the target of it, also find that these different emotional states are associated with different responses—anger with direct punishment or sanction, fear with avoidance, and indifference with doing nothing (Phillips & Smith, 2004). Looking specifically at political campaign ads, Fridkin and Kenney (2011) find that people who do not like uncivil discourse (the conflict-avoidant, in my terminology) were more responsive to the tone of negative commercials and that these messages influenced their assessments of both incumbents and challengers.

I argue that, like political discussion and candidate evaluation, political participation and media consumption can be explained by the interaction of individual and environmental characteristics. When presented with an uncivil political environment, individuals who enjoy conflict will engage, consuming more political information, particularly from those sources whose uncivil approach to political discussion makes them feel highly entertained. Their comfort in this environment serves as a resource when they enter the political sphere themselves, making them more likely to participate in political activities where they risk dealing with incivility or conflict. Conversely, the more conflict-avoidant individual possesses less of this resource in the political realm. They shy away from activities that could force them to experience incivility and disagreement, and they do not enjoy political media that paint each policy choice and candidate decision in an uncivil and negative light. The conflict-avoidant take steps to reduce their exposure to conflict, while the conflict-approaching hunt for it. I call this behavior the "conflict-reducing exposure hypothesis."

Choosing Political Programming

The first claim of my conflict-reducing exposure hypothesis is that citizens select the media they use to gather political information on the basis of a particular format's likelihood of introducing information in an uncivil, confrontational manner. For some citizens—the conflict-avoidant—the fact that a media personality is known for her vitriolic approach to the news will dissuade them from seeking her perspective. For others, this information will be enough to draw them in. While some citizens are capable of making this distinction on a show-by-show basis, others form more general, format-based assessments of the likelihood of exposure to incivility. In other words, Americans' preferences for newspapers or cable television are shaped by their perceptions that these types of media are more or less uncivil.

Furthermore, the increasingly diverse media environment spurred by growth of cable and internet sources only increases the likelihood that individuals are aware of and using information about the tone of a show or format to make decisions about their media consumption. As Prior notes, "more choice leads to better sorting of the television by taste," (2007, 95). As a result, Americans are able to choose whose opinions they want to hear. In an increasingly choice-driven media environment, academics and public figures have become concerned about *partisan* selective exposure or the individual's decision to watch, read or listen to likeminded media outlets. And while evidence suggests that media are the venue most likely to expose citizens to diverse viewpoints, other research has shown that Americans select news reports based on the perceived affinity between their political preferences and those of the media outlet (Iyengar & Hahn, 2009; Mutz & Martin, 2001; Stroud, 2011).

Selective media exposure is a concern because of its potential to increase polarization among the electorate (Stroud 2011, Sunstein 2009) and the lack of cross-cutting exposure, or ability to "hear the other side" (Jamieson and Cappella 2008, Mutz 2006). However, others have argued that exposure to ideologically-biased programming leads to further entrenchment of attitudes in situations where individuals are forced to watch counter-attitudinal programming. When participants are given the ability to choose, they are found to be more open to arguments from across the political spectrum (Arceneaux, Johnson and Cryderman 2013). Many of the same concerns can be raised about exposure to incivility and conflict in political media; incivility could reduce people's willingness to hear the other side and their consumption of political information and shape their beliefs about government legitimacy.

Scholars have begun to focus on another form of selective exposure as well: the decision to engage with political media at all (see Arceneaux, Johnson and Cryderman 2013, Bennett and Iyengar 2008, 2010, Prior 2007). With so many channels, websites, and other media available, an increasing proportion of Americans chooses to watch entertainment programming over news, or would rather focus on their fantasy baseball lineup than read news online (Nielsen, 2008). In short, recent changes in the media environment suggest that viewers are likely to show two types of behavior: they either exit the news environment entirely, or they select venues on the basis of a variety of characteristics, including partisanship and the amount of conflict they will likely be exposed to once they tune in.

These behaviors will be determined in part by individuals' perceptions of whether a particular media format is high- or low-conflict. Just as citizens intuitively (albeit at times incorrectly) sort media outlets into liberal or conservative, they also believe that certain types of media are more likely to use uncivil tone and language than others. In chapter four, I demonstrated that media could be categorized as high- or low-conflict based on the findings from a range of content analyses. Specifically, cable television, internet news, and talk radio are classified as high-conflict while newspapers, network television and social media are low-conflict. These categorizations are summarized in Table 20. Furthermore, survey data, as well as my findings from the experiment described in chapter four, suggest that citizens perceive these differences in incivility across media platforms and blame cable, internet and talk radio for the increase in political incivility (Weber Shandwick et al., 2013).

Table 20: Categorization of Media by Level of Conflict

High-Conflict Media	Low-Conflict Media
Cable Television	Newspapers (including their online versions)
Internet News/blogs	Network television
Talk Radio	Social Media (Twitter, Facebook)

Individuals will seek to match their attitudes towards conflict to media that fit their predispositions. Those who are entertained by incivility and argumentation can select the high-conflict media programming found on cable television, online blogs, and talk radio while their conflict-avoidant counterparts can seek information from low-conflict environments such as newspapers, network television and social media. Given the widespread public perception that politics lacks civility and the argument that the media are to blame for this problem, it is possible that certain types of politics coverage appeals to people who have a taste for argument and incivility. Those who do not like this conflict, on the other hand, will turn away from media coverage of politics or turn to a few select outlets. Given the distinctions between types of media laid out above, I expect conflict-avoidant individuals to prefer low-conflict media formats, while the conflict-approaching turn to high-conflict programming.

 H_1 : Conflict-approaching individuals will report preferences for high-conflict sources, like internet-only sources and cable television. Conflict-avoidant individuals will report preferences for media outlets that could be perceived as more civil—specifically network television and newspapers.

 H_2 : Conflict-approaching individuals will report consuming political media generally at a greater frequency than their conflict-avoidant counterparts.

Conflict Orientation, Incivility and Participation

Just as conflict orientation drives individuals to make choices about their media consumption habits, it can also influence how citizens engage politically. Scholars have connected conflict orientation and political participation in previous research, and have explored how it might be mediated by other factors in interpersonal communication (Mutz, 2006; Testa et al., 2014; Ulbig & Funk, 1999). I take these arguments a step further by arguing that conflict orientation can be seen as a psychological resource that renders individuals more or less capable of participating in activities that are most likely to lead them to exposure to incivility and conflict.

The idea that political participation is dependent on individuals' resources is derived from Brady, Verba and Schlozman's work on political participation and the political system's inability to provide equal political voice to all citizens. In seeking to understand why some citizens don't participate in politics, Brady, Verba and Schlozman argue that:

"Three answers immediately suggest themselves: because they can't, because they don't want to, or because nobody asked. 'They can't' suggests a paucity of necessary *resources: time* to take part in political activity, *money* to make contributions, and *civic skills* (I.e., the communications and organizational skills that facilitate effective participation)" (1995, 271).

While Verba, Schlozman and Brady argue that psychology is more closely tied to the "don't want to" reasoning for distancing oneself from politics, I propose that certain psychological traits, like conflict

orientation, are similar to other resources such as time, money and civic skills in providing citizens with the resources to engage in different political activities.

Conflict orientation functions as a resource by making individuals more or less capable of dealing with incivility and other forms of conflict in their day-to-day lives. Those that have more of this resource—the conflict-approaching—will be comfortable in political scenarios in which they are exposed to conflict, while those who have less—the conflict-avoidant—will not be as adept at navigating these situations.

A question that arises from the idea of conflict orientation as a resource is which scenarios are most likely to expose citizens to political incivility? I asked survey participants to report their engagement in ten different political activities in the past year: commenting on blogs, persuading others to vote, contacting one's Congressman, attending a protest or rally, working for a candidate, attending local meetings, wearing a campaign button or sticker, donating money, putting up a political sign, or voting. Table 21 shows that four of these activities can be categorized as "high-conflict" activities, while the other five are divided between "mid-range" and "low-conflict" activities. High-conflict activities include commenting on blogs, persuading others, contacting one's representatives, and attending a protest. Each of these high-conflict methods of political participation require an individual to offer their own opinion and potentially engage with others who don't share their views. The comment section of a blog, for example, is a frequent source of uncivil political discourse (Coe, Kenski, & Rains, 2014; Wallsten & Tarsi, 2014). Low-conflict activities tend to be forms of participation that can be done in private: there is minimal interaction with others when voting or donating money, and while putting up a yard sign signals your political preferences, few neighbors are going to march up to your door and engage you in conversation because of it. Finally, mid-range activities such as attending meeting or wearing a campaign button could introduce political conflict or encourage incivility but do not instigate interpersonal conversation as much as the high-conflict forms of engagement.

Table 21: Categorization of Political Activities by Potential for Conflict

High-Conflict Activities	Mid-Range Activities	Low-Conflict Activities
Commenting on a blog	Attending local meetings	Voting
Persuading others to vote	Wearing a campaign button or sticker	Donating money
Contacting one's Congressman	Working for a candidate	
Attending a protest or rally	Putting up a political sign	

From this categorization, I draw two hypotheses:

 H_3 : Conflict-avoidant individuals will be less likely to participate in high-conflict activities than their conflict-approaching peers.

 H_4 : Conflict orientation will not affect the likelihood of participating in mid- and low-conflict activities like voting, donating money to a campaign or putting up political signs.

Making Decisions: Choosing Media and Political Activities Measuring Media Consumption and Political Engagement

To test the hypotheses that citizens seek to expose themselves to incivility only to the extent that their conflict orientation allows, I use data from three surveys I conducted between 2012 and 2014: Studies 3 through 5 (see Table 2). Each study asks a set of questions from the Conflict Communication Scale and invites participants to report their typical media consumption and political participation in the past year. As in previous chapters, data from studies 4 and 5 were combined into a single dataset for analysis.

The two sets of studies take different approaches to measuring patterns of media use. Study 3 (Project Implicit) focuses on daily consumption patterns. I asked participants, "During a typical week, how frequently do you watch/read/listen to...network television/cable television/radio/internet/newspaper?" Participants were asked to select from a range of zero to seven days. I use this measure to estimate the amount of time spent tuning in to political news, constructing an average of the number of days a week that participants consumed any of the five types of news. A lower average amount of weekly consumption of any news suggests that participants were choosing other activities or entertainment over political information. This measure offers a general understanding of the extent to which individuals are selecting whether or not to consume political information, in addition to providing comparative consumption statistics for different types of media.

Frequency measures like those used in Study 3 are sometimes challenged as an effective measurement technique because they are difficult for individuals to report correctly (Price, 1993; Schwarz & Oyserman, 2001). The belief is that these self-reporting measures lead to inflated reports of media usage. Dilliplane, Goldman and Mutz (2013) argue that rather than focusing on the frequency of study participants' media consumption, as in the Project Implicit study, researchers should ask participants to select their regularly-viewed programs from a list. The program list approach reduces the cognitive burden placed on participants and is found to be a more reliable estimate of actual media consumption (Dilliplane et al., 2013). Therefore, in Studies 4 and 5 I asked participants to respond to the question "Which of the following is your main source of political news and information?" Participants chose between eight options: internet-only sources, newspapers, network television, cable television, radio, social media like Facebook and Twitter, talking with others, or saying they didn't really follow political news.³² They were then asked to report their second major source of political news and information. While these questions are not an entirely accurate reflection of Dilliplane et al's program list strategy or of the choice environment in which participants select where to get their political news, it does present them with a similar choice and encourages them to choose their preferred news source. Responses to this question shed light on whether conflict-avoidant and conflict-approaching individuals prefer different types of media as their primary source of political information.

Table 22 displays descriptive statistics for both methods of measuring media consumption.

Across both sets of studies, the Internet is turned to most frequently as the preferred media source—an

81

³² Participants were then asked a follow-up question that asked them to list their top three specific programs used for gathering political information. Unfortunately, the range of programs offered makes data analysis difficult; only a dozen programs were reported by enough participants to draw reliable statistical conclusions.

average of 4.5 days a week and the first choice of 35.2 percent of the MTurk sample.³³ Cable and network television are used at relatively similar frequencies (both are watched 2.9 days a week, on average) and are the most-preferred source of a similar percentage of participants (16.8 percent report a preference for cable television and 12.3 percent for network television). Radio ranks next, with Study 4 participants tuning in around 2.7 days a week and only 5.7 percent of the participants in Studies 5 and 6 reporting that radio is their preferred source for political information. The additional media choices offered to Mechanical Turk respondents—social media, talking to others, and not following political news—were collectively the preferred outlets of just over 10 percent of the sample.

The major discrepancy across the two measurement strategies is the prevalence of newspaper use and the number of individuals reporting that newspapers are their preferred source of news. Newspapers are only read on average 1.8 days a week by Project Implicit participants, making them the least used of the five sources. However, almost 20 percent of MTurk users reported that newspapers were their preferred news source, making it the second-most popular type of media after the internet. This disparity likely stems from differences in the question-wording. On Project Implicit, participants were asked about how frequently they read print newspapers. Mechanical Turk participants, on the other hand, were asked specifically to report their use of newspaper websites as part of the newspaper category, rather than as an internet source. Therefore, people who visit newspaper websites were captured as using the internet in Study 4 but as reading newspapers in Studies 5 and 6.

Table 22: Media Consumption Habits of the Samples

	Average Number of Days Per	Percent Reporting Medium as
	Week Participants Reported Use	First Choice Outlet (Studies 4 &
	(Study 3)	5)
Internet sources	4.5	35.2
Newspaper	1.8	19.6
Network television	2.9	12.3
Cable television	2.9	16.8
Radio	2.7	5.7
Social Media like Facebook and Twitter		4.7
Talking with others		3.1
Don't really follow political news		2.7

Sources: Average number of days consumed—Project Implicit. Percent Reporting Medium as first choice outlet—MTurk. Participants in the PI study were not asked how frequently they used social media or talked to others about politics.

Political engagement was measured in the same way across all three studies. Participants were asked to report whether they had engaged in a range of political activities in the past year and whether

³³ This is unsurprising, given that is a non-probability sample; these participants are also selecting to participate in online surveys.

they voted in the last presidential election.³⁴ Activities in which participants could report participating included: attending local political meetings (such as school board or city council), going to a political speech, march, rally, or demonstration, trying to persuade someone to vote, putting up a political sign (such as a lawn sign or bumper sticker), working for a candidate or campaign, wearing a campaign button or sticker, phoning, emailing, writing to, or visiting a government official to express their views on a public issue, commenting on political blogs or online forums (not surveys), and donating money to a candidate, campaign, or political organization.

As is frequently the case with political participation, the vast majority of participants report having voted in the previous election (approximately 71 percent of PI participants and almost 88 percent of MTurk participants). But far fewer people reported engagement in more resource-intensive activities like attending a meeting or working for a candidate. Commenting on blogs, contacting government officials, and persuading others to vote are the most popular forms of engagement, with between 19 and 38 percent of participants reporting engaging in these activities in the past year. These high-conflict activities are also potentially the most interesting for an investigation into the effects of conflict orientation, as they all require interpersonal communication in order to be successful. Engagement in the rest of the participatory activities, most of which require an investment of time or money, hovers at 15 percent or lower. Working for a candidate is the least frequent form of political engagement, with less than 5 percent participation across both samples, but is also arguably the most time and knowledge-intensive activity.

Table 23: Political Participation across Samples

		Percentage	Percentage Participating
		Participating in the Past	in the Past Year (Studies
		Year (Study 4)	5 & 6)
	Commented on political blogs	18.6	28.1
High-conflict	Persuaded others to vote	27.7	38.0
	Contacted government official	22.2	19.3
	Attended political protest	13.5	9.5
	Attended local meeting	13.4	9.0
Mid-range conflict	Wore a campaign button	12.1	13.2
	Put up political sign	11.3	13.1
	Worked for a candidate	4.8	4.6
Low-conflict	Donated money	13.2	11.5
	Voted	70.8	87.7

Source: Project Implicit (2012), Mechanical Turk (2012-2013).

³⁴ Data for the PI study (4) was collected in March 2012 and therefore asked if people voted "in the last presidential election." The Mechanical Turk studies (5 & 6) were run in December 2012 and June 2013 and therefore asked if participants voted "in the 2012 presidential election."

83

Results: Media Consumption

According to my conflict-reducing exposure hypothesis, I should find that conflict-avoidant individuals turn to news sources that will minimize their exposure to conflict and incivility while the conflict-approaching embrace the same conflict-ridden sources. Previously, I categorized cable television, talk radio and internet-only sources like blogs as highly uncivil and network television, social media, and newspapers as low-conflict or more civil sources. Therefore, the conflict-approaching should prefer and consume more information from the highly uncivil sources and the conflict-avoidant should prefer the more civil set of sources. Results from both sets of studies provide weak results in support of this hypothesis.

Looking first at the results of bivariate linear regression³⁵ of media consumption on conflict orientation, it is clear that those individuals who are more comfortable with conflict also are likely to consume all forms of media with greater frequency. A one-unit increase in conflict orientation (or a one-unit shift towards a conflict-approaching inclination) results in a very small increase in the frequency of media consumption. However, as Figure 14 shows, these small increases compound rapidly and lead the most conflict-approaching individuals to consume many forms of media one full day more frequently than their most conflict-avoidant counterparts. Each of these differences is statistically significant, with the exception of the two television categories. Contrary to my hypothesis, conflict-approaching people in the Project Implicit sample do not tune in to cable television more frequently than their conflict-avoidant, nor do the conflict-avoidant individuals watch network news any more frequently than their conflict-approaching peers.

