The Emotional Consequences of Psychological Conflict Orientation and Political Incivility

Emily Sydnor
Southwestern University
sydnore@southwestern.edu

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Research into media effects has long established that political news has the power to shape people’s emotional and cognitive engagement with politics. However, less has been done to understand how psychological differences lead to variation in individuals’ reactions to the tone of media coverage. I argue that individuals’ predispositions towards conflict—their conflict orientation—change how they react to mediated incivility, making the conflict avoidant more disgusted with politics and less likely to engage upon watching the uncivil presentation of information. To examine this question, I conducted two survey experiments in which participants were asked to complete a questionnaire about their conflict orientation and were then randomly assigned to one of four conditions containing video clips that convey political information in a civil or uncivil way. After being exposed to this treatment, participants were asked about their affective responses to, and perceptions of, political media. I find that the conflict avoidant—those who are uncomfortable with argument and confrontation—report more anger, anxiety and disgust with the clip than their conflict approaching peers. In contrast, the conflict-approaching are more likely to report enthusiasm, entertainment and amusement in the face of incivility. These findings suggest that we should pay more attention to individual differences when considering media effects and complicate our understanding of the impact of incivility on political behavior.
In 2010, Lanny Davis, former White House Counsel to President Clinton and founder of the Civility Project, commented that the level of political vitriol was the worst he’d seen in his forty years (“Uncivil War,” 2010). More recently, 95 percent of survey respondents report a belief that incivility is a problem, and 70 percent say that levels of incivility have risen to crisis levels (Weber Shandwick, KRC Research, & Powell Tate, 2016). The presence of incivility has been documented across a range of media (Anderson, Brossard, Scheufele, Xenos, & Ladwig, 2013; Berry & Sobeiraj, 2014; Papacharissi, 2004; Sobeiraj & Berry, 2011) and has been shown to affect a range of political attitudes and behaviors, including perceptions of legitimacy, trust in government, and participation (Brooks & Geer, 2007; J. Geer & Lau, 2006; Kahn & Kenney, 1999; Mutz & Reeves, 2005). Implicit across this research is the expectation that incivility has the same effect across all individuals, regardless of their personal predispositions and attributes.

In contrast, recent research on exposure to disagreement—a cousin to (or requirement for) incivility—demonstrates that personal characteristics shape both positive and negative consequences of exposure (Testa, Hibbing, & Ritchie, 2014). Specifically, one’s tendency to seek out or avoid conflict interacts with exposure to interpersonal disagreement to affect political participation. However, research also suggests that individuals are exposed to disagreement most frequently through the media (Mutz & Martin, 2001). Given this tendency, it is through communication via the media, not interpersonal political conversations, where we should be concerned with individuals’ experience of the effects of incivility.

In both interpersonal and mediated communication, disagreement can take many forms. Hearing someone say, “I disagree, and here is why,” is a very different experience than “You idiot! I can’t believe you think something so stupid.” While most people will react more negatively to the second comment, their reactions will also depend on how comfortable they are
with conflict generally. Some individuals are generally conflict-avoidant and are uncomfortable with uncivil ways of disagreeing. Others are conflict-approaching and may be drawn into a debate because they find conflict and confrontation exciting. Little has been done to understand how the effects of incivility differ based on an individual’s predisposition towards conflict.

I argue that what I call “mediated incivility” – that is, incivility experienced through the consumption of news media – elicits different emotional effects across individuals because of their conflict orientation. Conflict-avoidant individuals will react more negatively to uncivil presentation of political news, exhibiting more disgust and anxiety and less interest, entertainment or amusement than when watching a civil news clip. Conversely, conflict-approaching people will have more positive reactions to incivility than to civil communication. To test this argument, I analyze two survey experiments in which participants are shown either a civil or uncivil video clip and then asked about their emotional response to that clip. I find, as expected, that conflict-avoidant individuals recoil from expressions of incivility in the media while conflict-approaching individuals relish it. While the conflict-avoidant report greater feelings of disgust, anxiety and anger after watching uncivil media, the conflict-approaching report overall less of these emotions 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. The conflict-avoidant, however, were no more entertained by incivility than civil presentations of information. These results demonstrate that the interaction of incivility and conflict orientation leads to very different emotional responses across individuals.

These divergent outcomes complicate our understanding of the role of incivility in politics. On the one hand, incivility elicits emotions that draw people into the political arena,
potentially increasing participation and citizen engagement. On the other hand, it systematically
discourages involvement by the conflict-avoidant—people who are more likely to articulate
positions in non-confrontational ways. Furthermore, these findings suggest that incivility breeds
incivility: nasty online comments and hateful outbursts at political rallies may be the result of the
conflict-approaching individual’s enthusiasm for argument and confrontation.

