Personal and Public Levels of Political Incivility

ASHLEY MUDDIMAN[1]
University of Kansas, USA

As interest in political incivility has grown, scholarly conceptualizations of incivility have diverged, often centering on politeness theory or deliberative theory, but rarely on both. The current project addresses this problem by empirically investigating a two-dimensional incivility model. Two experiments test individuals' perceptions of uncivil interactions among political figures, finding that (a) personal-level incivility (impoliteness) and public-level incivility (lack of deliberativeness and reciprocity) are distinct concepts, (b) personal-level incivility is perceived as more uncivil than public-level incivility, and (c) political figures from a person's own political party are perceived as more civil than others. Future researchers can use this two-dimensional model to bring coherence to the incivility literature and more thoroughly investigate the effects of public-level incivility.

Keywords: incivility, partisanship, politics, experiments

Calls for political civility are regular occurrences. President Barack Obama asked for civility after United States Representative Gabrielle Giffords was shot in 2009 (Obama, 2011) and during the tumultuous 2016 primary campaign (Obama, 2016). Citizens plead for civility in letters to the editor (Johnson, 2016). Academics also are intrigued, examining the prevalence of incivility in news and comment sections (Coe, Kenski, & Rains, 2014; Sobieraj & Berry, 2011) and the effects of some types of incivility on political attitudes (Borah, 2014; Brooks & Geer, 2007; Mutz, 2015). Many politicians, citizens, and scholars find the current U.S. political context to be untenably uncivil.

Despite popular and academic attention to incivility, there is no consensus model scholars can use to study the concept. Researchers habitually mention the lack of an agreed-upon definition (Ben-Porath, 2010; Coe et al., 2014; Maisel, 2012). Some scholars—notably Mutz (2015)—claim that incivility is no more or less than violations of interpersonal politeness norms. Others counter that incivility cannot be constrained to impoliteness, arguing that incivility instead relates to democratic norms since "the devising of civility was identical with that of liberal democracy" (Orwin, 1992, p. 75).

Incivility is a concept in dire need of a theoretical model; providing such a model to guide future incivility research is this project's goal. This article provides overviews of two theoretical approaches scholars have used to study incivility: personal-level incivility founded on politeness theory and public-level incivility founded on political processes and deliberative theory. These approaches are rarely examined in the same studies, which has led to multiple and often contradictory conceptualizations across projects.

After overviewing the theoretical approaches to incivility, I describe two experiments that provide support for a two-level incivility model based on personal-level *and* public-level incivility. Specifically, the experiments investigate whether individuals evaluate a series of political incivility scenarios according to latent personal-level and public-level incivility perceptions, whether one type of scenario is considered more uncivil than the other, and whether the types of incivility are robust in the face of partisan reasoning. The study brings together disparate theoretical approaches to incivility, offers a novel model for testing the effects of incivility in future research, and sheds light on an outcome that has been largely ignored in incivility research: everyday citizens' perceptions of incivility.

Personal-Level and Public-Level Incivility

Studies of incivility have approached the concept as a violation of social norms (Ben-Porath, 2010; Borah, 2014; Jamieson & Hardy, 2012; Papacharissi, 2004). The question in defining incivility, then, is *which* violated norms constitute incivility. Scholars disagree on the answer. Previous approaches to incivility can be broadly categorized into two often conflicting camps: studies that define incivility as violations of interpersonal politeness norms (personal-level incivility) and studies that define incivility as violations of political process and deliberative norms (public-level incivility).

Personal-level incivility research builds on politeness theory (Ben-Porath, 2010; Mutz, 2015). Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that individuals have a desire to protect their public self-concepts, or "face." People tend to avoid face-threatening acts such as giving orders, displaying negative emotions, and expressing disagreement. Studies of political incivility apply similar definitions to research the effects of *observing* political figures who violate politeness norms (e.g., Brooks & Geer, 2007; Mutz, 2015). Mutz (2015) advocates for this approach in her analysis of uncivil politics on television, where she defines incivility as "communication that violates the norms of politeness for a given culture" (p. 6). Within this approach, researchers conceptualize incivility as interactions in which people yell, name-call, swear, and otherwise behave impolitely (Ben-Porath, 2010; Borah, 2014; Fridkin & Kenney, 2008; Mutz, 2015).

Contrastingly, researchers approaching incivility as violations of public-level norms contend that incivility cannot be confined to impoliteness (e.g., Orwin, 1992; Papacharissi, 2004). Directly confronting scholars who advocate for a personal-level approach, Papacharissi (2004) has claimed that impoliteness is not incivility and that uncivil messages are those that "threaten a collective founded on democratic norms" (p. 271). Instead, incivility relates to violating norms of political and deliberative processes. Deliberative approaches to democracy promote processes that emphasize public discussion and carefully weighing a comprehensive set of ideas (Fishkin & Luskin, 2005; Gastil, 2008). These norms can be violated in myriad ways—for instance, refusing to "[recognize] that other views are legitimate" (Uslaner, 1996, p. 8), putting forward political arguments in terms of private gain rather than the common good (Rawls, 1993), violating

Robert's Rules of Order (Jamieson & Hardy, 2012), spreading misinformation, and refusing reciprocity by blocking compromise with people who disagree (Entman, 2011; Jamieson & Hardy, 2012; Uslaner, 1996). In each case, norms of political process are violated rather than norms of interpersonal politeness.

As this review demonstrates, both personal- and public-level incivility have rich but divergent traditions in research. To date, no empirical evidence suggests that one approach to incivility is more appropriate than the other. This has led to a situation in which scholars disagree about the definition of incivility, meaning that projects focused on the effects (e.g., Mutz, 2015; Thorson, Vraga, & Ekdale, 2010) and prevalence (e.g., Papacharissi, 2004; Sobieraj & Berry, 2011; Stroud, Scacco, Muddiman, & Curry, 2015) of incivility often are not investigating the same concept. By empirically validating one or both of these theoretical approaches to incivility, this study provides future researchers a more solid theoretical ground on which to found their scholarship.

Validating Personal-Level and Public-Level Incivility

Specifically, I investigate individuals' perceptions of incivility prompted by norm-violating interactions. Perceptions of incivility are helpful for two reasons. First, experimental research suggests that perceptions mediate the effects of exposure to incivility in the news (Muddiman, Pond-Cobb, & Matson, 2017), suggesting that knowing what individuals regard as uncivil is an important addition the literature.