When media consumption is measured as a preference for a particular type of media, rather than the frequency with which individuals consume each type, the results more accurately reflect my hypotheses. As Figure 15 shows, individuals score higher on the Conflict Communication Scale (meaning they are more conflict-approaching), they are more likely to list cable television, internet-only sources like the *Huffington Post* and cable television as their top source for political news. Conversely, more conflict-approaching individuals are less likely to state that network television or social media are their preferred news sources than their conflict-avoidant counterparts. In contrast, participants' preferences for newspapers did not follow the hypothesized pattern. I expected that more conflict-avoidant individuals would express greater preference for newspapers than the conflict-approaching, but the relationship appears to run the other direction, with the conflict-approaching indicating a greater probability of choosing hard-copy newspapers as their preferred news source.

Although, in general, my hypotheses were supported, it is important to take these findings with some caution. Only one relationship is statistically significant: between conflict orientation and the preference for network television. Here, the most conflict-avoidant participants have about a 25 percent chance of selecting low-conflict network TV as their favorite source of political news, while the

³⁵ Full tables of regression results, for both the bivariate and multivariate models are presented in tables in Appendix C. I do not discuss the results of the multivariate models here beyond the interaction between media consumption and political interest, but there are few statistically significant results to be discussed from those models.

most conflict-approaching choose network television only about five percent of the time. Beyond this relationship, some differences are substantially insignificant; for example, the difference in preferences for social media among the most conflict-approaching and avoidant is at most five percent. However, it is possible in some cases that small sample sizes make statistical accuracy difficult. As shown in Table 22, 35 percent of participants reported that the internet was their preferred source, and the remaining 65 percent spread themselves across the other seven media options. Once these groups are broken down by conflict orientation, there are only a few individuals in each category, leading to high standard errors.

In an attempt to overcome this sampling problem, I analyzed the data from Studies 4 and 5 again, this time with individuals placed in one of three categories based on their CCS scores. Those within one standard deviation of the average CCS score are grouped together as "conflict ambivalent," while those outside one standard deviation from the mean score are labeled as "highly conflict-avoidant" and "highly conflict-approaching." I then compare the average probability of choosing each news source for those who are highly avoidant and highly approaching. Looking at conflict orientation in this way, two-tailed proportion tests demonstrate that differences in preferences for social media also become statistically significant (see Figure 16).³⁶

These bivariate analyses show that many of the relationships are in the expected directions even when they fail to approach statistical significance. However, in chapter 3 I established that conflict orientation is tied to a range of demographic and political characteristics that also are likely to affect the frequency with which one consumes political media; once I control for these demographic characteristics—interest, ideology, party identification and strength, age, gender, personality, and education level—conflict orientation's effects on the frequency with which individuals are exposed to political media and their reported preference for particular sources disappear. This could suggest that conflict orientation is not guiding political behavior, at least in the context of media consumption. It also suggests that, as is true with most behavioral and psychological characteristics, the relationship is more nuanced and complicated. In light of these findings, I argue that conflict orientation interacts with key demographic variables to produce more nuanced behavioral outcomes.

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³⁶ Proportion test results are in Appendix C. No participant in the highly conflict-approaching group (n=151) selected social media as their preferred source.

Figure 14

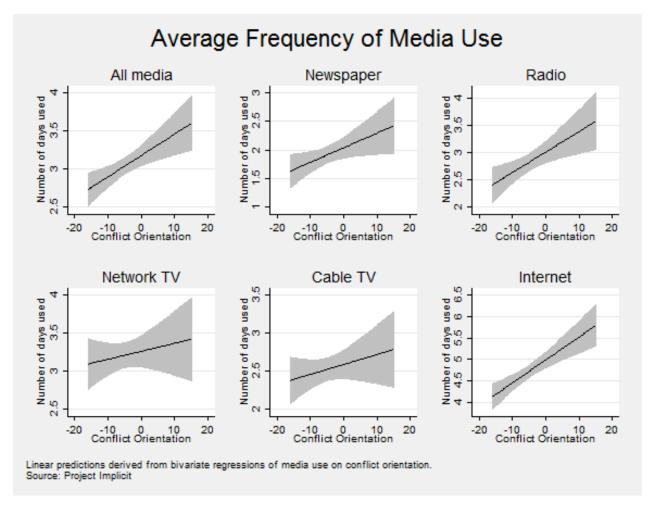


Figure 15

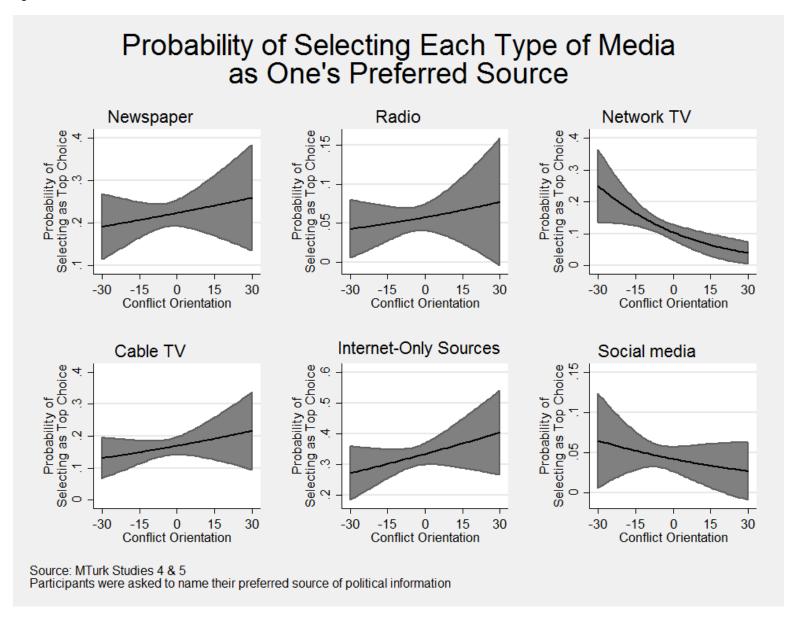
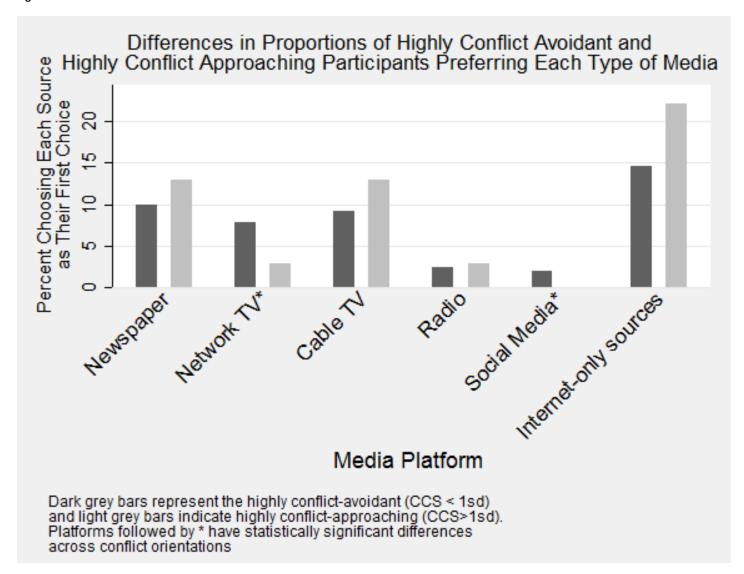


Figure 16



For example, political interest is highly correlated with conflict orientation and is likely to influence how regularly an individual looks at political media.³⁷ It is possible that conflict orientation will play a different role in the media habits of the extremely politically interested than it would for the not at all politically interested. Figure 17 displays the results of a regression of the frequency of media consumption on conflict orientation, political interest and the interaction between the two.³⁸ The figure demonstrates that the effects of conflict orientation on the frequency of media consumption change at different levels of political interest and across types of media. While there is no clear pattern across all types of media, conflict orientation influences consumption habits differently for those with different levels of political interest. In many cases, those who are very or extremely politically interested (the top two lines on each graph) look different from those who are not at all or somewhat interested in politics.

Looking first at the frequency with which individuals at various levels of political interest report weekly consumption of any form of media, those who are somewhat interested in politics stand out as having conflict orientation shape their consumption. Somewhat-interested individuals who are the most conflict-avoidant report consuming political media on any platform 2.5 days a week on average, while the most conflict-approaching participants who are somewhat interested in politics report exposure to political media close to three days a week. The same pattern is true for the frequency with which the somewhat politically interested tune in to radio and internet media. Those at the most approaching end of the spectrum report using the radio or internet one full day more than their conflictavoidant peers.

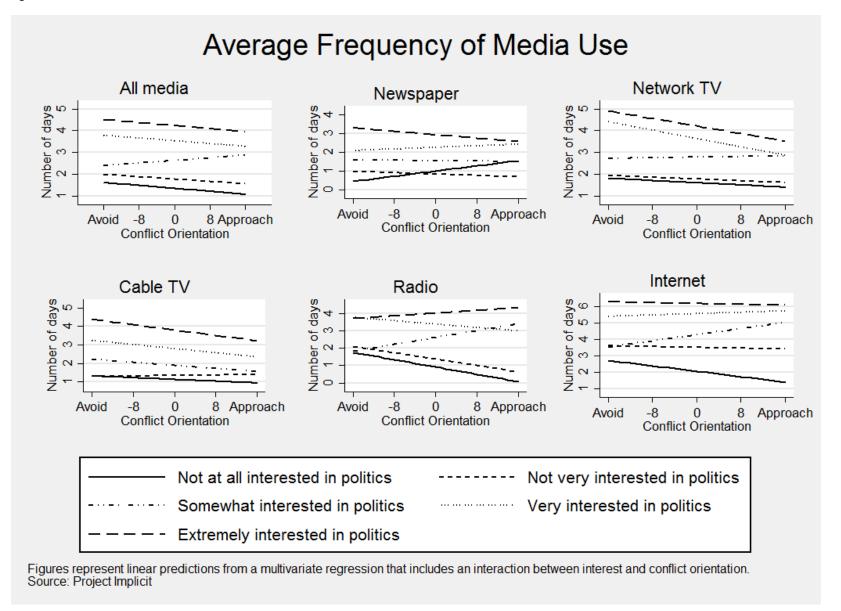
There are also some counter-intuitive findings concerning political interest. Participants who are not at all interested in politics and are extremely conflict-approaching use newspapers much more frequently than their conflict-avoidant peers. More investigation needs to be done into why this group is likely to turn to newspapers and if they're looking at the online versions or investing in paper subscriptions.39

³⁷ Returning to the set of concerns about media exposure measures, some scholars argue that these frequency measures of media are really measuring political interest instead of capturing any effects the media might have on an individual's political ideas.

³⁸ For simplicity, this regression does not contain controls for the other demographic characteristics. I do not conduct the same analysis on media preferences in Studies 4 & 5 because of the previously mentioned concerns about the limitations imposed by sample size that already lead many of the relationships to be statistically insignificant.

³⁹ From what we know about newspaper readership, the second option seems unlikely.

Figure 17



Ultimately, findings from Studies 3-5 only provide weak support for the conflict-reducing exposure hypothesis in the realm of media consumption. Many of the relationships are in the expected directions: conflict-avoidant participants turn to low-incivility media more frequently than high-conflict media and conflict-approaching people tend to prefer high-conflict sources over the low-incivility sources. However, this survey data allows for the examination of the correlational relationship between conflict orientation and media consumption and only integrates incivility as an assumption. A stronger test of this relationship would be to conduct additional survey experiments in which participants are shown civil or uncivil media clips and then asked to seek out additional information about political issues. This type of scenario would isolate the role incivility plays in information-seeking and would provide me with the ability to directly investigate the moderating role incivility plays in the relationship between conflict orientation and media consumption.

Results: Political Participation

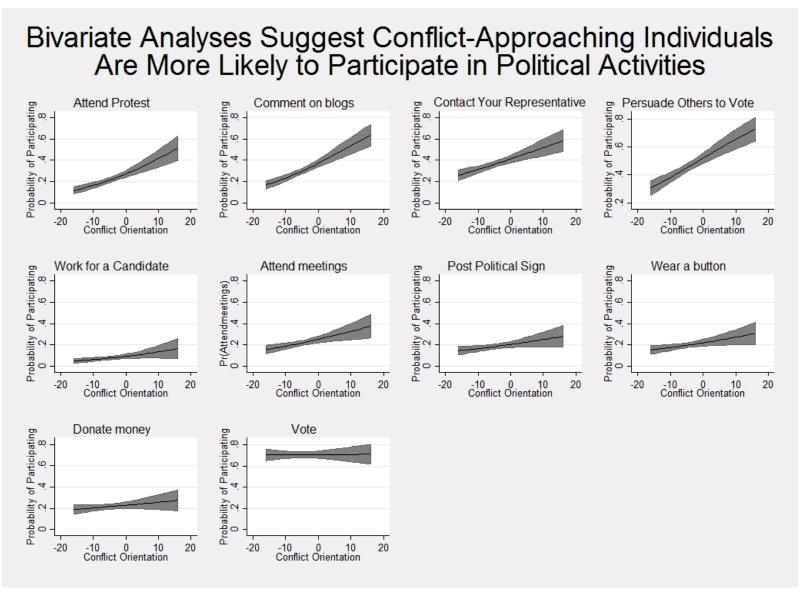
My conflict-reducing exposure hypothesis also asserts that citizens make decisions about political participation on the basis of the potential for exposure to incivility. The same tests I used to explore the relationship between conflict orientation and media exposure can be used to assess the disposition's effect on political engagement. The data provide evidence of conflict orientation's ability to shape participation in different political activities, particularly activities that present the possibility of uncivil or confrontational discussion.

Looking first at the bivariate relationships between participatory acts and conflict orientation in the Project Implicit sample, 40 it is clear that more conflict-approaching individuals are more likely to participate in most political activities. The one exception to this pattern is the likelihood of voting, which is uniform across conflict orientation: regardless of conflict orientation, there was about a 70 percent chance that a participant reported voting in the last presidential election. Beyond voting, the relationship between conflict orientation and participation is statistically significant and positive, although the size of this effect changes from activity to activity. In line with my hypotheses, the effects of conflict orientation are larger for the activities categorized as high-conflict. The likelihood of attending a protest, contacting one's representative, persuading others to vote, and commenting on blogs shifts significantly from the most conflict-avoidant (20 to 30 percent chance of reporting participation in the past year) to the most conflict-approaching (50 to 75 percent probability). The midrange or low-conflict activities exhibit, at most, a 30 percent change from one extreme of the Conflict Communication Scale to the other. Conflict-avoidant individuals report a five to twenty percent likelihood of engaging in politics by working for a candidate, attending a meeting, posting a political sign, or wearing a button while their conflict-approaching peers report a 15 to 35 percent probability of engaging in these activities.

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⁴⁰ Because both sets of studies measure participation in the same way, I only present one set of results here unless there are major differences in the outcomes of interest across the studies. The analyses for the Mechanical Turk sample (Studies 4 & 5) are in Appendix C.

Figure 18



Source: Project Implicit. Probabilities are reported from bivariate logistic regressions of each participatory activity on conflict orientation.

As with the investigation into patterns of media consumption, this analysis incorporated other participant characteristics that are known to influence political participation. Once I factor in the effects of these demographic and political variables on an individual's participation, the story of conflict orientation's role in participation is slightly different. As Figure 19 shows, conflict orientation still plays a statistically significant role in citizens' reporting that they had attended a protest, contacted their representative, commented on blogs or persuaded others to vote: conflict-approaching participants are more likely to participate in each of these activities than those who are conflict-avoidant. However, conflict-approaching individuals are no more likely to participate in the mid-range or low-conflict activities—working for a candidate, attending a meeting, posting a sign, or wearing a button—than the conflict-avoidant participants.

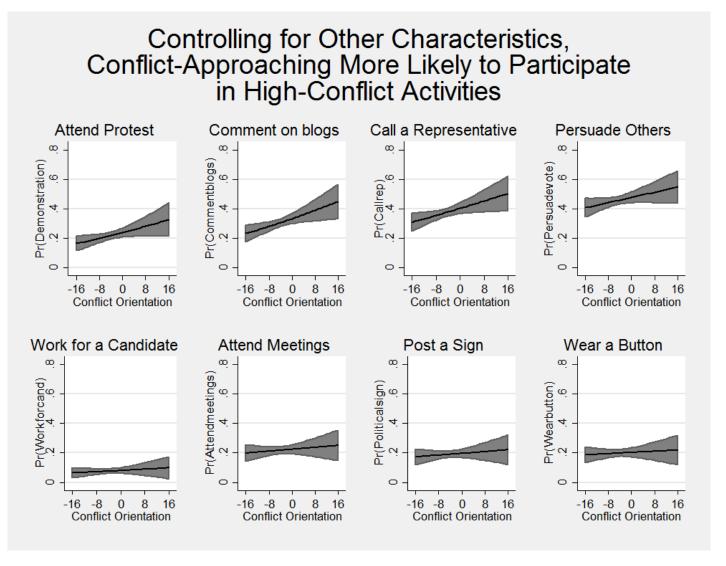
These differences in likelihood of participation are more pronounced for those who are more interested in politics. Looking exclusively at the four forms of participation that are statistically significant when controlling for demographic and political characteristics (commenting on blogs, protesting, calling a representative and persuading others), it is clear that political interest plays a major role in getting people to engage in these activities (Figure 20). Being conflict-approaching further increases the proclivity to participate if an individual is already interested in politics. Survey respondents who reported that they are not at all interested in politics show minimal change in their probability of participating across the CCS. The slope of each predicted probability line increases with the increase in political interest; very and extremely interested participants who are conflict-avoidant are about 20 percent less likely to participate in any activity than those who are somewhat interested or less so.

