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# Political incivility is a feature, not a bug: Why mediated incivility is not bad for democracy

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# Abstract

Popular and scholarly arguments state that uncivil discourse is bad for democracy because it hampers political trust and sharpens polarization. These same scholars see uncivil discourse as contrary to a good democratic society. However, their arguments could be overstated because incivility may be so contextual that elites can frame certain peoples and actions as uncivil for purely political benefit, and because incivility can prompt increased political participation among marginalized peoples. My dissertation draws on a series of survey experiments and a content analysis to assess how individuals' perceptions of incivility vary and whether exposure to incivility encourages individuals to participate or de-polarize.

The first study of my dissertation uses a conjoint experiment to focus on how people's perceptions of what constitutes uncivil speech is subjective to their own biases and inclinations. The second study of my dissertation uses a content analysis of over a decade of cable news coverage of protests, finding that what political actors consider uncivil depends significantly on the political partisanship and ideology of the protesters. Finally, my last empirical chapter of this dissertation studies how Black Americans prompted to consider the rich tradition of uncivil and disruptive incivility in the Black community will subsequently state higher intentions to participate politically. Generally, what the dissertation finds is that incivility in American politics both reflects and reinforces American power structures: who has power, who wants power, and what they will do to maintain or obtain power, respectively. Political actors with power will seek to frame their political opponents as uncivil, often in bad faith, in order to maintain their power. Marginalized peoples will pursue political capital through disruptive, often uncivil, protests

designed to obtain power. From this dissertation, I offer a more complicated, nuanced understanding of incivility in American politics beyond its established, negative consequences.

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living creatures. Moreover, our lives are a debt. All life is merely borrowed. That is, life does not belong to us; it is not given. It is merely a temporary grace we receive from God. One day, when I return that borrowed life to my creator, I hope to see you all again. Until then, I have a lot of work to do to make you all proud.

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# 1 Introduction

Popular and scholarly arguments state that uncivil discourse is bad for democracy because it hampers political trust and potentially sharpens polarization. This research claims that uncivil political discourse is contrary to a good democratic society. These scholars' arguments could be overstated for three reasons: (1) there may be no common understanding of what constitutes uncivil discourse; (2) ideas of what constitutes incivility may be manufactured for political gain; and (3) incivility can prompt increased political participation among some groups.

My dissertation draws on a series of survey experiments and a content analysis to assess how individuals' perceptions of incivility vary, how political actors try to frame what is and is not uncivil political behavior/speech, and whether exposure to incivility encourages certain marginalized peoples to participate in politics. This dissertation reveals that negative outcomes of incivility are often overstated or manufactured, while also showing the potential benefits of incivility in a democracy with such great systemic inequalities as the United States.

The first chapter of my dissertation tests to what extent White Americans' perceptions of what constitutes "incivility" is in fact a moving target; that is, what White Americans perceive as uncivil speech is subjective to their own biases and inclinations. In a conjoint experiment conducted with 450 White Americans, I find that regardless of the type of incivility, people alter what they think is uncivil depending on the *identity* of who said the uncivil statement and who was targeted by it. Specifically, those in my sample were more sensitive to incivility that targeted women and members of their own political party than men or members of a political out-party, respectively. And those with strong racist attitudes less strongly perceived incivility when speakers directed uncivil statements at people of color. This implies that perceiving incivility is

itself prone to context and societal biases reflecting current power structures in America and may even be subject to some degree of political strategy: people perceive incivility depending on whether it is political convenient to do so. So, if political incivility is inherently contextual, then that allows for multiple, sometimes competing notions of what it means to be uncivil—notions that political actors can manipulate to their own ends.

As such, my second dissertation study explores how political actors define incivility depending on who they are talking about, revealing to what extent their concern for incivility in politics is perhaps made in bad faith. Specifically, this content analysis looks at cable news portrayals of protests and when elites are more or less likely to call them uncivil—I refer to this practice as "civility policing." In this content analysis, which studies coverage on protests from January 2009 to January 2021, I find that civility policing is not only common in such cable news coverage, but that it is strongly driven by politics. That is, even after accounting for the type of protest activity being used, political actors were much more likely to call a protest conducting by members of their out-party as being uncivil than protests by members of their own political party or ideology. Further, this study reveals some evidence that political actors on Fox News are more likely to call protests concerning gender or racial issues uncivil than protests of other issue domains. This study again reinforces the notion that claims about incivility are about power. In this case, claims about incivility from those who often already have power reflect their desires to maintain their power amid protests against the status quo.

The final empirical chapter of my dissertation turns to incivility's positive effects. Indeed, I argue that the perceptual nature of incivility can be used by marginalized peoples to mobilize. Black Americans have historically relied on disruptive acts of public voice in order to alter the

status quo and achieve racial justice. These acts were and continue to be categorized by some scholars as uncivil, though they are culturally resonant. Thus, when recalling the need for such uncivil actions, Black Americans can be moved to take more action in efforts to gain equality.

In a survey experiment of 2,700 White and Black Americans, I prime respondents to consider the history of disruptive, and sometimes violent protest, in the Black community. I find that Black Americans, when primed in this manner, are more likely to express an intention to participate in a greater range of political activities, including some disruptive or uncivil acts (e.g., blocking traffic, occupying public property) and are less likely to view many of these activities as uncivil, relative to Black Americans in a control group and relative to White Americans receiving the same treatment. This experiment challenges contemporary notions that incivility generates problematic democratic outcomes; instead, I offer compelling evidence from a rigorous experimental context that incivility can lead to normatively desirable outcomes such as political participation. And once again, this study offers one final piece of evidence regarding incivility's intrinsic relationship with power: those marginalized are willing to rely on disruptive, uncivil means of political participation in order to obtain political capital.

I argue that this dissertation reveals, across three different studies, that incivility is indelibly linked to *power*: who has power, who wants power, and what they will do to maintain or obtain power, respectively. Scholars of incivility cannot afford to misunderstand it as some concept that simply *exists* somewhere in the world, ready to be measured. Instead, I propose a bold, novel approach to understanding incivility in politics: its relationship to power. By understanding and studying incivility as an extension of political actors' tactics for maintaining

their political power, or as a means for marginalized peoples to obtain power, we can better appreciate incivility's negative *and* positive consequences on American democracy.

# 2 Race, gender, and the politics of incivility: How identity moderates perceptions of uncivil discourse

Many Americans agree that incivility in politics is a problem, and has been one for a long time (Herbst 2010). Many speak of incivility as a singular concept; that is, a set of words and phrases that apparently "everyone" knows have no place in good democratic governance. I argue there is systematic variation in what people perceive as uncivil. These variations stem not only from partisan reasoning but perhaps more importantly from stereotypes about race and gender.

Most existing work on incivility perceptions focuses on partisanship or specific types of rhetoric (e.g., insults or threats) (e.g., Druckman et al. 2019; Muddiman 2017; Mutz 2015). While some recent work explores how other elements like how someone holding an elected office (Frimer and Skitka 2020) affects incivility perceptions, there remain notable gaps in what we know about Americans' perceptions of incivility. Little to no work has systematically explored a host of *identity* attributes—such as race and gender—that could affect perceptions of what is uncivil. This is surprising given incivility itself is a historically racialized concept surrounding minority political actions (Kirkpatrick 2008; Lozano-Reich and Cloud 2009; Rood 2013).

To address these gaps, I employ a conjoint experiment embedded in a nationally-representative survey of 450 White, non-Hispanic/Latino Americans to test how social identity induces variations in perceptions of incivility. I find that the identity of those involved in uncivil discussions—their partisanship, race, and gender—moderates perceptions. Specifically, White Americans are *more* likely to perceive incivility when a speaker directs it at their co-partisans, more likely to perceive incivility when the speaker or target are women, and *less* likely to

perceive incivility a speaker directs it at a Black American. These latter perceptions are moderated by racist attitudes such that those with strong racist attitudes least strongly perceive incivility directed at Black Americans. The implication of these findings is that White Americans are not perceiving norm violations equally in all cases, and especially in terms of identity. They seem to hold women to a higher standard in their expectations of civility and, among racists, are more accepting of incivility targeted at Black Americans.

### 2.1 Defining political incivility

I define political incivility as *perceived, norm-violating political communication* (Mutz 2015, 6). Political incivility occurs when an individual (i.e., an audience member) perceives a statement from a speaker to a target as norm-violating; this entails a reaction to a dyadic combination of speaker and target. In political settings, a common definition of norm violations involves "violations of politeness that include slurs, threats of harm, and disrespect" (Druckman et al. 2019; also see Stryker, Conway, and Danielson 2016). But if people perceive uncivil speech differently depending on who says it and who it targets, then the notion that uncivil speech is particularly devastating is further undermined.

While much of the existing research on political incivility focuses on clear cases of norm violations—that is, experimental treatments designed to be as uncivil as possible—there are also instances where perceptions of norm violations depend on the political context. After all, what a person construes as a "threat of harm" or "disrespect" is largely a subjective assessment, and it will likely vary depending on the context. Further, I argue that we should better understand how and why perceptions of incivility vary so that we can then better understand any effects of incivility. These effects include efficacy (Sydnor 2019c), trust in government (Mutz 2015), and

negative affect toward partisans (Druckman et al. 2019), all of which can have notable consequences on American democracy. This study aims to elucidate the antecedents to these effects.

**2.2 Politics and incivility perceptions**

Existing research has also looked at how partisanship may moderate people's perceptions of incivility. A number of researchers find that people are less sensitive to incivility that comes from their co-partisans (Gervais 2019; Muddiman 2017; Mutz 2015). This makes clear that there is some sort of in-group bias at play when partisans perceive incivility (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2004; Huddy, Mason, and Aarøe 2015). For an audience member perceiving a speaker/target dyad, this means that she will likely have a bias in favor of a co-partisan. As such, if the speaker says something potentially uncivil, an audience member sharing the speaker's partisanship may be inclined to diminish the severity of the uncivil communication.

> *Hypothesis 1a:* Audience members will less strongly perceive incivility when the speaker is a co-partisan, relative to when the speaker is not, all else constant.

As for how perceptions vary due to the partisanship of the target, I predict that audience members will be *more likely* to perceive incivility when a speaker directs it at a co-partisan. The logic here follows work in social psychology that finds people are more sensitive to threats that target their in-group (Voci 2006; Wann and Grieve 2005). This should extend to incivility insofar that uncivil statements are norm violations and thus threatening in nature to one's in-group. Because of this sensitivity to in-group members being treated poorly, audience members will be more likely to detect incivility when a speaker directs it at a co-partisan. While existing

work has explored the question of uncivil speakers thoroughly, this question of those targeted by incivility remains unaddressed.

> *Hypothesis 1b*: Audience members will more strongly perceive incivility when the target is a co-partisan, relative to when the target is not, all else constant.

### 2.3 Gender and gender stereotypes

Gender identity is subject to a set of norms about what is and is not appropriate for women to say or for others to say to women (Mendelberg and Karpowitz 2016). Moreover, gendered stereotypes and gender roles likely play a prominent role in many Americans' perceptions of what is means to be uncivil. After all, gender is one of the primary means by which people forms perceptions about others; that is, it is one of the go-to heuristics people rely on, even when gender has nothing to do with the issue at hand (Ito and Urland 2003). Further, even when people are primed to think about gender stereotypes, they often dominate discourse (Mendelberg and Karpowitz 2016).

While there are numerous stereotypes about women, most fall into one of two major stereotype categories that women are (1) warmer and (2) less competent than men (see Ellemers 2018 for a thorough review). Many people, either implicitly or explicitly, understand women through these two stereotypes regarding warmth and competence: that is, women care more about others, are better at expressing concern, are more sensitive than men, and are physically weaker than men. Moreover, these stereotypes become prescriptive insofar that many believe women *should* act in a manner consistent with their stereotype (Prentice and Carranza 2002).

Incivility, as discussed earlier, is a harsh sort of rhetoric, the sort that is often frowned upon by others because it violates certain social norms (Mutz 2015). This becomes a gendered

issue when we consider that many believe women should be warmer and nicer than men. Women who engage in uncivil speech challenge the dominant stereotype about how they should behave. And women who challenge these sorts of stereotypes are judged more harshly than women who conform to them. For example, Phelan, Moss-Racusin, and Rudman (2008) find that supervisors punish women who express higher levels of competence in mock hiring processes by giving them less favorable evaluations, shifting attention to their perceived deficiencies in other areas; this pattern was not observed with male applicants. Thus, I contend that people will perceive incivility more strongly when the speaker is a woman, due to the woman breaking not only norms of politeness applied to everyone, but also breaking specific stereotypes about how women should act.

> *Hypothesis 2a*: Audience members will more strongly perceive incivility when the speaker is a woman, relative to when the speaker is a man, all else constant.

One consequence of the stereotype that women are weaker and more sensitive than men is that women are often perceived as needing protection from harm (Glick and Fiske 1996). This stereotype, and subsequent bias, is often internalized during childhood when gender norms are typically instilled in children, even from parents who consciously try to raise their children in counter-stereotypical ways (Endendijk et al., 2014, 2017). In fact, even adult women can express these sort of sexist attitudes in response to perceived hostility toward women (Fischer 2006). Thus, I expect Americans will be more sensitive to incivility when a speaker targets a woman compared to that speaker targeting a man.[1]

[1] Further, women in the US have not been prominent in politics and have lower political efficacy as a result (Lawless and Fox 2005). Thus, many in the US may be seen as less able to deal with uncivil political rhetoric.

*Hypothesis 2b*: Audience members will more strongly perceive incivility when the target is a woman, relative to when the target is a man, all else constant.

### 2.4 Race and racism

As stated earlier, incivility as a concept has been historically racialized by those in the majority to silence racial minorities' speech (Lozano-Reich and Cloud 2009; Rood 2013). It stands to reason, then, that the race of the speaker or target can affect someone's perceptions of incivility. Specifically, I argue that the key to understanding this dynamic lie with some White Americans' racist attitudes.

America's racial hierarchy is useful for understanding White Americans' potential attitudes toward a speaker or target involved in uncivil speech. White Americans are, by and large, the most socially powerful group in America (Omi and Winant 2014). White Americans dominate the country's history books as heroic figures and figureheads of democratic citizenship (Allison and Goethals 2011). And because most White Americans live in segregated communities, much of their exposure to Black Americans is through media, which often portray them as dangerous criminals (Jackson 2019).

The theory of social dominance orientation (SDO) provides a partial explanation for why this racial hierarchy may matter for some White Americans assessing the uncivil nature of some political speech. This theory posits that dominant groups in society have such a strong preference for the status quo that they outright desire a hierarchical society that places them at the top at others' expense (Sidanius and Pratto 2001). That is, those with these attitudes express an outright desire in many cases to dominate racial minorities in the US.

It follows that perceptions of incivility could be subject to these racist attitudes as incivility is generally considered a negative behavior in America (Bybee 2016).[2] Those with strong racist attitudes are motivated to see Black Americans or other racial minorities as uncivil because incivility is often threatening; racists *want* to see these groups as uncivil because it confirms what they already believe: that these groups are threats.[3]

> *Hypothesis 3a*: Audience members with strong racist attitudes will more strongly perceive incivility if the speaker is Black, relative to an audience member with weaker racist attitudes (i.e., a moderation effect), all else constant.

Extending this logic from speakers to targets, those with strong racist attitudes are likely to express outright hostility toward Black Americans and other minorities; they want to hate these groups. As an extension of that, I posit that racists *want* to see others expressing hostility toward Black Americans and other racial minorities. That said, while they may enjoy the uncivil statements themselves, they will be unlikely to admit that they perceive the statements as uncivil.

> *Hypothesis 3b*: Audience members with strong racist attitudes will less strongly perceive incivility if the target is Black, relative to a target with weaker racist attitudes, all else constant.

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[2] "Racist attitudes" refer to SDO from this point forward, or racial resentment, which is a separate measure also employed by this study (Kinder and Sanders 1996).