Second, the top-down theoretical approaches scholars have used thus far have resulted in disagreement about the topic. Even the few studies that have utilized a two-pronged theoretical approach to incivility (Papacharissi, 2004; Uslaner, 1996; Wolf, Strachan, & Shea, 2012) have disagreed on the specific norm violations that align with different types of incivility. Papacharissi (2004), for instance, categorized noncooperation as impoliteness, whereas Wolf et al. (2012) and Uslaner (1996) categorized similar concepts separately from their personal-level conceptions of incivility. This project takes a bottom-up approach by asking individuals to evaluate situations in which political figures violate impoliteness norms, deliberative norms, or neither. The data will demonstrate whether individuals' reactions generate a one-dimensional model of incivility (where individuals' reactions to all the norm violations cluster together) or a two-dimensional model (where individuals' reactions to personal-level norm violations form one cluster and their reactions to public-level norm violations form another). For both theoretical approaches to receive validation, the data must support the following hypothesis:

H1:   Individuals' evaluations of political norm violations will support a latent personal-level incivility factor and a latent public-level incivility factor.

After determining whether individuals' perceptions of incivility cluster into a personal-level and/or public-level, the project turns to a second question: Do individuals consider one type of norm violation to be more uncivil than the other? Individuals' reactions to norm violations can provide empirical evidence that only personal-level norm violations are perceived as uncivil, only public-level norm violations are perceived as uncivil, or both types of norm violations are perceived as uncivil. Research strongly suggests that individuals will perceive personal-level norm violations as uncivil. Although politeness theory was developed to explain face-to-face interactions (Brown & Levinson, 1987), there is mounting evidence that

observing impoliteness also affects individuals. People who observe impolite exchanges among politicians and journalists feel more discomfort than those who observe polite interviews (Ben-Porath, 2010), and people who watch impolite political exchanges consider them more uncivil than polite exchanges (Mutz, 2015). In other words, violating politeness norms has effects on observers, so individuals will likely perceive impolite exchanges as uncivil as well.

Violations of public-level norms may prompt a more ambivalent reaction. On the one hand, disruptions of political and deliberative processes remain violations of social norms, meeting the most basic definition of incivility (e.g., Jamieson & Hardy, 2012). On the other hand, deliberative democracy is not the only normative approach to democratic processes. In fact, people may instead favor agonistic pluralist democracy, characterized by a clash of adversaries who do not compromise (Mouffe, 1999). Support for agonistic pluralism may be especially likely in the current political environment given that affective polarization—that is, dislike of the out-group political party—has increased over recent decades (Iyengar, Sood, & Lelkes, 2012). Notably, Iyengar et al. (2012) find that affective polarization is not consistently related to a person's position on issues, which suggests that individuals may not want politicians to deliberate or compromise across party lines, no matter the issue context, simply out of dislike for the other party. One survey provides empirical evidence of ambivalence toward deliberative norms: Nearly half of respondents in a national survey reported that it is more important for politicians to stand on principle than to compromise (Shea & Steadman, 2010).

A two-dimensional model of incivility will be validated only if both personal-level norm violations and public-level norm violations are perceived as uncivil. Further, individuals likely consider violations of politeness norms (personal-level incivility) to be more uncivil than violations of deliberative norms (public-level incivility):

H2:   Both personal-level and public-level norm violations will be perceived as significantly uncivil.

H3:   Interactions that include personal-level norm violations will be considered more uncivil than interactions that include public-level norm violations.

Finally, this project examines the robustness of a two-dimensional approach to incivility across partisan lines. To date, scholars have largely avoided studying how individual differences—such as partisan identification—influence whether people perceive a situation as uncivil. In surveys, about 95% of people report that incivility is bad for democracy (Shea & Steadman, 2010). Yet the reports that find praise for civility ask partisan-neutral questions—for instance, "Do you think civility in politics is important for a healthy democracy?" (Shea & Steadman, 2010, p. 41). Thus, scholars know little about how people perceive incivility across party lines. Partisans cognitively process information in ways that allow them to hold on to their current beliefs (Kunda, 1990; Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979). Some experimental studies have demonstrated that messages with personal-level incivility amplified partisan responses compared with messages with no incivility (Mutz, 2015; Thorson et al., 2010), though whether this is also true for public-level incivility is unknown. Overall, research suggests that people who claim a partisan identity may believe that figures from their own side of the political aisle are more civil than political figures from another political party.

However, a robust two-level approach to incivility requires people to distinguish between personal- and public-level incivility when they judge norm violations from the party they support *and* the party they oppose. On the one hand, partisans may think of parties as in-groups and out-groups when rating norm violations. If so, out-group homogeneity theory—which suggests that people view out-group members as relatively similar to one another and in-group members as relatively diverse—may apply to incivility perceptions (Linville & Fischer, 1993). People may have more nuanced reactions to different types of incivility when enacted by an in-group party rather than an out-group party. The out-group party may be considered uncivil no matter the situation, whereas the in-group party may be considered uncivil when yelling at someone (personal-level), but civil when refusing to compromise (public-level). On the other hand, if the differences between incivility types hold when rating political figures from the in-group and the out-group party, the two-level approach to incivility will have robust support. Given the little research conducted on this final topic, I raise the following hypothesis and research question:

H4:   *Individuals will perceive political figures from their in-group political party as less uncivil than political figures from an out-group party.*

RQ: *Do people continue to perceive differences between personal-level and public-level incivility when they rate partisan political figures?*

Study 1

Study 1 Method

Participants. Participants were recruited from Mechanical Turk (MTurk.com), Amazon's "marketplace for work" (Amazon Mechanical Turk, 2017, para. 1) where researchers can post links to online studies and gather anonymous participants. Samples recruited from MTurk can be national, and, though they are not representative, they produce similar results to other types of nonrepresentative samples (Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz, 2012; Casler, Bickel, & Hackett, 2013). The results of established experiments have been replicated using MTurk (Berinsky et al., 2012). Between April 25 and May 9, 2013, 258 U.S. participants were recruited. Individuals who completed Study 1 received $0.50. The age of participants ranged from 18 to 72 years; the average age was 38 (SD = 13.60). Participants had completed an average of 15 years of education (the equivalent to nearly a four-year college degree; SD = 1.79) and had an average annual income of $47,000 ($SD$ = $18,090). Forty-seven percent of participants were female and 83% were White/Caucasian. Additionally, 8% of participants reported being Hispanic/Latino.[2] Participants leaned toward the Democratic Party on a scale ranging from 1 (*strong Republican*) to 5 (*strong Democrat*) (M = 3.57; SD = 1.22; 7% strong Republican, 15% lean Republican, 19% no affiliation, 33% lean Democratic, 26% strong Democrat).

Procedure. Participants completed the experiment online. They answered pretest political identification questions. MTurk.com participants lean more liberal than the U.S. population (Berinsky et

---

[2] Participants could report their race and ethnicity separately, so the total percentage does not equal 100%.

al., 2012), so, to test the hypotheses about in-group and out-group political figures, participants were randomly assigned to view norm violations from (a) people in a different political party than the participant reported, (b) people in the same political party that the participant reported, or (c) people whose partisan identification was not mentioned, rather than randomly assigning them to a Republican or Democrat condition. To reduce the risk of partisan items priming later responses, participants answered distractor questions about nonpartisan media use. Participants next read 24 statements that described a political scenario and rated whether the scenario in each statement was civil, uncivil, or somewhere in between. They then answered demographic questions, were debriefed, and paid for their participation.