To summarize, the participatory findings presented here are in line with my hypothesized relationship between political engagement and conflict orientation. Conflict-approaching individuals are more likely to report having participated in high-conflict activities—that is, activities where they are more likely to be exposed to disagreement or incivility—than their conflict-avoidant peers. This is particularly true for people who are also interested in politics. The effect of conflict orientation is stronger for the extremely interested than it is for those who are not at all interested. One's predisposition towards conflict does not appear to play a part in the decision to engage in the mid-range to low-conflict forms of political participation. For these activities—wearing a button, working for a candidate, donating money, and perhaps most importantly, voting—the conflict-avoidant are just as likely to participate as the conflict-approaching.

Compounding Existing Participatory Inequalities

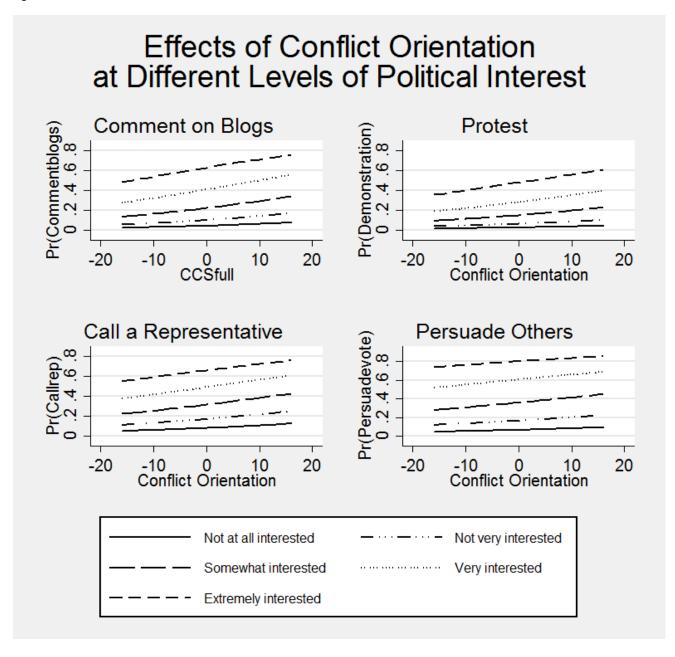
Previous research and my own analysis in chapter 3 suggest that conflict orientation can be tied to gender, age, race, and education. I find that differences in political participation can also be explained by each of these characteristics: women, younger people, minorities and those with less education are less likely to participate in politics, particularly the resource-intensive activities focused on in this chapter. If members of these groups are systematically less likely to engage in politics and are also more likely to be conflict-avoidant—a characteristic I've shown also lowers the probability of participating—conflict orientation could be compounding already existing inequalities in the political sphere.

Figure 19



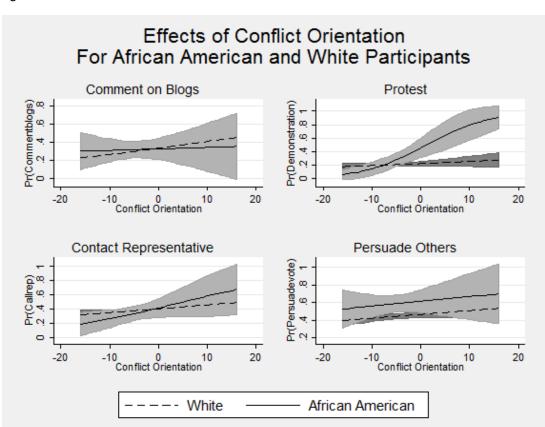
Source: Project Implicit. Probabilities are reported from multivariate logistic regressions of conflict orientation, controlling for personality, gender, age, education, race, ethnicity, party identification, party strength, and political interest. .

Figure 20



However, there are few indications of this compound effect of conflict orientation and demographics. I examined participants' likelihood of participation at the various levels of conflict orientation across demographic categories. For the most part, the interaction is statistically insignificant.⁴¹ However, one result in particular stands out and should be explored further. Conflict orientation interacts with race—specifically whether an individual is African-American or white—to create substantial disparities in the likelihood of attending a protest or demonstration. However, it does so by dramatically increasing the likelihood of African-American participation while having minimal effect on whites. As Figure 21 shows, extremely conflict-avoidant whites and blacks (those with CCS scores below -8) were equally likely to participate in demonstrations, around a 20 percent likelihood. But while highly conflict-approaching white participants hovered at a 25 percent probability of having participated in a protest or demonstration in the past year, the most conflict-approaching African-Americans are over three times more likely to report participation in a protest.⁴² Rather than emphasize traditional divisions in participation, this result suggests that conflict orientation may facilitate a "closing of the gap," offering members of marginalized groups a resource that helps them participate in an activity that would otherwise be very difficult.

Figure 21



⁴¹ I ran interactions of conflict orientation and race (seen here) as well as gender. None of the interactions of race and gender are statistically significant, but the graphical results are displayed in Appendix C.

⁴² This finding does not replicate in the MTurk sample (Studies 4 & 5). It is possible that the samples do not really contain an adequate number of participants who are African-American (see Table 3 in Chapter 1 for sample characteristics).

Conclusion

I demonstrate in this chapter that conflict orientation plays a role in citizens' media consumption habits and approaches to political engagement. I find weak evidence for my hypothesis that more conflict-approaching individuals prefer media sources that will expose them to incivility and conflict, while the conflict-avoidant turn to low-conflict sources like newspapers, network television and social media. The relationship between conflict orientation and political participation shows a manifestation of a similar pattern with more robust results. While the conflict-approaching are more likely to participate in high-conflict activities like commenting on a blog or persuading others to vote than the conflict-avoidant, there is no difference across conflict orientation in participation in mid- to low-conflict activities. When these findings are considered in light of variation in political interest, conflict orientation plays a greater role in the likelihood of participation for the most politically-interested.

Even with weak connections between conflict orientation and media consumption, citizens' habits of selecting political media based on perceived incivility could have implications for information recall and agenda-setting. Just as partisan selective exposure has been found to leave Republicans and Democrats with different perceptions of the most important issues facing our nation (Stroud, 2011), prolonged exposure to systematically civil or uncivil media coverage could shape individuals' perceptions of the political world. The online processing model of political decision-making (McGraw, Lodge, & Stroh, 1990), in particular would suggest that while the facts conveyed in political news coverage fade away, the emotional responses to incivility and memories of the general tone will linger and shape opinions and behavior.

In the realm of political engagement, differences in behaviors across the conflict orientation spectrum affect whose voices get heard and what those voices are saying. My finding that conflict-approaching tendencies lead African-Americans—but not whites—to join protest movements at a high rate alleviates some concerns about conflict orientation's potential to exacerbate existing racial inequalities in participation. Protest has been called "the weapon of the weak," (Schlozman, Verba & Brady 2012, 557) and it appears that it continues to be an outlet in which members of minority and other marginalized groups are more likely to express their opinions. However, those members who are participating are more conflict-approaching than their peers, suggesting that even among these demographic groups comfort with conflict is a resource that facilitates participation in the political arena.

In the next chapter, I conclude by addressing a question that arises from these results: When these voices are heard, what do they say and how do they say it? I expect that conflict-approaching individuals are willing to use more uncivil language in their political discussion, particularly when provoked. As I discuss in the next chapter, a political world where the conflict-approaching are engaging in political discussion and communication while the conflict-avoidant stay silent could have implications for the quality of our democratic discourse and the ability to hear the other side.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

"There should be nothing controversial about everyday kindness; civility as a kind of individual moral compass should remain a virtue. But civility as a type of discourse—as a high road that nobody ever actually walks—is the opposite. It is bullshit."—Hua Hsu, The New Yorker (Dec. 1, 2014)

The media are a critical institution that inform and motivate people in the political sphere. The advent of online political communication, the rise of talk radio, and the reinforcement of the 24-hour cable news cycle have only served to broaden the array of sources from which individuals can extract information and motivation. However, each of these shifts in institutional structure has, according to scholars, served to increase the presence of uncivil and argumentative language in political discourse. This incivility has been decried by political theorists as being detrimental to deliberative democracy but also accepted as a strong motivational force in participatory theories of democratic governance. Over the course of the last six chapters, I have argued that incivility plays a more nuanced role that requires political scientists to take personal predispositions into account. Specifically, in an uncivil media environment, participation is stratified by conflict orientation. An individual's comfort with conflict will lead them to have different emotional reactions to incivility and to seek out media sources and methods of participation that do not expose them to negative emotional responses or to conflict that might be more than their personal predispositions can tolerate. In explaining the connection between conflict orientation and behavior, it is useful to think of the predisposition as a political resource like gender, age or education. When viewed in this light, the tendency to become conflict-approaching becomes a vital political resource in an uncivil political world, encouraging those who already participate more because of other resource advantages to get more involved and pushing away those who are unlikely to engage.

This story may reinforce the deliberative theorists' argument that we must have civil discourse to ensure democracy, but it also demonstrates that there is a specific set of citizens for which incivility can act as a democratic windfall. These citizens are predisposed to enjoy conflict, to feel comfortable with confrontation, and to find these situations amusing and entertaining in such a way that leads them to engage in politics. It seems hasty, then, to say that an uncivil tone does not have a place in democratic discourse.

Ultimately, the results presented throughout this work only serve to highlight the ways in which incivility muddies the political waters. In order to distill the evidence into meaningful conclusions and implications, I conclude by reviewing my key findings, paying close attention to the ways in which conflict orientation has the potential to exacerbate existing political inequalities in participation. I suggest which paths should be travelled next, reviewing the questions raised by this research and the ways in which we might begin to tackle them. Finally, I revisit the roles of civility and incivility in politics to suggest that our politics can benefit from less idealizing of civil discourse and demonizing of incivility.

The Impact of the Conflict Orientation-Incivility Interaction

The primary goal of this dissertation is to investigate the interaction between an apolitical individual-level trait—conflict orientation—and a prominent component of the contemporary media environment—incivility. I focus on the impact of this interaction on citizens' political behavior, specifically how perceptions of incivility vary across conflict orientation and media format, how

emotional responses to civility and incivility vary across conflict orientation, and how conflict orientation shapes media consumption and political engagement. Conflict orientation plays a role in each of these outcomes, particularly when moderated by the presence of incivility.

Conflict orientation did not influence individuals' ability to identify incivility in the media; it did not make those who were uncomfortable with conflict any more likely to than those who enjoyed it to identify particular language or tone as uncivil. It did, however, play a role in citizens' perceptions of the emotion conveyed in a media clip. Conflict-approaching individuals found the story to be more emotional than their conflict-avoidant peers. When I probe these emotional responses more systematically, I find that conflict-avoidant individuals are more likely to report negative emotions like disgust and anxiety in the face of incivility, while the conflict-approaching have more positive reactions, like entertainment and amusement. Citizens exposed to a civil media clip were less likely to report any of these emotions, positive or negative. Research into the relationship between emotion and behavior has established that certain emotions lead citizens to be more or less information-seeking and more or less active in political activities, raising the possibility that these heterogeneous emotional responses are the mechanism by which conflict orientation shapes political engagement.

In the last set of empirical tests, I focus on the importance of conflict orientation in guiding media use and participation in a range of political activities, from voting to donating money to commenting on a blog. I see weak evidence that conflict-avoidant individuals spend less time consuming political news generally and prefer different media sources than their conflict-approaching peers. More conflict-avoidant study participants report using social media and network television as their primary source of news. A greater number of conflict-approaching people, however, reported preferences for internet-only sources like the *Huffington Post*. When looking at political participation, the differences between the conflict-avoidant and conflict-approaching become stronger. Engagement in low-conflict activities like voting, donating money, or putting out a yard sign is unaffected by conflict orientation. Those who dislike conflict are just as likely as those who are comfortable with it to participate in these activities. However, when an activity has the potential to introduce incivility or conflict communication more generally, conflict-avoidant citizens are much less likely to report having done that activity than their conflict-approaching counterparts. This divergence in participation is particularly true for those who are highly interested in politics.

These findings have implications across political psychology and communication research. Political scientists have begun to focus more heavily on pre-political and apolitical personality differences as central to our understanding of political behavior. The study of conflict orientation demonstrates that there are many traits beyond the "Big Five" that play a role in decision-making generally and in political choices specifically. On a global scale, conflict orientation has the potential to change the nature of who gets involved, particularly in a political environment where incivility is increasingly a part of citizens' daily experience. In this section, I begin by discussing the importance of understanding these psychological processes. I then focus on the ways in which conflict orientation can exacerbate existing inequalities in political participation in a hypothetical world in which incivility more thoroughly invades political discourse. This thought experiment demonstrates the impact of the interplay between political institutions and individual differences on political outcomes.

Exacerbating Participatory Inequalities

In Chapter 6, I show that in today's political environment, conflict orientation interacts with race to produce profound differences in who participates in political protests. Those African-American participants who were at all conflict-avoidant had less than 50 percent probability of reporting attendance at a protest, while those who were comfortable with conflict had an over 80 percent probability of reporting involvement in a political demonstration. There was no similar increase for white Americans, suggesting that for African-Americans, particularly, conflict orientation is a resource that facilitates a specific kind of engagement. I did not find strong effects of conflict orientation on participation across other demographic categories or activities. This result is interesting and has the potential to alleviate some concerns about the potential of conflict orientation to compound participatory inequality. However, more in-depth investigation into each of these demographic relationships is needed, as it is easy to see how the correlation between conflict orientation and these characteristics could still influence exacerbate disparities in citizens' political voice.

Differences in political participation only matter if those who are participating have different interests or opinions than those who are not. Schlozman, Verba and Brady (Schlozman et al., 2012) and Bartels (2009), among others, have shown that citizens of a lower socio-economic status have different needs and expectations of their government but are much less likely to be represented on these issues by their elected officials or to engage in politics in such a way that these differences can be articulated. Conflict orientation compounds these problems because conflict avoidance is correlated with the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics that decrease citizens' likelihood of being heard.

For example, I found that conflict orientation is correlated with gender such that women are less likely to be conflict-approaching than men. In other words, women can be seen as comparatively lacking in a specific political resource: the ability to tolerate or react positively to conflict. We can add this difference to the growing list of gender differences in political interest, information, efficacy and other resources like civic skills and income that explain the disparity between men and women in political activity.

The samples used for this research do not show strong correlations between conflict orientation and other demographics that are similarly tied to lower political engagement. Therefore I hesitate to make additional claims about the relationship between conflict orientation, these characteristics and participation. However, as I discuss in chapter 3, other research by psychologists ties conflict orientation to important demographic variables like education and race. These connections should be investigated further in samples of American citizens that are large enough to draw conclusions across many different dimensions and that over-sample on characteristics—like being a racial minority—that might interact with conflict orientation in meaningful ways. Because the convenience samples used here have smaller samples of minority groups and lower educational attainment, it is difficult to get the statistical power necessary to effectively engage with these questions.

Moving Forward: Directions for Future Research

Political scientists will continue to wrestle both with the role of individual differences in shaping political behavior and with the effects of incivility in political discourse. The findings presented here offer many new avenues for research into these domains, and I explore two of them in depth. First, I ask what can be done for the conflict-avoidant in order to make them feel comfortable engaging in the public sphere. I then turn to what divergent participation in activities like persuasive political discussion,

writing one's representative or commenting on blogs could mean for the tone of mass political discourse. How does conversation between citizens change if only those who are comfortable with conflict are doing the talking? Each of these questions would benefit from further investigation.

Interventions for the Conflict-Avoidant

Incivility aroused negative emotions in the conflict-avoidant, offering a potential mechanism by which to explain lower participation in high-conflict political activities and greater preferences for media that maintain a low-conflict environment. However, civil discourse fails to elicit positive emotions in the conflict-avoidant, and this group of citizens is no more likely to participate in low-conflict participatory activities than the conflict-approaching. Ultimately, this ends with the conflict-approaching being able to express their concerns to the government in more ways than their counterparts and potentially with the conflict-avoidant feeling less positive about government in general. Both of these outcomes have negative implications for democracy.

Policymakers and activists who are invested in greater equality of political voice, then, may want to create interventions that encourage the conflict-avoidant to overcome their discomfort with conflict and become more involved. Perhaps there is a "sweet spot" on the spectrum from civil to uncivil discourse that arouses the passions of the conflict-avoidant but not their anxiety or disgust. Political humor and satire like that found on *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* or *Last Week with John Oliver* could fall into this category. Expanding Study 2 to test the effects of humorous or snarky—but not fully uncivil—language on the emotions of the conflict-approaching and conflict-avoidant could be one step towards understanding what levels of communication conflict are more acceptable.

Alternatively, we might explore environments that allow the conflict-avoidant to engage in the same types of political communication with their peers and political elites, but that are not perceived to be as high-conflict as these activities are currently. For example, conflict-avoidant individuals might be more willing to comment on blogs or persuade friends to vote when they know a third party is there to moderate the discussion and shut down any incivility that might appear. Moderators have been found to increase the likelihood of deliberative discussion on news organizations' Facebook pages, so perhaps they could serve the same functions in other political environments as well (Stroud, Scacco, Muddiman, & Curry, 2014).

Ultimately greater investigation needs to be done into what the conflict-avoidant *don't* avoid in politics. A better understanding of the characteristics of the media and activities conflict-avoidant individuals enjoy could lead to interventions that reduce the participatory disparities between them and their conflict-approaching peers.