Mediated Incivility and Political Behavior

Ninety-five percent of Americans surveyed (Weber Shandwick et al., 2016) report that
we have an incivility problem, but what exactly do we mean when we talk about incivility?
Herbst (2011) argues that incivility is a strategic tool deployed by political elites to achieve
specific aims, but there is disagreement in the academic literature and the public consciousness
about the specific nature of the tool. Just as a screwdriver can be either a flat-head or a Phillips-
head, incivility can be identified both by the substance of the message and by the tone.

In much of the empirical research into its effects on political behavior, incivility is
characterized as “features of discussion that convey an unnecessarily disrespectful tone” (Coe,
Kenski, & Rains, 2014). These features include insulting language (Mutz, 2015; Mutz &
Reeves, 2005; Thorson, Vraga, & Ekdale, 2010), inflammatory speech (Brooks & Geer, 2007;
Gervais, 2015; Sobieraj & Berry, 2011), and name-calling (Coe et al., 2014; Gervais, 2015;
Stroud, Scacco, Muddiman, & Curry, 2014), among other language. When asked if a range of
acts are uncivil, over 70 percent stated that “belittling or insulting someone” and “personal
attacks on someone you disagree with”—acts that emphasize the tone of the conversation—fall
into the category of incivility (“Allegheny Survey,” 2016). While this conceptualization of
incivility draws heavily on politeness literature, particularly the idea of maintaining positive
“face” (Brown & Levinson, 1987), it does not go so far as to say the two are equivalent. Instead,
the focus is on the ways in which the tone of communication violates acceptable social norms for interpersonal communication (Mutz, 2015; Stryker, Conway, & Danielson, 2016).

Other scholars argue that a simple focus on the politeness of a message’s tone is not enough to identify language as civil or uncivil. Instead, incivility requires “consideration for the democratic consequences of impolite behavior” (Papacharissi, 2004). From this perspective, incivility is operationalized as verbalizing threats to democracy, assigning stereotypes, or threatening others’ rights. Individuals’ perceptions of incivility align with this definition as well; over 65 percent of survey respondents agreed that comments about someone’s sexual orientation, race or ethnicity should be considered uncivil (“Allegheny Survey,” 2016).

Incivility has been documented at differing levels across media platforms. Sobeiraj and Berry (Berry & Sobeiraj, 2014; Sobeiraj & Berry, 2011) report that almost 90 percent of the blogs, cable television and talk radio segments they sampled contain at least some form of “outrage,”† with television ranking as the worst offender. One hundred percent of the cable television programs in their sample and 98.8 percent of talk radio programs contained some form of outrage. Sobeiraj and Berry find that blogs feature outrage less frequently than cable and talk radio, but not “radically less” (Berry & Sobeiraj, 2014). Several studies suggest that incivility has been steadily increasing since the 1980s with the rise of cable television, the internet, and negative campaigning (J. G. Geer, 2012; Shea & Sproveri, 2012). Papacharissi (2004) investigates incivility in the new media environment of online forums, and finds that around half of forum messages contain either impolite or uncivil commentary.

† 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.
Increased incivility has mixed implications for political behavior. Some studies find that exposure to negative, rude or uncivil media leads to decreased perceptions of government legitimacy and lower trust in government (Kahn & Kenney, 1999; Mutz & Reeves, 2005). Others find that incivility increases engagement and participation in campaigns (Brooks & Geer, 2007; J. Geer & Lau, 2006). While these findings demonstrate substantial implications of incivility for political behavior, they say little about the mechanisms by which the presence of incivility in the media leads to changed behavioral outcomes in citizens.

Emotions are influenced by mediated communication and have also been shown to influence behavioral outcomes. For example, emotions play a role in reasoning and affect political decision-making (Brader, 2006; Cassino & Lodge, 2007; Huddy, Feldman, & Cassese, 2007; MacKuen, Marcus, Neuman, & Keele, 2007; Parsons, 2010). Brader (2006) shows that positive campaign ads can cue enthusiasm that motivates participation and activates pre-existing loyalties. Brader also manipulates ads, finding that negative music and images evoke fear, which facilitates persuasion.

Research on media and emotion establishes a starting point from which to investigate the link between incivility, emotion, and political behavior. Much of this research assumes that everyone generally has the same emotional response to negative or positive music and images. However, there are some notable exceptions. 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). Similarly, Gervais (2015) finds that exposure to
like-minded incivility provokes less of an emotional response in participants in an online discussion forum than does exposure to disagreeable incivility. Characteristics of the individual receiving the message—their position vis-à-vis the person communicating through incivility—shape their emotional and behavioral responses to the communication.