Stimuli. The stimuli consisted of 24 statements, each describing a scenario involving a political figure. A content analysis of news coverage of four U.S. political events provided examples of norm violations to include in the experiment.[3] Texts were coded as including *personal-level norm violations* when any one of the following appeared: insulting language/name-calling (e.g., cronies), obscene language (e.g., damn Democrats), or emotional language/displays (e.g., extreme anger or yelling). Texts were coded as including *public-level norm violations* when any one of the following appeared: lack of compromise (e.g., refusing to work together), misinformation (e.g., saying that a person is lying), ideological extremity and lack of comity (e.g., calling people Nazis), and nonpublic acts (e.g., taking secret foreign donations). Intercoder reliability, computed from two coders' categorization of 25% of the texts, reached an acceptable level, with Krippendorff's α = .77 for *personal-level*, and α = .78 for *public-level* (Krippendorff, 2004). A single coder coded the remaining texts. Most of the 279 analyzed texts included personal-level (82%) and/or public-level (72%) norm violations.

The content analysis served two purposes. First, it demonstrated that both types of norm violations predicted by the theoretical foundations do occur in public discourse about politics. Second, the news texts provided externally valid examples used in creating the 24 one-sentence stimuli. Each sentence included a description of an interaction involving political figures either violating or adhering to various political norms. To focus on the norm violations rather than on disagreements with policy, no issues were included in the stimuli. The order of the statements was randomized for each participant. Each participant read and rated all 24 statements. Eight statements that were coded as personal-level norm violations and eight that were coded as public-level norm violations in the content analysis were included in the stimuli. Two statements were included that involved partisan name-calling (i.e., calling politicians extremists or Nazis). These were coded as public-level incivility in the content analysis due to the extreme partisan nature of the comments, but labeling an opponent as an extremist or a Nazi could also be perceived as an impolite aspersion (Papacharissi, 2004). The remaining six statements were civil interactions included for contrast to the incivility (see Table 1).[4]

---

[3] The four events included the 2009 health care protests, the 2010 midterm campaign, the 2011 Occupy Wall Street protests, and the 2011 debt ceiling debate. Transcripts and articles published or broadcast in a one-week time frame during each of the events were collected using Factiva. Texts came from newspapers (*The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal*), broadcast news (*ABC World News Tonight, NBC Nightly News, CBS Evening News*), and cable news (*MSNBC, Fox News, CNN*).

[4] For a complete list of stimuli used in Study 1 and Study 2, contact the author.

Table 1. Factor Loadings for Political Incivility Factors in Study 1.

| | | Incivility | | |
	Hypothesized factor	Personal-level	Public-level	Civility
Partisan criticism of new congressional legislation has been getting louder and more inflammatory.	1-Per	0.58		
A politician said that lawmakers of the opposing party are delusional.	2-Per	0.55		
During a recent episode of a cable news show, the host shouted down his guest from the opposing political party and interrupted him many times.	3-Per	0.62		
The host of a partisan political news show recently said, "damn the political opposition."	4-Per	0.56		
An advisor to a political candidate said that it would be embarrassing to the state if his opponent became a U.S. senator.	5-Per	0.51		
Politicians started a heated exchange with members of the opposing party on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives.	6-Per	0.44		
Several members of Congress from one political party say their opponents are wrong on most political issues.	7-Per		0.47	
A Senate candidate ran a negative campaign against his opponent.	8-Per	0.50		
A partisan news host compared politicians from the opposing political party to Hitler and the Nazis.	9-M	0.67		
A partisan television show host said that extremism from members of the opposing political party has taken over the U.S. Congress.	10-M	0.39		
Interest groups, super PACs and other powerful political groups have sponsored a sophisticated, shadowy campaign against a recent congressional legislative effort led by their opponents.	11-Pub	0.51		
A candidate's Senate campaign aired phony television ads using paid out-of-state actors to spread rumors about his political opponent.	12-Pub	0.64		
Members of the House of Representatives don't believe they need to compromise with members of the political party they oppose.	13-Pub		0.58	
Many members of Congress will not pass a bill that is supported by their opponents, leading to deadlock in the House of Representatives.	14-Pub		0.57	

		Incivility		
	Hypothesized factor	Personal-level	Public-level	Civility
A partisan host for a cable news program is encouraging like-minded politicians in Congress to go at it alone and pass legislation supported only by members of their own political party.	15-Pub		0.42	
A fact-checking segment on a political news program found that ads produced by a recent political campaign were misleading.	16-Pub	0.37		
Partisan political groups that support one political party are accepting money from unknown foreign investors.	17-Pub		0.59	
According to a recent news report, the politicians in Congress have shown their extreme ideological purity by voting along party lines.	18-Pub		0.39	
On her television program, a partisan cable news pundit had a polite exchange with her guest from the opposing political party.	19-C			0.47
Members of Congress from one political party had a respectful discussion about new policies with Congress members from the opposing political party.	20-C			0.52
During an official campaign debate, a House of Representatives candidate asked her opponent a number of questions.	21-C			0.60
A U.S. Senator said that there are some reasonable, moderate politicians from the opposing party in Congress.	22-C			0.60
A fact-checking organization found that an advertisement from a recent political campaign provided truthful information.	23-C			0.36
Most likely, a new bill will pass because members of both political parties are working together to draft a compromise that could gain bipartisan support.	24-C			0.62

Note. The example statements are from the unknown partisan condition, but statements from all three partisan conditions were included in the analysis. Factor loadings < .35 are suppressed. The information in the "Hypothesized factor" column shows how the statement was originally coded in the content analysis and matches the labels used in Figure 2. Labels containing *Per* were hypothesized as personal-level incivility, those containing *Pub* were hypothesized as public-level incivility, those containing *M* were considered either personal-level or public-level incivility, and those containing *C* were hypothesized as civility.

Partisan Conditions. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three partisan conditions (unknown partisan, in-group partisan, out-group partisan) based on their partisan identification. Across the conditions, the interactions described were identical. Only the party of the political figures changed. In the unknown partisan condition, the stimuli included no information about political identification (see Table 1). This condition was a control group and paralleled studies exploring incivility in nonpartisan contexts (Shea & Steadman, 2010). In the in-group partisan condition, the partisans described in the stimuli had the same partisanship as the participants. Republican (Democrat) participants saw statements about Republicans (Democrats). In the out-group partisan condition, the partisanship of the people in the stimuli was incongruent with participants' partisanship—that is, Republican (Democrat) participants saw statements about Democrats (Republicans).