[3] In one of the only studies on the subject of race and incivility perceptions, Sydnor (2019a) uses an experiment that varies the race of two people engaged in an uncivil discussion on Twitter. She finds that an interaction between two White men is perceived as more uncivil than an interaction between a Black man and a White man. However, she does not measure racial attitudes and cannot find moderation effects, which I anticipate are crucial to detecting the effects that race and differences in soft power more generally have on perceptions of incivility. These findings are significant at $p < 0.10$ (see her online appendix).

## 2.5 Method

My framework to study incivility involves a dyad consisting of a speaker and a target of the incivility, and an audience that is exposed to that communication. I predict that the audience's reaction to any dyad depends on both ascriptive and descriptive features as well as the type of incivility. I study the impact of the hypothesized features via a conjoint experiment. This approach allows one to vary several features of stimuli and assess the causal effects of each feature independent of the others (Bansak et al. 2021). The advantage of this approach, as compared to a factorial vignette experiment, is that it allows me to study that large menu of dimensions about which I hypothesized. Specifically, respondents are randomly exposed to a set of features, multiple times. As Bansak et al (2021) explain, multiple exposures in conjoint experiments does not appear to lead to order effects.

I test the effects of 10 features of an uncivil communication: (1) the *speaker's* partisanship, (2) gender, (3) race, and (4) elite status (e.g., elected official or not); (5) the *target's* partisanship, (6) gender, (7) race, and (8) elite status; (9) the type of incivility; and (10) the presence of civility policing (i.e., an explicit pointing out of an uncivil statement). These 10 features almost all have at least two possible values.[4] I will detail the specific connection of each attribute to their respective hypothesis below. I pre-registered the hypotheses at AsPredicted.org.[5]

Note that I included three features that I did not discuss above: elite status, civility policing, and the type of incivility. I include the former to make the experimental design more

[4] With that many features to randomly assign across so many possible values, I would need 4,608 unique stimuli to assess the effects of a feature if I were to use a traditional factorial design.

[5] You can find an anonymized document here: https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=8z96ms

externally valid, as job titles are frequently attributed to those mentioned in news articles. And I include civility policing also to enhance ecological validity as headlines often vary in whether it explicitly calls out incivility. Moreover, civility policing itself is worth further exploration in future work on the subject, but it is not the subject of interest in this particular study (see Braunstein 2018 for an introduction to this concept).

I omit the type of incivility as a formal hypothesis because the existing literature is clear on expectations. Namely, that due to exceedingly strong violations of social norms, different types of incivility evoke stronger reactions (Muddiman 2017; Stryker, Conway, and Danielson 2016). For the purposes of this study, I follow Muddiman's (2017) work by studying personal-level and public-level incivility; specifically, I study insults and threats as forms of personal-level incivility, and slurs as a category of incivility that falls somewhere between the two major categories. First, insults deride political opponents. Second, threats often aim to increase make a target concerned for their own safety. Finally, slurs are derogatory, taboo words or phrases that a given culture perceives as incredibly offensive to a certain group of people (Henderson 2003). I am not the first to draw these distinctions, which Muddiman's (2017) research validates. As such, we should expect slurs to elicit the strongest perception of incivility, followed by threats, and then insults.

### 2.5.1 Conjoint design

After a pre-treatment survey, respondents are told that they are going to read excerpts from recent articles about politics. They then receive six different excerpts, each of which is

randomly generated from the 10 different attributes mentioned above.[6] Table 2.1 shows each attribute and respective possible levels, as well as the relevant hypotheses. For occupation, I included numerous "ordinary" jobs, such as teacher, accountant, and nurse so that respondents did not consistently receive a description of the same non-elite job in each scenario. Also, I varied incivility type in a similar manner, with many different operationalizations all falling under the three main categories: insults, threats, and slurs. I discuss the variations in name/race/gender below.

A couple of examples of this short vignette are displayed in Figure 2.1.


*Figure 2.1 Examples of treatment variation*

*Table 2.1 Attributes and levels in conjoint experiment*

| **Attribute** | **Level** | **Hypothesis tested** |
|---|---|---|

[6] A pilot test of this study, conducted with 130 undergraduate students, revealed that six tasks were the optimal number of tasks to ask respondents to complete for this design.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Speaker Partisanship | 1. Democrat<br>2. Republican | Hypothesis 1a |
| Speaker Gender | 1. Female<br>2. Male<br>(accomplished through name) | Hypothesis 2a |
| Speaker Race | 1. Black<br>2. White<br>(accomplished through name) | Hypothesis 3a |
| Target Partisanship | 1. Democrat<br>2. Republican | Hypothesis 1b |
| Target Gender | 1. Female<br>2. Male<br>(accomplished through name) | Hypothesis 2b |
| Target Race | 1. Black<br>2. White<br>(accomplished through name) | Hypothesis 3b |
| Incivility Type | 1. Insults (idiot, moron, lunatic, asshole, shit head, bitch, bastard)<br>2. Threats ("get punched," "get roughed up by the crowd," "get hurt by someone," "be dealt with")<br>3. Racial and gendered slurs (N-word, cracker, cunt, prick) | No associated prediction |
| Civility policing | 1. "Recent Townhall Meeting Turns Uncivil"<br>2. "Details From Recent Townhall Meeting" | No associated prediction |
| Speaker Occupation | 1. Elite<br>2. Non-elite (accomplished through multiple possible job titles) | No associated prediction |
| Target Occupation | 1. Elite<br>2. Non-elite | No associated prediction |

After reading each vignette, the survey asked respondents to assess how uncivil they thought the scenario was. This process was repeated another five times for six total excerpts.[7]

[7] I designed the excerpts to be brief, as fatigue could have been an issue with longer vignettes. Further, readers could lose attributes in longer texts, which encourage skimming. Six profiles is a low number of tasks to complete, as

### 2.5.2 Names and race

To vary race and gender in the scenarios, I followed the audit study literature, using names (Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004; Butler and Homola 2017). Specifically, this study relies on findings from Gaddis (2017) to select 64 first names to use in the study (16 for each gender/race combination), along with 15 last names that reliably denote a White or Black identity. I chose names from his results that control for class with six exceptions (see Appendix I for those six names), and I also account for the class confound by adding last names that are distinctly Black or White. The 64 names are all perceived to be the intended race at least 90 percent of the time, according to the Gaddis findings. I adopted the last names straight from Gaddis' study as well. Names were randomly generated according to what race and gender were randomly assigned to the participant for any given task. First name and last name were randomly assigned separately to increase variation. I detail all first and last names chosen for this experiment in Appendix I.

### 2.5.3 Procedure

The survey started (prior to the scenarios) with respondents answering a set of pre-treatment questions including: partisanship, gender, and the $SDO_7$ scale ($\alpha = 0.83$) (Ho et al. 2015). This latter scale is used to test Hypotheses 3a and 3b. I also asked for respondents' basic demographic information, their partisanship, and their political ideology pre-treatment (full question wording can be found in Appendix D). Participants then received the experimental treatments. After each scenario, participants answered the main post-treatment item, a five-point

recent work finds that as many as 30 profiles does not significantly increase satisfying behaviors among respondents (Bansak et al. 2018).

perceived incivility scale, which is fairly standard in the existing literature (e.g., Muddiman, 2017; Stryker et al., 2016; Sydnor, 2019a).[8]

### 2.5.4 Participants

The sample is 450 White, non-Hispanic/Latino American adults. The nationally representative sample was collected by Bovitz, Inc. between October 21-25, 2019. I collected an all-White sample because my predictions concerning racist attitudes (H3a and H3b) are predicated on White Americans' attitudes; I wanted to maximize my ability to detect the predicted moderation effects. I determined the sample size based on recommendations provided by Orme (2010), who advises that conjoint analyses looking at subgroups use about 200 respondents per sub-group (65). Since I am analyzing the data using interactions to test two of the hypotheses, it is prudent to think of the analyses as having two main "sub-groups", one group with "low" levels of out-group hostility, and one group with "high" levels.[9] Full demographics for the sample can be found in Appendix A.

[8] Some may worry that answering the first outcome question will subsequently affect the measurement of that same outcome after additional profile tasks are completed. However, research finds that this is not the case and that this particular concern can be addressed in analyses. Specifically, one can assess this by examining of the outcomes from later tasks differ from those results from the first task (Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto 2014, 8). I do this and find my results do not significantly differ when using only the first scenario's data (see Appendix F), except in the case of the interactions, which lose most of their statistical power by dropping 5/6 of the sample size.

[9] Since each participant responded to six tasks each, the data was first transformed from "wide" to "long," such that each task became its own row, complete with the corresponding respondent ID and characteristics (e.g., race, gender, etc.). Open-source code used for this transformation are publicly available. This creates a dataset of 2,700 rows or "respondents."

**2.6 Results**

I analyze the data using ordinary least squares with all variables recoded from 0-1; all standard errors are cluster robust on the respondent (to account for the fact that each respondent produced six different rows of data).[10] I first present a model that tests Hypotheses 1 and 2, or the hypotheses that do not require moderation analyses to test. The reported significance tests are two-tailed in order to present a more stringent test of the hypotheses. The model shown in Figure 2.2 tests whether respondent's perceptions of incivility (i.e., five-point scale from "not at all uncivil" to "very uncivil") is affected by the following: the partisanship of the speaker (H1a) and the target (H1b); the gender of the speaker (H2a) and the target (H2b); the type of incivility used (no hypothesis) the race of the speaker (no hypothesis) and the target (no hypothesis); the presence of "civility policing" (no hypothesis); and the elite status of the speaker and target (no hypothesis). I include variables for which there are no associated hypotheses, including two race variables, because although unrelated to my central hypotheses (some of which are contingent on racist attitudes), it is still important to account for them in this model since I am trying to isolate the effects of particular features of the vignette. This "base" model is later used again, with the relevant interactions added to it, to test Hypotheses 3a and 3b while accounting for the variation in the vignettes.

Figure 2.2 shows the results of the base model, broken down by hypothesis. First and foremost, I find that sharing partisanship with the speaker has no effect on perceptions of

[10] AMCEs are perhaps the better-known method for analyzing conjoint designs. I omit them here because multivariate OLS is not only the same analysis when used with cluster-robust standard errors, but also because OLS regressions with interactions produce results that are easier to interpret. Regardless, I replicated the main analysis (sans interactions) with an AMCE model and the results did not significantly differ from the OLS; these results can be found in Appendix G.

incivility. This indicates that people perceive in-party members and out-party members similarly when it comes to making uncivil statements, replicating some prior work on the subject (e.g., Druckman et al., 2019). However, in contrast, other work that finds people are less sensitive to incivility from their co-partisans, relative to their out-party (Muddiman 2017; Gervais 2019). This may be due to the variation in the other aspects of the conjoint. My approach presents a wider variety of possible intervening variables to people's perceptions of incivility, while the work that finds people less sensitive to co-partisan incivility has to date focused only on the intersection of partisanship and incivility type.

However, I do find strong support for H1b that predicts that those who share partisanship with the target will be more likely to perceive incivility, relative to audience members who do not share partisanship with the target. I find strong effects in the predicted direction for partisanship ($p < 0.01$). This indicates that people are more likely to perceive incivility when a speaker targets a co-partisan with uncivil speech, relative to situations wherein the audience member does not share partisanship with the target. These findings indicate there is no objective evaluations of incivility going on in political discourse.

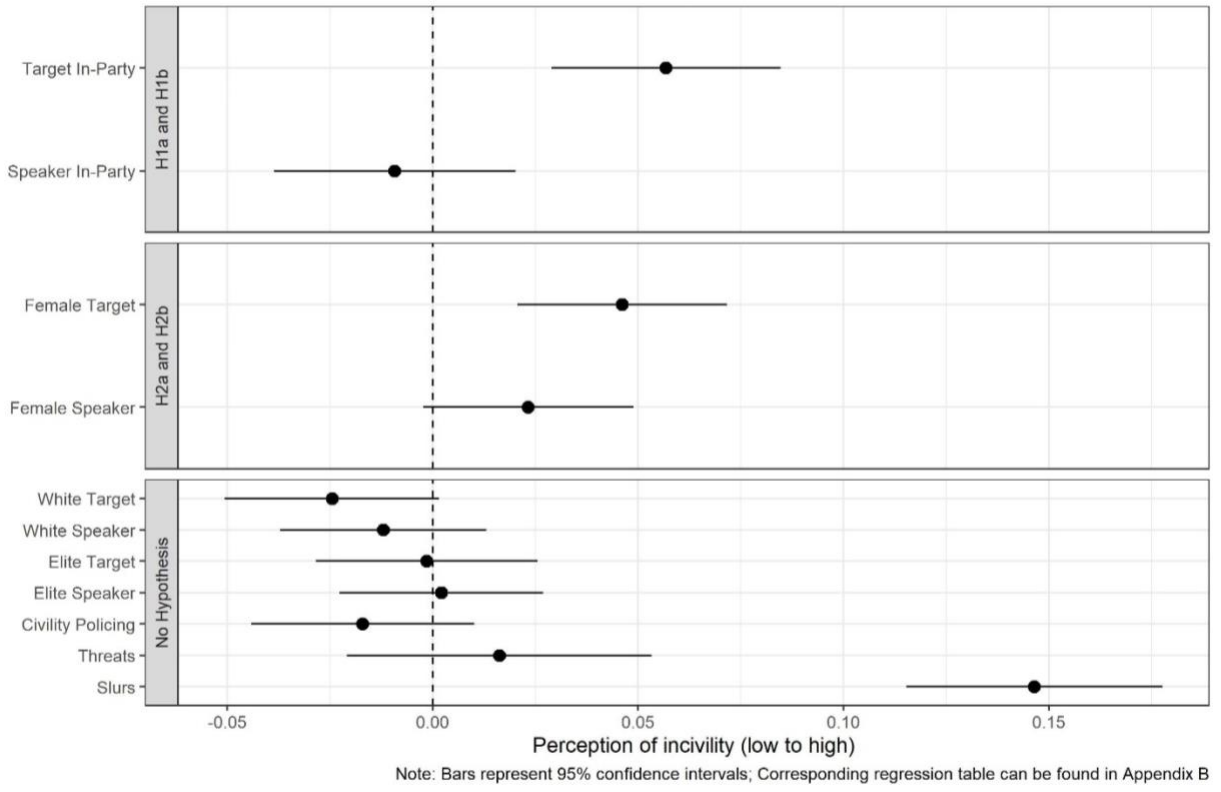


*Figure 2.2.* Perceptions of incivility and how they vary

Next, I turn to the hypotheses concerning gender, namely that people would more strongly perceive incivility when it was spoken by or targeted at a woman, both of which are supported. As Figure 2.2 shows, there are positive effects of the speaker ($p < 0.10$) or target being a woman ($p < 0.01$). Both of these findings reflect the effects that gendered stereotypes in American society can have on people's perceptions of uncivil speech from and toward a woman. White Americans judge women who act uncivilly more harshly than men, likely due to stereotypes about how women are supposed to be "nicer" than men. And White Americans are sensitive to women being targeted by incivility, likely due to paternalistic notions about protecting women, who they believe are inherently sensitive.

I next move on to the question of whether racist attitudes affect these perceptions. As one can see in Figure 2.2, the results show that White Americans more strongly perceive incivility when the target is Black. But these results do not test the actual hypotheses as those require an investigation of moderation effects. Recall that H4a predicts that those with strong racist attitudes will more strongly perceive incivility if the speaker is Black, relative to an audience member with weaker racist attitudes. This implies an interactive model between the presence of Black speaker and racist attitudes. Specifically, I operationalize this as social dominance orientation. I present the interaction graphically in Figure 2.3, with the details appearing in Appendix B. As one can see in the figure, I find no evidence in favor of H3a.[11] This indicates that people with strong racist attitudes do not perceive incivility more strongly from Black *speakers*.