Like Phillips and Smith and Gervais, I argue that citizens’ responses to political incivility are more nuanced. Incivility does not elicit the same emotions across all individuals. Appraisal theory suggests that emotions are elicited based on an individual’s assessment of the personal significance of a situation, object, or stimulus (Lazarus, 1994; Roseman, 2008; Scherer, 1999). From this perspective, we are constantly assessing the congruence between situations and our own motivations. If an individual is motivated to approach conflict situations, then, they will have a different emotional response than they might if they are motivated to avoid conflict. In the case of political incivility, motivations are not only tied to partisan identity but also to an individual’s conflict orientation: their desire to approach or avoid argumentative or confrontational situations.

**Conflict Orientation**

Psychologists argue that conflict orientation is trait-based—a set of relatively stable personality attributes rather than responses that change in the face of various environmental stimuli (Bresnahan, Donohue, Shearman, & Guan, 2009; Goldstein, 1999). Conflict orientation determines how people experience and react to conflict, including 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. Conflict-avoidant individuals dislike confrontation and face-to-face resolution of
conflict and will find ways in their personal and political lives to minimize their exposure to potential conflict situations. At the other extreme are conflict-approaching individuals, 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. Conflict-approaching individuals are not disturbed by the presence of conflict around them, and can even thrive in a high-conflict environment.

Political scientists have applied the concept of conflict orientation to their own outcomes of interest, specifically the relationships between conflict orientation, interpersonal disagreement, trust in government and political participation (Mutz, 2006; Mutz & Reeves, 2005; Testa et al., 2014; Ulbig & Funk, 1999). It is easy to see how exposure to incivility while watching political news could lead to different reactions across orientations towards conflict. Those who dislike arguing with others will have a more negative reaction to the yelling, ad hominem attacks and belittling that characterize uncivil communication than those who are excited by the same experience. The conflict avoidant are found to participate less in political discussions and other high-conflict political activities like attending protests, and their trust in government is more affected by incivility than their conflict-approaching peers. This paper explores the first step in one possible explanation for these relationships: the interaction of conflict orientation and incivility produces varying emotional responses, which in turn lead to divergent attitudes and outcomes.

Expectations

Previous research has demonstrated that incivility can produce a range of emotional responses, from disgust, fear and frustration to anger to excitement (Gervais, 2015; Mutz & Reeves, 2005; Phillips & Smith, 2004). I argue that certain individuals are more likely to experience these emotional reactions than others because of the interaction between conflict
orientation and incivility. 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. I focus on three negative emotions—anxiety, disgust and anger—and two positive emotions—amusement and entertainment.

I expect that when conflict-avoidant individuals are faced with political information that is expressed in a highly argumentative 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, will more likely react with enthusiasm or amusement to the expression of incivility in political media.

Looking first at the negative emotions, the literature suggests that incivility could easily tap into the distinct appraisal themes and action tendencies of each. Perceptions of threat and uncertainty produce anxiety (Albertson & Gadarian, 2015; MacKuen et al., 2007). If an individual prefers a world where conflict is minimized, it seems obvious that he or she would perceive incivility as threatening to the stability and habitual nature of their world. On the other hand, if an individual enjoys conflict, incivility is far less likely to produce the same feelings of threat or uncertainty.

Anxiety hypothesis: The more conflict-avoidant the individual, the more anxiety he or she will report feeling when exposed to incivility.

Where anxiety stems from feelings of uncertainty, disgust arises when a situation or stimulus violates expectations of moral purity (Horberg, Oveis, Keltner, & Cohen, 2009; Pizarro, Inbar, & Helion, 2011; Rozin, Haidt, & McCauley, 2008). The use of obscenity or other uncivil language has been tied to morality throughout American culture (Carter, 1998; Feinberg, 1988;
Horberg et al., 2009), making it plausible that uncivil language would elicit feelings of moral disgust towards politics or the political discussion.

*Disgust hypothesis:* More conflict-avoidant individuals than conflict-approaching individuals will report feeling disgusted by incivility.

Appraisal theory suggests that individuals are more likely to experience anger when they assess a situation as wrong or unjust in some way (Lerner & Tiedens, 2006; Russell & Giner-Sorolla, 2011). Incivility’s ability to provoke anger, therefore, would be dependent not only on how an individual feels about conflict, but their assessment of the situation in which incivility is used. In a political situation, this could be tied to partisanship; like Gervais (2015) has shown, partisans are more likely to experience anger when incivility is directed toward their own party than when directed at the opposing party. 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. Furthermore, conflict-avoidant individuals who share the partisan perspective being attacked might be more likely to report anger than those who share the perspective of the attacker.

*Anger hypothesis:* Conflict avoidant individuals will be more likely to report feelings of anger after exposure to incivility.

*Partisan anger hypothesis:* Conflict avoidant individuals who are exposed to disagreeable incivility will report greater anger than those who see the exchange as like-minded incivility.