For example, one unknown partisan statement read, "A politician said that lawmakers of the opposing party are delusional." The same statement for a Democrat (Republican) in the in-group (out-group) condition read, "Debbie Wasserman Schultz, a Democratic politician from Florida, said that the Republicans are delusional." The same statement for a Democrat (Republican) in the out-group (in-group) condition read, "Nikki Haley, a Republican politician from South Carolina, said that Democrats are delusional."

Incivility Rating Outcome Measure. To measure perceptions of incivility, participants rated each statement on a scale from 1 (*extremely civil*) to 5 (*extremely uncivil*), $M = 3.21$; $SD = 0.49$.

Study 1 Results

The first test examined whether participants perceived latent personal- and public-level dimensions in the 24 stimuli (H1). I ran an exploratory MLM factor analysis.[5] Although most of the stimuli were created with a specific type of incivility in mind (see Table 1), there was no hypothesis about whether participants would perceive the two "mixed" statements as personal- or public-level incivility. Additionally, scholars have disagreed about whether specific situations count as personal- or public-level incivility (see, e.g., Papacharissi, 2004; Uslaner, 1996). The exploratory factor model allowed responses to experimental statements to load onto whichever factor fit best.[6]

Since the common factor extraction method of eigenvalues often leads to incorrect factor interpretations, I ran a parallel analysis (Costello & Osborne, 2005; Hayton, Allen, & Scarpello, 2004). A parallel analysis involves a comparison of eigenvalues produced by the sample data to eigenvalues produced by random data. When an eigenvalue for a factor from the sample data is greater than the

---

[5] The data were skewed, breaking an assumption of the often-used maximum likelihood approach to factor analysis; thus, I used an MLM approach (UCLA Statistical Consulting Group, 2014). The results were similar, though the factor loadings were smaller, when a maximum likelihood factor analysis was used.

[6] The data met the assumptions for a factor analysis, with at least 10 participants per statement, a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value of .90, no evidence of multicollinearity, and a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity, $\chi^2(n = 258) = 1,936.76$, $p < .001$. I ran the analysis using a promax rotation since it was likely that the factors would be correlated (Field, 2013).

averaged eigenvalue for a factor from the random data, the results signal that the factor is significant to the model. The analysis was run on 1,000 parallel data sets using O'Connor's (2000) RawPar program and his common factor analysis model. The eigenvalues from the first three sample data factors were greater than the eigenvalues from the randomly generated data samples. This suggests that a three-factor model best fit the sample data.[7]

Twelve items loaded onto a personal-level incivility factor (Cronbach's α = .86), including statements describing harsh language (e.g., damning the opposition), negative campaign tactics (e.g., influence of powerful political interest groups), and partisan name-calling (e.g., calling opponents Nazis). Six items loaded onto a public-level incivility factor (Cronbach's α = .80), including statements that related to refusals to work with political opposition (e.g., will not pass an opponents' bill) and partisan politics (e.g., saying the opposing party is wrong). Six items loaded onto a civility factor (Cronbach's α = .70), including statements emphasizing respect (e.g., saying that opponents are reasonable; see Table 1). Overall, the factors were stable. None of the factors loaded with fewer than three items, no items cross-loaded with a factor loading of .35 of higher, and between three and nine items loaded at a .50 level or higher on each factor. The factor analysis supports H1: Individuals perceived distinct latent personal-level incivility and public-level incivility factors.

I next averaged the incivility ratings for the statements that loaded onto each factor to create a repeated-measures variable for type of incivility (personal-level incivility, public-level incivility, and civility). I ran one-sample t tests for each type of incivility to determine whether the mean value was perceived as significantly uncivil (greater than the midpoint of the measure) or civil (less than the midpoint of the measure). Each of the tests was significant, with personal-level incivility ($M = 3.88$; $SD = 0.64$) perceived as significantly greater than the midpoint of the measure, $t(257) = 21.97$, $p < .001$; public-level incivility ($M = 3.42$; $SD = 0.73$) perceived as significantly greater than the midpoint, $t(257) = 9.24$, $p < .001$; and civility ($M = 1.68$; $SD = 0.59$) perceived as significantly less than the midpoint, $t(257) = -36.17$, $p < .001$. The analysis supports H2: Participants perceived both personal- and public-level norm violations as significantly uncivil.

Then I ran a 3 × 3 mixed analysis of variance (ANOVA) using type of incivility as a repeated-measures independent variable and partisan condition (in-group partisan, out-group partisan, unknown partisan) as a between-groups independent variable.[8] The main effect of type of incivility provided a test of H3, which predicted that personal-level incivility would be considered more uncivil than public-level incivility. The effect was significant, $F(1.58, 322.44) = 964.58$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.83$.[9] Pairwise post hoc tests with Bonferroni corrections showed significant differences at the .05 level. Civil situations were considered significantly more civil than either personal- or public-level incivility. There also was a significant difference between the two types of incivility. Personal-level incivility was considered significantly more uncivil than public-level incivility. The effect size for the post hoc comparison between

---

[7] Other methods of choosing factors, including a scree plot and eigenvalues, also indicated a three-factor fit.

[8] Nonpartisans were dropped from the remaining analyses.

[9] Mauchly's test of sphericity was significant for each repeated-measures test. The results include Greenhouse-Geisser corrections.

the two types of incivility indicated that the difference was substantial (Cohen's d = 0.63). The findings support H3, since personal-level incivility was considered more uncivil than public-level incivility.

The main effect for partisan condition in the same ANOVA tested H4, which predicted that partisans would perceive in-group political figures as less uncivil than out-group political figures. The main effect was significant, $F(2, 204)$ = 19.07, p < .001, η_p^2 = .16. Pairwise post hoc tests with Bonferroni corrections highlighted significant differences at the .05 level, which indicated that political figures from the in-group party were viewed as significantly more civil (M = 2.90, SD = 0.56) than partisans from an out-group party (M = 3.35, SD = 0.51) and political figures whose partisanship was not known (M = 3.31, SD = 0.31).[10] The effects of the comparisons were large (out-group partisan: Cohen's d = 0.83; unknown partisan: Cohen's d = 0.89). There were no differences between the out-group and unknown partisan groups. H4 was supported: Individuals considered partisans from their own partisan side as most civil.

The interaction between the main effects allowed for an analysis of the research question, which asked whether participants differentiated between personal- and public-level incivility when partisanship of a political figure was taken into account. The interaction between type of incivility and partisan condition was significant, $F(3.16, 322.44)$ = 6.67, p < .001, η_p^2 = .06. Pairwise post hoc tests with Bonferroni corrections indicated that participants perceived their own side to be least uncivil in the two incivility conditions, but not in the civility condition. However, within each partisan condition, the pattern of incivility ratings was the same: Personal-level incivility was always considered significantly more uncivil than public-level incivility, and both were always considered significantly more uncivil than civility (see Figure 1). The result suggests that people distinguish between personal-level and public-level incivility when rating partisans from their own political party, from an opposing party, and from an unknown party.