Assessing the Content of Political Discourse

Not only do my findings have implications for who is participating in political activities, but they also have the potential to effect what is being said during these activities—particularly those that involve some sort of informational exchange like commenting online or persuading a friend. As part of Study 4, Nicole Pankiewicz and I developed an experiment in which participants read a blog post and were then asked if they would respond to the post and if so, what they would say. In line with the survey findings presented in chapter 6, conflict-approaching individuals are more likely to report that they would respond to a comment on blog posts than the conflict-avoidant. Blog posts that were uncivil

produced more direct attacks on the initial commenter than did those that were civil.⁴³ For example, one individual in our study replied that "It's ironic you are giving so much flak to the government and individuals with mental health problems, because you are clearly insane yourself."

Research in political communication has begun to focus on who is making the uncivil comments in online forums, particularly on the role anonymity plays in encouraging incivility (Coe et al., 2014). However, more investigation is needed into other individual-level characteristics that might lead an individual to be more aggressive or uncivil in both their interpersonal and virtual political discussions. What type of person reads an uncivil comment and thinks "This person has already made up their mind, and any attempt to reason with them would be futile?" They are likely different from the person who responds "you are clearly insane yourself" in meaningful, substantial ways. A conflict-approaching tendency is just one possible characteristic that could explain why individuals engage in this behavior.

Civility and Incivility: The Angel and Devil on Our Shoulders?

We can think of civility and incivility as the little angel and devil sitting on the shoulders of the democratic man. The angel encourages a path towards a more deliberative and respectful society through polite discussion of our differences, while the devil incites uncivil commentary as a means of arousing passions and encouraging engagement. This tension between the characteristics of a strong deliberative and participatory democracy have been well-documented, and the evidence presented here only reinforces it. However, I hesitate to agree with many of the voices in contemporary public discussion of political incivility who hold civility as a gold standard, the ideal to strive for in a democratic society. My findings leave me skeptical that civil discourse is truly a panacea. While I certainly acknowledge that rising incivility raises some serious concerns for the state of our democracy, a shift towards an extremely civil society does not necessarily solve the problems associated with incivility. Individuals that are turned off by incivility are not more engaged by civil presentation of policy issues or campaign information. Civility mutes excitement and arousal associated with "in-your-face" politics and can mask the discriminatory or derogatory nature of opinions or policies.

Many pages of this dissertation focus on the effects of incivility and individuals' awareness of it, but there is minimal discussion of civility. In chapter five, I showed that incivility inspired greater amusement and entertainment in the conflict-approaching, but greater anxiety and disgust in the conflict-avoidant. These emotional responses have, at least for the conflict-avoidant, a potentially negative impact on political engagement. However, civility does not reverse this trend. The civil television clips are not more likely to produce any of these emotions for either set of individuals. They do not make the conflict-avoidant more entertained or amused, nor do they provide clear emotional benefits to the conflict-approaching. The physiological arousal associated with incivility motivates citizens in a way civil discourse does not (Mutz, 2015). Incivility—not civility—helps resolve another oftnamed crisis of American politics—our low levels of citizen participation.

Civil discourse is less likely to provoke participation, but civility is a long-accepted component of both the politics of recognition and deliberative theories of democracy (Conover, 2009; Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards, & Rucht, 2002). Civil discourse is frequently equated with mutual respect, but a polite or civil tone can mask substantively derogatory comments in even more insidious ways. To explain, I return to the idea of the "polite racist." This individual states that certain peoples' rights should be restricted on

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 $^{^{43}}$ The full explanation of the experimental treatments and post-treatment questions is available in Appendix B.

the basis of some ascriptive characteristic, but does so using techniques of politeness—optimism, apology, reciprocity. For example, Oklahoma State Senator Joseph Silk (R), in proposing a bill that would allow businesses and individuals to refuse service to gay couples on religious grounds, stated that "The L.G.B.T. movement is the main thing, the primary thing that's going to be challenging religious liberties and the freedom to live out religious convictions...And I say that sensitively, because I have homosexual friends" (Fausset & Blinder, 2015). Silk is being civil, according to the definition used throughout this dissertation, but his comment is still discriminatory. Does this civil statement convey mutual respect or a recognition of gay citizens' basic human dignity? Or is Silk wrapping prejudices in language that American culture has taught us to see as respectful? I would argue for the latter, and I would go a step further to suggest that citizens are less likely to see the statement as problematic because it is civil. If Silk had used derogatory epithets instead of "gays," the violation of the social norms surrounding polite discourse might clue a greater number of people in to the discriminatory nature of his substantive comment.

These days, America is well aware that it has an "incivility problem." But that problem, and the offered solutions, are much more complex than conventional wisdom would have us believe. Incivility reduces citizens' general trust in government and turns conflict-avoidant citizens away from the political process, citizens who are already at a disadvantage because of other demographic characteristics. There is much more research to be done to determine how to win back this trust and facilitate equal voice for underrepresented groups. However, interventions that focus only on civility as the high road are, in the words of journalist Hua Hsu, bullshit.

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Appendix A

Distributions and Correlations for the Conflict Communication Scale

Table 24: Inter-item Correlation, Full Scale (Study 1)

	Challenge	Excite	Hate	Bother	Upset
Challenge others					_
Conflicts excite	0.53				
Hate arguments	0.49	0.63			
Arguments don't bother	0.55	0.59	0.65		
Upset after argument	0.42	0.49	0.68	0.71	

Correlations were calculated after variables were recoded to accommodate for reverse coding. Therefore, a positive correlation indicates the more conflict-approaching response for each item.

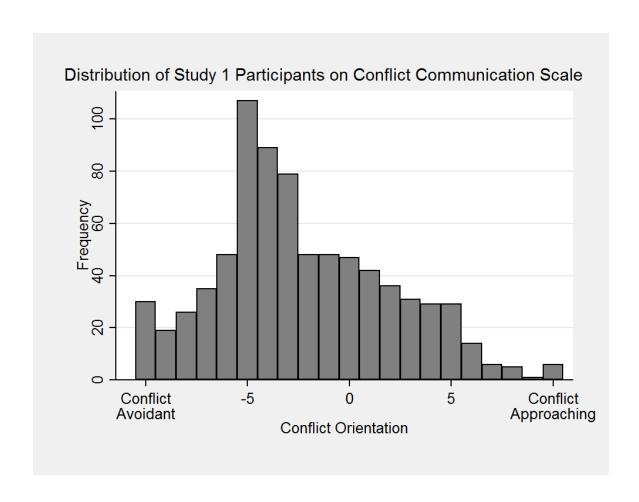


Table 25: Inter-item Correlation, Full Scale (Study 2, SSI)

	Challenge	Excite	Hate	Bother	Upset
Challenge others					
Conflicts excite	0.49				
Hate arguments	0.34	0.43			
Arguments don't bother	0.42	0.55	0.56		
Upset after argument	0.27	0.28	0.63	0.47	

Correlations were calculated after variables were recoded to accommodate for reverse coding. Therefore, a positive correlation indicates the more conflict-approaching response for each item.

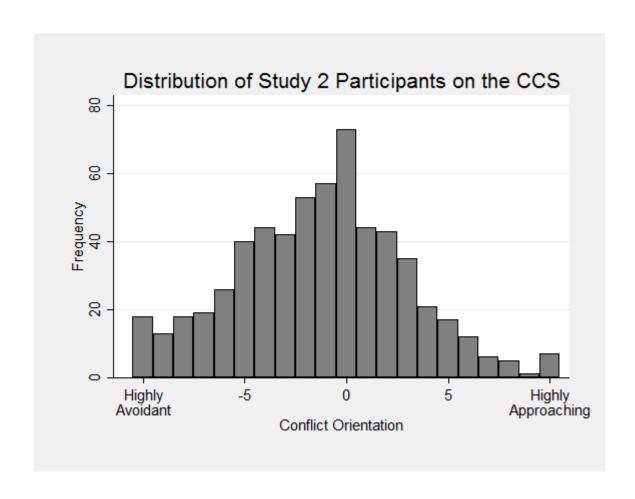
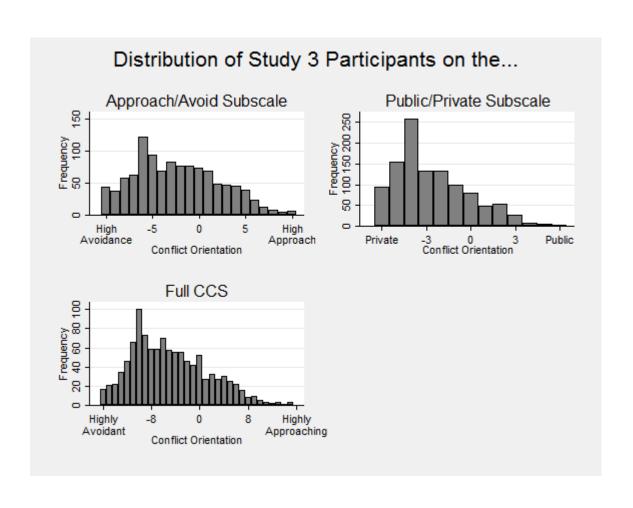


Table 26: Inter-item Correlation, Full Scale (Study 3, PI)

	Challenge	Excite	Hate	Bother	Upset	Public	Others	Restaurant
Challenge others								
Conflicts excite	0.46							
Hate arguments	0.40	0.46						
Arguments don't bother	0.36	0.47	0.49					
Upset after argument	0.25	0.29	0.48	0.45				
Avoid in public	0.26	0.32	0.48	0.32	0.33			
Others in public	0.16	0.24	0.36	0.36	0.32	0.34		
Argue in restaurant	0.22	0.28	0.30	0.37	0.21	0.36	0.21	

Correlations were calculated after variables were recoded to accommodate for reverse coding. Therefore, a positive correlation indicates the more conflict-approaching response for each item.



Appendix B

Additional Study Information

Study 1: Perceptions of Civility (Mechanical Turk)

Morning Joe (MSNBC)



Transcript, Morning Joe

Mika Brzezinski: Here with us now, Republican Representative from Virginia and House Minority Whip, Congressman Eric Cantor

Lawrence O'Donnell: What I want to know Congressman Cantor...

Joe Scarborough: It's unconstitutional!

O'Donnell: If you're opposed to these bonuses, have you finally found the tax increase that you like specifically targeted to these bonuses? If not, how would you get the money?

Congressman Eric Cantor: Listen, I am for whatever we can do right now to get that money back.

O'Donnell: Congressman, you said that your idea...

CROSSTALK

... for getting that money back is to ask Tim Geithner how to do it.

Cantor: He's the Secretary of the Treasury, he's the one that put the taxpayer dollars out there that allows the bonuses to go forward.

O'Donnell: And you have confidence in his ability to get it back, that's what you've just said.

Cantor: Well, well listen, if he is the president's secretary, he ought to be responsible for his actions.

The Dylan Ratigan Show (MSNBC)



Transcript, The Dylan Ratigan Show

Dylan Ratigan: Can a leader address these issues, considering how dependent they are for funding for political campaigns from those who benefit from those tax loopholes that he would have, he or she would have to close?

Karen Finney: Wait a second, wait a second! It is Congress that holds the power of the purse—and I'm going to get back to Dylan's question—this president was willing to put on the table a big deal, and who couldn't get the votes? John Boehner.

Ratigan: Ok, Ok, Ok, what are you talking about, four trillion dollars?

Finney: Four trillion dollars. I'm saying...

Ratigan: We owe 70 trillion dollars...

Finney: I understand that but...

Ratigan: He goes to walk out a 4 trillion dollar solution that is basically just a way for the Democrats to avoid dealing with this until 2017!

Study 2: Survey Sampling International

The SSI survey was conducted as part of a collaborative effort among UVA graduate students. Therefore, the incivility treatments and questions used from this survey were part of a larger amalgam of different research projects. For purposes of understanding the context in which the experiment was embedded, I present the entirety of the survey in this appendix.

Demographics for Quotas:

What best describes your gender?

- Male
- Female

What best describes your ethnicity?

- Caucasian
- Hispanic
- African American
- Asian
- Other
- Native American
- Pacific Islander

What is your age?

- 18-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- 55-64 years old
- 65-74 years old
- 75+ years old

What best describes your educational background?

- Some high school
- Completed high school
- Completed some college
- College degree
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree

Some say that income inequality has been increasing in America. In the 1920s, the top 1% of the income distribution earned about 20% of all income. From the 1940s through the early 1980s

that number decreased to about 10%, but now the top 1% earns a little more than 20% of all income.⁴⁴

Is it good, bad, or neither good nor bad that the top 1% of earners have been earning a larger share of all income while those with lower incomes earn a smaller share?

- Very good
- Good
- Somewhat good
- Neither good nor bad
- Somewhat bad
- Bad
- Very bad

Do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose the government trying to decrease income inequality?

- Favor a great deal
- Favor moderately
- Favor a little
- Neither favor nor oppose
- Oppose a little
- Oppose moderately
- Oppose a great deal

Taxes vary by income: those with lower incomes pay a smaller proportion of their income in taxes, while those who make more money pay a larger proportion. The lowest earning 20% of Americans pay 2.1% of all income taxes, while the middle three groups pay 5.3, 10.3, and 19% respectively. The top 20% of earners pay 66% of all income taxes.

Is it good, bad, or neither good nor bad that those who earn more pay more in taxes?

- Very good
- Good
- Somewhat good
- Neither good nor bad
- Somewhat bad
- Bad
- Very bad

Do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose the government increasing the share of taxes that the top 20% of earners have to pay?

- Favor a great deal
- Favor moderately

⁴⁴ This question and the six that follow (through foreign aid) were asked across multiple treatments. Two of these treatments included figures that are not included in this appendix.

- Favor a little
- Neither favor nor oppose
- Oppose a little
- Oppose moderately
- Oppose a great deal

The United States spends about 37 billion dollars on foreign aid each year, which is about one percent of the total national budget. Do you support the U.S. spending money on foreign aid?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Support somewhat
- Neither support nor oppose
- Oppose somewhat
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose

Do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose the government increasing the amount spent on foreign aid?

- Favor a great deal
- Favor moderately
- Favor a little
- Neither favor nor oppose
- Oppose a little
- Oppose moderately
- Oppose a great deal

The next four survey questions will present you with vignette about an American citizen. After reading each vignette, you will be asked your level of agreement with a proposed law that would restrict the rights of the citizen described in the vignette.

Citizen A is 32 years old, single, and in good health. Citizen A was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, has completed high school and has no criminal history. Since being laid off ten months ago, Citizen A has been receiving welfare benefits to get by.

Proposed legislation in Citizen A's state would require all welfare recipients to pass a drug test every month in order to continue receiving benefits. To what extent do you agree or disagree that people on welfare like Citizen A should be subject to drug testing?

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Citizen T became a citizen a year ago after being naturalized. She is proud to be an American citizen, but she feels much more comfortable speaking in her native language and has very limited English skills.

Proposed legislation in Citizen T's state would make English the official language. Residents would be required to speak fluent English in order to do things like get a job, apply for state benefits, or get a driver's license. To what extent do you agree or disagree with proposed legislation that would force people like Citizen T to speak only English?

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Citizen N has lived on the streets for ten years. She shows signs of mental illness, but whenever she is arrested for causing a disturbance she denies treatment, saying that it is her right to live as she pleases. Without treatment, there is little chance of Citizen N ever maintaining a stable living situation.

Proposed legislation in Citizen N's state would require anyone diagnosed with a mental illness that is linked to homelessness to take medication and to have regular visits with a mental health professional. To what extent do you agree or disagree that people like Citizen N should be forced into mental health treatment, even if they don't want to be treated?

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Citizen G is a 32-year-old high school graduate in a long-term relationship. Citizen G has been employed at a restaurant since being released from prison six months ago after serving seven years for a non-violent felony conviction.

According to the laws of Citizen G's state, convicted felons permanently lose their right to vote, even after completing their sentences. To what extent to you agree or disagree that people who have been convicted of felonies like Citizen G should be permanently barred from voting?

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: More tax money should be spent on the care and treatment of people with mental health problems.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

We would like to get a sense of your general preferences.

Most modern theories of decision making recognize that decisions do not take place in a vacuum. Individual preferences and knowledge, along with situational variables can greatly impact the decision process. To demonstrate that you've read this much, just go ahead and select both white and green among the alternatives below, no matter what your favorite color is. Yes, ignore the question below and select both of those options.

What is your favorite color?

- White
- Red
- Blue
- Pink
- Black
- Green

Here are a few questions about the government in Washington. Many people don't know the answers to all of these questions, but even if you're not sure we would like you to mark your best guess.

Who is the Vice President of the United States?

- Dick Cheney
- Ron Paul
- Joe Biden
- Hillary Clinton

The current Majority Leader of the United States Senate is:

- Harry Reid
- John Boehner
- Nancy Pelosi
- Mitch McConnell

Who is the current Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States?

- William Rehnquist
- Sandra Day O'Connor
- John Roberts
- Thurgood Marshall

How long is a U.S. Senate term?

- 2 years
- 4 years
- 6 years
- 8 years

Do you happen to know which party currently has the most members in the House of Representatives in Washington?

- The Democratic Party
- The Republican Party

Thinking about the economy in the country as a whole, would you say that over the past year the nation's economy has gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse?

- Better
- About the same
- Worse

Much better/worse or somewhat better/worse?

- Much better/worse
- Somewhat better/worse

[My study starts here]

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. [Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree]

- I enjoy challenging the opinions of others.
- I find conflicts exciting.
- I hate arguments.
- Arguments don't bother me.
- I feel upset after an argument.