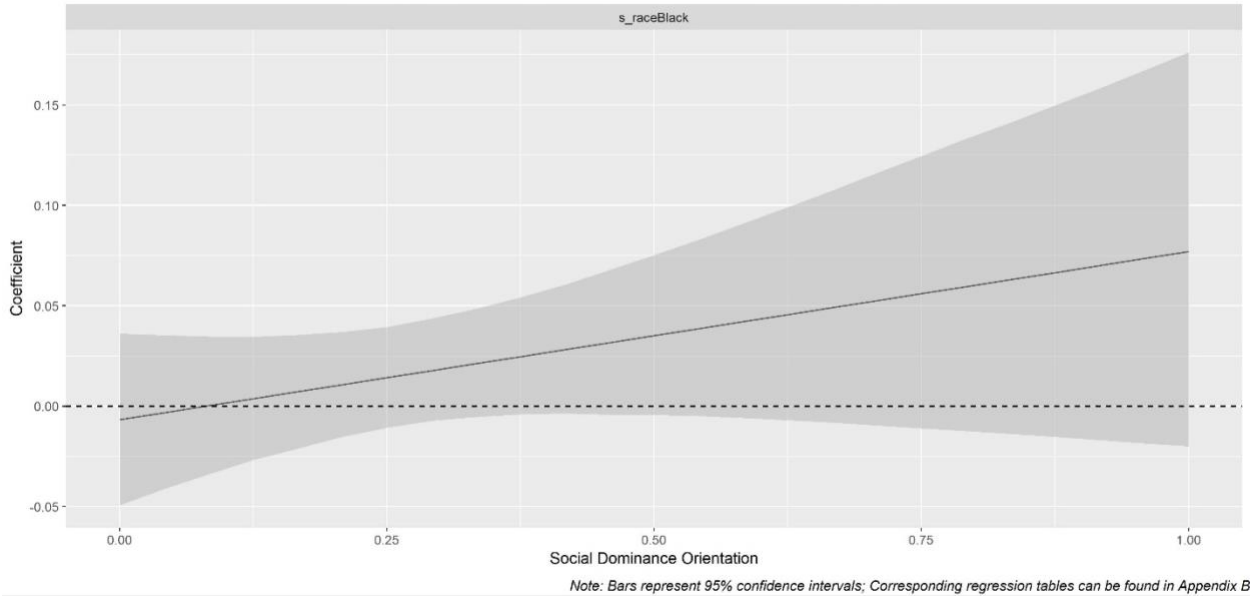


*Figure 2.3.* OLS interaction model for racism toward speaker

[11] This holds true with models substituting racial resentment; the hypothesis is still unsupported.

And Hypothesis 3b predicts that those with strong racist attitudes will less strongly perceive incivility if the target is Black, relative to audience members with weaker racist attitudes. This, again, calls for an interactive model between SDO and the presence of a Black target. Figure 2.4 shows clear evidence that those with high levels of SDO are less likely to perceive incivility when it targets Black Americans ($p < 0.10$).[12] These findings replicate across other models, including tests of reactions to specific dyadic combinations of speaker and target (see Appendix C).

This implies that SDO attitudes predict incivility perceptions in cases where the target of uncivil speech is a Black person, regardless of the actual incivility being used. These moderation effects reveal why respondents, as shown in Figure 2.2, more strongly perceive incivility when a speaker directs it at a Black target. As one can see in Figure 2.4, those with the weakest racial attitudes most strongly perceive incivility that targets a Black person. In the aggregate, this result becomes weaker. Overall, however, this is clear evidence in favor of the argument that White Americans with racist attitudes differentially perceive incivility depending on the race of the target.

[12] A similar model with racial resentment exhibits a similar pattern; see Appendix B.

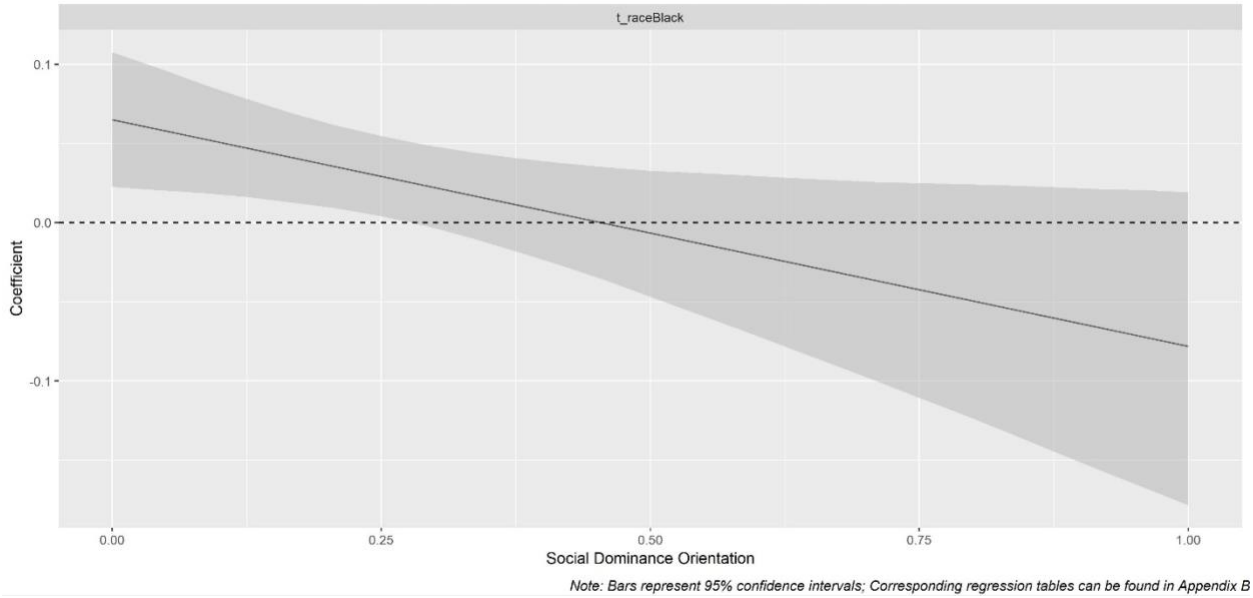


*Figure 2.4.* OLS interaction model for racism toward target

As for features for which I do not have an associated prediction, we see some clear trends. Figure 2.2 shows that while the presence of slurs greatly affects people's perceptions that the exchange was uncivil, threats do not. The effect of slurs on incivility perceptions is large and statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), providing clear evidence that respondents see slurs as more uncivil than other types of uncivil discourse, replicating some prior work on the subject (Stryker, Conway, and Danielson 2016). However, respondents do not perceive threats are more uncivil than insults. Further, there is no observed effect for the remaining variables that did not have an associated hypothesis.

This might be surprising in at least one area: the null effect on the elite status of the speaker. Elites may no longer hold a vaulted place in American culture; this may reflect the rise of polarization and decline in trust in government ("Public Trust in Government: 1958-2019" 2019). In Appendix E, I replicate analyses from Frimer and Skitka (2020) that test whether people perceive incivility more strongly from their in-party elites than they do in-party non-

elites. These additional analyses also exhibit null effects. This difference from Frimer and Skitka is likely due to the wider menu of features this experiment tests, as opposed to a more straightforward design that the aforementioned study employs.

**2.7 Discussion and conclusion**

Many Americans are greatly concerned with incivility in politics, with most of the electorate going as far as saying the phenomena have reached "crisis levels" ("The State of Civility" 2017). Scholars find good reason to be wary of political incivility, as it can erode trust in institutions (Mutz 2015), increase hostility (Gervais 2017), and even disincentivize certain groups of people from engaging in politics (Sydnor 2019c). Empirical strategies for identifying incivility have evolved from manual content analyses of news corpuses (e.g., Berry & Sobieraj, 2014) to automated content analyses that rely on dictionaries of "uncivil" terms (Coe and Park-Ozee n.d.), machine-learning programs that adapt in real-time to evolving discourse (Hosseini et al. 2017), and hybrid methods that retain human knowledge (Muddiman, McGregor, and Stroud 2019). The issue with many of these methods of inquiry is that they often fail to account for social dynamics and human bias in how we perceive incivility.

I show that researchers must account for variations in incivility perceptions going forward and attend to the gendered, racial, and partisan interplay at work when it comes to incivility. There is no single, universally-accepted understanding of what is and is not uncivil. My findings show that people form their own impressions based on a combination of their attitudes and the identity of those involved in an uncivil exchange in the following ways:

1 People are sensitive to their co-partisans being targeted by uncivil speech, while conversely being more likely to look the other way when an out-partisan is being similarly targeted.

2 People are more sensitive to women speaking uncivilly and being targeted by incivility; essentially, women need to watch their speech more, according to these findings.

3 People with strong racist attitudes less strongly perceive incivility targeting Black Americans, making them easy targets for incivility for those strategic enough to capitalize on America's history of White supremacy.

While slurs may be the strongest predictor of whether someone strongly perceives something as uncivil, the findings in this study reveal a degree of partisan strategy at play in when and how people perceive incivility (Herbst 2010). Indeed, the findings make clear that partisans are overly sensitive to uncivil speech that targets a co-partisan. I posit that this is partly strategic, as outrage politics can be quite effective when one side can make the case that their party is being treated poorly (Braunstein 2018). This also indicates to some extent that partisan calls for civility may be made in bad faith as a means to demean out-partisans for their "uncivil" behavior. White Americans may be politically motivated to perceive incivility when it is most convenient to them, such as when Black Americans or other minorities challenge white supremacy.

Gendered attitudes about what is acceptable for women to say seems to affect how strongly people perceive a woman's political speech as uncivil (Ellemers 2018). And the White Americans in this sample seemed especially sensitive to incivility targeted at women, indicating a patriarchal sort of prejudice (Glick and Fiske 1996). If women and men are being judged by

different standards on what constitutes incivility, then we must pay attention to the gendered biases that can accentuate attention toward some people's speech, and not others. For example, the findings here potentially indicate that female candidates for office are hamstrung to carefully watch their language in order to appease gendered stereotypes of appropriate speech for women in America.[13]

Further, even after accounting for every type of incivility and the other contextual features of an uncivil speech exchange, racist attitudes can moderate White Americans' perceptions of incivility. Specifically, White Americans with the lowest levels of social dominance orientation—a *need* to dominate others in society—perceive incivility *more* when the target of that uncivil speech is Black. Meanwhile, those high on the scale do not seem to be particularly sensitive or blind to incivility targeting Black Americans. So, while racially progressive White Americans may more readily detect incivility that targets Black Americans marginalized peoples, a whole swath of the population will likely not mind at all. This allows for an explicit type of prejudice to take place in American discourse *under the guide of uncivil speech*; that is, elites have *carte blanche* to say whatever they like about Black Americans so long as they play to the right audiences.

In sum, what I find in this study is that claims about who is and is not uncivil are fundamentally about *power*. That is, who and what White people perceive as uncivil reflects their notions of power in America—who has it and who wants it. Those without power or those with less power are perceived as being less civil than those who already have power, like White men.

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[13] Perhaps more interesting are supplemental analyses where I measure the perceived incivility of a speaker depending on who they are speaking to. These analyses, found in Appendix H, show that Black women are routinely perceived as the most uncivil speakers, especially when they are speaking to White women.

As such, this study demonstrates that incivility is about *identity* and not institutional politics. This could matter when contentious politics, especially those concerning race or gender, are deemed uncivil by those in power. In these situations, norm violations are not being perceived equally in all cases, specifically when the target of the uncivil speech is a woman, or a co-partisan, or Black. There are a series of double standards at play. And the outrage in politics surrounding just how "uncivil" everything has become is perhaps just another strategy: faux outrage politics that censures the speech of some, but not others. Perhaps, there is no incivility crisis in America; rather it is merely politically convenient to perceive as much when it suits some people more than others.

# 3 That's the sound of the (civility) police: How civility serves as political strategy

The first study of this dissertation shows that perceptions of incivility vary based on the context of the situation and the biases of the perceiver. From this, I argue that incivility's contextual nature is useful for political actors who benefit from strategically framing their political opponents as uncivil. The intended consequence of such framing, I argue, is to discredit political opponents' acts of political voice in order to maintain a status quo that benefits certain political actors. That said, the extent of this phenomenon are largely unknown, having only been documented in certain historical case studies (e.g., Gitlin 1980; Ransby 2018; Welch 2012).

To that end, I conduct a content analysis of over a decade of cable news coverage surrounding protest activities, one of the primary means by which marginalized peoples exert their public voice (Nelsen 2019; Zukin et al. 2006). Cable news networks that are known for partisan bias in their reporting are likely to strategically label some of these protests as civil and others as uncivil depending on their partisan lilts, a practice that I call "civility policing" (Levendusky 2013). In this content analysis, I find protests from a speaker's partisan or ideological opponents more likely to be targeted by civility policing and that protests concerning gender or racial issues are also more likely to be called uncivil than protests of other issue domains. I discuss the consequences of this politically motivated civility policing, which cast serious doubt on some concerns that America is experiencing a "crisis" of civility ("The State of Civility" 2017).

### 3.1 Civility policing as repression

Political actors can use incivility as rhetorical strategy in order to mobilize, which Herbst (2010) argues is part of the appeal of incivility. I argue that these actors can also appeal to *civility norms* as rhetorical strategy. "Civility norms," here, refer to "implicit or explicit rules or principles that are understood by members of a group and that guide and/or constrain behavior without the force of laws to engender proper conduct" (van Kleef et al. 2015, 25). Braunstein (2018) labels this tactic as a "civility contest," or "practical efforts to draw symbolic boundaries between civil and uncivil individuals, groups, or behaviors" (608). The purpose of these contests, she argues, is to denote which groups in society are playing by the rules of civility, and which are not, thereby marking the group(s) supposedly in violation of civility norms as societal nuisances or illegitimate. The strategic value of civility policing or civility contests is repressing certain acts of public voice that are inconvenient or contrary to one's politics. Put another way, civility policing can act to shame groups.

This tactic of rhetorical repression has been historically aimed at groups infringing on the status quo, be they labor groups in the early 20th century (Welch 2012), leftist social movements in the mid-20th century (Gitlin 1980), or contemporary movements for racial justice (Ransby 2018). By "repression," I refer to a statement that seeks to silence or disrupt some act of political voice such that the public undermine its value or do not hear it at all. In the case of civility policing, political actors can invoke civility norms to point to specific groups in society and mark them as unworthy of consideration in the political process, thus delegitimizing their claims and voice. Civility policing can be problematic precisely because those in power often have employed it to silence marginalized groups such as people of color and women (Lozano-Reich

and Cloud 2009; Neberai 2017; Rood 2013). Whether these documented cases are indicative of a larger trend is unclear. The purpose of this study is to understand whether civility policing is used to further marginalize already marginalized peoples.

The history of political incorporation in the US has been rough and unevenly distributed. Racial minorities and women were explicitly left out of the franchise of voting at the nation's founding (Takaki 2012). And without the institutional means of political action, minorities and women turned to acts of political voice (i.e., protest) to struggle for enfranchisement rights throughout the 19th and 20th centuries (Barreto et al. 2009; McConnaughy 2013; Walton, Smith, and Wallace 2017).

The legacy of the Civil Rights Movement of the mid 20th century is especially notable for its effects of the enfranchisement of Black Americans (Gillion 2020). This protest movement left an indelible mark on Americans even half a century later. Black Americans are still motivated to protest and participate in politics through a communal norm of "honoring the past," or the legacy of their ancestors who fought for the rights enjoyed by many in the community today (Anoll 2018). Black Americans are not only motivated by the past; the ongoing *de facto* segregation of Black communities provides ample incentives to contemporary Black Americans to continue to protest (Cohen 2010). Even as segregation practices have diminished in the past half century, their effects continue to stall Black achievement, especially in education and income mobility (Logan 2013; Massey and Denton 1993; Reardon and Owens 2014). However, research shows that segregated communities increase group consciousness, especially in the case of Black Americans (Anoll 2018; Dawson 1994). Cohen (2010) argues that a combination of this increased group consciousness and other socialization practices in Black communities leads

individual Black Americans to have lower trust in government institutions (i.e., diffuse support) and thus express a desire a "take to the streets" to demonstrate their frustrations (p. 128-129).Even White Americans in counties that experienced Black protest during the Civil Rights Movement today express less racial resentment and greater support of redistributive policies that benefit Black Americans (Mazumder 2018).