Study 1 Discussion

The results from Study 1 provide evidence that violations of norms in political contexts prompt perceptions of two latent concepts: personal-level and public-level incivility. Both types of norm violations were perceived as significantly uncivil, though personal-level incivility was perceived as significantly more uncivil than public-level incivility.

There are limitations to Study 1. First, the stimuli prompted people to respond to situations that included politicians and partisan media figures. Individuals may have different perspectives about how media personalities and politicians should communicate. Second, the sample size of 258 participants met one rule of thumb for minimum sample size for a factor analysis: At least 10 people per each of the 24 statements were included in the analysis. However, as Field (2013) explained, this rule of thumb is simplistic. Larger samples are especially needed when factors have a few loadings lower than .40, which was the case in Study

---

[10] Levene's test for homogeneity of variances was significant for this main effect, indicating that a Games-Howell post hoc test was an appropriate post hoc correction to use. However, the SPSS mixed-effects ANOVA does not allow for a Games-Howell test. I ran a one-way between-groups ANOVA with a Games-Howell post hoc test as a robustness check. The results were the same as those reported.

1 (see Table 1). Thus, the factor structure should be replicated using a larger sample. Study 2 addresses these limitations, confirms the factor model, and replicates the results of Study 1.
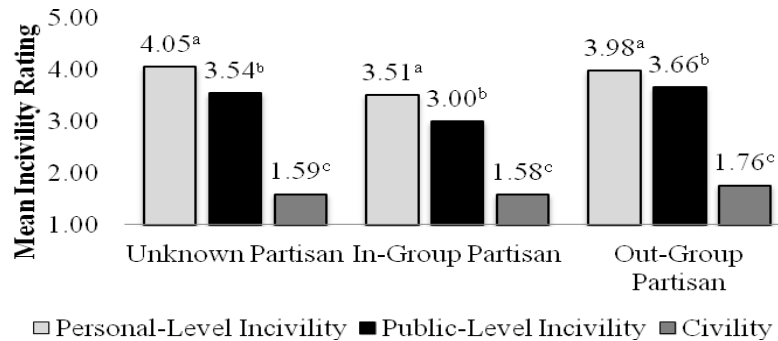
Figure 1. Study 1 mean incivility rating by partisan condition and type of incivility. Lowercase letters that differ within each partisan condition indicate a significant difference between the types of incivility at the $p < .05$ level.

Study 2

Study 2 Method

Participants. Study 2 included 1,024 participants and gathered a more nationally representative sample using the online sampling firm Survey Sampling International (see also, Muddiman et al., 2017). Participants were recruited between May 6 and May 13, 2015. Overall, 51% of participants were female. The age of participants ranged from 18 to 104 years; the average age was 43 (*SD* = 16.07). Participants had completed a mean of 14 years of education (about two years of college; *SD* = 2.08). Seventy-seven percent were White/Caucasian, 13% Black/African American, and 10% another race; additionally, 14% of the participants were Hispanic/Latino.[11] Thirty-one percent of the participants had an average yearly household income of less than $29,000, 21% had an income of $40,000 to $62,500, 17% had an income between $62,500 and $75,000, and 32% had an income of more than $75,000 (*M* = $51,660; *SD* = $19,473). These demographics closely match those of the U.S. population of Internet users, as shared by the Pew Research Center.[12] Participants leaned toward the Democratic Party on a scale ranging from 1 (*strong Republican*) to 5 (*strong Democrat*) (*M* = 3.55; *SD* = 1.33; 12% were strong Republican, 9% were lean Republican, 21% had no affiliation, 28% were lean Democrat, and 30% were strong Democrat).

---

[11] Participants reported ethnicity (here Hispanic/Latino) separately from race, so the percentage is higher than 100%.

[12] Pew Research Center data tracking the demographics of American internet users is available online at http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/internet-broadband/.

Stimuli. Three changes were made to the stimuli used in Study 1. First, congressional leaders like John Boehner were removed from the stimuli and replaced with members of Congress who did not hold party leadership positions, such as Representative Lloyd Doggett. Second, all stimuli included members of Congress to minimize the chance that participants would react to the office of a political figure rather than the type of incivility. Third, all people in the stimuli were changed to politicians so there was no longer a mix of politicians and media personalities.

The procedure, the partisan condition variable, and the incivility rating measure remained the same from Study 1.

Study 2 Results

I again tested H1 to determine whether personal- and public-level incivility were separate, latent factors. Since Study 1 provided exploratory support for a distinction between the incivility types, Study 2 applied a confirmatory factor analysis to the data using the R package Lavaan. The three-factor model (personal-level incivility, public-level incivility, and civility factors) included the factors produced by the exploratory factor analysis in Study 1 (see Table 1) and was tested against a two-factor model (incivility and civility factors). The model fits were compared using two measures: the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and the standardized root mean residual (SRMR; see Hu & Bentler, 1999). The chi-square goodness-of-fit test was not used because it is overly sensitive with large samples.

The two-factor model fit the data well, with an RMSEA of .07, 90% CI [.06, .07], and an SRMR of .08, both of which are considered acceptable model fits (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The three-factor model, which included a path between the two latent incivility variables, was a strong fit as well, with an RMSEA of .06, 90% CI [.06, .07], and an SRMR of .07. In both models, every parameter estimate was significant.[13] Overall, both the two-factor and three-factor models explained the data, but the three-factor model was a consistently, albeit slightly, better fit than the two-factor model (see Figure 2).

A variable for type of incivility was created by averaging the incivility ratings for the items that loaded on to each factor (personal-level incivility: Cronbach's α = .92; public-level incivility: Cronbach's α = .82; civility: Cronbach's α = .85). To test H2, which predicted that violations of both personal- and public-level norms would be perceived as uncivil, I ran one-sample t tests for each type of incivility to determine whether the mean value of the incivility type was significantly uncivil (greater than the midpoint of the measure) or significantly civil (less than the midpoint of the measure). Each test was significant, with personal-level incivility ($M = 3.64$; $SD = 0.83$) perceived as significantly greater than the midpoint of the measure, $t(1,023) = 24.74$, $p < .001$; public-level incivility ($M = 3.37$; $SD = 0.83$) perceived as significantly greater than the midpoint, $t(1,023) = 14.44$, $p < .001$; and civility ($M = 1.95$; $SD = 0.80$)

---

[13] Study 2 included a sample large enough to begin testing whether the factor structure remained the same across the partisan condition groups (in-group partisan, out-group partisan, unknown partisan). Running the two- and three-factor models with only participants from each of these groups yielded the same pattern as the overall models described. In each case, the three-factor models fit the data slightly better than the two-factor models.