Please watch the news clip below and answer the questions on the following screens.

[see treatments at end of the questionnaire]

To what extent was the clip you just watched... [not at all, slightly, moderately, very, extremely]

- Informative?
- Entertaining?
- Civil?
- Impolite?
- Expressive of multiple viewpoints?

After watching this clip, how likely are you to tune in to cable news in the future?

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely

- Neither more nor less likely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Very unlikely

To what extent did the clip you just watched make you feel any of the following? [not at all, slightly, moderately, very, extremely]

- Angry
- Disgusted
- Anxious
- Interested
- Amused

What economic policy debate is Representative Cantor discussing?

- TARP
- · The debt ceiling
- Tax increases
- Job creation

What policymaker are the journalists and Representative Cantor discussing?

- Tim Geithner
- Eric Holder
- Jack Lew
- Arne Duncan

According to the clip, who is being blamed for the bonuses paid to AIG executives?

- Secretary Geithner
- President Obama
- Wall Street
- Congress

According to the clip, whose responsibility is it to fix the tax loopholes that affect trade and banking?

- The President
- The Secretary of the Treasury
- Congress
- The IRS

According to the clip, how much of the U.S. debt did the Democratic proposal propose to cover?

- \$4 trillion
- \$70 trillion
- \$8 trillion
- \$25 trillion

[my study ends here]

Please read the following news story carefully:45

Do you approve of the Court's decision about protesting rights?

- Approve a great deal
- Approve moderately
- Approve a little
- Neither approve nor disapprove
- Disapprove a little
- Disapprove moderately
- Disapprove a great deal

Do you approve of how the Supreme Court is doing its job overall?

- Approve a great deal
- Approve moderately
- Approve a little
- Neither approve nor disapprove
- Disapprove a little
- Disapprove moderately
- Disapprove a great deal

A local sheriff in Oregon has received a request for a permit to protest at a nearby church during its Sunday-morning service. Should the request be granted despite the Court's ruling?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

A local sheriff in Ohio has received a request for a permit to protest at a nearby abortion clinic during its busiest hours of operation. Should the request be granted despite the Court's ruling?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Here is a 7-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you put yourself on this scale?

- Extremely liberal
- Liberal
- Slightly liberal
- Moderate: middle of the road
- Slightly conservative

⁴⁵ Three treatment news stories were shown here, the three treatments are not contained in this appendix.

- Conservative
- Extremely conservative

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?

- Republican
- Democrat
- Independent
- Other

[If Democrat/Republican] Would you consider yourself a strong Republican/Democrat or a not very strong Republican/Democrat?

- Strong Republican/Democrat
- Not very strong Republican/Democrat

[If independent/other] Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic Party?

- Republican Party
- Democratic Party
- Neither Party

Thinking back to the first questions we asked, how much of total income taxes do the top 20% of earners pay?

- 20%
- 34%
- 66%
- 90%

How confident are you about your answer to the question above?

- Very confident
- Somewhat confident
- Slightly confident
- Not at all confident

Thinking back to the first questions we asked, about how much of all income do the top 1% of earners actually earn today?

- Between 40-50%
- Between 30-40%
- Between 20-30%
- Between 10-20%

How confident are you about your answer to the question above?

- Very confident
- Somewhat confident

- Slightly confident
- Not at all confident

Thinking back to the first questions we asked, about how much of the federal budget is spent on foreign aid?

- 1%
- 3%
- 7%
- 13%

How confident are you about your answer to the question above?

- Very confident
- Somewhat confident
- Slightly confident
- Not at all confident

In what state (or territory) do you live?

- Alabama
- Alaska
- Arizona
- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Delaware
- District of Columbia
- Florida
- Georgia
- Hawaii
- Idaho
- Illinois
- Indiana
- lowa
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Louisiana

- Maine
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Montana
- Nebraska
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- New York
- North Carolina
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- South Dakota

- Tennessee
- Texas
- Utah
- Vermont
- Virginia
- Washington
- West Virginia
- Wisconsin
- Wyoming
- American Samoa
- Federated States of Micronesia
- Guam
- Marshall Islands
- Northern Mariana Islands
- Palau
- Puerto Rico
- U.S. Minor
 Outlying Islands
- U.S. Virgin Islands

Please provide an approximation of your annual income:

How likely is it that you will vote in the 2014 midterm election?

Thank you for completing the study. The description of the Supreme Court decision in this survey was fictional and created for the purpose of scientific inquiry. Please click here or click "submit" to finish the survey.

Treatments:

Morning Joe (MSNBC): Uncivil



Transcript, Morning Joe

Mika Brzezinski: Here with us now, Republican Representative from Virginia and House Minority Whip, Congressman Eric Cantor

Lawrence O'Donnell: What I want to know Congressman Cantor...

Joe Scarborough: It's unconstitutional!

O'Donnell: If you're opposed to these bonuses, have you finally found the tax increase that you like specifically targeted to these bonuses? If not, how would you get the money?

Congressman Eric Cantor: Listen, I am for whatever we can do right now to get that money back.

O'Donnell: Congressman, you said that your idea...

CROSSTALK

... for getting that money back is to ask Tim Geithner how to do it.

Cantor: He's the Secretary of the Treasury, he's the one that put the taxpayer dollars out there that allows the bonuses to go forward.

O'Donnell: And you have confidence in his ability to get it back, that's what you've just said.

Cantor: Well, well listen, if he is the president's secretary, he ought to be responsible for his actions.

The Dylan Ratigan Show (MSNBC): Uncivil



Transcript, The Dylan Ratigan Show

Dylan Ratigan: Can a leader address these issues, considering how dependent they are for funding for political campaigns from those who be from those tax loopholes that he would have, he or she would have to close?

Karen Finney: Wait a second, wait a second! It is Congress that holds the power of the purse—and I'm going to get back to Dylan's question-this president was willing to put on the table a big deal, and who couldn't get the votes? John Boehner.

Ratigan: Ok, Ok, Ok, what are you talking about, four trillion dollars?

Finney: Four trillion dollars. I'm saying...

Ratigan: We owe 70 trillion dollars...

Finney: I understand that but...

Ratigan: He goes to walk out a 4 trillion dollar solution that is basically just a way for the Democrats to avoid dealing with this until 2017!

Study 3: Project Implicit

The goals of the Project Implicit study were twofold: examine the relationship between the adapted CCS and the political and media variables of interest outlined in Chapter 2, as well as develop and test an Implicit Association Test of conflict orientation. Because argument and disagreement provoke an affective response (see Mutz and Reeves 2005, for example), I hypothesized that a measure of unconscious "approach" associations with conflict might provide greater insight into the effects of tone and incivility on individuals' political behavior.

Participants in this study were presented with a series of explicit measures—the Conflict Communication Scale, questions about political participation and about media engagement—and a Brief Implicit Association Test (BIAT) in a randomized order. The BIAT contains the same four-category design and stimulus-response mappings as a standard IAT, but with substantially fewer trials. Furthermore, the BIAT focuses on just two of the block's four categories, with the right-hand key used to indicate that a stimulus belongs in the two categories shown and the left-hand key signifying a stimulus that does not belong in either of the two categories shown on the screen (Sriram & Greenwald, 2009). The BIAT developed as part of this study compared participant response times in four categories: *approach*, *avoid*, *agree* and *debate*. Table 27 presents these categories and the stimuli shown for each category. Previous research suggests that a BIAT reacts in expected ways only when the positively-valenced attribute is the focal category on the screen (Sriram & Greenwald, 2009). Therefore, *approach* rather than *avoid*, was chosen as the attribute classification to be displayed on screen, while the concept classification (*agree* and *debate*) alternative across trials. Figure 22 shows both the instruction screen and an example of a participant's screen during the administration of the BIAT.

Table 27: BIAT Categories and Related Items

Approach	Avoid	Agree	Debate
Toward	Withdraw	Consensus	Argue
Closer	Evade	Compromise	Dispute
Forward	Retreat	Approve	Discuss
Approach	Avoid	Accommodate	Disagree

Figure 22: BIAT Block Instructions and Stimuli

In this 5-minute task, you will be presented with words to classify into categories using two computer keys, "E' and "I'. It requires you to go as quickly as you can while making as few mistakes as possible. Going too slow or making too many mistakes will result in an uninterpretable score.

Here are the possible target categories and the words that belong with each:

Category Items

Approach Toward, Closer, Approach, Forward

Agree Consensus, Compromise, Approve, Accommodate

Debate Argue, Dispute, Discuss, Disagree

Instructions

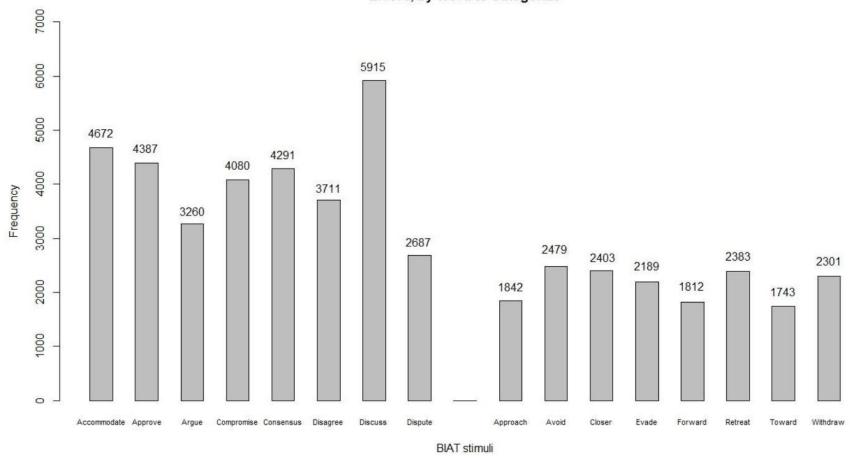
- In each round of the task, two of the categories will be designated as 'target' categories.
 When you see a word from a currently targeted category press the 'I' key as quickly as possible. The 'E' key is used for words that do not belong to currently targeted categories.
- in some rounds you will also see the words 'avoid', 'withdraw', 'evade', and 'retreat'. These will
 never be target words so you should always use the 'E' key for them.

Approach
or
Agree

Accommodate

Figure 23

Errors, by Word to Categorize



Unfortunately, there was essentially a zero correlation between the implicit measure of conflict-approaching responses and explicit measure through participants' CCS scores. This is particularly weak in light of other implicit-explicit relationships explored using the IAT; Nosek (2007) finds that across 56 domains, the median implicit-explicit correlation is 0.46. An investigation of the error rates—how frequently participants wrongly categorized words—for each stimulus indicates that the test was likely too hard for most participants, particularly when asked to categorize the agree/debate words (see Figure 23 for a breakdown by word). Because the BIAT did not accurately measure the appropriate concept, it was dropped from further analyses.

The explicit measures were as follows:

Conflict Communication Scale:

(Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree)

Approach/Avoidance Scale

- 1. I enjoy challenging the opinions of others.
- 2. I find conflicts exciting.
- 3. I hate arguments.
- 4. Arguments don't bother me.
- 5. I feel upset after an argument.

Public/Private Behavior

- 1. I avoid arguing in public.
- 2. I feel uncomfortable seeing others argue in public.
- 3. It wouldn't bother me to have an argument in a restaurant.

Media Consumption:

(Choices range from 0 to 7)

- 1. During a typical week, how many days do you watch, read, or listen to news on the Internet, not including sports?
- 2. During a typical week, how many days do you listen to news on the radio, not including sports?

- 3. During a typical week, how many days do you watch to news on network TV, not including sports?
- 4. During a typical week, how many days do you read news in a printed newspaper, not including sports?
- 5. During a typical week, how many days do you watch news on cable TV, not including sports?

Political Participation

During the past year did you... (select all that apply)

- Attend local political meetings (such as school board or city council)
- Go to a political speech, march, rally, or demonstration
- Try to persuade someone to vote
- Put up a political sign (such as a lawn sign or bumper sticker)
- Work for a candidate or campaign
- Wear a campaign button or sticker
- Phone, email, write to, or visit a government official to express your views on a public issue
- Comment on political blogs or online forums (not surveys)
- Donate money to a candidate, campaign, or political organization

Did you vote in the last political election?

- Yes
- No

Ten Item Personality Inventory⁴⁶

Here are a number of personality traits that may or may not apply to you. For each statement, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement. You should rate the extent to which the pair of traits applies to you, even if one characteristic applies more strongly than the other. (Disagree strongly, disagree moderately, disagree a little, neither agree nor disagree, agree a little, agree moderately, agree strongly)

I see myself as:

- 1. Extraverted, enthusiastic
- 2. Critical, quarrelsome
- 3. Dependable, self-disciplined
- 4. Anxious, easily upset
- 5. Open to new experiences, complex
- 6. Reserved, quiet

-

⁴⁶ TIPI scale scoring ("R" denotes reversed-scored items): Extraversion – 1, 6R; Agreeableness- 2R, 7; Conscientiousness- 3, 8R; Emotional Stability- 4R, 9; Openness to Experience- 5, 10R

- 7. Sympathetic, warm.
- 8. Disorganized, careless
- 9. Calm, emotionally stable
- 10. Conventional, uncreative

Demographics

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what? (Democrat/Republican/Independent/Other/No preference)

[If answered Democrat or Republican] Would you call yourself a strong Republican/Democrat or a not very strong Republican/Democrat?

[If answered Independent, Other, or No preference] Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic Party? (Democrat/Republican)

Some people don't pay much attention to politics. How about you? Would you say that you are:

- Not at all interested in politics
- Not very interested in politics
- Somewhat interested in politics
- Very interested in politics
- Extremely interested in politics

The following demographics are collected from all participants who visit the Project Implicit site:

Gender

- Male
- Female

Birth date (Month, Date, Year)

Education

- elementary school
- junior high
- some high school
- high school graduate
- some college
- associate's degree
- bachelor's degree
- some graduate school
- master's degree
- JD
- MD
- PhD

- other advanced degree
- MBA

Political ideology

- Strongly conservative
- Moderately conservative
- Slightly conservative
- Neutral/Moderate
- Slightly liberal
- Moderately liberal
- Strongly liberal

Religiosity

- Very religious
- Moderately religious
- Somewhat religious
- Not at all religious

Race

- American Indian/Alaska Native
- East Asian
- South Asian
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- White
- More than one race Black/White
- More than one race—Other
- Other or Unknown

Ethnicity

- Hispanic or Latino
- Not Hispanic or Latino
- Unknown

Study 4: MTurk

Conducted using Mechanical Turk participants, this study was designed to test experimentally how conflict orientation influenced individuals' decisions to engage in political conversation in the comments section of online news sites. Participants were asked to respond to the questions below, first completing three sub-sections of the Conflict Communication Scale (CCS, Goldstein, 1999), as well as Ulbig and Funk's (1999) conflict orientation question from the Citizen Participation Survey.⁴⁷ They then reported their political engagement, media consumption, and interest in reality television. After completing a series of distractor tasks in which they solved word scrambles and basic mathematical equations, participants were asked to read a brief article about a violent act committed by an individual with mental health issues. The article presented to participants is a segment of a real news story from *The New York Times* that connects the murder of a social worker with budget cuts to mental health services. After reading the article, participants were randomly assigned to view one of four comments purported to have been made by another participant in the study; the full text of these comments is available in Table 29.⁴⁸

Table 28: Experimental Treatment: News Article on Mental Health

A Schizophrenic, a Murder, Troubling Questions By DEBORAH SONTAG BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Last year Yvette grew very worried that her 27-year-old son Deshawn was losing his mind. He seemed completely paranoid and called Yvette late at night to tell her about loud voices in his head.

Deshawn was a schizophrenic with a violent criminal record. For a while when he was living in a state-funded group home in Charlestown, he seemed stable. But then Deshawn got in a fight with another resident. After that he bounced from one home to another home.

In the meantime Yvette also thought Deshawn had quit taking his medicine. She tried to tell the staff at the homes, but nobody listened – until finally Stephanie did. Stephanie was Deshawn's counselor at his new group home in Revere. She promised Yvette that she would help get Deshawn back on his medicine. Stephanie said: 'Don't worry. I'm going to get Deshawn back on track.' Yvette was so relieved. "I thought everything was going to be O.K. because he had somebody who cared," she said, her voice breaking.

Two days later, Stephanie was dead. Deshawn was accused of killing her.

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⁴⁷ Question text: "Some people try to avoid getting into political discussions because they think that people can get into arguments and it can get unpleasant. Other people enjoy discussing politics even though it sometimes leads to arguments. What is your feeling on this--do you usually try to avoid political discussions, do you enjoy them, or are you somewhere in between?"

⁴⁸ We could provide an extensive discussion of the conceptual differences between civility and politeness. However, as the theoretical distinction between politeness and civility is less central to our argument in this paper than the distinction between polite/impolite or civil/uncivil, we will use the two terms relatively interchangeably here.

To vary the level of politeness or incivility, we turned to research on politeness and communicative styles, as well as comments posted on similar articles on national news stories available online. The uncivil conditions violate understandings of both positive and negative politeness by presuming to understand the out-group's position, disagreeing with that position, and using jargon and slang that are insulting, hyperbolic or pejorative (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In order to inject some realism into the comments, the jargon (e.g. "libtard") and use of curse words mirrors vocabulary used by those who comment on news sites.