Women in America have also had to fight for their enfranchisement. The Suffrage movement of the 19th and early 20th centuries is a quintessential example of women's commitment to protest as a primary means of influencing policy (McConnaughy 2013). And while women's organizations in America have since transitioned away from mass protest as their *primary* means of political action to more formal forms of lobbying (Goss 2012), women's movements in the 21st century still rely on protest at crucial moments and have been quite successful with these efforts. Both sides of the abortion debate in America have successfully organized annual, national protests that garner attention from lawmakers (Munson 2018). And many partisan actors often label these protests as "deviant"—another example of civility policing (Boyle and Armstrong 2009). And the 2017 national "Women's March" was the largest single-day protest in the history of the US, mobilizing women from across different races and income brackets (Broomfield 2017; Fisher 2019).

Given the importance of protest in modern minority and women's politics, it is important to understand how political actors may use news media as a means of rhetorically repressing these movements through civility policing. If political actors portray a primary means of political expression for marginalized peoples as illegitimate or deviant, it means that those political actors are trying to remove these people's challenges to the status quo from a position of power, even if

only rhetorically. Protests in America are already portrayed as "nuisances" in news media and it is not that great a leap to go from "nuisance" to "dangerous" (Di Cicco 2010). This basic schemata is already well embedded in American consciousness; I argue that what political actors are doing is increasing the accessibility of those beliefs that protests are nuisances, thereby increasing the effectiveness of the frame that minority and women's protests are illegitimate forms of political voice (see Druckman and Chong 2007). Thus, coverage of protests is a prime opportunity for political actors to engage in civility policing, which is why I focus my study on this material.

### 3.2 Civility norms and their importance

It may not be immediately clear why calling a person or group uncivil could be greatly damaging to their reputation, but it follows logically from what we know about how people feel about incivility. Incivility is perceived as a major problem in American politics by a majority of Americans ("The State of Civility" 2017). For instance, a study conducted just after the 2016 Presidential Election finds that 75 percent of Americans reported that incivility in America had reached "crisis levels," and 56 percent reported that they thought incivility would only get worse ("The State of Civility" 2017).

And exposure to incivility typically makes people feel some sort of undesirable emotion or attitude, such as anger when exposed to incivility from a political opponent (Gervais 2017), decreased trust in the political system (Mutz 2015), and a generally combative attitude (Kalmoe, Gubler, and Wood 2018). Indeed, only a minority of Americans seem to truly enjoy incivility, as those who are conflict seeking express greater interest in politics when it takes on an uncivil tone

(Mutz 2015; Sydnor 2019c).[14] Incivility in politics is so undesirable that partisans even feel less warmly toward members of their own party that violate civility norms (Druckman et al. 2019), and find them less credible (Frimer and Skitka 2018).

There is scant empirical evidence for this repression tactic, aside from a working paper by Sydnor (2019b). That study tested how labeling the same protest activities by Black Lives Matter or an environmentalist group as uncivil affected respondents' feelings toward the two groups and their perceptions of protest as a legitimate form of participation. Sydnor finds that when Black Lives Matters protests are labeled as uncivil in a mock news story, respondents are less likely to think that protests, in general, are a legitimate form of political participation, exactly the sort of "worst case" scenario that comes to mind when discussing consequences of civility policing (Braunstein 2018). The question then becomes just how and how often political actors use these tactics.

### 3.3 Race, media, and civility policing

Political actors can engage in civility policing in any political setting, but their responses to protests are a good source of empirical inquiry. As explained, protests are acts of public voice, a particular type of political participation, wherein groups of people try to push for political change outside the bounds of institutional politics (Walton, Smith, and Wallace 2017). Often, marginalized peoples engage in protest more often than other groups due to their minority status within a majoritarian political system (Cohen 2010). And most protest tactics violate some civility norm, be it politeness or the rule of law or any number of norms. Further, protests are

[14] Of course, variations in conflict orientation depend on a number of individual characteristics, such as gender, partisanship, and age, but it is, overall, true that very few are in the extreme end of the scale that expresses enjoyment in response to conflict.

easily perceived as uncivil by the majority in America, regardless of the tactics being used (Rosenberg 2016). Protests are often loud, disruptive, comprised of many different actors, and difficult to organize, even with 21st century technologies (Lozano-Reich and Cloud 2009; Ransby 2018); they can very easily spiral out of control due to a few bad actors, a common problem of this sort of collective action (Chong 1991). Thus, protests are perhaps the best opportunity for political actors to undermine the groups associated with them, especially when the subject of the protest is contrary to their own politics. After all, protests are methods by which marginalized peoples seek power or justice; if these efforts are undermined by civility policing, then this has important implications for the ongoing struggle for racial and gender equality.

The population of interest for this study then are public statements covered in news media about protests in the United States. By protests, I am referring extra-institutional political mass mobilization aimed at rejecting some aspect of the status quo in favor of some change in policy that would benefit the protesting group (see Alinsky 1989). The purpose of this mass mobilization can be to educate or inform the mass public or elites about some otherwise inconspicuous grievance (Gillion 2013) or to pressure lawmakers directly by making private grievances subject to public debate (Schattschneider 1960); in many cases, the purpose of protest can be multi-faceted and even contested (Gitlin 1980).

I focus on cable news coverage of protest in order to adequately sample political actors making public commentary on these acts of public voice. Analyzing media coverage of protests provides a good case study for assessing the nature of civility policing primarily because the majority of Americans are unlikely to experience protests firsthand. Certainly, average

Americans could have some first or second-hand experience of protest (via inter-personal discussions), but most Americans will rely on third-party information of protests to form attitudes about them; this is precisely why we should pay attention to news coverage of protest activities. And I specifically opt to study cable news and not broadcast media or newspaper media for three reasons. First, cable news has a stable and growing audience size and continues to grow in its profits annually ("Cable News Fact Sheet" 2019). Second, cable news tends to be more political than mainstream news outlets which allows me to look at partisan trends and partisan targets (Levendusky 2013). Third, given the political nature of cable news, it is a perfect medium in which to look at political actors' rhetorical efforts—and ultimately, I seek to understand how different types of political actors treat distinct types of protests. Put another way, regardless of the ultimate effects—which are important—the goal here is to assess how political actors act rhetorically and cable news serves as an excellent place to study that.

Indeed, if most Americans' only exposure to protest is through news coverage, and cable news coverage provides a platform for more opinionated content, then these media are good outlets for political actors to engage in civility policing of marginalized peoples. I argue that political actors, all else constant, are most inclined to civility police during media coverage of protests concerning racial and/or gendered issues. I posit that political actors are more likely to police the civility of issues like police brutality, immigration, wage discrimination, or abortion because they challenge the status quo that most political actors benefit from.

> *Hypothesis 1*: Civility policing is more likely to occur surrounding coverage of racial or gendered political issues, relative to protests in which the topic is unspecified, all else constant.

### 3.4 Civility policing and partisanship

While political actors often benefit from the status quo, this is not universally so (Schattschneider 1960). For example, a Republican cable news pundit is unlikely to be pleased with *Roe v. Wade* as the status quo of abortion law in the US and will thus support efforts to undermine that status quo. Moreover, partisans are perhaps most likely to oppose the status quo when their political party is not in power. As such, it is natural to predict that political actors will engage in *selective* civility policing such that they more frequently target their partisan opponents, relative to their in-party. After all, my main theoretical argument is that political actors do not use civility policing out of a genuine concern for the value of civility in democratic society; rather, they employ it as a rhetorical tactic and political strategy.

First, there is very little strategic value in marginalizing members of your own political party. Of course, a content analysis cannot assess intention, but it can assess trends in civility policing when political actors engage in such behaviors. More important, and second, I posit that political actors will also not engage in civility policing of their own party due to the process of motivated reasoning. Motivated reasoning occurs when a person assesses information and forms opinions in the service of a particular goal—it can be conscious or unconscious. Most differentiate directional from non-directional goals (Molden and Higgins 2012). A directional goal is akin to a predetermined conclusion, such as reaffirming one's prior belief or bolstering one's identity (Lodge and Taber 2013). A directional goal, in this case of civility policing, is to minimize the message of one's out-party while maximizing the message of one's in-party. Thus, political actors will process information about protests to reach these conclusions, such that a Democrat, for example, will engage in civility policing when a protest is mainly about an issue

that is Republican or conservative in nature (e.g., second amendment rights, pro-life), but not when people are protesting around Democratic or liberal issues (e.g., gun control, pro-choice).

Both the lack of strategic value in policing one's own party and the motivated reasoning that leads political actors to overstate the incivility of their out-party will likely be reflected in any media coverage of protests undertaken by marginalized peoples. Thus, I predict the following:

> *Hypothesis 2*: Political actors will more often engage in civility policing when the majority of protesters are not a part of one of their political party or ideology, relative to when the protest group shares their party or ideology, all else constant.

### 3.5 Content analysis design

In order to understand how political actors use civility policing tactics and test my hypotheses, I conduct a content analysis of cable news coverage of protest activity in America; that is, any news story within a certain time frame that covers protest efforts.

In analyzing these news transcripts, I document discussions of protest, and how political actors (the host of the show, journalists, pundits, etc.) describe them (i.e., uncivil or not), while noting the race, gender, partisanship, and position of the speaker, and the same information for the target group that is protesting; the partisanship information tests my second hypothesis. Further, I document the type of activity for the purposes of comparisons. I generated my list of possible protest activities by borrowing from Ratliff and Hall (2014), who documented the use of over 60 different types of protest activities in the 21st century. In this study, I limit my list of types of protest activity to those Ratliff and Hall documented at least 10 times in their coding, leaving me with 35 different activities (see Appendix A for full list). Additionally, I document the topic of the protest to test my first hypothesis about certain protests being policed more

strongly because they are protesting for racial or gendered issues. I generated a list of 20 different protest topics inductively by doing a pilot study wherein I read 100 randomly chosen transcripts covering protests to get an idea of the range of topics, adding additional topics throughout the study as they appeared. Again, the full list can be found in Appendix A.

The primary outcome variable of this content analysis is whether the speaker says the protests are uncivil. I determined how to code incivility inductively during an initial pilot study. Very rarely did speakers outright call something "uncivil." Thus, I adopt a formal definition of incivility as "norm-violating behavior" to code for language that speakers use to describe protesters as uncivil (Mutz, 2015). Some described protesters as "thrashing out" or "trying to intimidate/threaten," which falls under a "threats" category of uncivil behavior (Muddiman 2017). Others described protesters as "agitators" or "rude," which falls under a "insults" category of incivility. And when speakers described protesters as using slurs in their protests, or extremely derogatory language, that falls under a "slurs" category. As such, I code for the presence or absence of the speaker calling the protests uncivil, followed by the specific type of incivility that they claim is happening (i.e., "threats," "violence," "insults," or "slurs").

I also note whether the speaker is calling the protesters "civil." Sydnor (2015) defines civility as, "indication that an opponent's policies would positively change American values or institutions, acknowledgment of common ground, and use of complementary language or praise of an opponent." I follow suit and code for civility as such. That is, if speakers described protesters as being "norm-adhering" in some way, they are calling them "civil." In the very few cases this happened, it was because the speaker described the protests or protesters as "peaceful." This could also take the form of the speaker saying that protesters are seeking common ground or

bridging divides (Sydnor, 2015). Do note, however, that it is entirely possible that the speaker describes the protests as neither uncivil nor civil. As such, civility cannot be considered the opposite of incivility for the purposes of analysis. They are separate categories entirely.

Finally, I code for overall valence of the descriptions of the protest (i.e., negative or positive on a 1-5 scale), in addition to whether the speaker says the protesters should be stopped in some way (e.g., "they need to sit down and be quiet"). That latter part is to determine if political actors are pursuing civility policing aimed at protest activity as a means of rhetorical repression, as Braunstein (2018) and others argue. Alternatively, it is possible that political actors try to repress protests whether they are uncivil or not.

### 3.5.1 Content analysis procedure

Nexis Uni (formerly LexisNexis Academic) collected the data used in this content analysis. I chose to study CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC for the purposes of analysis. I chose CNN due to the fact that for much of the time of my study it has been established it has low levels of identifiable partisanship, relative to its contemporaries. I chose Fox News and MSNBC as the exemplars of conservative and liberal news (Levendusky 2013; Peck 2019). All three have good audience sizes ranging from several hundred thousand to a million, depending on the show in question ("Cable News Fact Sheet" 2019).

After testing various time frames to search and study, I opted for January 1, 2009 to January 20, 2021.[15] It includes Barack Obama becoming president, his two terms, and the entirety of President Donald Trump's tenure in office, including the massive protests concerning

[15] This means that my time frame will transition from when CNN was perceived as more neutral to when it was perceived as more liberal leaning in its content. I will have to account for this in any claims made about longitudinal trends in the eventual CNN data.

racial justice that occurred in the summer of 2020 and the insurrection at the Capitol on January 6, 2021. This 12-year time period has been historically marked by an increase in the extreme partisanship of my the three cable networks I intend to study (Berry and Sobieraj 2014; Peck 2019). It is also marked by two presidents from different political parties, providing a good sample across different political status quos. Table 3.1 shows how many transcripts for each network are produced by searching for all possible forms of "protest" (e.g., protests, protesters, protested, etc.) within this time frame. I use the term "protest" because prior research from Burch (n.d.), who conducted a large-scale content analysis of news coverage of protest activities, finds that "protest" and its immediate variations captures almost all other possible activities while introducing the fewest false positives. Certainly, using other terms could add more items to the corpus, but the tradeoff is that vaguer terms that are somewhat related to protest (march, vigil, riot, etc.) introduce transcripts where the speaker uses the term in question in a context outside the scope of this study. Including these terms increases the overall difficulty of the study by creating a situation wherein the research team must sort through a large assortment of false positives. Further, stories about protests outside of the United States are also excluded as false positives. Therefore, I manually determine which items actually pertain to US domestic politics. I exclude such false positives from the study, as indicated in Table 1, where I derived a "false positive probability" from the pilot study of one-fourth the intended sample.

*Table 3.1 News items within timeframe of study, per network*

| | CNN | Fox News | MSNBC | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jan 1, 2009 – Jan 20, 2021 (start of Obama Presidency to end | 38175 items; 12725 in sample (sample 2.88 | 10,123 items; 3,375 in sample | 7,015 items; 2,338 in sample (sample 15.65 | 55,313 items; 18,438 in sample (approx. 5.97 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| of Trump Presidency) | percent; 367 in corpus) | (sample 10.87 percent; 367 in corpus) | percent; 366 in corpus) | percent sampled, total; 1,100) |

Given the sheer amount of coverage in each time frame (especially CNN's coverage), I randomly sampled from this corpus to make the project more manageable. I used a stratified sampling approach that samples within each year of the 12-year timeframe, in order to ensure a good balance of items across time. My sample is 1,100 transcripts due to the feasibility of the project and the resources available to me. Details about the sample can be found in Table 3.1.

I conduct a manual content analysis, as opposed to one using machine-learning techniques because the inquiry in question is best addressed by hand coding. In order for an algorithm to collect and assess the data I need, it would need to find every instance of potential protest activity via a dictionary, determine how the protest is being discussed, and then assess the race, gender, and political party of both speaker and protester(s). This is, for all intents and purposes, either impossible or less valid than simply relying on trained human coders. Even as methods of detecting incivility in media have gotten better in recent years (see Muddiman, McGregor, and Stroud 2018), this study is not about identifying incivility, per se; rather, it is about identifying people talking about potential incivility in the context of a protest. The existing dictionaries, machine-learning methods, and so-on are simply not applicable. Relevant coding instructions can be found in Appendix A.

### 3.5.2 Reliability assessment

I first assessed the intercoder reliability of my coding scheme with the help of an RA. I randomly sampled 10 percent of the total sampled corpus (after excluding false positives) for this

assessment. The RA and I independently coded the speakers and protest details first, without researching the race and gender of the speakers. We assessed to what degree we were capturing the same number of speakers within the same transcript from the corpus and to what degree we agreed on the details of those speakers and what they said. Full intercoder reliability figures for this first part of the coding can be found in Table 3.2.