perceived as significantly less than the midpoint, $t(1,023) = -42.34$, $p < .001$. The analysis supports H2. Both personal- and public-level norm violations were perceived as significantly uncivil.
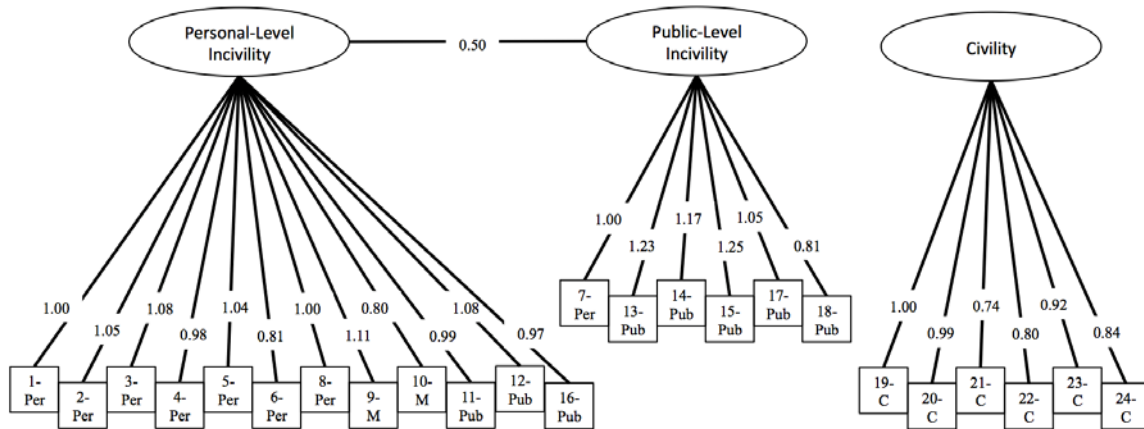

Figure 2. Plot of three-factor confirmatory factor analysis model. All paths included the unstandardized coefficients and were significant at a p < .001 level. See Table 1 to match the variable labels (e.g., 1-Per) to the specific experimental stimuli that fit into each factor.

I then ran a 3 (personal-level incivility, public-level incivility, civility) × 3 (in-group partisan, out-group partisan, unknown partisan) mixed ANOVA.[14] This ANOVA was used to test H3, which predicted that personal-level incivility would be considered more uncivil than public-level incivility. The main effect of type of incivility was significant, $F(1.33, 926.92) = 1,340.04$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .66$.[15] Post hoc tests with Bonferroni corrections indicated a difference in perceptions of incivility among the three factors, with personal-level incivility perceived as significantly more uncivil than public-level incivility and both types of incivility perceived as significantly more uncivil than civility (see Figure 3). Though the effect size for the post hoc comparison between the two types of incivility was smaller than in Study 1 (Cohen's $d = 0.31$), the replicated findings provide additional support for H3: Personal-level incivility was considered more uncivil than public-level incivility.

To test H4, which predicted that participants would perceive politicians from their own party as less uncivil than those from the party they oppose, I examined the main effect of partisan condition. The effect was significant, $F(2, 695) = 43.33$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$. Post hoc tests with Bonferroni corrections demonstrated that participants perceived out-group politicians as most uncivil, followed by politicians whose party was unknown, then by in-group politicians. All differences were significant, with the difference between the out-group and in-group partisan conditions generating the most substantial effect (Cohen's $d = .83$). The results provide more support for H4 (see Figure 3).

---

[14] Nonpartisan participants were cut from the remaining analyses.

[15] Mauchly's test of sphericity was significant. The estimates include Greenhouse-Geisser corrections.
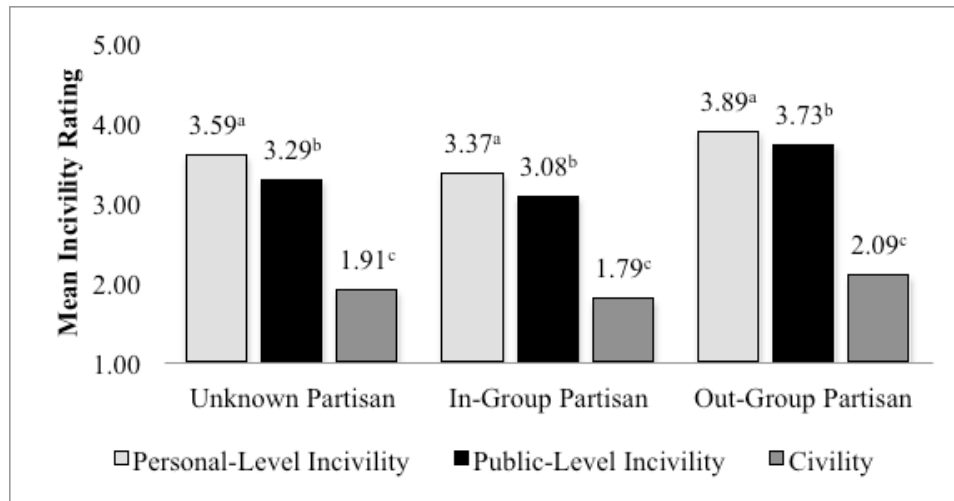
*Figure 3. Study 2 mean incivility rating by partisan condition and type of incivility. Lowercase letters that differ within each partisan condition indicate a significant difference between the types of incivility at the **p** < .05 level.*

Finally, the research question was tested using the interaction between type of incivility and partisan condition. The interaction was significant, $F(2.67, 926.92) = 4.59$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .01$, because participants perceived their own side to be significantly less uncivil than unknown partisans in the two incivility conditions, but not in the civility condition. However, as in Study 1, pairwise comparisons with Bonferroni corrections indicated that, within each partisan condition, personal-level incivility was always perceived as significantly more uncivil than public-level incivility, and both were perceived as significantly more uncivil than the civil interactions (see Figure 3).[16]

Study 2 Discussion

Study 2 confirmed the factor structure explored in Study 1 using a larger sample and stimuli focused on politicians. The study also provided more evidence that people perceive differences between personal-level and public-level norm violations. Because this finding was repeated in both studies and given the theoretical support for a distinction between the two incivility types, there is evidence to approach the types of incivility as separate but related. Additionally, public-level incivility and in-group politicians were perceived as less uncivil than personal-level incivility and out-group politicians.

---

[16] Female, conflict-avoidant, and less partisan participants were likely to perceive increased personal- and public-level incivility. Older participants were likely to perceive more personal-level incivility. Even taking into account these variables, the partisan conditions continued to predict perceptions of both incivility types.