While the conflict-avoidant are more likely to experience negative emotions, I expect individuals who are more conflict-approaching to have more positive reactions to incivility. Experiences generated by others that are also consistent with an individual’s personal motives evoke “liking” (Arnold, 1960; Roseman, 1984). Translated directly into my framework,
mediated incivility is consistent with the conflict-approaching individual’s motivation to experience conflict and therefore will be liked. Similarly, affective intelligence theory suggests that enthusiasm and satisfaction stem from the successful repetition of behavioral outcomes (Marcus, Neuman, & MacKuen, 2000). From both perspectives, an individual who enjoys conflict situations will report positively experiencing incivility. And indeed, this is what Mutz and Reeves (2005) find: individuals who are excited by conflict also report that incivility has greater entertainment value. Therefore, I assess individuals’ reporting of two positive affective states in the face of incivility: entertainment and enthusiasm. I expect the patterns here to be the opposite of those found in the investigation of negative emotions; while the conflict-avoidant will report no difference in their positive experience of the civil or uncivil video clips, the conflict-approaching will have a stronger positive reaction to incivility.

*Entertainment hypothesis:* The more conflict-approaching the individual, the more he or she will report being entertained by incivility.

*Amusement hypothesis:* The more conflict-approaching the individual, the more he or she will report being amused by incivility.

**Sample**

Data for this study was collected as part of a larger survey experiment conducted on a nationally representative sample of 600 participants by Survey Sampling International (SSI). The survey was run through the open-source survey platform Limesurvey. In order to meet 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. The questions and treatments for this experiment were the third set out of four.

While online samples raise external validity concerns similar to those expressed about student samples, our institution of a quota system ensures a more diverse set of respondents than is the case in most online convenience samples. As Table 1 shows, the quotas were relatively successful in capturing a sample that was reflective of gender, age and race/ethnicity in the United States. As is the case with many online samples, the participants tended to be more educated than the average American but with a lower median household income; however, we still had substantial variation across both of these categories.

[Table 1 here]

While the alignment between the sample and census demographics suggest that the results of the experiment are likely to hold across a diverse set of citizens, other research allays concerns about the external validity of online samples. 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 samples like the one used in this paper, reducing my concerns about the effects of demographic differences or other individual-level characteristics of the sample affecting experimental results.

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2 This researcher's questions came near (3rd out of four) the end of the series of four sets of questions. However, each of the questions 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 the supplementary appendix.
Measuring Conflict Orientation

Across studies of conflict orientation and political behavior, conflict orientation is measured using different scales or survey questions. While Testa and his colleagues (2014) assume that conflict orientation consists of two distinct dimensions—both approaching and avoidant orientations—I build on Mutz’s (2005) work by drawing my measures of conflict orientation from the same psychological measure—the Conflict Communication Scale (Goldstein, 1999). Although Mutz uses only a single question from the CCS, I extend my measure to include five questions that I combine into an additive scale. The scale can range from -10 (the most conflict-avoidant) to 10 (the most conflict-approaching). As Figure 1 shows, many individuals exhibit both conflict-approaching and conflict-avoidant behaviors, placing them somewhere in the middle of the scale. Even using a different scale, my results align with Testa’s (2014) finding that most people are “conflict ambivalent;” the middle 50 percent of the sample have conflict orientation scores of between -4 and 1 which translates to somewhere between moderately conflict-avoidant and slightly conflict-approaching ($\bar{x} = -1.28, sd = 4.2$).

[Table 2, Figure 1 here]

Looking at the specific questions asked within the CCS, it is clear that the scale was designed to measure reactions to conflict in interpersonal settings. And indeed, much of the political science literature focuses on the relationship between conflict orientation and actions that require interpersonal communication (specifically the potential for disagreement)—protesting, knocking on doors for a campaign, or having political conversations. I expect conflict orientation to have the same impact on individuals’ reactions to disagreement in the media. Individuals relate to computers or television programs in much the same way that they relate to other human beings, suggesting that they will process an argument fought on television
Experimental Manipulation of Incivility

After participants responded to 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*. 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 shortened to highlight either the civil or uncivil components of one conversation among the same set of commentators. The segments from both *The Dylan Ratigan Show* and *Morning Joe* dealt with major economic

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3 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: $M_{Morning Joe}=2.89$, $M_{Ratigan}=2.98$, $p<0.69$. 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.

4 *Morning 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 to 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.
debates from 2009 and 2011: the AIG bonus scandal and the budget deficit. As with any experimental treatment, the videos represent a balance between the desire for ecological validity and a realistic experience on the part of participants against the need to control as much of the content as possible to ensure that the treatments differ only on the construct of interest (Druckman, Green, Kuklinski, & Lupia, 2011).