*Table 3.2 Intercoder reliability results*

| | Percent Agreement | Scott's π | Cohen's κ | Krippendorff's α | N Disagreements | N Cases |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Protest topic | 91.11 | 0.90 | 0.90 | 0.90 | 16 | 180 |
| Protest group name | 91.67 | 0.81 | 0.81 | 0.81 | 15 | 180 |
| Protester ideology or partisanship | 91.67 | 0.86 | 0.86 | 0.86 | 15 | 180 |
| Protester race | 93.89 | 0.80 | 0.80 | 0.80 | 11 | 180 |
| Protester gender | 98.89 | 0.95 | 0.95 | 0.95 | 2 | 180 |
| Are the protesters elite? | 99.44 | 0.92 | 0.92 | 0.92 | 1 | 180 |
| Protest tactic 1 | 86.11 | 0.85 | 0.85 | 0.85 | 25 | 180 |
| Protest tactic 2 | 86.67 | 0.80 | 0.80 | 0.80 | 24 | 180 |
| Described as uncivil? | 94.44 | 0.89 | 0.89 | 0.89 | 10 | 180 |
| Described as insulting? | 98.34 | 0.94 | 0.94 | 0.94 | 3 | 180 |
| Described as threatening? | 95.56 | 0.84 | 0.84 | 0.84 | 8 | 180 |
| Described as using slurs? | 98.89 | 0.88 | 0.88 | 0.88 | 2 | 180 |
| Described as violent? | 96.67 | 0.90 | 0.90 | 0.90 | 6 | 180 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Described as civil? | 96.67 | 0.84 | 0.84 | 0.85 | 6 | 180 |
| Described as peaceful? | 98.89 | 0.91 | 0.91 | 0.91 | 2 | 180 |
| Described as seeking compromise? | 100 | NA | NA | NA | 0 | 180 |
| Described as bridging gaps? | 99.44 | 0.85 | 0.85 | 0.85 | 1 | 180 |
| Should the protesters be silenced? | 98.89 | 0.49 | 0.49 | 0.50 | 2 | 180 |
| Speaker Party ID | 98.18 | 0.97 | 0.97 | 0.97 | 4 | 220 |
| Speaker race | 98.6 | 0.97 | 0.97 | 0.97 | 3 | 220 |
| Speaker gender | 100 | NA | NA | NA | 0 | 220 |
| Speaker host | 97.27 | 0.94 | 0.94 | 0.94 | 6 | 220 |
| Speaker occupation | 96.82 | 0.96 | 0.96 | 0.96 | 7 | 220 |

As one can see from Table 3.2, nearly every variable of interest demonstrates great reliability (0.8 and above in Scott's π, Cohen's κ, and Krippendorff's α). Specifically, the main DV of interest, whether speakers describe the protesters as uncivil, exhibits great reliability across the three major statistics. I cut those variables that do not exhibit this level of reliability from subsequent data collection and from all analyses, with the exception of the "should be silenced" variable, which I still record as it only occurs in the most extreme cases.

### 3.6 Results

My RA and I coded the 1,100-transcript corpus. This resulted in 1,581 unique speaker/protest units. Some transcripts only briefly mention a protest, or refer to it in reference to another story, leaving that transcript with only the one speaker/protest unit. Others, however,

spend a great deal of time covering an ongoing protest, such as the 2014 Ferguson protests, and have multiple speakers talking about the same protest at length. First, I will describe the data in some detail to provide the information necessary for understanding exactly what civility policing *looks* like. Second, I will show the quantitative results from the analysis of these data.

### 3.6.1 Descriptive results

First and foremost, at almost no point in this coding did someone outright say, "this group is uncivil!" Civility policing most often takes the form of more implicit and pernicious statements that undermine the legitimacy of protesters through careful framing. This means calling attention to any violence the protesters may be perpetrating or insinuating that the group is threatening somehow. It may also call attention to extreme voices among the protesters, showing the protesters to be insulting or even saying terrible slurs and implying that the protest is only as good as its worst participants. For example, Rick Sanchez of CNN's *Rick's List* reported that a Democratic congressman who voted in favor of the Affordable Care Act faced protests outside of his home; Sanchez describes these protests as "loud..., angry because of his vote, death threats, abusive and profane personal attacks." Or, for another case, when students protested Dr. Charles Murray speaking at Middlebury College in 2017, and Fox's Martha MacCallum framed the protesters as violent radicals by calling attention to the fact that a university professor was injured during the course of protests. In both of these cases, the speakers in question draw attention to the most extreme elements of the protests to make their rhetorical argument: these protesters are extremists and thus unworthy of being heard. Entman (1993) argues that framing tries to emphasize certain elements of reality in order to "promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (52). I

contend that those who engage in civility policing are doing just that: they highlight some aspect of reality, shine a spotlight on it to emphasize its ugliness, and promote their moral evaluation that this behavior is indicative of all related protests, thereby delegitimizing the protesters' political voice.

Third, while civility police may promote their own moral evaluation and imply a treatment recommendation (i.e., ignoring or demonizing the protesters), they very rarely come out and say that the protesters should be stopped. Indeed, across all 1,100 transcripts coded in this study, only six speakers ever recommended protesters be stopped, explicitly. In two of the cases, Greta Van Susteren and Kirk Adams of Fox News argued that local authorities should stop the Westboro Baptist Church from protesting the funerals of soldiers in order to protest the US condoning gay marriage and homosexuality. In another instance, Harry Houck argued on CNN's *New Day* that protesters in Baltimore in the immediate aftermath of Freddie Gray's death were "thugs" and that the Baltimore mayor needed to do more to arrest those damaging property in the city. And in another case, sheriff Dave Ward argued on Fox News's *Special Report with Bret Baier* that the Bundy family, which had seized federal land and engaged in a shootout with federal and local law enforcement that such behavior, "can't happen in America and can't happen in Harney County." In all the cases, we see explicit calls for the state to end protests that the speakers found especially reprehensible. While this only happened six times, it clearly demonstrates the extreme end of what civility policing leads to when it promotes a certain treatment recommendation.

Fourth, civility policing is rather common in cable news coverage of protests, at least in these pilot data. Of the 1,581 data points generated by the 1,100 transcripts, civility policing

occurs nearly 32 percent of the time. MSNBC engages in civility policing the least, with only 21% of civility policing in these data belonging to speakers on their network. CNN is next in line with 29% of all civility policing incidents in these data. And Fox News accounts for the other 50% of all civility policing, keeping pace with the other two networks *combined*. Peck (2019) in his historical analysis of Fox News' success argues that in addition to the ideological slant of the outlet, its success also owes to its accordance with more tabloid-style news values. I contend that these news values, such as prioritizing conflict and sensationalism, exacerbate their policing activities. That is, tabloid-news values encourage civility policing. Alternatively, one could explain Fox's civility policing dominance in these data by pointing out how the American left is more likely to protest given the historical significance of protest in the US (Gillion 2013; McConnaughy 2013).

Further, 56 percent the 502 incidents of civility policing occur when the protesters in question are of the other party. Incredibly, 77 percent of all civility policing on Fox News targets an out-party protest. Speakers on MSNBC and CNN, in comparison, use civility policing to target their out-parties in 51 and 24 percent of their civility policing cases, respectively. This partially confirms Hypothesis 2's argument that speakers will more often police the civility of protesters of the opposite political party; that said, more robust tests of this hypothesis are to follow.

Finally, while civility policing is fairly common in these data, the opposite framing is relatively rare: calling protesters *civil*. There are only 182 incidents (12 percent of all coverage) of protesters being called civil in some manner, whether that be because they are presented as "peaceful," or because they are said to be seeking compromise, or bridging divides. Of those,

almost two-thirds of the cases are because the protesters are co-partisans, reflecting some degree of "in-group love" (Huddy 2015; Mason 2018). MSNBC is the outlet most likely to frame co-partisans as civil (61 percent of the co-partisan cases), perhaps indicating to some extent that liberals are more likely than conservatives to promote their own groups. However, these instances are far outweighed by civility policing across the board. So, not only is civility policing rather common, but it also outweighs any attempts at simple in-party bias; it seems that the depravity of one's opponents is more interesting than the righteousness of one's cause.

### 3.6.2 Regression results

To conduct a more thorough analysis of these data, I employ OLS regression. While I previously stated that the data set is 1,581 unique speaker/protest units, this is not the case for the purpose of regression analysis. Because we coded for up to two protest topics per speaker, I expand the data set by allowing each protest tactic its own row in the data, of course sharing the other details from the speaker and protest. Thus, the final data set has 3,162 speaker-protest combinations to analyze. Because of this, and the fact that a single speaker can produce multiple rows of data, I use cluster-robust standard errors to account for the effect that any single speaker may have on the data, similar to methods used for analyzing conjoint experiment wherein one participant can produce multiple rows of data. Further, in order to account for the topic of the protest and the tactics of that protest, I employ a fixed effects model to account for that variation. In choosing the reference category for protest topic and protest tactic, I opted for cases where the topic/tactic were unclear or unspecified, and thus "unknown." This means that the effect of any

single protest topic or tactic is relative to when the topic or tactic was unknown.[16] Finally, to test the second hypothesis, I include a dummy variable in these analyses to indicate whether the protests were "out-party," relative to the speaker. Thus, all data in these analyses are from *partisans* in the three networks, meaning I have excluded any non-partisans or those whose partisanship was unclear after reading the transcript and conducting separate research into the speakers' identities.

After conducting the regression analysis in this manner, we find notable effects. What I present in Table 3.3 are the results from three models, one model for each cable news outlet. Each model uses the "being called uncivil" variable as the outcome, predicted by the protest topic, protest tactic, and whether the protesters were from a political party opposite the speaker. For the sake of brevity, I truncate these results to only those that are significant at $p < .10$, but the full results can be found in Appendix B. You will also notice that some variables are empty for certain outlets; this is because those outlets never covered a protest that speakers described as having used that particular tactic.

*Table 3.3 Truncated results of OLS regression*

| | *Dependent variable:* Protesters called uncivil | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Fox News | MSNBC | CNN |
| Out party protesters | **0.155**$^{**}$ | **0.419**$^{***}$ | **0.336**$^{***}$ |
| | **(0.062)** | **(0.063)** | **(0.066)** |
| Second amendment protest | | **-0.410**$^{**}$ | **-0.475**$^{**}$ |
| | | **(0.164)** | **(0.216)** |

[16] I also conducted a robustness check to ensure that this decision did not artificially create significant results by treating the "unknown" cases as NA and excluding them from analysis, instead opting for the first category in each variable as the reference. This robustness check produces no significant deviations from the results presented in this paper and can be found in Appendix C.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| COVID lockdown protest | -0.007 | **0.591**$^{***}$ | -0.331 |
| | (0.184) | **(0.176)** | (0.247) |
| Election protest | **0.668**$^{***}$ | 0.101 | **0.443**$^{**}$ |
| | **(0.208)** | (0.192) | **(0.215)** |
| Gender issue protest | **0.367**$^{***}$ | -0.110 | 0.121 |
| | **(0.133)** | (0.195) | (0.313) |
| Immigration protest | 0.047 | 0.002 | -0.006 |
| | (0.180) | (0.172) | (0.239) |
| Police brutality protest | **0.395**$^{**}$ | 0.096 | 0.196 |
| | **(0.170)** | (0.136) | (0.219) |
| Pro-choice protest | -0.144 | -0.201 | -0.186 |
| | (0.161) | (0.151) | (0.225) |
| Pro-life protest | -0.051 | **-0.720**$^{***}$ | -0.235 |
| | (0.197) | **(0.230)** | (0.292) |
| Race issue protest | 0.236 | 0.041 | 0.187 |
| | (0.163) | (0.185) | (0.228) |
| Religious issue protest | -0.074 | -0.235 | **-0.558**$^{**}$ |
| | (0.177) | (0.208) | **(0.226)** |
| Boycotting | -0.042 | -0.066 | **-0.265**$^{**}$ |
| | (0.094) | (0.118) | **(0.119)** |
| Burning items | **0.433**$^{***}$ | **0.570**$^{***}$ | -0.080 |
| | **(0.109)** | **(0.218)** | (0.190) |
| Chanting | **0.251**$^{***}$ | 0.076 | 0.057 |
| | **(0.080)** | (0.077) | (0.091) |
| Civil disobedience | **0.341**$^{***}$ | 0.001 | -0.200 |
| | **(0.128)** | (0.070) | (0.124) |
| Damaging property | **0.490**$^{***}$ | **0.704**$^{***}$ | **0.314**$^{***}$ |
| | **(0.062)** | **(0.120)** | **(0.110)** |
| Dramaturgy | **0.962**$^{***}$ | **0.194**$^{**}$ | **-0.361**$^{***}$ |
| | **(0.073)** | **(0.079)** | **(0.079)** |
| Flag-waving | 0.250 | **0.588**$^{**}$ | -0.165 |
| | (0.263) | **(0.294)** | (0.219) |
| Hitting or punching | **0.645**$^{***}$ | **0.800**$^{***}$ | **0.623**$^{***}$ |
| | **(0.088)** | **(0.106)** | **(0.067)** |
| Holding signs | **0.201**$^{*}$ | **0.310**$^{**}$ | **-0.147**$^{**}$ |
| | **(0.120)** | **(0.130)** | **(0.068)** |
| Interrupting event | **0.413**$^{***}$ | **0.228**$^{***}$ | **0.364**$^{***}$ |
| | **(0.076)** | **(0.063)** | **(0.096)** |
| Lawsuits | | | **-0.434**$^{***}$ |
| | | | **(0.099)** |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Leafleting | **0.772*** ** | | 0.351 |
| | **(0.107)** | | (0.433) |
| Loud noisemaking | **-0.255*** ** | 0.156 | -0.159 |
| | **(0.081)** | (0.098) | (0.129) |
| Marching | **0.155** ** | **0.103** ** | -0.006 |
| | **(0.076)** | **(0.044)** | (0.079) |
| Musical/vocal | 0.229 | -0.273 | **0.605*** ** |
| | (0.406) | (0.191) | **(0.113)** |
| Occupation | **0.211** ** | 0.143 | **-0.204*** |
| | **(0.099)** | (0.088) | **(0.108)** |
| Other protest activity | 0.101 | 0.093 | **-0.291** ** |
| | (0.115) | (0.084) | **(0.117)** |
| Picket line | **0.479*** ** | **0.124*** | 0.076 |
| | **(0.184)** | **(0.071)** | (0.133) |
| Praying | | **0.310** ** | |
| | | **(0.130)** | |
| Press conference | **0.962*** ** | | **0.494*** ** |
| | **(0.073)** | | **(0.141)** |
| Pushing or shoving | **0.373*** | **0.959*** ** | **0.593*** ** |
| | **(0.206)** | **(0.088)** | **(0.107)** |
| Rally | **0.112*** | **0.101** ** | -0.027 |
| | **(0.065)** | **(0.048)** | (0.086) |
| Strike | 0.017 | **0.226** ** | 0.007 |
| | (0.124) | **(0.104)** | (0.168) |
| Symbolic clothing | -0.270** | **0.580*** ** | **-0.395*** ** |
| | (0.136) | **(0.077)** | **(0.113)** |
| Symbolic display | **0.533*** ** | **0.113*** | **-0.257*** |
| | **(0.083)** | **(0.065)** | **(0.145)** |
| Throwing objects | **0.524*** ** | **0.983*** ** | **0.575*** ** |
| | **(0.104)** | **(0.048)** | **(0.093)** |
| Yelling | **0.440*** ** | **0.258** ** | 0.257 |
| | **(0.153)** | **(0.130)** | (0.238) |
| Constant | -0.068 | -0.010 | 0.165 |
| | (0.166) | (0.154) | (0.219) |
| Observations | 688 | 592 | 436 |
| $R^2$ | 0.299 | 0.373 | 0.309 |
| F Statistic | 5.445*** (df = 50; 637) | 6.575*** (df = 49; 542) | 3.444*** (df = 50; 385) |

*Note:* *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01

To test the first hypothesis' assertion that racial and gendered issues would be more strongly policed, we first turn to racial protests, and then to gendered ones. To test the racial aspect of this hypothesis, we can look to the "police brutality" and more general "race issue" variables. For racial issues, I find only mixed evidence in support of my hypothesis. The more general "race issue" variable finds no statistically significant results whatsoever, as does the "immigration" topic. That said, the "police brutality" variable, which was almost exclusively about police brutality against Black people, does have a significant effect in the Fox News model ($p < 0.05$). And this is even after accounting for the partisanship of the protesters, meaning that this result is driven by something other than partisan politicking. Further, while the tactic was often employed in a variety of contexts, the "symbolic displays" variable very frequently captured the protests of Black athletes protesting racial injustice by kneeling during the national anthem (26 percent of all symbolic display protests). The significant results here could also provide some credence to the idea that political actors target protests concerning racial issues with civility policing even when accounting for the multitude of other factors in play.