General Discussion

Incivility is not perceived as one overarching concept, even among researchers. Some contend that incivility should be studied as impoliteness (Mutz, 2015), while others argue that incivility is better conceptualized as threats to democratic norms (Orwin, 1992; Papacharissi, 2004). This project addresses the conceptualization tension by offering theoretical and empirical evidence for a two-dimensional approach to incivility. The two experiments demonstrate that (a) personal-level and public-level incivility are distinct concepts even when rating political opponents, (b) personal-level incivility is perceived as more uncivil than public-level incivility, and (c) political and media figures from a person's own political party are perceived as less uncivil than others. The data suggest that incivility cannot be constrained to one or the other of these conceptualizations; rather, people think that both kinds of norm violations are uncivil. In validating incivility as two-dimensional, this project makes several contributions to the literature.

This project's exploratory approach provides future researchers a better idea of what individuals perceive to be personal-level incivility (insults, impoliteness, and negative campaigns) and public-level incivility (situations related to lack of compromise and refusing to work with an opposing political party). A few previous studies have approached incivility as two-dimensional, but have disagreed about the exact messages and behaviors that count as one type of incivility or the other (Papacharissi, 2004; Uslaner, 1996). By asking individuals to rate various norm violations and then exploring how their responses group together, this project offers specific guidelines about the types of situations that individuals consider personal-level and public-level norm violations.

People considered rudeness, emotion, and name-calling to be personal-level incivility, paralleling the approach of Mutz (2015) and Brooks and Geer (2007). Two groups of norm violations also loaded onto the personal-level incivility factor even though they were not predicted to do so. First, extreme partisan attacks, such as calling the political opposition Nazis, were considered impolite rather than violations of partisan reciprocity norms. This aligned with Papacharissi's (2004) argument that aspersions (e.g., calling someone un-American) should be considered impolite. Also, all stimuli that mentioned norm violations in campaign contexts clustered with personal-level incivility, even when violations of deliberative norms (e.g., spreading misinformation) were included in the stimuli. Given the recent increases in negative campaign ads attacking personal characteristics (Fowler & Ridout, 2013), perhaps citizens connect any campaign to personal-level norms, even when interpersonal-level conflicts are not explicit.

There were fewer surprises concerning the public-level incivility factor. People considered partisan divisiveness and refusal to work with political opponents to be public-level incivility, mirroring conceptualizations proposed by Uslaner (1996) and Wolf et al. (2012). Only one scenario unexpectedly loaded onto the public-level incivility factor: calling the opposing party wrong. Mutz (2015), an advocate for the personal-level incivility approach, has used statements like this one in her work. However, in the current project, individuals perceived the act of calling the opposing party wrong as public-level incivility. This scenario's appearance in the public-level incivility factor reinforces the definition of public-level incivility as violations of reciprocity norms and disrespect for opposing political ideas (Entman, 2011; Jamieson & Hardy, 1992; Uslaner, 1996).

Beyond the two-dimensionality of incivility, this project demonstrates that partisanship matters—but that it does not override the distinctions between personal-level and public-level incivility. Individuals do not uniformly agree on the severity of incivility in political interactions when partisan political figures are involved. Instead, like-minded political and media figures are considered less uncivil than others across both types of incivility. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that incivility can amplify partisan differences in perceptions of arguments (Mutz, 2015; Thorson et al., 2010). The studies discussed in this article reveal that the uncivil situations themselves, not only the legitimacy of the arguments, are perceived differently across partisan lines.

The findings suggest, however, that the types of incivility are robust across partisan conditions. Unlike the predictions made by out-group homogeneity theory (Linville & Fischer, 1993), in the realm of incivility people did not ascribe more nuance to their in-group than their out-group. People perceived political figures from both groups as being more uncivil when they yelled, interrupted, or swore (personal-level incivility) than when they refused to compromise (public-level incivility). The two-dimensionality of incivility holds even when accounting for partisan reasoning.

There are some limitations to note. First, participants rated written statements about real people. The textual statements increased internal validity because partisanship could be changed without altering other message features (e.g., tone of voice, facial expression). Researchers should replicate the study using visuals and audio. External validity was strengthened and partisanship more strongly manipulated by using contemporary political figures. However, using real people means that participants may have drawn from existing attitudes when responding to the stimuli. The results were replicated even after names were altered in Study 2, suggesting that the norm violations prompted similar effects no matter who was mentioned. Future studies should examine whether the individual characteristics of people enacting incivility influences reactions.

Additionally, the current study focused largely on partisan participants. Future studies should test whether individuals who do not identify with a political party react to incivility in the same ways as partisans. Further, the samples skewed Democratic. When robustness tests were run on Republican and Democratic participants separately, the direction of the results was largely the same, though there were fewer instances of statistical significance in the smaller Republican sample. This result suggests that Republicans and Democrats react similarly to incivility, but more research is needed.

As in any experiment, the stimuli do not cover every norm violation that could be perceived as uncivil. This project focused on public political figures rather than citizens, social movements, online commenters, or other groups. Other *types* of interactions may—or may not—be considered uncivil, too. For instance, politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) covers many types of norm-violating acts, including making promises and disagreeing with a discussion partner, and a national survey found that 16% of respondents believed that phoning legislators to express constituent views, a behavior often praised as positive engagement by researchers, was against the rules of civility (Shea & Steadman, 2010). Whether these types of interactions are considered personal-level incivility, public-level incivility, or something else requires further testing.

Political incivility is messy, both in practice and in scholarship. The current project makes a substantial step toward clarifying incivility and providing researchers a theoretical model on which to build future studies. Scholars have typically drawn from disparate theoretical foundations. This project put multiple theoretical approaches into conversation with one another to offer a two-dimensional incivility model consisting of personal-level incivility centered on politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and public-level incivility centered on political and deliberative theory (Fishkin & Luskin, 2005; Rawls, 1993). I empirically tested norm violations related to both dimensions and found that *both* were considered uncivil to different degrees. These distinctions were robust across studies, stimuli, and samples. They held when partisan reasoning was taken into account. The two-dimensional model clarifies incivility theory and provides researchers a unified model they can use to guide future studies of incivility's effects on citizens.

Most importantly, the model highlights the need to understand multiple theoretical traditions related to incivility. Claiming that impoliteness is the only appropriate approach may be too narrow, but claiming that manners are not related to incivility also is misguided. People perceive incivility when either type of norm is violated. Notably, while individuals agree that impoliteness is unacceptable, they are more accepting of violations of deliberative norms, especially when they originate from their in-group party. Citizens may be torn between a deliberative approach to democracy (Fishkin & Luskin, 2005; Gastil, 2008) and a collective agonistic approach (Mouffe, 1999). Personal-level incivility may decrease trust in government (Mutz, 2015), and public-level incivility may grind governing processes to a halt (e.g., Jamieson & Hardy, 2012; Uslaner, 1996), but individuals appear more concerned with the former than the latter. Yet both incivility types should be of interest. Researchers need to do more to study what citizens think about incivility and to test the extent to which public-level incivility is considered an acceptable part of the political process.