To ensure that the civil and uncivil treatments differed in incivility rather than simply the level of disagreement, I chose videos in which political elites—journalists and elected officials—disagreed about a political outcome. Substantively, the clips focus on policy and don’t contain the sort of anti-democratic content that Papacharissi identifies as uncivil. Therefore, the findings reported below only compare emotional responses to incivility as captured by the tone of communication rather than the substance. Both uncivil clips indicators of incivility similar to those used in other experimental research (e.g. Berry & Sobeiraj, 2014; Brooks & Geer, 2007; Gervais, 2015; Mutz, 2015), including interruption, shouting, and verbal sparring (phrases like “wait a second” or “well, listen”). The uncivil clips also contained visual cues that could signal incivility. In Morning Joe, co-host Mika Brzezinski touches Joe Scarborough’s forearm as he emphatically interrupts Congressman Cantor, as if to encourage him to tone down his response. In the Dylan Ratigan clip, one of the female speakers held her hands up while fighting against an interruption, reinforcing her words, “wait a minute” with a hand gesture that indicated the same thing. While neither gesture is uncivil in and of itself, both could be incorporated into an individual’s mental picture of the scene as evidence that incivility was occurring. Finally, the civil clips contained an exchange between the same journalists and political elites in which they had some disagreement but without the indicators of incivility such as name-calling or shouting.
As Figure 2 shows, participants in the survey interpreted the uncivil treatment as approximately one-half point less civil than the civil treatment, a statistically significant but perhaps not substantively significant difference ($\bar{x}_{\text{uncivil}} = 3.1, sd = 1.0$; $\bar{x}_{\text{civil}} = 2.5, sd = 1.1, t = 6.6$). The most conflict-avoidant and the most conflict-approaching participants perceived the civil treatment as similarly 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, we can be more confident that conflict orientation is directly shaping emotional reactions, rather than orientation affecting perceptions of incivility which then influence one’s affective response.

[Figure 2 here]

Incivility Sparks Emotional Responses

Before getting into the differences across conflict orientations, I looked for a general relationship between exposure to incivility and reported emotional responses. Drawing on Mutz and Reeves (2005) and Brader (2006), I expected 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 3 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 ($\bar{x}_{\text{civil}}=1.89$, $\bar{x}_{\text{uncivil}}=2.08$, p<0.041). 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. A two-sample, two-tailed t-test indicates there was no significant difference in their reported entertainment ($\bar{x}_{uncivil} = 2.2, \bar{x}_{civil} = 2.1, p = 0.30$).

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 ($Anger: \bar{x}_{uncivil} = 2.0, \bar{x}_{civil} = 1.8, p < 0.02; Anxiety: \bar{x}_{uncivil} = 2.1, \bar{x}_{civil} = 1.7, p < 0.001$), but they report much greater feelings of disgust. On average, participants report feeling a little disgusted after watching the civil treatment ($\bar{x}=1.90$), 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 ($p<0.01$).

[Figure 3 here]

Effects as Moderated by Conflict Orientation

Overall, these findings demonstrate that incivility elicits a range of emotional responses from citizens, both positive and negative. But the main effects of incivility on emotional response also suggest an interesting 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 why incivility seems to 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.

Table 3 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. Looking first at the negative emotions—anxiety, anger and disgust—I expected that exposure to incivility would increase feelings of all three among the conflict-avoidant and that partisanship would also play a role in evoking anger. 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 4 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.

[Table 3 here]

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, thereby offering support for the anxiety, disgust and anger hypotheses. There was no support for the partisan anger hypothesis. Neither partisanship nor the strength of party identity had a statistically significant effect on participants’ report of negative emotional reactions.

[Figure 4 here]

The pattern for the experience of positive emotions mirrors that for negative emotions. Looking at Figure 5, we see that 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 5 here]

To summarize, my experimental survey results suggest that conflict orientation and incivility interact to produce different emotional responses in the conflict-avoidant and conflict-approaching. 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 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.

Beyond Political Incivility

A frequent question raised in the investigation of conflict orientation is the extent to which it is domain-specific. In other words, can we be conflict avoidant when it comes to politics, but conflict approaching in our professional lives? If our conflict orientation is specific
to politics, then we would not have the same reactions to political incivility as we would to other types of incivility.

To test the extent to which conflict orientation shapes our responses to incivility in the mediated world more generally, I replicated the initial survey experiment with a different set of respondents and stimuli. GfK/Knowledge Networks recruited 3,101 individuals to participate in the experiment, which was funded by the Time-Sharing in the Social Sciences’ Young Investigators Program. Participants completed a 4-question version of the Conflict Communication Scale and were randomly assigned to one of 4 45-second clips that varied in the presence of civility or incivility and their substantive content. One set was political in nature, featuring CSPAN coverage of Congressional hearings on Planned Parenthood. The second set of clips was entertainment-based and centered on two judges’ evaluations of food prepared by a contestant on the reality cooking show Master Chef. Each of the clips was pretested by a different online convenience sample and selected to maximize differences in perceived civility between the civil and uncivil clips while minimizing differences across the substantive topics.