Table 29: Text of Experimental Treatments

Treatment	Text
Instructions	Please consider the comment below, which was made by a fellow participant in response to the article you just read. After reading the comment, please respond to the questions on the following pages.
Civil towards liberals	This makes me so sad. I wonder if it was a good idea to close the large mental institutions. We all want the mentally ill to be cared for but sometimes I think liberals worry more about the rights of the mentally ill than about the safety of our community. Like most Americans I am concerned about the fiscal cliff but I think we need to spend more money on making sure the mentally ill have a permanent place to stay where they can be looked after.
Civil towards conservatives	This makes me so sad. Many people have family members or friends who struggle with mental illness and would never want to see their rights restricted just to preserve a sense of public safety. We are at the edge of a fiscal cliff – we can't afford to be institutionalizing people who just need improved access to mental health care.
Uncivil towards liberals	This makes me so angry. Forget bringing back mental institutions, the government needs to stop this "libtard" nonsense of coddling criminals to protect their so-called rights. People with serious mental issues should be sterilized. The country is facing a fiscal cliff - it's time for liberals to face reality and stop letting the mentally ill breed more criminals that I have to pay taxes to support.
Uncivil towards conservatives	This makes me so angry. Conservatives are such fucking hypocrites. They talk about cutting wasteful government spending, but they can't wait to build more institutions for the mentally ill. What about the rights of people with mental illness? Fiscal cliff or no fiscal cliff, we need to spend more money to offer group home-based care for the mentally ill to preserve their rights as human beings

After reading the story and corresponding comment, participants were asked a series of questions about their reaction to the comment. The survey concluded with demographic information.

To get a better sense of our respondents' reactions to our experimental treatments, we included several open-ended questions in our survey. We had an undergraduate research assistant code the responses to the open-ended questions.

The full set of questions and the coding scheme are presented below:

Conflict Communication Scale (adapted from Goldstein 1999)

(Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree)

Approach/Avoidance Scale

- 1. I enjoy challenging the opinions of others.
- 2. I find conflicts exciting.
- 3. I hate arguments.
- 4. Arguments don't bother me.
- 5. I feel upset after an argument.

Public/Private Behavior

- 1. I avoid arguing in public.
- 2. I feel uncomfortable seeing others argue in public.
- 3. It wouldn't bother me to have an argument in a restaurant.
- 4. I don't want anyone besides those involved to know about an argument I've had.
- 5. I would be embarrassed if neighbors heard me argue with a family member.

Confrontation:

- 1. I feel more comfortable having an argument in person than over the phone
- 2. I prefer to express points of disagreement with others by speaking with them directly rather than by writing them notes.
- 3. When I have a conflict with someone I try to resolve it by being extra nice to him or her.
- 4. After a dispute with a neighbor, I would feel uncomfortable seeing him or her again, even if the conflict had been resolved.
- **5.** I prefer to solve disputes through face-to-face discussion.

Ulbig and Funk's Conflict Avoidance (Ulbig and Funk 1999)

1. Some people try to avoid getting into political discussions because they think that people can get into arguments and it can get unpleasant. Other people enjoy discussing politics even though it sometimes leads to arguments. What is your feeling on this--do you usually try to avoid political discussions, do you enjoy them, or are you somewhere in between?

(Avoid discussions, Enjoy discussions, In between)

Political Behavior and Participation: (From Project Implicit questionnaire, NES)

- 1. During the past year did you... (check all that apply)
 - Attend local political meetings (such as school board or city council)
 - Go to a political speech, march, rally, or demonstration
 - Try to persuade someone to vote
 - Put up a political sign (such as a lawn sign or bumper sticker)
 - Work for a candidate or campaign
 - Wear a campaign button or sticker
 - Phone, email, write to, or visit a government official to express your views on a public issue
 - Comment on political blogs or online forums (not surveys)
 - Donate money to a candidate, campaign, or political organization
- 2. Did you vote in the 2012 presidential election? (Yes/No)
- 3. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what? (Democrat/Republican/Independent/Other/No preference)
 - a. [If answered Democrat or Republican] Would you call yourself a strong Republican/Democrat or a not very strong Republican/Democrat?
 - b. [If answered Independent, Other, or No preference] Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic Party? (Democrat/Republican)
- 4. Some people don't pay much attention to politics. How about you? Would you say that you are:
 - Not at all interested in politics
 - Not very interested in politics
 - Somewhat interested in politics
 - Very interested in politics
 - Extremely interested in politics

Media Consumption:

- Which of the following is your main source of political news and information? (From NBC Poll, July 2012)
 - Newspaper
 - Network television
 - Cable television
 - Radio
 - Social Media like Facebook and Twitter
 - Talking with others
 - Don't really follow political news.
- 2. And, which is your next major source of political news and information?
- 3. List the top three sources you turn to regularly for political news.

- 4. Do you watch any reality television shows?
- 5. [If yes,] What is your favorite reality show?
- 6. [If yes,] Why do you enjoy watching [X show]?

Questions on manipulation/comment:

To what extent do the following words describe the comment? (3 point scale—strongly, somewhat, not at all)

- 1. Civil
- 2. Fair
- 3. Impolite
- 4. Unreasonable
- 5. Hostile
- 6. Knowledgeable

Do you like or dislike the comment?

- 1. Like
- 2. Dislike

How likely would you be to respond to this comment?

- 1. Not at all
- 2. Somewhat
- 3. Very

The following questions were coded using the "Coding Scheme for Open-Ended Questions," below

[If "not at all"] Why not?

[if "somewhat" or "very" likely to respond] What would you say in response to the comment?

Demographics

In general, do you think of yourself as...

- 1. Extremely liberal
- 2. Liberal
- 3. Slightly liberal
- 4. Moderate, middle of the road
- 5. Slightly Conservative
- 6. Conservative

Are you male or female?

- 1. Male
- 2. Female

Please enter your current age.

What is the highest level of school you have completed?

- 1. 9th grade
- 2. 10th grade
- 3. 11th grade
- 4. 12th grade
- 5. High school graduate—high school diploma or equivalent
- 6. Some college, no degree
- 7. Associate's degree
- 8. Bachelor's degree
- 9. Master's degree
- 10. Professional or doctoral degree

Which of the income groups listed below includes the total 2011 income before taxes of all members of your family living in your home?

- 1. Under \$15,000
- 2. \$15,000-\$30,000
- 3. \$30,000-\$45,000
- 4. \$45,000-\$60,000
- 5. \$60,000-\$75,000
- 6. \$75,000-\$90,000
- 7. Above \$90,000

This is about Hispanic ethnicity. Are you of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino descent?

- 1. No, I am not
- 2. Yes, Mexican, Mexican-American, Chicano
- 3. Yes, Puerto Rican
- 4. Yes, Cuban
- 5. Yes, Central American
- 6. Yes, South American
- 7. Yes, Caribbean
- 8. Yes, Other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino

Please check one or more categories below to indicate what race(s) you consider yourself to be.

- 1. White
- 2. Black or African American
- 3. American Indian or Alaskan Native
- 4. East Asian

- 5. South Asian
- 6. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- 7. Other

Coding Scheme for Open-Ended Questions

I. comment is critical of what group?

- 0. no answer
- 1. policymakers broadly/government
- 2. liberals/Democrats
- 3. conservatives/Republicans
- 4. mentally ill
- 5. families of mentally ill
- 6. unsure
- 7. other

II. why not?

- A. tone
 - 1. neutral
 - 2. negative
 - 3. positive
- B. Agreement
 - 0. doesn't say/NA
 - 1. agree
 - 2. disagree
- C. gendering
 - 1. male (references to "he" or "him")
 - 2. female (references to "she" or "her")
- D. content (choose TWO: primary and secondary)
 - 1. I don't have enough information to respond
 - 2. it's pointless to respond to this person (mentions incivility, hostility)

- 3. I don't respond to online comments or don't engage online
- 4. the issue is too complicated for productive discussion
- 5. I agree, so there's nothing to add
- 6. the government can't do anything anyway
- 7. I don't like to argue/the argument would upset me
- 8. I'm not sure of my own opinion on the issue
- 9. I respect this person's right to speak out
- 10. the person is stupid/ignorant/trolling
- 11. I'm not interested/don't care
- 12. I have a personal connection with mental illness
- 16. other

III. what would you say in response?

- A. tone
 - 1. neutral
 - 2. negative
 - 3. positive
- B. Agreement
 - 0. doesn't say/NA
 - 1. agree
 - 2. disagree
- C. gendering
 - 1. male (references to "he" or "him")
 - 2. female (references to "she" or "her")
- D. content (choose TWO: primary and secondary)
 - 1. some understanding of ideological/party conflict
 - 2. direct attack, no specific content ("you're an idiot," etc.)
 - 3. agrees with the comment
 - 4. mentions rights of the mentally ill (treatment, sterilization, etc.)

6. mentions spending on mental health care should increase
7. says better mental health care is needed (no mention of spending)
8. says we can't go back to institutionalizing the mentally ill
9. says we need to bring back institutions for the mentally ill
10. says we should find some way to house and contain the mentally ill
11. mentions personal connection to mental illness
15. other
E. Personalization: Does the participant respond directly or target the commenter personally (uses "you," "educate yourself," etc.)
0. No
1. Yes
F. Does the person blame Reagan or Republicans or conservatives for
deinstitutionalization?
0. No
1. Yes
G. Does the person blame Democrats or liberals for deinstitutionalization?
0. No
1. Yes
H. Does the person use a swear word?
0. No
1. Yes

5. mentions public safety (and/or rights of the community to be safe)

Study 5: Mechanical Turk

The final Mechanical Turk survey experiment was designed to examine the interactive effect of mediated incivility and individuals' conflict orientation on political learning and information retention. As with the previous studies, participants were asked to fill out the Conflict Communication Scale, as well as questions about their political participation and media use. In this survey, they were also asked to answer Delli Carpini and Keeter's 5-question assessment of political knowledge in advance of the experimental treatment.

After completing the initial survey questions, participants read what was described as a transcript of a radio program covering a piece of current legislation. The transcript used for the experimental treatment reflects points presented in news coverage of the Farm Bill between January and June 2013 in an attempt to maintain realism within the experiment. Specifically, it outlines a debate over cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) contained in the 2013 Farm Bill.

The three treatments varied in their usage of diction and tone that indicated politeness. In all three treatments and the control, the broadcast begins with a discussion between the show host and the news reporter of the connection between SNAP and the Farm Bill. In the treatments, they go on to introduce two political advocates—Joel Berg, Executive Director of the New York Coalition Against Hunger, and Chris Trimarchi, from the New York office of Americans for Prosperity. The activists discuss the number of people affected by cuts in SNAP benefits, the connections between illegal immigration and welfare receipt, and the effects of stalling Farm Bill passage on the price of milk. In Treatment 1, this is done using phrases indicative of negative politeness—hedging, impersonalization, and apology—while in Treatment 2 they speak using positive politeness—emphasizing common ground, optimism, the inclusive "we," and assuming shared knowledge. Finally, in the third treatment, these phrases become more uncivil or impolite, manifest as interruption, aspersions on each others' character, blame and name-calling.

After reading one of the four transcripts, participants were asked about their perceptions of the dialogue. Was it fair? Civil? Impolite? They were then asked several recall questions about facts presented by the advocates in the treatments that would suggest a memory-based processing of the information presented, as well as if they believe civility had decreased, increased, or stayed the same under President Obama. While not a direct measure of online processing of the information in the article, differences in this measure across treatments could suggest that the tone of the article has "taught" participants something about the tone of discourse under the current administration.

The experimental treatment in this study was a weak test of the presence of incivility in the media; there was not a strong, distinct difference in the perceived incivility of the treatments. Therefore, like with the BIAT in the PI study, investigation of the experimental manipulation and its effects was dropped from the analysis.

The full set of questions and the experimental treatment are presented below:

Conflict Communication Scale (adapted from Goldstein 1999)

(Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree)

Approach/Avoidance Scale

- 6. I enjoy challenging the opinions of others.
- 7. I find conflicts exciting.
- 8. I hate arguments.
- 9. Arguments don't bother me.
- 10. I feel upset after an argument.

Public/Private Behavior

- 6. I avoid arguing in public.
- 7. I feel uncomfortable seeing others argue in public.
- 8. It wouldn't bother me to have an argument in a restaurant.
- 9. I don't want anyone besides those involved to know about an argument I've had.
- 10. I would be embarrassed if neighbors heard me argue with a family member.

Confrontation:

- 6. I feel more comfortable having an argument in person than over the phone
- 7. I prefer to express points of disagreement with others by speaking with them directly rather than by writing them notes.
- 8. When I have a conflict with someone I try to resolve it by being extra nice to him or her.
- 9. After a dispute with a neighbor, I would feel uncomfortable seeing him or her again, even if the conflict had been resolved.
- **10.** I prefer to solve disputes through face-to-face discussion.

Ulbig and Funk's Conflict Avoidance (Ulbig and Funk 1999)

2. Some people try to avoid getting into political discussions because they think that people can get into arguments and it can get unpleasant. Other people enjoy discussing politics even though it sometimes leads to arguments. What is your feeling on this--do you usually try to avoid political discussions, do you enjoy them, or are you somewhere in between?

(Avoid discussions, Enjoy discussions, In between"

Political Behavior and Participation: (From Project Implicit questionnaire, NES)

- 5. During the past year did you... (check all that apply)
 - Attend local political meetings (such as school board or city council)
 - Go to a political speech, march, rally, or demonstration
 - Try to persuade someone to vote

- Put up a political sign (such as a lawn sign or bumper sticker)
- Work for a candidate or campaign
- Wear a campaign button or sticker
- Phone, email, write to, or visit a government official to express your views on a public issue
- Comment on political blogs or online forums (not surveys)
- Donate money to a candidate, campaign, or political organization
- 6. Did you vote in the 2012 presidential election? (Yes/No)
- 7. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what? (Democrat/Republican/Independent/Other/No preference)
 - a. [If answered Democrat or Republican] Would you call yourself a strong Republican/Democrat or a not very strong Republican/Democrat?
 - b. [If answered Independent, Other, or No preference] Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic Party? (Democrat/Republican)
- 8. Some people don't pay much attention to politics. How about you? Would you say that you are:
 - Not at all interested in politics
 - Not very interested in politics
 - Somewhat interested in politics
 - Very interested in politics
 - Extremely interested in politics

General Political Knowledge (From Delli Carpini and Keeter 1993)

Instructions: Here are a few questions about the government in Washington. Many people don't know the answer to these questions, so if there are some you don't know, simply move on to the next question.

- 1. Do you happen to know what job or political office is now held by Joe Biden?
- 2. Whose responsibility is it to determine if a law is constitutional or not? Is it the president, Congress, or the Supreme Court?
- 3. How much of a majority is required for the U.S. Senate and House to override a presidential veto?
- 4. Do you happen to know which party currently has the most members in the U.S. House of Representatives?
- 5. Would you say that one of the parties is more conservative than the other at the national level? Which party is more conservative?

Media Consumption:

- 7. Which of the following is your main source of political news and information? (From NBC Poll, July 2012)
 - Newspaper

- Network television
- Cable television
- Radio
- Social Media like Facebook and Twitter
- Talking with others
- Don't really follow political news.
- 8. And, which is your next major source of political news and information?
- 9. List the top three sources you turn to regularly for political news.

Treatment, Study 5:

House Committee Approves Farm Bill With Food Stamp Cuts

STEVE INSKEEP: Today's business news begins with the future of food stamps.

(SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC)

STEVE INSKEEP: Late last night, the House Agriculture Committee approved a version of the **farm bill** that would cut \$2.5 billion from the food stamp program - which is known by an acronym, S-N-A-P - SNAP.

DAVID GREENE: It is a huge program - about \$80 billion a year, serving nearly 47 million Americans. This would be the biggest cut to the program in 15 years.

STEVE INSKEEP: Now the cost of that program has more than doubled since 2008, due to the recession - we're told - as well as higher food prices and expanded eligibility for it - which became an issue Republicans used against President Obama in his re-election campaign.

DAVID GREENE: And that partisan divide was fully evident yesterday during a nine-hour debate on the bill. It turned philosophical - even biblical - about the role of government in the lives of the poor. Representatives from both parties at times quoted scripture.

From here, story changes based on treatment...control will not contain any of this information (nor the lead in to the story).

Joel Berg, Executive Director of the New York City Coalition against Hunger and Chris Trimarchi, from the New York office of Americans For Prosperity, are here with us today to discuss the implications of the House's decision. Joel, why are these cuts cause for concern?

Negative Politeness	Positive Politeness	Impolite/Uncivil
JOEL BERG: I'm afraid [question/hedge] the bill cuts the supplemental assistance nutrition program by \$20 billion over the next ten years, eliminating food assistance to nearly two million low-income Americans.	JOEL BERG: As you know, [presupposing knowledge], the bill cuts the supplemental assistance nutrition program by \$20 billion over the next ten years, eliminating food assistance to nearly two million low-income Americans.	JOEL BERG: It's really unbelievable how little Congress understands the problems facing America today. The bill cuts the supplemental nutrition program by \$20 billion over the next ten years, eliminating food assistance to nearly two million low-

JOEL BERG: . The bill cuts the supplemental nutrition program by \$20 billion over the next ten years, eliminating food assistance to nearly two million low-income Americans. And I'm sorry to say it [apology], but it's the conservatives' recession that's now forcing us to spend more money on these types of welfare programs.

CHRIS TRIMARCHI: It is understandable why this misconception exists, but [indirect, impersonalizing the speaker/addressee] conservatives are trying to save the government and Americans money by passing this bill! If Congress continues to defer on passing a farm bill, prices will revert to the subsidy structure that existed in 1949. If that happens, price levels will double. And that could mean that a gallon of milk, which today goes for about \$3.60 or \$3.65, which is the national average, could go to \$7 or \$8 a gallon if something isn't done.