Moving to gender, we can look to the "pro-life," "pro-choice," and more general "gender issues" variables. Again, we find mixed evidence supporting my hypothesis. While pro-choice protests elicit no significant results, there is one significant result for pro-life protests, but only for MSNBC. And this result indicates that partisans on MSNBC are *less likely* to target pro-life protests as being uncivil after accounting for the partisanship of the protesters ($p < 0.01$). This is likely an artifact of a small sample size, however, rather than any "true" effect. Indeed, there are only six speaker-protest units in the MSNBC data that cover pro-life protests; one can glean this

from the very large standard error from this "result." The same can be said of the result observed for the more general "gender issue" variable, where we find a significant effect from Fox News such that partisans on that network are more likely to police protests concerning gender issues that are not about abortion ($p < 0.01$). This, too, is likely an artifact of small sample sizes, as there are only 10 cases of gender issues protests in the Fox News data. Thus, there likely is no effect for protests concerning gender issues.

While I find only weak support for the first hypothesis, and only when we limit its predictions to race, I find much stronger support for my second hypothesis. Recall I predicted that partisans would be more likely to target protests comprised of out-party members. I find strong support for this across all three outlets. In all three outlets, partisans were more likely to target their out-party as being uncivil than their in-party, even after accounting for all possible protest topics and tactics ($p < 0.01$). This reinforces the notion that civility policing is perhaps rarely done in good faith when it is done by political actors. Indeed, there is a degree of political strategy at play, according to these data.

### 3.7 Discussion and conclusion

The most easily explained results are those that show some tactics are more likely to result in civility policing. Pushing or shoving, throwing objects, and damaging property are all tactics that elicit strong reactions and civility policing. While one could argue that this is rightfully so, as these violent methods of protest are perhaps normatively undesirable, I would argue that the attention paid to these tactics are often the result of strategic framing. After all, what I analyzed here was not exclusively fact-based reporting that aimed to be the coverage of record. Instead, what I analyzed was cable news coverage, filled with opinionated pundits, hosts,

and other political actors all with different aims and purposes. For instance, in the cases where a speaker talks about protesters damaging property, is it that all the protesters are doing that, or that there was one or two incidents among a larger protest? Again, framing is strategically valuable because it allows these political actors to make these presentations of reality and present it as if it is the *truth*. But we should not take these data as evidence of reality; rather, what is recorded in these data are artifacts of purposeful framing often construed as journalism.

Interrupting events stands out among the significant results because it occurs so frequently among the right and the left. For example, in the early years of the Obama administration, MSBNC (and CNN to some degree) admonished Tea Party activists for their interruption of townhall events used to discuss the implications of the Affordable Care Act. These same tactics were later adopted by liberals during the early years of the Trump administration to protest his attempts at repealing the Affordable Care Act and using similar townhall events to sell constituents on the move. But the tactic easily attracts the civility police because it is easily presented as uncivil; after all, it is much easier to portray detractors as dishonest disruptive elements than genuinely concerned citizens with differing viewpoints on how healthcare in America should be managed.

Finally, while partisan actors on these platforms are perhaps using civility policing to delegitimize their political opponents, there was one group among all the others that elicited strong civility policing: the Westboro Baptist Church. This is an American church widely regarded as a hate group that frequently protests the funerals of soldiers killed in the line of duty in order to make a point about the "evil" of homosexuality in America. Of all the named groups in the dataset, none evoke such strong rebuke as the Westboro Baptist Church; nothing else

comes close. If American partisans are united in anything in the 21st century, it is probably in their mutual dislike of this church.

What these data tell us is that civility policing is, as it has been argued by others, a *strategy* employed to frame one's opponents as amoral dissidents without legitimate grievances rather some legitimate form of social norm maintenance. Civility policing is not only common in cable news coverage, accounting for nearly a third of all coverage of protests, it is profoundly strategic. These data show what those in power will do to maintain that power when their status quo is challenged by political opponents.

# 4 How incivility can be good for democracy: A path to racial justice

Pundits, politicians, and political scientists often argue that incivility, or "norm-violating behavior," is deleterious to democracy (Mutz 2015). Indeed, Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018) argue the death of any democracy starts with the erosion of norms undergirding incivility, such as mutual toleration between political opponents—if opponents themselves are illegitimate, then so too are the broader democratic institutions themselves (see also Frimer and Skitka 2020, 1).[17] While important, such calls for civility in all aspects of American politics miss an important point: disruptive, and sometimes rude, acts of political voice are often necessary in a competitive democracy wherein all peoples are not equal. Any argument that advocates for strict adherence to "civility" as a means to preserve democracy "presupposes conditions of economic, political, and social equality among interlocutors," an assumption that does not hold in the US for many marginalized groups, most notably Black Americans (Lozano-Reich and Cloud 2009, 220). Civility norms may indeed play a role in legitimacy, but at certain times it also serves as a pretense for maintaining the legitimacy of racist or unjust laws (Itagaki 2016).

A narrow scope of conflict serves to benefit those already in power (Schattschneider 1960), widening that scope, through protest and disruption of the status quo, makes it possible for David to *sometimes* beat Goliath (Karpf 2016). But any such disruption necessarily violates norms of politeness and civility. This will be especially true for Black Americans, who were only able to dismantle the Jim Crow system after years of protests and legal challenges (Gillion 2013).

[17] Levitsky and Ziblatt, in outlining how America has "unraveled" as a democracy, draw a clear line from "normalizing uncivil discourse" (pp. 172) to the demise of democratic norms like compromise, and finally to the possible death of democracy.

This history will make Black Americans more likely to value disruptive forms of political participation than White Americans. Given this, appealing to this norm of uncivil, norm-violating protest will be especially effective for Black Americans. To test these hypotheses, I conduct a survey experiment of Black and White Americans (n = 2,784), testing the effects of an intervention designed to prime Black Americans to consider their rich tradition of disruptive protest in American politics. I find that Black Americans, when primed in this manner, are less likely to perceive such disruptive activities as uncivil and more likely to want to participate in such activities, even those bordering on unlawful. Comparatively, White Americans exhibit weaker effects on average in response to the same treatment. I argue that this is evidence that Black Americans, due to their collective history as a marginalized political group, are more open to the idea that civility is worth sacrificing for the sake of something they care about than White Americans who lack such a rich tradition of disruptive protest.

**4.1 Can Incivility Promote Political Action?**

Can incivility lead people to be more likely to engage in political action, especially political protest (Zukin et al. 2006)? Prior work examining the effects of incivility on participation focus primarily on voting or engaging in uncivil speech (e.g., Brooks and Geer 2007; Gervais 2019). For example, Brooks and Geer (2007) find that exposure to incivility has a slight positive effect on intent to vote. Others look at incivility spirals—that is, how initial uncivil speech stimulates subsequent uncivil speech in turn, due to anger sparked by the initial incivility (Andersson and Pearson 1999). I turn to the role of incivility on mobilizing other types of participation, particularly public voice in the form of political protests. This approach speaks

to how social norms operate within certain groups and the role of social movements using incivility to promote action and change (Gillion 2020).

Historically, marginalized peoples have placed a greater emphasis on acts of public voice and civic engagement than more formal avenues of political participation such as voting, primarily because they have been systematically restricted from the franchise of voting for much of American history (Waldman 2017). While de jure segregation laws and racist election protocols hamper Black Americans' ability to access a ballot box, they were able to mobilize their communities in massive protest movements; a trend we still observe in today's Movement for Black Lives (Ray 2020). Anoll (2018) argues that this ongoing process of segregation encourages the formation of certain participatory norms within the Black community that emphasizes acts of public voice as crucial for the group's continued survival.

It is unknown, however, to what extent Black Americans' emphasis on norms surrounding the use of public voice extends to a tolerance for more uncivil forms of political participation. By uncivil forms of political participation, I primarily refer to means of protest that eschew traditional means of deliberation in favor of disruption, often aimed at capturing media attention and political capital (see Wasow 2020 for a description of "violent" protest). Naturally, the range of activities that one might consider uncivil or violating norms varies depending on the context. But some tactics are inherently more disruptive than others, and they more strongly violate the norms of civility. While both a peaceful march and violent protest are by definition uncivil, the latter is a much stronger civility violation than the former. For the purposes of this study, I curated a list of 20 protest activities from Ratliff and Hall (2014). I present these in Table 1, broken down by major category. In a pilot study of a nationally-representative sample of 308

Americans, respondents rated eight of these 20 activities as more uncivil than the others, denoted by bolded text in Table 4.1.[18]

*Table 4.1 How uncivil are protest activities (5-point scale; not at all uncivil – extremely uncivil)*

| **Protest activity** | **Weighted national average (n = 308)** | **Protest activity** | **Weighted national average (n = 308)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Blocking traffic** | **3.62** | Leaflets | 1.59 |
| Boycotting | 1.97 | Marches | 1.79 |
| Camping out on public property | 2.62 | **Occupation of private property** | **3.22** |
| Candlelight vigils | 1.51 | Parades | 1.66 |
| Chanting | 1.94 | Petitions | 1.47 |
| **Damaging property** | **4.38** | Picket lines | 2.09 |
| **Graffiti** | **3.78** | Sit-ins | 1.92 |
| **Hitting/punching** | **4.53** | Taking a knee during the national anthem | 2.37 |
| **Interrupting a public event** | **3.32** | **Throwing objects** | **4.31** |
| Lawsuits | 2.24 | **Verbal threats** | **3.85** |

Black Americans have historically relied on tactics in Table 1 that many would consider "uncivil." For instance, even "sit-in" protests, which are squarely in the tradition of civil disobedience, were seen as unfavorable by White Americans in 1961, with 57 percent saying that the practice hurt Black Americans' efforts to integrate in the South (Rosenberg 2016). And leaders in the Civil Rights Movement were also weary of being too well-mannered in their protests for fear that their points were never going to reach White Americans unless it made them

[18] Results from this pilot study can be found in Appendix D.

uncomfortable. A central purpose of protest, Alinksy (1989) argues, is to make the powerful uncomfortable, which means breaking certain social norms is a necessity.

This tradition of uncivil acts of public voice, disruptive tactics and sometimes even vandalism and violence, becomes a sort of injunctive norm, or a norm that prescribes certain behaviors as morally appropriate by a particular group (Tankard and Paluck 2016). I posit that this norm becomes reinforced over time through the ongoing segregation of Black communities in American cities (White and Laird 2020) and linked fate, which reinforces norms by strengthening a collective identity among Black people (Dawson 1994). As such, I predict:

> *Hypothesis 1*: that Black Americans perceive a wider variety of protest activities, including more disruptive and uncivil ones, as *less uncivil* than White Americans, all else constant.

I posit that priming Black Americans to consider their rich tradition of disruptive protest will affect their perceptions of incivility and intention to participate in some of these protest activities. These sort of *emphasis frames* affect those exposed to them because they influence the *applicability* (or perceived importance) of some available and accessible belief to a particular attitude (Chong and Druckman 2007). Thus, by increasing the applicability of participatory social norms that celebrate a history of successful disruptive, and sometimes uncivil, protest, I predict that:

> *Hypothesis 2*: Black Americans exposed to this frame should in turn perceive more disruptive and uncivil protest tactics as *less uncivil* than those unexposed, all else constant.

Further, there is reason to expect additional effects on *intentions to participate politically*, in addition to the above predictions about perceptions of incivility. By priming people to think about the sacrifices that Black peoples have made in the past to be able to vote can encourage

Black Americans to intend to vote at higher levels than those unexposed (Anoll 2018). As such, I anticipate a similar effect from priming more uncivil participatory norms in a similar manner. Thus, I posit that:

> *Hypothesis 3*: Black Americans exposed to information that primes participatory norms of uncivil protest will in turn express an intention to participate in politics at higher levels than those unexposed, all else constant.

**4.2 White Americans and disruptive norms**

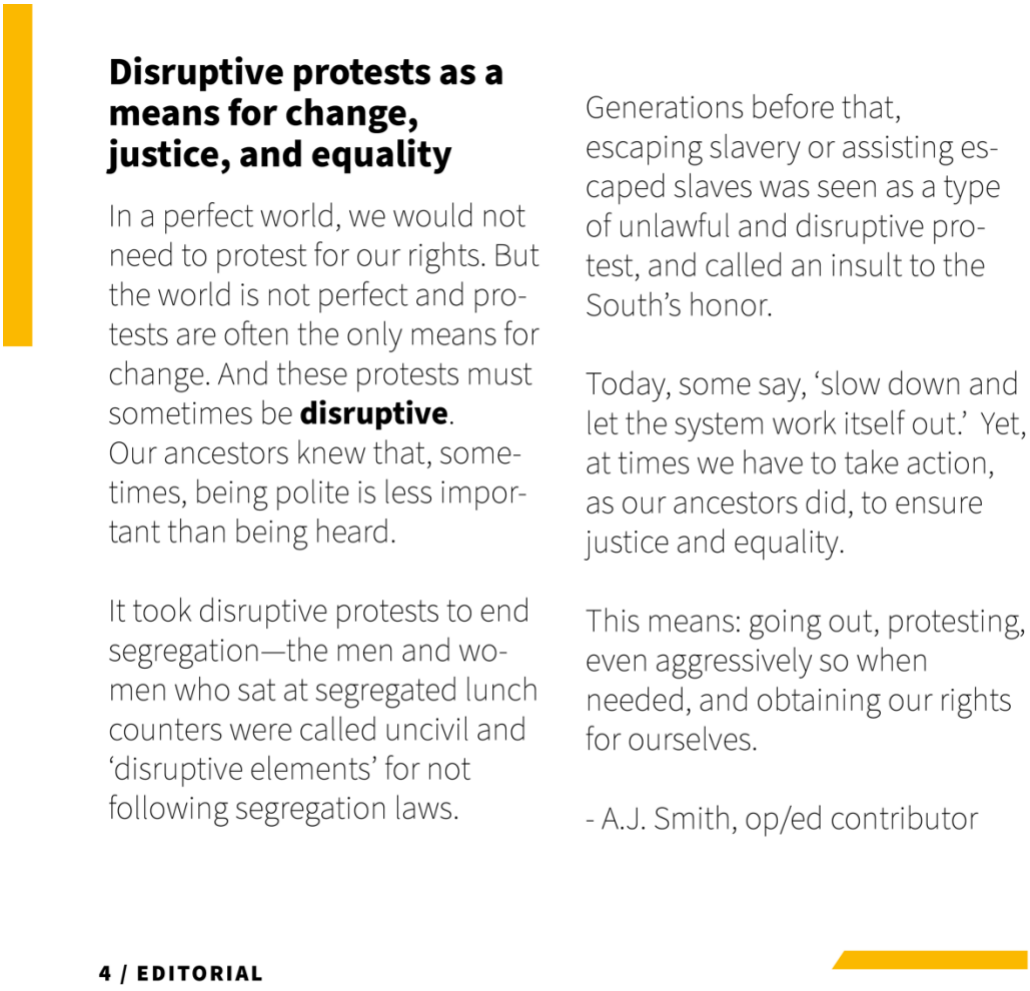
Most of my hypotheses are primarily concerned with the perceptions and intended behaviors of Black Americans. That said, how White Americans may respond to appeals to this norm of uncivil political participation is unknown. We might expect some White Americans to respond positively to appeals to the rich tradition of uncivil protest by Black Americans, chiefly on the basis of ideological or partisan commitments to racial justice, or at least racially liberal views (Kinder and Sanders 1996). Conversely, we might expect White Americans with strong racist attitudes to oppose acts of public voice from Black people, especially when those actions violate social norms of respectability or challenge the status quo that benefits White Americans (Sidanius and Pratto 2001). And White people who fear Black people may also respond negatively to such information about Black protests (DeSante and Smith n.d.).