The Planned Parenthood clips showed an exchange between members of the Congressional Oversight and Government Reform committee and Planned Parenthood President Cecile Richards. In the civil condition, Representative Elijah Cummings (D-MD) argues in a reasoned, calm tone that the rule of law must be followed even if he or others wishes that it said something else. The uncivil clip depicts an exchange between Richards and Congressman Jim Jordan (R-OH). Jordan frequently interrupts Richards, raises his voice, holds his figure up as if he’s pointing or telling her to wait a minute, and ultimately accuses her of avoiding his questions.

6 The scale contained four of the five statements used in the first experiment. The fifth, “Arguments don’t bother me,” was dropped to keep the TESS-funded survey on the shorter side, thereby increasing the number of participants that could be collected. This statement was chosen because it showed the weakest correlation with the other measures in a series of pairwise correlation evaluations.
Using a five point scale on which 1 signified the clip was not at all civil and 5 indicated extreme civility, participants saw a statistically significant difference in the civility of the two clips ($\overline{x}_{civility} = 3.2, sd = 1.3; \overline{x}_{uncivility} = 1.7, sd = 0.90, p(two - tailed) < 0.01$).

In the Master Chef clips, a male contestant’s pasta dish is being judged. In the civil condition, a female judge is critical of the food but keeps an even tone and does not malign or otherwise insult the contestant. The uncivil condition presents an assessment of the same meal by a second, male judge. This judge is also critical, but he criticizes in a way that belittles the contestant, pointing to his “cavalier” and “oh poor me again, I got screwed up” attitude. He continues: “you want to show us how cutesy and intelligence and crafty you are. Well that’s going to get you a one way ticket back to where you came from. And then you can show your friends and the six people who told you you were good how cutesy and smart you are while you’re at home cooking at dinner parties” (Joe vs Howard Pasta Challenge | Masterchef US, 2013). Like with the Planned Parenthood clips, the Master Chef clips were perceived as significantly different from one another ($\overline{x}_{civility} = 2.5, sd = 1.20; \overline{x}_{uncivility} = 1.6, sd = 0.89, p(two - tailed) < 0.01$).

Before moving into the relationships between conflict orientation, incivility, and emotional responses to these new clips, I offer a brief characterization of the participants and treatments. The average participant was slightly conflict-avoidant ($\overline{x} = -2.4, sd = 2.95$). There was a statistically significant difference between the perceived civility of the civil and uncivil clips, as well as between the coverage of the two topics. Specifically, the civil Planned Parenthood clip was found to be almost half a point more civil than that from Master Chef ($\overline{x} = 3.2, sd = 1.31; \overline{x} = 2.6, sd = 1.20$, respectively) on a 1-5 scale where five signified
extreme civility. The difference between the two uncivil clips was smaller and statistically
insignificant ($\bar{x}_{PF} = 1.7, sd = 0.90; \bar{x}_{MC} = 1.6, sd = 0.89$).

As in the previous experiment, participants’ experience of discrete emotions was self-
reported on a 1-5 scale where one demonstrated that a participant did not feel a particular
emotion at all and five indicated extreme emotion. For the most part, the uncivil treatments
produced more emotional responses than the civil treatments, particularly negative emotional
responses.

An OLS regression of each emotion on the interaction between conflict orientation and
incivility, holding constant partisanship, ideology, gender, education and race, displays patterns
similar to those seen in the SSI study. Figure 6 graphically depicts these results. For the Master
Chef clip, there is no significant difference in the reported anger, disgust, or anxiety of the highly
conflict-approaching. However, the most conflict-avoidant individuals are likely to report
substantially more anger, disgust and anxiety after watching the uncivil clip than the civil one.
The uncivil Planned Parenthood clip produces a strong direct effect but weaker interactive
effects on anger and disgust. Regardless of conflict orientation, the uncivil clip elicited greater
disgust and anger on the part of participants. However, the interactive pattern for anxiety
matches that found in the SSI student and with the Master Chef clips. The conflict-avoidant
report greater feelings of anxiety—almost a point higher on the scale—when shown the uncivil
clip while there is no difference in the emotion evoked in the conflict-approaching by the two
clips. Once again, there is support for the anxiety, disgust, and anger hypotheses. Party
identification fails to obtain statistical significance, so there is no support for the partisan anger
hypothesis.

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7 A table of the regression results is available in the appendix.
As in the SSI study, incivility and conflict orientation produce weaker effects on positive emotional responses. Both conflict orientation and incivility produce statistically significant direct effects for the Planned Parenthood and Master Chef videos; however, the interaction between the two is only statistically significant for amusement in the Planned Parenthood condition. While the remainder of the interactions fail to achieve statistical significance, they do follow a similar pattern to that found in the SSI sample. Therefore, there is at least some support for the *amusement* and *entertainment* hypotheses, as well as an indication that conflict orientation and the presence of incivility can evoke enthusiasm in participants.