DAVID GREENE: So Chris, you're saying that this is not about cutting SNAP benefits as much as it is about ensuring prices on our daily groceries remain affordable?

CHRIS TRIMARCHI: Definitely. And it's also about making sure that we're only providing benefits to those people who are legitimately eligible for these programs. One of the things that we need to start looking at is, do we have people that are here

JOEL BERG: We need to help Congress understand how much this would hurt American citizens [inclusive "we"]. The bill cuts the supplemental nutrition program by \$20 billion over the next ten years, eliminating food assistance to nearly two million low-income Americans. And we're willing to work with conservatives who are concerned about government spending in return for their cooperation on this bill. [reciprocity]

CHRIS TRIMARCHI: You understand, don't you, that [optimistic] conservatives are trying to save the government and Americans money by passing this bill! If Congress continues to defer on passing a farm bill, prices will revert to the subsidy structure that existed in 1949. If that happens, price levels will double. And that could mean that a gallon of milk, which today goes for about \$3.60 or \$3.65, which is the national average, could go to \$7 or \$8 a gallon if something isn't done.

DAVID GREENE: So Chris, you're saying that this is not about cutting SNAP benefits as much as it is about ensuring prices on our daily groceries remain affordable?

CHRIS TRIMARCHI: Definitely. And it's also about making sure that we're only providing benefits to those people who are legitimately eligible for these programs.

income Americans. And it is incredibly hypocritical that the same conservatives that lit the match that burned down our economy are now complaining that we have to spend more money...

CHRIS TRIMARCHI: [interruption]
Conservatives are trying to save the government and Americans money by passing this bill! If Congress continues to defer on passing a farm bill, prices will revert to the subsidy structure that existed in 1949. If that happens, price levels will double. And that could mean that a gallon of milk, which today goes for about \$3.60 or \$3.65, which is the national average, could go to \$7 or \$8 a gallon if something isn't done.

DAVID GREENE: So Chris, you're saying that this is not about cutting SNAP benefits as much as it is about ensuring prices on our daily groceries remain affordable?

CHRIS TRIMARCHI: Definitely. And it's also about making sure illegal immigrants, terrorists and other people who shouldn't be in this country aren't stealing our citizens' benefits [aspersions]. One of the things that we need to start looking at is, do we have people that are here illegally? Do we have people that are here on a terrorist watch list that that are receiving these benefits that they shouldn't receive?

illegally? Do we have people that are here on a terrorist watch list that that are receiving these benefits that they shouldn't receive?

JOEL BERG: I think we all agree that [declarative hedging] we need to work on immigration issues in this country. But this approach won't help 2 million Americansour children, elderly and the disabled.

DAVID GREENE: Sounds like heightened tensions will keep this debate going well after the fate of the bill has been decided. Thank you both for joining us.

JOEL BERG: Thank you David.

CHRIS TRIMARCHI: Thanks.

One of the things that we need to start looking at is, do we have people that are here illegally? Do we have people that are here on a terrorist watch list that that are receiving these benefits that they shouldn't receive?

JOEL BERG: Like you, I want to solve immigration issues in this country [common ground]. But this approach won't help 2 million Americans --our children, elderly and the disabled.

DAVID GREENE: Sounds like heightened tensions will keep this debate going well after the fate of the bill has been decided. Thank you both for joining us.

JOEL BERG: Thank you David.

CHRIS TRIMARCHI: Thanks.

JOEL BERG: **You're absurd** to think that by reducing SNAP benefits, you're solving immigration issues in this country. **Republicans are throwing** 2 million

Americans **under the bus**--our children, elderly and the disabled.

DAVID GREENE: Sounds like heightened tensions will keep this debate going well after the fate of the bill has been decided.

----FOR ALL TREATMENTS----

STEVE INSKEEP: Ultimately, the Agriculture Committee did pass this **farm bill** with the cuts to the food stamp program intact. There will definitely be more debate as the bill comes before the full House.

Questions on manipulation/comment:

To what extent do the following words describe the dialogue in the transcript?

- 7. Civil
- 8. Fair
- 9. Impolite
- 10. Unreasonable
- 11. Hostile
- 12. Knowledgeable

(3 point scale—strongly, somewhat, not at all)

Do you think Joel Berg, one of the sources in the article, is a liberal or a conservative?

Knowledge/Recall questions

1. What welfare program does the article mention is affected by the passage of a new Farm Bill?

(Answer: Food Stamps)

- 2. What is the effect of delaying passage of the Farm Bill on the price of a gallon of milk?
 - a. It will double
 - b. It will stay the same
 - c. It will cut in half
 - d. It will triple
- 3. Approximately how many people are enrolled in SNAP (food stamps) every year?
 - a. 47 million
 - b. 300 thousand
 - c. 1 million
 - d. 75 million
- 4. Which political party is blocking the passage of the 2013 Farm Bill?
- 5. What group do conservatives think should be more carefully scrutinized for eligibility to reduce the costs of the Food Stamp program?
- 6. How many low-income Americans will be affected by the cuts to SNAP that are currently being debated?
 - a. 10 million
 - b. 2 million
 - c. 3 thousand
 - d. 6 hundred

Do you think there has been a decline or improvement in civility of American politics since Barack Obama became president, or do you think things have stayed about the same?

- 1. There has been a decline in civility in American politics
- 2. There has been an increase in civility in American politics
- 3. Civility is about the same

(If yes,) Of the following, please tell me if you think each item has pushed politics to become less civil in the past few years. (Choose all that apply)

- 1. Radio talk shows
- 2. Television news programs
- Blogs
- 4. Late night talk show programs, like Stewart and Leno
- 5. Glenn Beck
- 6. Rachel Maddow
- 7. Political parties
- 8. Competitiveness of elections
- 9. Sense of entitlement among average citizens
- 10. Changes in American culture
- 11. The way young people act in politics
- 12. Colleges and universities

Demographics (From National Election Studies)

In general, do you think of yourself as...

- 7. Extremely liberal
- 8. Liberal
- 9. Slightly liberal
- 10. Moderate, middle of the road
- 11. Slightly Conservative
- 12. Conservative

Are you male or female?

- 3. Male
- 4. Female

Please enter your current age.

What is the highest level of school you have completed?

- 11. 9th grade
- 12. 10th grade
- 13. 11th grade
- 14. 12th grade
- 15. High school graduate—high school diploma or equivalent
- 16. Some college, no degree

- 17. Associate's degree
- 18. Bachelor's degree
- 19. Master's degree
- 20. Professional or doctoral degree

Which of the income groups listed below includes the total 2011 income before taxes of all members of your family living in your home?

- 8. Under \$15,000
- 9. \$15,000-\$30,000
- 10. \$30,000-\$45,000
- 11. \$45,000-\$60,000
- 12. \$60,000-\$75,000
- 13. \$75,000-\$90,000
- 14. Above \$90,000

This is about Hispanic ethnicity. Are you of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino descent?

- 9. No, I am not
- 10. Yes, Mexican, Mexican-American, Chicano
- 11. Yes, Puerto Rican
- 12. Yes, Cuban
- 13. Yes, Central American
- 14. Yes, South American
- 15. Yes, Caribbean
- 16. Yes, Other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino

Please check one or more categories below to indicate what race(s) you consider yourself to be.

- 8. White
- 9. Black or African American
- 10. American Indian or Alaskan Native
- 11. East Asian
- 12. South Asian
- 13. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- 14. Other

Appendix C Full Regression Tables for Chapter 6: Responding to Incivility

Table 30: Bivariate Regression of Conflict Orientation on Media Consumption (Project Implicit)

	Average Weekly Use	Newspaper	Network TV	Cable TV	Radio	Internet
Conflict	0.03**	0.03*	0.01	0.01	0.04**	0.05**
Orientation	(0.009)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.012)
Constant	3.18**	2.04**	3.26**	2.59**	3.02**	4.99**
	(0.069)	(0.093)	(0.106)	(0.096)	(0.102)	(0.094)
R^2	0.010	0.004	0.001	0.001	0.008	0.018
N	1094	1094	1093	1093	1094	1094

Source: Project Implicit. Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.01, *p<0.05.

Table 31: Bivariate Regression of Conflict Orientation on Media Consumption (Mechanical Turk Studies 4 & 5)

	Newspaper	Network TV	Cable TV	Radio	Internet	Social Media
Conflict	0.007	-0.04**	0.01	0.01	0.01	-0.02
Orientation	(0.009)	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.017)	(0.008)	(0.020)
Constant	-1.24**	-2.15**	-1.59**	-2.79**	-0.69**	-3.13**
	(0.091)	(0.130)	(0.100)	(0.160)	(0.080)	(0.194)
χ^2	0.49	0.004	0.33	0.53	0.23	0.42
N	886	886	886	886	886	886

Source: Mechanical Turk. Cell entries are logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.01, *p<0.05.

Table 32: Differences in Proportion Preferring Particular Media Sources, by Conflict Orientation

	Newspaper	Network TV	Cable TV	Radio	Internet	Social Media
Highly	0.203	0.16	0.19	0.051	0.30	0.04
Avoidant	(0.037)	(0.034)	(0.036)	(0.020)	(0.042)	(0.019)
Highly	0.205	0.05	0.21	0.046	0.35	0
Approaching	(0.033)	(0.017)	(0.033)	(0.017)	(0.039)	(0)
Difference						
(Avoid-	-0.002	0.11*	-0.019	0.005	-0.05	0.04*
Approach)						

Cell entries for the first two rows are the proportion of participants who report a preference for the news platform in each column. Standard errors are in parentheses. The last row presents the difference between row one and row two, with positive numbers indicating a greater preference on the part of the most conflict-avoidant. *indicates statistical significance at p<0.05 in a two-tailed proportion test. Participants were classified as highly conflict-avoidant or highly conflict-approaching if their score on the CCS was outside one standard deviation from the sample mean.

Table 33: Regression of Frequency of Media Exposure on the Interaction between Conflict Orientation and Political Interest

	Average					
	Weekly	Newspaper	Network TV	Cable TV	Radio	Internet
	Use					
Conflict	-0.02	0.03	-0.01	-0.012	-0.052	-0.041
Orientation	(0.029)	(0.044)	(0.049)	(0.26)	(1.10)	(1.00)
Interest						
Not very	0.42	-0.17	0.17	0.214	0.451	1.452
	(0.333)	(0.500)	(0.559)	(0.42)	(0.84)	(3.12)**
Somewhat	1.28*	0.55	1.18*	0.757	1.691	2.230
Verv	(0.282)	(0.421)	(0.473)	(1.78)	(3.72)**	(5.67)**
Very	2.18*	1.26*	2.03*	1.664	2.454	3.505
	(0.281)	(0.42)	(0.471)	(3.92)**	(5.41)**	(8.94)**
Extremely	2.89	1.93*	2.62*	2.678	3.085	4.124
•	(0.278)	(0.42)	(0.466)	(6.37)**	(6.87)**	(10.63)**
CCS-Interest						
Interaction						
Not very	0.003	-0.04	0.003	0.015	0.007	0.035
	(0.037)	(0.056)	(0.063)	(0.26)	(0.11)	(0.68)
Somewhat	0.03	-0.04	0.02	-0.009	0.102	0.088
	(0.033)	(0.049)	(0.055)	(0.19)	(1.93)	(1.92)
Very	0.0008	-0.02	-0.04	-0.016	0.028	0.052
	(0.033)	(0.050)	(0.056)	(0.32)	(0.52)	(1.11)
Extremely	-0.001	-0.06	-0.03	-0.024	0.072	0.035
•	(0.033)	(0.049)	(0.055)	(0.49)	(1.35)	(0.76)
Constant	1.34*	1.00*	1.60*	1.123	0.918	2.072
	(0.256)	(0.384)	(0.431)	(2.89)**	(2.21)*	(5.78)**
R^2	0.27	0.09	0.12	0.14	0.12	0.24
N	1087	1087	1086	1,086	1,087	1,087

Source: Project Implicit. Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.01, *p<0.05.

Table 34: Bivariate Regression of Political Participation on Conflict Orientation (Project Implicit)

	Attend meetings	Donate money	Attend a protest	Persuade others	Post a sign	Work for candidate	Wear a button	Call your representative	Comment on blogs
Conflict	0.037	0.015	0.065	0.056	0.026	0.042	0.028	0.043	0.067
Orientation									
	(3.21)**	(1.31)	(5.63)**	(5.61)**	(2.14)*	(2.44)*	(2.36)*	(4.28)**	(6.32)**
Constant	-1.100 (12.64)**	-1.220 (13.47)**	-0.988 (11.69)**	0.082 (1.05)	-1.361 (14.55)**	-2.287 (17.96)**	-1.270 (13.94)**	-0.359 (4.61)**	-0.527 (6.65)**
N	1,095	1,095	1,095	1,095	1,095	1,095	1,095	1,095	1,095

Source: Project Implicit. Cell entries are logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.01, *p<0.05.

	Vote
Conflict	0.001
Orientation	
	(0.10)
Constant	0.888
	(10.52)**
N	1,094

Table 35: Bivariate Regression of Political Participation on Conflict Orientation (Mechanical Turk)

	Vote	Attend meetings	Attend a protest	Persuade others	Post a sign	Work for candidate	Wear a button	Call representa tive	Comment on blogs	Donate money
Conflict	-0.006	0.044	0.047	0.028	0.020	0.043	0.035	0.022	0.031	0.031
Orienation	(0.53)	(3.51)**	(3.73)**	(3.49)**	(1.78)	(2.52)*	(3.17)**	(2.33)*	(3.57)**	(2.70)**
Constant	1.933	-2.128	-2.098	-0.342	-1.784	-2.870	-1.728	-1.318	-0.792	-1.892
	(17.04) **	(17.98)**	(17.93)**	(4.43)**	(16.84)**	(17.86)**	(16.78)**	(14.42)**	(9.75)**	(17.34)**
N	883	886	886	886	886	886	886	886	886	886

Source: Mechanical Turk (Studies 4 & 5). Cell entries are logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table 36: Effects of Conflict Orientation on Participation Controlling for Demographics (PI)

	Attend Meetings	Attend protest	Donate money	Persuade others	Post a sign	Work for candidate	Wear a button	Call representa tive	Comment on blogs	Vote
Conflict orientation	0.010	0.034	-0.004	0.024	0.011	0.016	0.007	0.031	0.038	-0.018
	(0.68)	(2.14)*	(0.26)	(1.67)	(0.67)	(0.69)	(0.44)	(2.26)*	(2.63)**	(0.96)
Extraversion	0.034	0.044	0.008	0.019	0.049	0.104	0.059	-0.023	0.021	0.024
	(1.27)	(1.60)	(0.27)	(0.77)	(1.74)	(2.48)*	(2.10)*	(0.97)	(0.81)	(0.77)
Agreeableness	-0.042 (1.04)	-0.031 (0.75)	-0.009 (0.21)	0.006 (0.16)	-0.006 (0.14)	-0.058 (0.95)	0.031 (0.72)	-0.008 (0.21)	-0.013 (0.34)	0.008 (0.16)
Conscientious -ness	-0.045	-0.058	0.036	0.010	-0.041	-0.029	-0.065	-0.039	-0.102	0.071
	(1.46)	(1.80)	(1.09)	(0.35)	(1.23)	(0.62)	(2.00)*	(1.37)	(3.45)**	(1.87)
Emotional	0.037	0.046	0.039	0.041	0.057	0.057	0.025	0.000	-0.025	0.043 (1.16)
Stability	(1.14)	(1.38)	(1.13)	(1.38)	(1.66)	(1.15)	(0.76)	(0.01)	(0.82)	
Openness	0.107 (2.54)*	0.095 (2.20)*	0.096 (2.19)*	0.028 (0.77)	-0.016 (0.36)	0.030 (0.46)	0.033 (0.77)	0.054 (1.52)	0.011 (0.30)	0.027 (0.60)
Political interest	0.591	0.847	0.601	0.939	0.652	0.559	0.591	0.745	0.889	0.668
	(6.31)**	(8.22)**	(5.88)**	(10.68)**	(6.32)**	(3.65)**	(5.99)**	(8.84)**	(9.62)**	(6.73)**
Party strength	-0.306	0.145	0.115	0.291	0.458	0.006	0.225	-0.219	0.097	0.357
	(1.39)	(0.65)	(0.53)	(1.55)	(2.03)*	(0.02)	(1.02)	(1.15)	(0.48)	(1.42)
Democrat	-0.035	0.393	0.859	0.338	0.198	0.166	0.450	0.416	-0.034	0.528
	(0.17)	(1.79)	(3.89)**	(1.89)	(0.87)	(0.50)	(2.06)*	(2.30)*	(0.17)	(2.41)*
Age	0.012	-0.014	0.032	0.000	0.009	0.027	-0.001	0.018	0.005	0.143
	(1.92)	(2.07)*	(5.05)**	(0.03)	(1.41)	(3.00)**	(0.12)	(3.24)**	(0.91)	(11.00)**
Hispanic	-0.726	0.146	0.411	0.188	-0.323	-1.132	0.274	-0.369	0.202	-0.372
	(1.92)	(0.46)	(1.29)	(0.69)	(0.90)	(1.52)	(0.89)	(1.31)	(0.70)	(1.15)
Black	0.365	0.201	-0.052	0.206	-0.590	0.196	-0.107	-0.481	-0.151	0.301
	(1.35)	(0.71)	(0.18)	(0.77)	(1.77)	(0.49)	(0.36)	(1.80)	(0.54)	(0.78)
Female	0.351 (1.89)	0.337 (1.77)	-0.057 (0.30)	0.146 (0.86)	0.325 (1.66)	0.205 (0.74)	0.709 (3.55)**	0.649 (3.82)**	0.051 (0.30)	-0.056 (0.25)
Constant	-4.152	-4.546	-5.751	-3.975	-4.599	-5.945	-4.448	-4.223	-3.921	-6.264
	(9.87)**	(9.88)**	(11.77)**	(10.57)**	(10.00)**	(8.51)**	(9.98)**	(11.14)**	(9.90)**	(11.57)**
N	998	998	998	998	998	998	998	998	998	997