Not only do White Americans' attitudes toward disruptive protest vary along a host of dimensions for various sociological and psychological reasons, but White Americans also lack a *collective* history of uncivil protest. While there are several examples of White uncivil protest that are remembered and even celebrated, these are *episodic* events and not emblematic an overall culture that cultivated such norms across Whiteness in America (e.g., Lichtenstein 1989). As such, I predict that information that emphasizes traditions of disruptive protest will be less

effective for White Americans, relative to Black Americans. That is, White Americans will more strongly perceive the most disruptive activities as uncivil and be less likely to intend to participate in those activities, relative to Black Americans (Hypothesis 4).

### 4.3 Research design

I conducted a survey experiment that makes use of a vignette modified from Anoll's (Forthcoming) treatments that prime Black Americans to consider the history of sacrifice in getting the right to vote. I adapted this treatment text for my own purposes to prime Black Americans to consider the history of uncivil protest in order to adequately test Hypotheses 2 and 3. As such, I lengthened the text and formatted it to look like an editorial one might read in a magazine or newspaper. The author of the "editorial" was "A.J. Smith," a fictitious person with a gender-neutral and relatively race-neutral name (Gaddis 2017). Figure 4.1 depicts the full text and visual presentation of the treatment. This text specifically primes considerations that most Black Americans have: that uncivil or disruptive protest has been and continues to be valuable tools in the fight for racial justice. Admittedly, this text also taps into Black identity; however, it is unrealistic and perhaps even inauthentic to separate the historical norm of disruptive protest from Blackness. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine invoking histories of successful disruptive and uncivil protest without simultaneously invoking identity to some extent.



**Disruptive protests as a means for change, justice, and equality**

In a perfect world, we would not need to protest for our rights. But the world is not perfect and protests are often the only means for change. And these protests must sometimes be **disruptive**. Our ancestors knew that, sometimes, being polite is less important than being heard.

It took disruptive protests to end segregation—the men and women who sat at segregated lunch counters were called uncivil and 'disruptive elements' for not following segregation laws.

Generations before that, escaping slavery or assisting escaped slaves was seen as a type of unlawful and disruptive protest, and called an insult to the South's honor.

Today, some say, 'slow down and let the system work itself out.' Yet, at times we have to take action, as our ancestors did, to ensure justice and equality.

This means: going out, protesting, even aggressively so when needed, and obtaining our rights for ourselves.

- A.J. Smith, op/ed contributor

4 / EDITORIAL

*Figure 4.1 Treatment design*

### 4.3.1 Experiment sample procedure

I recruited a 2,784-person sample from Bovitz, Inc, with 1354 Black Americans and 1430 White Americans. The sample was collected from September 23 to October 18, 2020. Bovitz collected the data from a non-probability-based, but representative (on all key census

demographics), national sample, using the American Community Survey as its benchmarks to construct the sample. The survey was administered via the Internet.[19]

Respondents were first asked demographic questions, including partisanship measures. They were then assigned to the treatment text or a control text about an orthogonal entertainment topic (the end of the TV show *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*).[20] Following either treatment or control, respondents were asked to rate 20 protest activities from Table 4.1 in terms of their incivility (five-point scale; "not at all uncivil" to "very uncivil"), as a test of hypotheses 1 and 2.

Second, respondents were asked to rate how likely they would be to participate in the same 20 activities if it were for an issue they cared deeply about, as measured on a five-point scale ("very unlikely to participate" to "certain to participate") as a test of hypothesis 3. While stated intentions are not the same as actually doing the activity, they constitute the "closest cognitive antecedent" of actual behaviors (Ajzen and Fishbein 2005, 188; see also O'Keefe 2015) and are commonly invoked in studies of communications and behaviors (Bolsen, Druckman, and Cook 2014; Nelsen 2020).

### 4.4 Results

First, consider H1, that Black Americans would, on average, rate a wider variety of protest activities as *less uncivil* than White Americans. This means focusing on the 1,427 (Black = 691; White = 736) respondents who were assigned to the control group (i.e., did *not* receive the

[19] Full sample demographics, survey instruments, and details concerning recruitment and consent can be found in Appendices A and J.
[20] Full control design can be found in Appendix J.

prime of historical disruptive activities). Below, in Figure 4.2, I present the results of the incivility rating task from those in the control group.

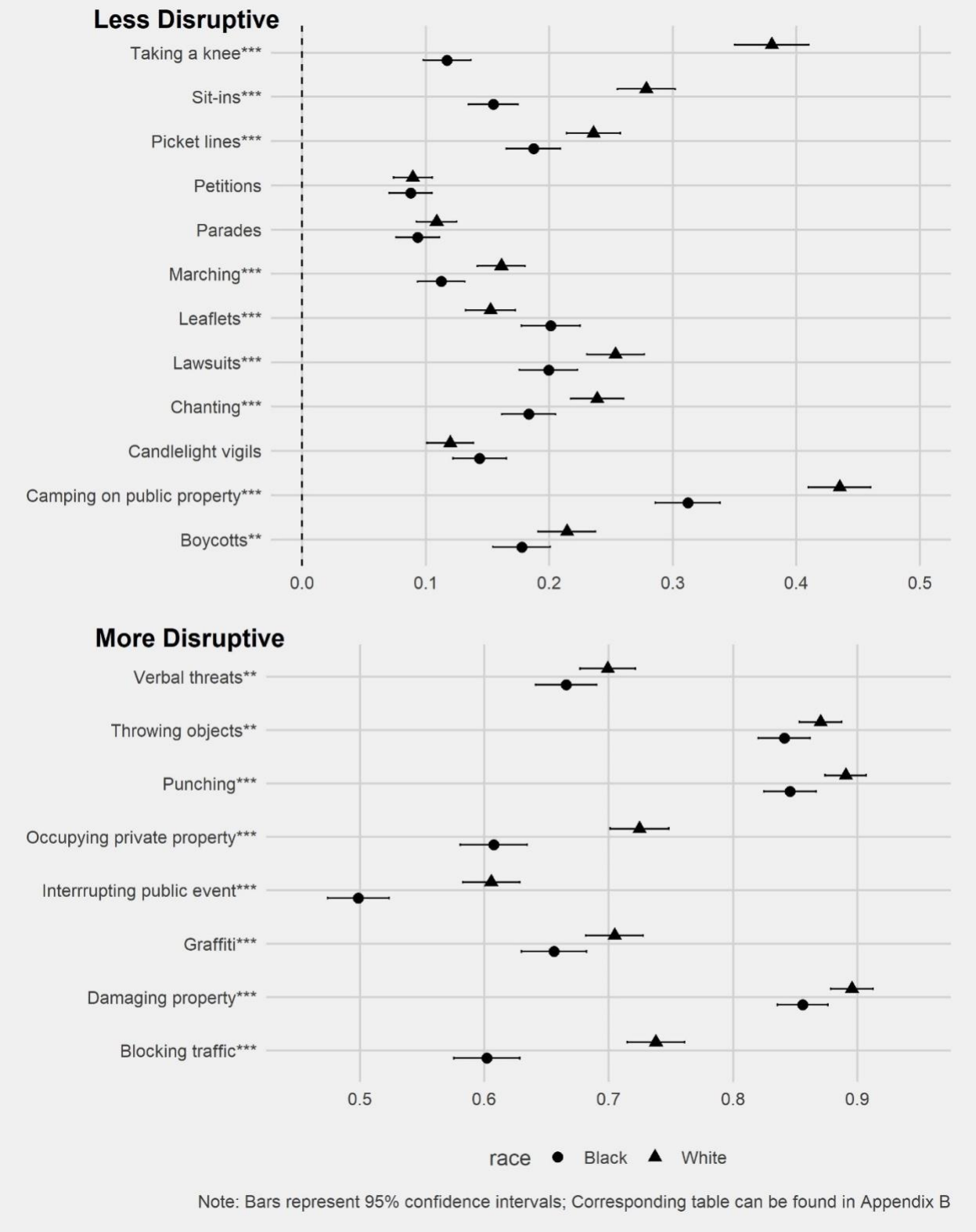



*Figure 4.2 Average perceived incivility of protest activities by race of respondent*

*Note. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p <0.01*

There is strong evidence in favor of Hypothesis 1. Black Americans, on average, perceive four-fifths of the 20 tactics as less uncivil than White Americans, including *every* tactic previously found to be "more disruptive." And these differences are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$ or $p < 0.01$). In short, Black Americans are more supportive of a greater variety of protest activities, including quite uncivil ones, than White Americans are, and sometimes by a large margin.

What remains to be seen, however, is whether these perceptions can be altered with an intervention. For that, we turn to the results from the experiment, which tests hypotheses 2 and 3. All analyses for the experiment are bivariate OLS regressions with two-tailed significance tests. I present these results graphically and rescale all values from 0-1 for ease of interpretation.[21] Figure 4.3 shows the effects of treatment on Black Americans' perceptions of an activity's incivility, relative to those Black Americans in the control (i.e., no historical story); positive coefficients indicate greater perceived incivility while negative values indicate lesser perceived incivility. I further breakdown results by the relative "disruptiveness" of the activity, according to my pilot study's findings.[22]

[21] Full regression tables can be found in Appendix B. I subsequently ran Bonferroni corrections to address any multiple comparisons issue. Corrected results show no significant departure from the results presented here. Full, corrected p-vales can be found in Appendix C.

[22] This study finds that eight activities are rated as at least "somewhat uncivil" (3 out of 5) on average by a nationally-weighted sample of Americans. The results of this study can be found in Appendix D.

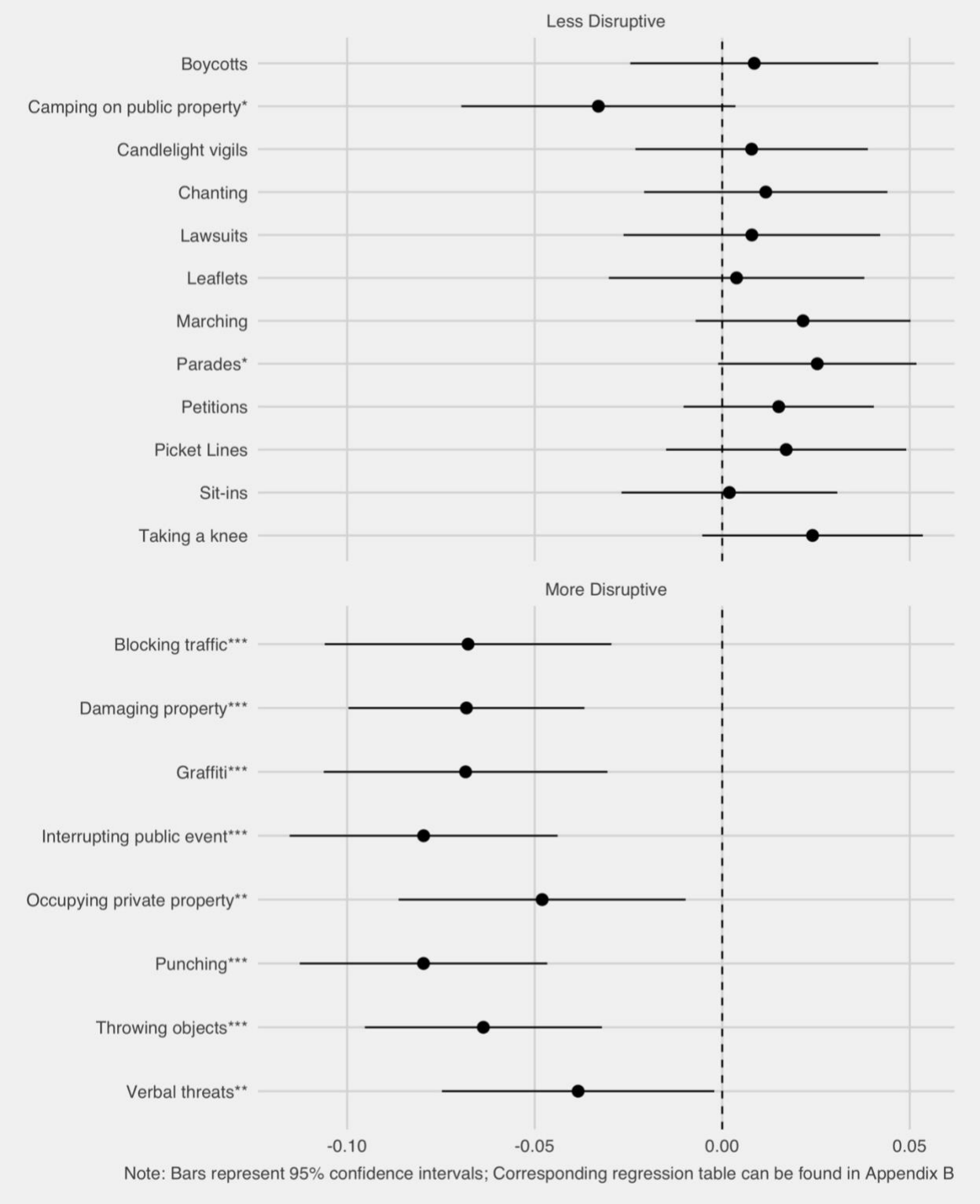



*Figure 4.3 Black Americans' perceptions of protest activities' incivility*
*Note. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p <0.01*

The overall effect of treatment on Black Americans is -0.020 (see Appendix I). As we see in Figure 4.3, priming Black Americans to consider traditions of disruptive protest within the Black community subsequently influences them to perceive disruptive protest activities as less uncivil than those in the control group. Indeed, *all* eight "more disruptive" activities are rated as less uncivil by Black Americans relative to those in the control and are statistically significant at $p < 0.01$ except for "Verbal threats" ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that the treatment text primed Black Americans to see some disruptive actions under a different set of standards: one that promotes racial equality over civility. Next, I consider whether the treatment can similarly affect Black Americans' intentions to participate in these activities. To test my third hypothesis, Figure 4.4 presents the results of OLS regressions in the same manner as Figure 4.3, changing the outcome to "likelihood to participate." Positive values indicate greater likelihood, and negative coefficients indicate lesser likelihood.