**Discussion**

Current research on incivility emphasizes its dual nature: on one hand, it decreases trust in government and perceptions of legitimacy while on the other it increases participation. This article offers one reason for these contrasting outcomes: incivility affects people differently because people respond to conflict in different ways.

Specifically, the two studies described above demonstrate that people who don’t enjoy conflict—the conflict-avoidant—will experience greater negative emotions when exposed to incivility than when asked to watch a civil video clip. Alternatively, the conflict-approaching will report stronger positive emotions in the face of incivility. These patterns hold up across different samples and using different video clips of both political and entertainment topics.

The fact that conflict orientation and incivility interact to provoke different emotional responses has implications for a range of political behaviors and decisions. Much of the evidence suggests that emotion has a positive effect on political participation (Marcus et al., 2000). Research by Brader suggests that anxiety propels people to seek more information while
enthusiasm stimulates the desire to vote (Brader, 2006). This increased engagement in the political sphere is typically seen as normatively positive, but it raises concerns about the quality of citizens’ engagement. Conflict-approaching individuals are being drawn into politics, but not in a way that facilitates reasoned, respectful conversations about the issues. A Facebook post by a Toledo, Ohio news station about steps to resettle Syrian refugees prompted a stream of uncivil comments, from “Gas them, dig a big hole” to “Sad to say but I think its time of a new day and aged [sic] Hitler” (Voss, 2015). Previous research (Anderson et al., 2013; Stroud et al., 2014) suggests that preventing anonymous postings and moderating comment forums can reduce uncivil comments, but this does not explain why individuals are driven to make uncivil comments in the first place, nor does it explain why they are willing to use their Facebook accounts to do so. My research suggests that the presence of incivility in the media, coupled with greater engagement by people who are comfortable with conflict in the first place, could increase the likelihood that discourse will become uncivil.

Future research concerning the impact of incivility on emotional responses should push this connection further, identifying emotional response as the mechanism by which incivility and conflict orientation shape political participation and engagement. If incivility makes the conflict-avoidant anxious, are they looking for more information about politics, and if so, how and where are they doing so? The greatest effects were in eliciting disgust reactions, which have been shown to lead to avoidance behaviors (Neuberg, Kenrick, & Schaller, 2011; Rozin et al., 2008). Are most of the conflict-avoidant deciding to simply avoid politics instead? Or, because anger motivates political action, could we see the conflict-avoidant become more engaged in political activity? Positive emotions like enthusiasm also encourage engagement, so it is possible that the conflict-approaching are also more likely to participate in certain types of political activity.
Experimental work that builds political engagement onto the end of the surveys used here would go far towards exploring these effects.

Finally, this research fits within a growing body of literature that acknowledges individual variation in reactions to and engagement with the media. As Mondak et al explain, “For both personality traits and environmental factors, we must detail in clear terms how and why effects on political behavior are expected to operate, and ultimately in what circumstances” (2010, 91). The findings in this article demonstrate that the effects of incivility are conditional on both personality traits and the content of the uncivil communication. Some emotional responses, like anxiety, manifest the same way across video clips: the conflict-avoidant are more anxious in the face of incivility than civility. Others change; conflict orientation conditions feelings of anger and disgust when watching uncivil clips about Master Chef or economic topics, but doesn’t have an effect on individuals’ reactions to an uncivil exchange about Planned Parenthood. Additional research may be able to tease out whether the contentious nature of the issue itself also matters. Ultimately, where traditional media effects research assumed that news clips and advertisements had similar effects across individuals, these findings demonstrate that such effects are conditioned by an individual’s predispositions—both political and nonpolitical.
Works Cited


https://doi.org/10.2307/2586118


https://doi.org/10.1002/bdm.515


Biobehavioral Reviews, 35(4), 1042–1051.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neubiorev.2010.08.011


Figure 1

Distribution of Participants on the Conflict Communication Scale

Conflict Orientation

Density
Figure 2

To what extent was the clip you just watched civil?

- More uncivil
- Reported level of civility
- Less uncivil

Conflict Orientation

- Avoid
- Approach

Uncivil Treatment

Civil Treatment
Figure 3

Average Participant Report of...

Positive Emotions

Negative Emotions

Self-Reported Experience of Emotion (Average)

Civil Uncivil

Entertainment Amusement

Anger Anxiety Disgust
To what extent did the clip make you feel...

Figure 4
Figure 5

Conflict Orientation Affects Emotional Reactions to Incivility

To what extent did the clip make you feel...

- Amused?
- Entertaining?

Conflicts were measured on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 indicating 'not at all' and 5 'extremely.'
Figure 6:

To what extent did the clip make you feel...

Source: GIK 2016
Figure 7

To what extent did the clip make you feel...

Master Chef

- Amused?
- Entertained?
- Enthusiastic?