^{*} *p*<0.05; ** *p*<0.01

Table 37: Effects of Conflict Orientation on Participation Controlling for Demographics (MTurk)

	Vote	Attend meetings	Attend protest	Persuade others	Post a sign	Work for candidate	Wear a button	Call representati ve	Comment on blogs	Donate money
Conflict	-0.025	0.035	0.045	0.034	0.020	0.004	0.026	0.027	0.014	0.010
Orientation	(1.35)	(1.95)	(2.72)**	(2.77)**	(1.42)	(0.17)	(1.83)	(2.03)*	(1.14)	(0.65)
Democrat	0.486	0.501	0.117	-0.605	0.858	1.275	0.186	0.514	-1.183	1.119
	(0.64)	(0.64)	(0.15)	(1.17)	(1.29)	(1.28)	(0.29)	(0.80)	(2.15)*	(1.47)
Party	-0.186	-0.074	0.525	0.646	0.803	-0.397	1.432	-0.270	0.578	0.039
strength	(0.31)	(0.12)	(0.78)	(1.52)	(1.50)	(0.48)	(2.62)**	(0.51)	(1.28)	(0.06)
Ideology	-0.100	0.207	-0.079	-0.138	0.229	0.274	0.065	0.003	-0.333	0.144
	(0.74)	(1.50)	(0.57)	(1.54)	(1.86)	(1.63)	(0.53)	(0.03)	(3.46)**	(1.09)
Political	1.140	0.571	0.579	0.752	0.263	0.677	0.381	0.656	0.728	0.709
interest	(5.32)**	(2.94)**	(3.16)**	(6.09)**	(1.75)	(2.90)**	(2.50)*	(4.63)**	(5.72)**	(4.20)**
Education	0.131	0.373	0.398	0.128	-0.001	0.675	0.118	0.127	-0.098	0.332
	(0.77)	(1.92)	(2.18)*	(1.09)	(0.01)	(2.63)**	(0.78)	(0.93)	(0.82)	(1.99)*
Black	-1.138	0.028	0.386	-0.321	-0.164	-0.290	-0.437	-0.760	0.142	-0.066
	(2.03)*	(0.04)	(0.71)	(0.80)	(0.32)	(0.37)	(0.80)	(1.43)	(0.35)	(0.13)
Income	0.196	-0.141	-0.109	0.023	0.069	-0.156	0.106	-0.037	-0.023	-0.000
	(2.01)*	(1.49)	(1.25)	(0.40)	(0.93)	(1.34)	(1.42)	(0.56)	(0.39)	(0.01)
Female	0.976	-0.091	-0.191	1.110	0.839	0.212	0.672	0.590	0.065	0.471
	(2.65)**	(0.27)	(0.60)	(5.17)**	(3.12)**	(0.52)	(2.47)*	(2.43)*	(0.30)	(1.65)
Age	-0.003	-0.018	-0.022	-0.017	-0.004	-0.042	-0.065	0.023	-0.003	-0.010
_	(0.20)	(1.24)	(1.59)	(1.98)*	(0.37)	(2.17)*	(4.67)**	(2.48)*	(0.33)	(0.83)
Constant	-0.563	-3.395	-3.697	-1.931	-3.242	-4.677	-1.981	-3.755	-1.528	-4.579
	(0.81)	(4.19)**	(4.74)**	(4.05)**	(5.05)**	(4.30)**	(3.02)**	(6.39)**	(3.15)**	(6.17)**
Ν	532	533	533	533	533	533	533	533	533	533

^{*} *p*<0.05; ** *p*<0.01

Table 38: Participatory Effects of the Interaction between Conflict Orientation and Race (PI)

	Comment on blogs	Attend a protest	Persuade others	Call representative
Conflict Orientation	0.041	0.021	0.023	0.028
	(2.70)**	(1.28)	(1.60)	(1.96)
Extraversion	0.021	0.043	0.019	-0.024
	(0.82)	(1.53)	(0.77)	(0.99)
Agreeableness	-0.014	-0.027	0.006	-0.006
_	(0.37)	(0.64)	(0.17)	(0.17)
Conscientiousness	-0.102	-0.060	0.010	-0.038
	(3.45)**	(1.86)	(0.35)	(1.36)
Emotional Stability	-0.025	0.049	0.041	0.000
•	(0.82)	(1.46)	(1.38)	(0.02)
Openness	0.011	0.103	0.028	0.055
_	(0.29)	(2.35)*	(0.77)	(1.55)
Political interest	0.890	0.858	0.939	0.746
	(9.62)**	(8.27)**	(10.68)**	(8.85)**
Party strength	0.092	0.171	0.291	-0.215
	(0.45)	(0.76)	(1.55)	(1.13)
Democrat	-0.030	0.380	0.338	0.412
	(0.15)	(1.72)	(1.89)	(2.28)*
Age	0.005	-0.015	0.000	0.018
	(0.93)	(2.22)*	(0.02)	(3.20)**
Hispanic	0.201	0.160	0.189	-0.365
	(0.69)	(0.51)	(0.69)	(1.29)
Black	-0.291	0.859	0.235	-0.260
	(0.82)	(2.28)*	(0.64)	(0.78)
Female	0.052	0.320	0.145	0.647
	(0.30)	(1.67)	(0.86)	(3.80)**
Conflict orientation x Black	-0.032	0.165	0.005	0.050
	(0.65)	(2.83)**	(0.11)	(1.08)
Constant	-3.917	-4.629	-3.977	-4.242
	(9.88)**	(9.99)**	(10.57)**	(11.16)**
N	998	998	998	998

^{*} *p*<0.05; ** *p*<0.01

Table 39: Participatory Effects of the Interaction between Conflict Orientation and Race (MTurk)

	Vote	Attend meetings	Attend protest	Persuade others	Post a sign	Work for candidate	Wear a button	Call representat ive	Comment on blogs	Donate money
Conflict	-0.025	0.033	0.045	0.029	0.019	-0.000	0.025	0.025	0.014	0.007
Orientation	(1.29)	(1.85)	(2.70)**	(2.35)*	(1.28)	(0.01)	(1.73)	(1.88)	(1.16)	(0.45)
Democrat	0.480	0.512	0.113	-0.563	0.870	1.302	0.195	0.525	-1.187	1.145
	(0.63)	(0.65)	(0.14)	(1.08)	(1.31)	(1.32)	(0.30)	(0.82)	(2.15)*	(1.50)
Strong	-0.180	-0.082	0.527	0.600	0.790	-0.406	1.425	-0.282	0.583	0.020
Partisan	(0.29)	(0.13)	(0.78)	(1.41)	(1.47)	(0.49)	(2.61)**	(0.53)	(1.29)	(0.03)
Ideology	-0.102	0.211	-0.080	-0.125	0.233	0.285	0.068	0.007	-0.335	0.152
	(0.76)	(1.52)	(0.58)	(1.37)	(1.89)	(1.70)	(0.55)	(0.07)	(3.47)**	(1.15)
Political	1.138	0.572	0.579	0.767	0.264	0.672	0.377	0.661	0.727	0.711
Interest	(5.30)**	(2.94)**	(3.16)**	(6.14)**	(1.76)	(2.87)**	(2.48)*	(4.65)**	(5.71)**	(4.19)**
Education	0.130	0.370	0.399	0.125	-0.001	0.666	0.117	0.124	-0.098	0.327
	(0.76)	(1.90)	(2.19)*	(1.07)	(0.01)	(2.61)**	(0.77)	(0.91)	(0.82)	(1.96)*
Black	-1.249	0.298	0.316	0.905	0.216	0.496	-0.106	-0.317	0.042	0.481
	(1.43)	(0.34)	(0.42)	(1.23)	(0.29)	(0.51)	(0.13)	(0.43)	(0.07)	(0.65)
Black x	-0.015	0.044	-0.011	0.156	0.051	0.146	0.050	0.065	-0.013	0.078
C.O	(0.16)	(0.42)	(0.14)	(1.91)	(0.65)	(1.01)	(0.53)	(0.76)	(0.22)	(0.94)
Income	0.197	-0.144	-0.108	0.020	0.067	-0.168	0.104	-0.040	-0.022	-0.004
	(2.01)*	(1.52)	(1.24)	(0.35)	(0.91)	(1.43)	(1.41)	(0.60)	(0.38)	(0.05)
Female	0.970	-0.089	-0.192	1.132	0.840	0.204	0.673	0.591	0.063	0.472
	(2.63)**	(0.26)	(0.60)	(5.26)**	(3.12)**	(0.50)	(2.48)*	(2.44)*	(0.29)	(1.65)
Age	-0.003	-0.018	-0.022	-0.017	-0.004	-0.041	-0.065	0.023	-0.003	-0.009
-	(0.18)	(1.22)	(1.59)	(1.98)*	(0.35)	(2.10)*	(4.65)**	(2.51)*	(0.34)	(0.77)
Constant	-0.565	-3.383	-3.699	-1.939	-3.247	-4.651	-1.976	-3.753	-1.528	-4.579
	(0.82)	(4.18)**	(4.74)**	(4.04)**	(5.06)**	(4.26)**	(3.01)**	(6.39)**	(3.15)**	(6.16)**
N	532	533	533	533	533	533	533	533	533	533

^{*} *p*<0.05; ** *p*<0.01

Analyzing the Behavior-Conflict Orientation Relationship Using a 10-item CCS Measure

As suggested in Chapter 3, the Confrontation subscale of the Conflict Communication Scale does not adhere to the same standards of inter-item correlation seen in the other scales. The tables and figures in this section replicate those done above but with a 10-item version of the CCS that does not include the confrontation measures.

Table 40: Bivariate Regression of Conflict Orientation on Media Consumption (Mechanical Turk, 10-item CCS)

	Newspaper	Network TV	Cable TV	Radio	Internet	Social Media
Conflict	0.007	-0.05**	0.004	0.03	0.02	-0.01
Orientation	(0.012)	(0.016)	(0.013)	(0.020)	(0.010)	(0.024)
Constant	-1.24**	-2.32**	-1.61**	-2.70**	-0.63**	-3.13**
	(0.106)	(0.161)	(0.119)	(0.177)	(0.093)	(0.224)
χ^2	0.57	0.001	0.75	0.20	0.11	0.63
N	889	889	889	889	889	889

Source: Mechanical Turk. Cell entries are logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.01, *p<0.05.

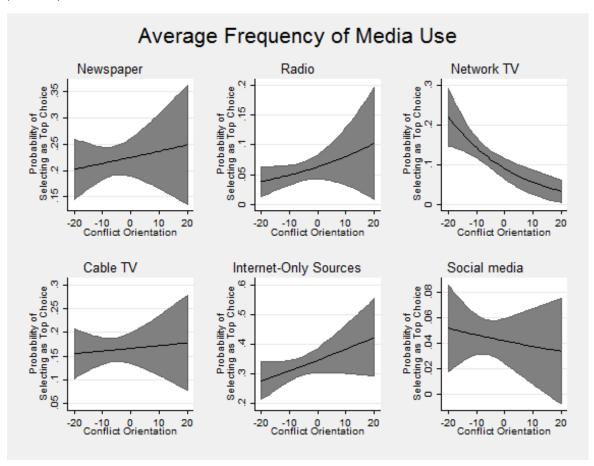


Table 41: Differences in Proportion Preferring Particular Media Sources, by Conflict Orientation (Mechanical Turk, CCS-10)

	Newspaper	Network TV	Cable TV	Radio	Internet	Social Media
Highly	0.20	0.19*	0.21	0.05	0.26	0.03
Avoidant	(0.038)	(0.037)	(0.038)	(0.021)	(0.041)	(0.015)
Highly	0.22	0.06	0.18	0.07	0.31	0.006
Approaching	(0.031)	(0.018)	(0.029)	(0.019)	(0.034)	(0.006)
Difference						
(Avoid-	-0.019	0.12*	0.03	-0.02	-0.05	-0.02
Approach)						

Cell entries for the first two rows are the proportion of participants who report a preference for the news platform in each column. Standard errors are in parentheses. The last row presents the difference between row one and row two, with positive numbers indicating a greater preference on the part of the most conflict-avoidant. *indicates statistical significance at p<0.05 in a two-tailed proportion test. Participants were classified as highly conflict-avoidant or highly conflict-approaching if their score on the CCS was outside one standard deviation from the sample mean.

Appendix D

Codebook for Content Analysis of Cable and Network News Segments

Instructions:

Read each transcript and following the coding scheme for the segments that are related to either immigration or healthcare. Only code those segments that make explicit reference to one of the established topics. In some cases, one transcript will be a single segment, in others, one transcript will contain many different segments. Use context such as an anchor's decision to cut from one reporter to another or the playback of video clips (marked by [Begin Video Clip]) in order to determine when a segment begins and ends. Each row in the spreadsheet should represent a different segment.

- 1. Coder ID
 - 1. Edward
 - 5. Emily
- 2. Record ID. Consecutive unique numbering of all coded stories.
- 3. Story Identification. Record the number assigned to the story by the Lexis-Nexis search.
- 4. Story Date (MM/DD/YY)
- 5. Topic . Does the article cover the debate on healthcare or immigration?
 - 1. healthcare
 - 2. immigration
- 6. Media Outlet
 - 1. Fox 4. ABC
 - 2. MSNBC 5. NBC
 - 3. CNN
- 7. Media Program (N=News, O=Opinion)

Fox

- 1. On The Record with Greta Van Susteren (O)
- 2. Glen Beck (O)
- 3. The O'Reilly Factor (O)
- 4. Special Report with Bret Baier (N)
- 5. Hannity (O)
- 6. Fox News Sunday (N)
- 7. Journal Editorial Report (N)
- 8. Fox News Sunday (N)
- 9. Fox News Live (N)
- 10. Your World with Neil Cavuto (O)
- 11. Fox News Special (N)

MSNBC

- 12. The Rachel Maddow Show (O)
- 13. Hardball with Chris Matthews (O)
- 14. The Ed Show (O)
- 15. The Last Word with Lawrence O'Donnell (O)
- 16. Countdown with Keith Olbermann (N)
- 17. MSNBC Live (N)
- 18. MSNBC News Special (N)

CNN

- 22. The Situation Room (N)
- 23. Campbell Brown (O)

ABC

- 24. 20/20 (N)
- 25. This Week (N)
- 26. World News This Morning (N)
- 27. Good Morning America (N)
- 28. World News Now (N)
- 29. World News with Diane Sawyer (N)

NBC

- 30. NBC Nightly News (N)
- 31. Meet the Press (N)
- 32. Today Show (N)
- 33. The Chris Matthews Show (N)
- 34. Rick's List (N)
- 35. American Morning (N)
- 36. State of the Union with Candy Crowley (N)
- 37. John King, USA (N)
- 38. Anderson Cooper (N)
- 39. Showbiz Tonight (N)
- 40. Nightline (N)

19. Larry King Live (O)	41. Joy Behar (O) 42. Reliable Sources (N)				
20. CNN Live (N)					
21. CNN Newsroom (N)	43. Your Money(N)				
Sources					
8. How many total sources?					
Source 1:					
9. Occupation					
1. journalist	5. president				
2. program host/anchor	6. other elected official				
3. member of Congress	7. advocate, lobbyist, or other political elite				
4. bureaucrat/unelected member of	8. other				
government					
40.11					
10. Name-calling or aspersions. Does the source call of					
"traitor?" Does the source use derogatory adjectives	or aspersions like "reckless" or "irrational?"				
0. No 1. Yes					
1. Yes					
11. Uncivil communication. Does the source suggest t	hat opponents' policies are going to destroy or				
fundamentally alter American values or institutions in					
0. No	,				
1. Yes					
12. Civil Engagement. Does the source suggest that op	pponents' policies will positively change American				
institutions or support American values?					
0. No					
1. Yes					
13. Common Ground. Does the source indicate intere	st in sympathy for or approval of his or her				
opponent's views?	st iii, sympatily for or approval of his of her				
0. No					
1. Yes					
1. 163					
14. Complimentary Language. Does the source praise	or compliment his or her opponent or members of				
the opposing party (calls opponent trustworthy, intell	ligent, reasonable)?				
0. No					
1. Yes					
Target Groups. Does the source mention any of thes	a specific groups? Code 1 for yes, 0 for no				
15. African Americans	e specific groups: code I for yes, o for fio.				
16. Hispanics or Latinos					
17. Immigrants					
±7. mmiligranio					

18. Youth

19. Disadvantaged/poor

Is this group portrayed in a positive or negative manner? Code -1 for negative, 0 for neutral, 1 for positive)

- 20 African Americans
- 21. Hispanics or Latinos
- 22. Immigrants
- 23. Youth
- 24. Disadvantaged/poor

Repeat for all sources in the transcript.

- 25. Article Category. Does the article primarily discuss the political game or strategy surrounding the issues, the policy substance behind the issue, both, or neither?
 - 1. Political game
 - 2. Policy substance
 - 3. Both
 - 4. Other
- 26. Notes. Include any excerpts from the transcript that you think are relevant or interesting.