References

Amazon Mechanical Turk. (2017). FAQ. Retrieved from
https://www.mturk.com/mturk/help?helpPage=overview

Ben-Porath, E. N. (2010). Interview effects: Theory and evidence for the impact of televised political interviews on viewer attitudes. *Communication Theory*, *20*(3), 323–347. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2885.2010.01365.x

Berinsky, A. J., Huber, G. A., & Lenz, G. S. (2012). Evaluating online labor markets for experimental research: Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk. *Political Analysis*, *20*(3), 351–368. doi:10.1093/pan/mpr057

Borah, P. (2014). Does it matter where you read the news story? Interaction of incivility and news frames in the political blogosphere. *Communication Research*, *41*(6), 809–827. doi:10.1177/0093650212449353

Brooks, D. J., & Geer, J. G. (2007). Beyond negativity: The effects of incivility on the electorate. *American Journal of Political Science*, *51*(1), 1–16. doi:10.1111/j.1540-5907.2007.00233.x

Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language use*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Casler, K., Bickel, L., & Hackett, E. (2013). Separate but equal? A comparison of participants and data gathered via Amazon's MTurk, social media, and face-to-face behavioral testing. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *29*(6), 2156–2160. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2013.05.009

Coe, K., Kenski, K., & Rains, S. A. (2014). Patterns and determinants of incivility in newspaper website comments. *Journal of Communication*, *64*(4), 658–679. doi:10.1111/jcom.12104

Costello, A., & Osborne, J. (2005). Best practices in exploratory factor analysis: Four recommendations for getting the most from your analysis. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, *10*(7), 1–9.

Entman, R. M. (2011, March). *Incivility and asymmetrical partisan warfare*. Paper presented at the Breaux Symposium: In the Name of Democracy, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA.

Field, A. (2013). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Fishkin, J. S., & Luskin, R. C. (2005). Experimenting with a democratic ideal: Deliberative polling and public opinion. *Acta Politica*, *40*(3), 284–289. doi:10.1057/palgrave.ap.5500121

Fowler, E. F., & Ridout, T. N. (2013). Negative, angry, and ubiquitous: Political advertising in 2012. *The Forum*, *10*(4), 51–61. doi:10.1515/forum-2013-0004

Fridkin, K. L., & Kenney, P. J. (2008). The dimensions of negative messages. *American Politics Research*, *36*(5), 694–723. doi:10.1177/1532673x08316448

Gastil, J. (2008). *Political communication and deliberation*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.

Hayton, J. C., Allen, D. G., & Scarpello, V. (2004). Factor retention decisions in exploratory factor analysis: A tutorial on parallel analysis. *Organizational Research Methods*, *7*(2), 191–205. doi:10.1177/1094428104263675

Hu, L., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, *6*(1), 1–55. doi:10.1080/10705519909540118

Iyengar, S., Sood, G., & Lelkes, Y. (2012). Affect, not ideology: A social identity perspective on polarization. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *76*(3), 405–431. doi:10.1093/poq/nfs038

Jamieson, K. H., & Hardy, B. W. (2012). What is civil engaged argument and why does aspiring to it matter? *PS: Political Science & Politics*, *45*(3), 412–415. doi:10.1017/S1049096512000479

Johnson, T. (2016, August 16). A plea for civility in politics. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/17/opinion/a-plea-for-civility-in-politics.html

Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Kunda, Z. (1990). The case for motivated reasoning. *Psychological Bulletin*, *108*(3), 480–498. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.108.3.480

Linville, P. W., & Fischer, G. W. (1993). Exemplar and abstraction models of perceived group variability and stereotypicality. *Social Cognition*, *11*(1), 92–125. doi:10.1521/soco.1993.11.1.92

Lord, C. G., Ross, L., & Lepper, M. R. (1979). Biased assimilation and attitude polarization: The effects of prior theories on subsequently considered evidence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *37*(11), 2098–2109. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.37.11.2098

Maisel, L. S. (2012). The negative consequences of uncivil political discourse. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, *42*(3), 405–411. doi:10.1017/S1049096512000467

Mouffe, C. (1999). Deliberative democracy or agonistic pluralism? *Social Research*, *66*(3), 745–758. doi:10.2307/40971349

Muddiman, A., Pond-Cobb, J., & Matson, J. E. (2017). Negativity bias or backlash: Interaction with civil and uncivil online political news content. *Communication Research*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1177/0093650216685625

Mutz, D. C. (2015). *In-your-face politics: The consequences of uncivil media*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Obama, B. (2011, January 12). *Remarks by the president at a memorial service for the victims of the shooting in Tucson, Arizona*. The White House. Retrieved from https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/01/12/remarks-president-barack-obama-memorial-service-victims-shooting-tucson

Obama, B. (2016, February 10). *Remarks by the president in address to the Illinois General Assembly*. The White House. Retrieved from https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/02/10/remarks-president-address-illinois-general-assembly

O'Connor, B. P. (2000). SPSS and SAS programs for determining the number of components using parallel analysis and Velicer's MAP test. *Behavior Research Methods, Instruments, & Computers*, *32*(3), 396–402.

Orwin, C. (1992). Citizenship and civility as components of liberal democracy. In E. C. Banfield (Ed.), *Civility and citizenship in liberal democratic societies* (pp. 75–94). New York, NY: Paragon House.

Papacharissi, Z. (2004). Democracy online: Civility, politeness, and the democratic potential of online political discussion groups. *New Media & Society*, *6*(2), 259–283. doi:10.1177/1461444804041444

Rawls, J. (1993). *Political liberalism*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Shea, D. M., & Steadman, B. (2010, April 20). *Nastiness, name-calling and negativity: The Allegheny College Survey of Civility and Compromise in American Politics*. Allegheny, PA: Allegheny College.

Sobieraj, S., & Berry, J. M. (2011). From incivility to outrage: Political discourse in blogs, talk radio, and cable news. *Political Communication*, *28*(1), 19–41. doi:10.1080/10584609.2010.542360

Stroud, N. J., Scacco, J. M., Muddiman, A., & Curry, A. L. (2015). Changing deliberative norms on news organizations' Facebook sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *20*(2), 188–203. doi:10.1111/jcc4.12104

Thorson, K., Vraga, E., & Ekdale, B. (2010). Credibility in context: How uncivil online commentary affects news credibility. *Mass Communication and Society*, *13*(3), 289–313. doi:10.1080/15205430903225571

UCLA Statistical Consulting Group. (2014). *Introduction to MPlus*. Retrieved from http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/mplus/seminars/IntroMplus_CFA/

Uslaner, E. M. (1996). *The decline of comity in Congress*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Wolf, M. R., Strachan, J. C., & Shea, D. M. (2012). Forget the good of the game: Political incivility and lack of compromise as a second layer of party polarization. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *56*(12), 1677–1695. doi:10.1017/S1049096512000509