Planned Parenthood

Self-Reported Amusement

Avoid -5 0 5 Approac Conflict Orientation

Self-Reported Entertainment

Avoid -5 0 5 Approac Conflict Orientation

Self-Reported Enthusiasm

Avoid -5 0 5 Approac Conflict Orientation

---

Civil

Uncivil

Source: GfK 2016
Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the SSI Sample in Comparison to the National Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SSI sample</th>
<th>National Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>$42,000</td>
<td>$53,046</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Education
- <H.S. diploma: 5% (SSI), 14% (National)
- H.S. grad/some college: 46% (SSI), 57% (National)
- College grad+: 49% (SSI), 29% (National)

Race/Ethnicity
- White: 66% (SSI), 78% (National)
- Black: 13% (SSI), 13% (National)
- Hispanic: 14% (SSI), 17% (National)

Sex
- Female: 52% (SSI), 51% (National)

Median Age
- 35-44 (SSI), 37 (National)

Note: National data are from U.S. Census estimates for 2012, except age (U.S. Census estimates for 2010).
Table 2: Adapted Conflict Communication Scale Question Wording

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy challenging the opinions of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find conflicts exciting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I hate arguments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arguments don’t bother me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel upset after an argument.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 3: The Interaction between Conflict Orientation and Incivility Influences Emotional Responses

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Anxious</th>
<th>Disgusted</th>
<th>Angry</th>
<th>Amused</th>
<th>Entertained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>-0.0080</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>0.0087</td>
<td>0.037*</td>
<td>0.014</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(0.0144)</td>
<td>(0.016)</td>
<td>(0.015)</td>
<td>(0.015)</td>
<td>(0.015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncivil Treatment</td>
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<td>0.41**</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.28**</td>
<td>0.21*</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Political Knowledge</td>
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<td>(0.373)</td>
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<td>Independent</td>
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<td>(0.145)</td>
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<td>Strong Partisan</td>
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<td>0.27*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.111)</td>
<td>(0.125)</td>
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<td>(0.114)</td>
<td>(0.115)</td>
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<td>Female</td>
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<td>-0.24*</td>
<td>-0.20*</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
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<td>(0.094)</td>
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<td>Constant</td>
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<td>(0.187)</td>
<td>(0.170)</td>
<td>(0.17)</td>
<td>(0.174)</td>
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</table>

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

This appendix only includes the portion of the SSI study that relates directly to this article.

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
Treatments:

**Morning Joe (MSNBC): Uncivil**

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.

**Transcript, Morning Joe**

Mika Brzezinski: Here with us now, Republican Representative from Virginia and House Minority Whip, Congressman Eric Cantor.
MSNBC reporter: Congressman, the president yesterday said that he has full confidence in Secretary Geithner, do you?

Cantor: Listen, I don't think you're going to find anybody on Capitol Hill that doesn't have some real concerns about what's going on at the Treasury department and I think Secretary Geithner owes this country an explanation as to first of all how he approved the second transfer of the TARP money without catching these bonuses.

MSNBC Reporter: Congressman, the president yesterday said that he has full confidence in Secretary Geithner, do you?
The Dylan Ratigan Show (MSNBC): Civil

RUNNING HEAD: Conflict Orientation, Incivility and Emotions
GfK Study

[All participants] 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.
• I feel upset after an argument.

[Randomly assign participants to four (4) groups. Each group will watch one of the following video clips. There should be a free-text box underneath the video where participants can offer comments/questions/feedback per the instructions below. The text box should be labeled “Add your comment:”]

Please watch the video below. After watching the clip, you are invited to ask questions or offer your own comments in the box below if you would like to do so.

1. Civil apolitical (masterchef_civil.mp4)
2. Civil political (pp_civil.mp4)
3. Uncivil apolitical (masterchef_uncivil.mp4)
4. Uncivil political (pp_uncivil.mp4)

[Ask this question ONLY if the participant does not type anything in the comment box:] We noticed you chose not to leave a comment on the video clip. Why did you decide not to leave a comment?

[All participants] The news organization also allows you to share the content you just watched with your social network on Facebook, Twitter, or other social networking sites. Would you be interested in sharing this story? [Yes/no]

[i]f yes] Please write below any commentary you would include in your shared post.

[i]f no] Why wouldn’t you share the story?

[All participants] 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
• Amused
• Entertained
• Enthusiastic

[All participants] To what extent was the clip you just watched... [not at all, slightly, moderately, very, extremely]
• Informative?
• Civil?
• Biased?
Table A.1: The Interaction between Conflict Orientation and Incivility Influences Emotional Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Anxious</th>
<th>Disgusted</th>
<th>Angry</th>
<th>Amused</th>
<th>Entertained</th>
<th>Enthusiastic</th>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>0.03</td>
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Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. ** indicates statistical significant at p<0.01, * significance at p<0.05.