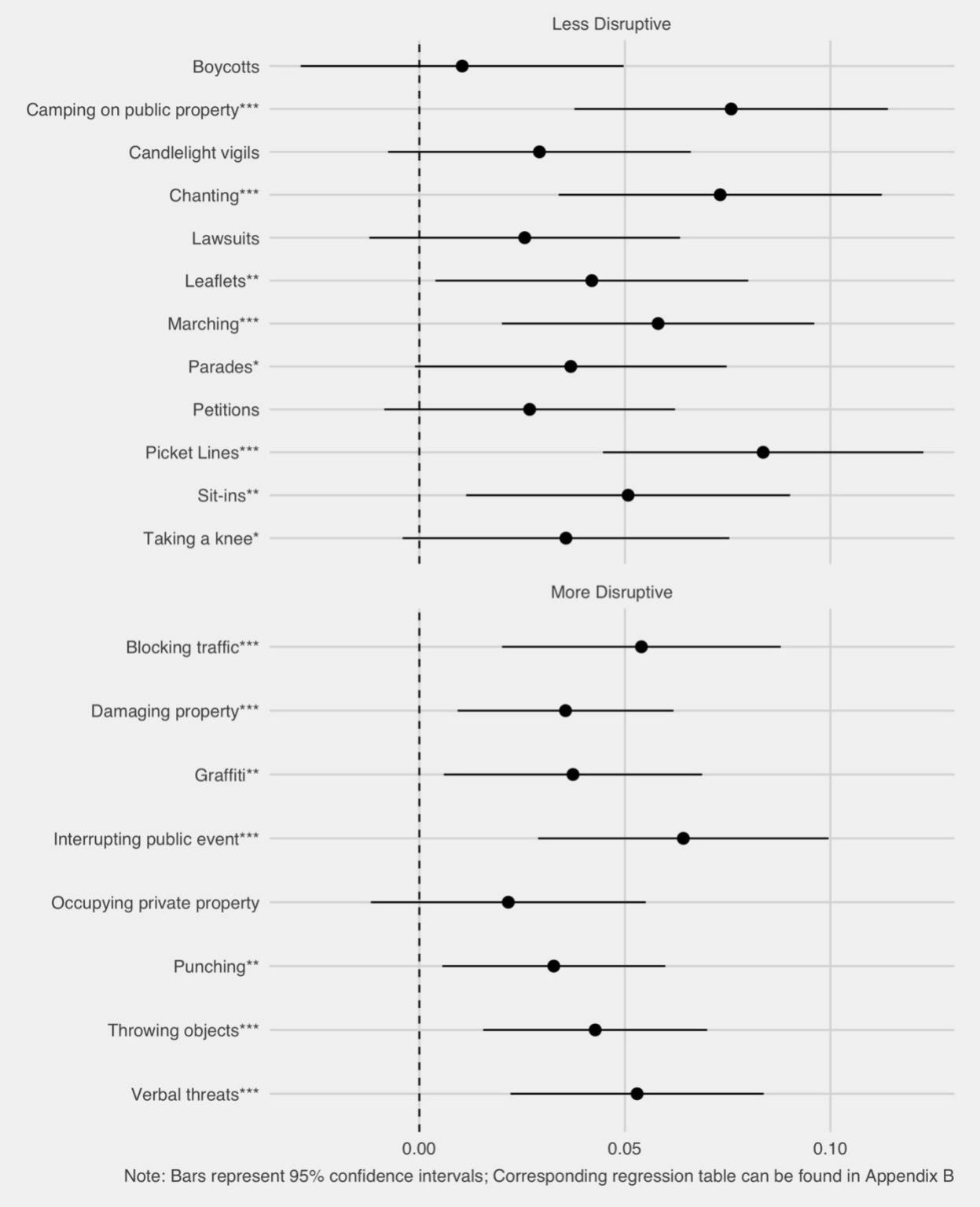



*Figure 4.4 Black Americans' likelihood to participate in protest activities*

*Note. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p <0.01*

The overall effect of treatment on Black Americans' intentions to participate is 0.044 (see Appendix I). Of the eight disruptive activities, which we would expect social norms of civility to discourage participation in, seven of them are responded to favorably by Black Americans. These are all statistically significant at $p < 0.01$ except for punching and graffiti ($p < 0.05$).[23] The only disruptive activity that intervention did not affect is "occupying private property." Black Americans, by reading a text that emphasizes their unique position in American history, express a greater likelihood to participate in some of the least socially sanctioned ways to protest, including some that are unlawful.

### 4.4.1 White Americans' results

To understand the effects of treatment on White Americans relative to Black Americans, we can first look at the results of the experiment for White Americans. Figure 4.5 shows the effect of treatment on White Americans' perceptions of incivility and intentions to participate in those activities, broken down by the disruptiveness of the activity as before. This shows a number of trends, but namely that White Americans did not exhibit the same strong effects as Black Americans did in response to treatment. That is, White Americans exposed to treatment perceive the most disruptive activities as being more uncivil and are less likely to want to participate in those activities than Black Americans exposed to treatment.

[23] Full regression analyses and Bonferroni corrected p-values can be found in Appendices B and C, respectively. Corrected results do not significantly differ from what is presented here. The overall trend remains unchanged.

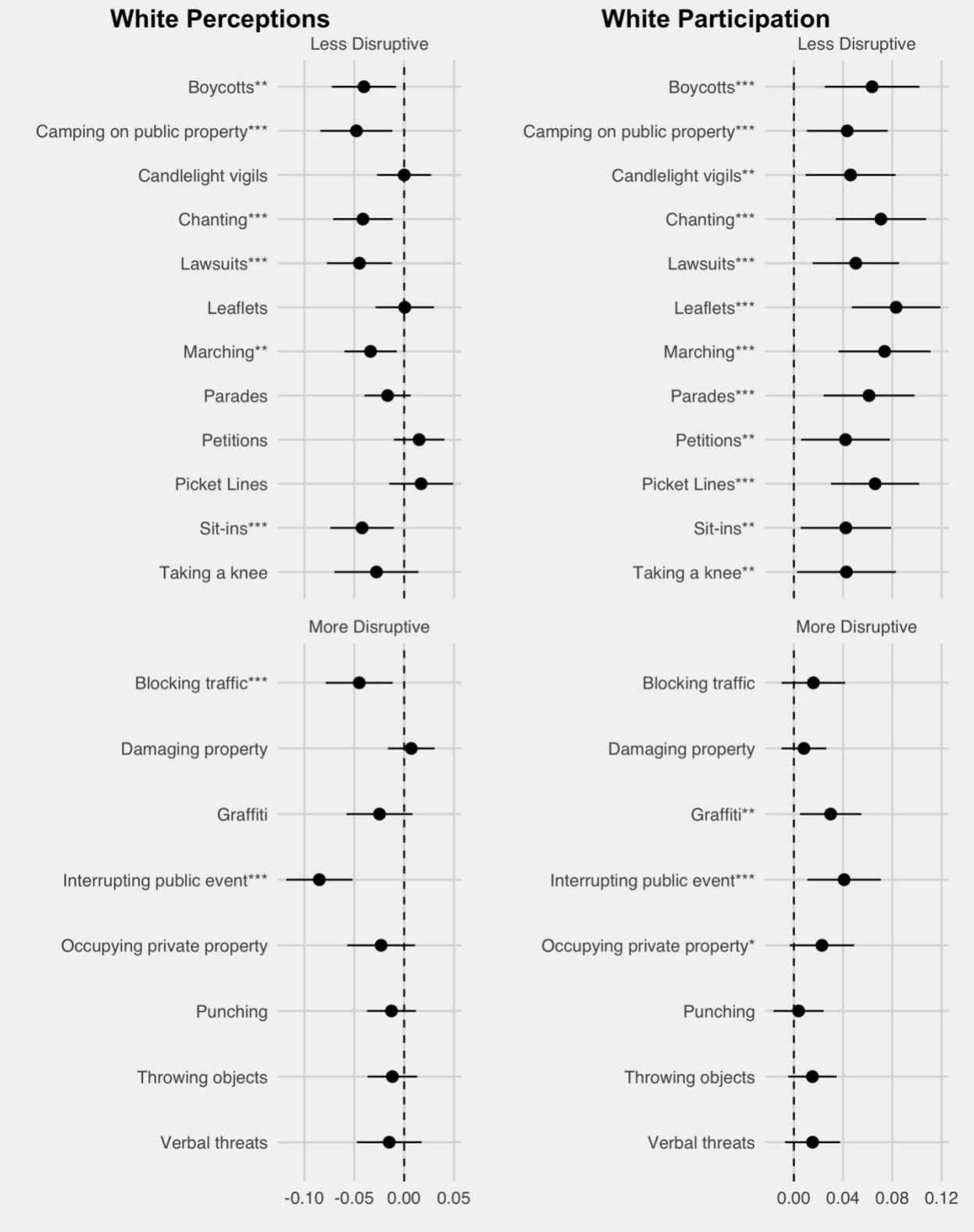

White Perceptions
Less Disruptive
Boycotts**
Camping on public property***
Candlelight vigils
Chanting***
Lawsuits***
Leaflets
Marching**
Parades
Petitions
Picket Lines
Sit-ins***
Taking a knee
More Disruptive
Blocking traffic***
Damaging property
Graffiti
Interrupting public event***
Occupying private property
Punching
Throwing objects
Verbal threats
-0.10 -0.05 0.00 0.05
White Participation
Less Disruptive
Boycotts***
Camping on public property***
Candlelight vigils**
Chanting***
Lawsuits***
Leaflets***
Marching***
Parades***
Petitions**
Picket Lines***
Sit-ins**
Taking a knee**
More Disruptive
Blocking traffic
Damaging property
Graffiti**
Interrupting public event***
Occupying private property*
Punching
Throwing objects
Verbal threats
0.00 0.04 0.08 0.12

*Figure 4.5 White Americans' perceptions of protest activities' incivility and intentions to* participate

Note. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

But this conclusion is based solely off of the number of activities that exhibit a treatment effect, not a robust statistical test. This implies an interactive model: measuring the average effect of treatment on the two outcomes depending on the race of the respondent. To conduct this test, similar to how I measure the average treatment effect, I conduct OLS regressions using fixed effects for the eight most disruptive protest activities at the core of this fourth hypothesis and interact the treatment with the race of the respondent.[24] The results of this test are presented graphically in Figure 4.6 such that one can see the effect of treatment on perceptions and intentions for White Americans and Black Americans.

I find here some favorable evidence of this hypothesis. Namely, I find that Black Americans exposed to the treatment text, on average, perceive these "most disruptive" activities as being less uncivil than White Americans who also read the same treatment text ($p < 0.05$). This reinforces the trend we observe in the difference-in-means tests. However, the intent to participate outcome tells a more complicated story. While the direction of these coefficients in this plot tells us that Black Americans who received the treatment are more likely to participate in these "most disruptive" activities than White Americans who received treatment, the statistics tell a different story. That is, the difference in treatment effects observed here between Black and White Americans is *not* statistically significant ($p = 0.128$). Of course, when I use a one-tailed

[24] Again, using cluster-robust standard errors to account for the fact that each respondent becomes eight rows of data using this method of analysis.

significance test, I find a marginally significant result ($p < 0.10$). I argue that what I observe here is an indeterminate effect rather than a true negligible effect (Rainey 2014).

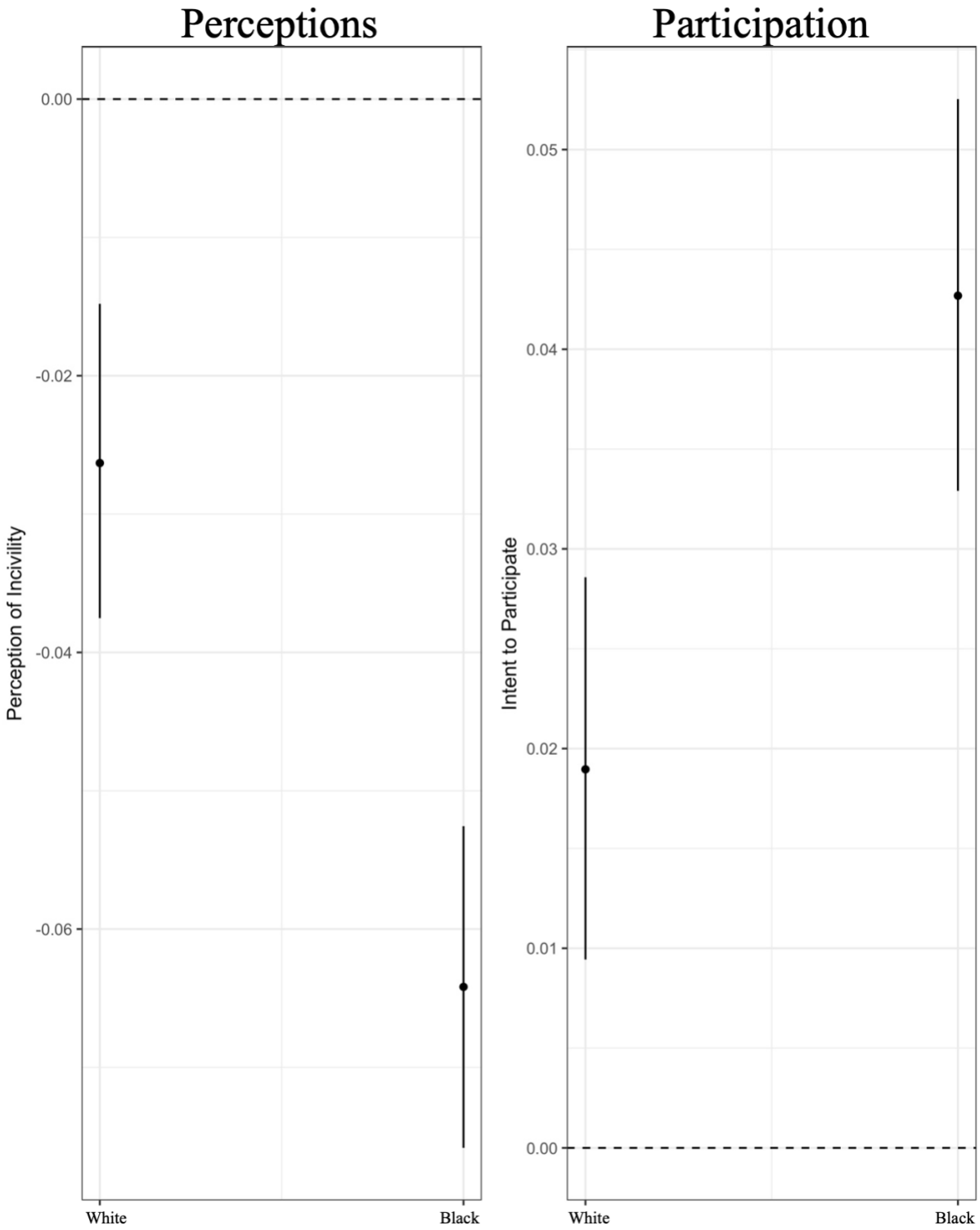



*Figure 4.6 Treatment effects moderated by respondent race*

From this test, I find some favorable evidence for my fourth hypothesis, my prediction that White Americans would perceive these disruptive activities as more uncivil and be less likely to intend to participate in those activities than Black Americans, even after both groups had received the experimental treatment. This indicates that treatment had a very specific effect on Black Americans, which I argue is primarily because the norms of disruptive protest are more latent in the Black community than in most White Americans who have rarely had to *depend* on such disruptive activities to gain political capital.

**4.5 Discussion and conclusion**

Scholars, pundits, and everyday Americans have presented incivility as a "problem area" for American democracy. Some even argue that the death of civility in politics undermines the strength of democracy (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018; Frimer and Skitka 2020). But these scholars miss an important caveat in their research: incivility serves an important, mobilizing function for those marginalized by formal politics. Black Americans, who have a turbulent history with the franchise of voting, have shown the power of disrupting the status quo through protests (Gillion 2020). And this research shows the strength of this norm in the Black community: when this norm is primed, Black Americans are subsequently less likely to perceive a number of disruptive protest activities as uncivil, and more likely to state they would participate in such actions. Moreover, the results from White Americans in this sample reveal that the treatment had a *unique* effect on Black Americans such that the two groups exhibit different levels of responsiveness to treatment. This is why I argue that any attention to incivility in American politics must also pay close attention to the critical role that disruption and incivility play in Black politics.

Some may find troubling normative implications from these results. What I have shown with this experiment is that the right message to the right audience can encourage them to see unlawful and even violent actions as less uncivil than they might have otherwise, and even express a willingness to join in. First, it is important to note that the effects observed in this study are not limited to "more disruptive" protest activities. In fact, I show that Black Americans express an increased likelihood to participate in a number of activities that are not nearly as uncivil, including hallmarks of peaceful protests such as sit-ins and marches. Thus, there are clear positive effects of invoking this sort of social norm that sit at the intersection of incivility and protest.

Second, the normative and moral implications of this study are hotly debated and rightly so. In the wake of George Floyd's death at the hands of Minneapolis police in mid 2020, many debated whether property destruction, vandalism, and threatening language constitute an appropriate response to state violence. This is a constitutional gray area, as the Supreme Court has affirmed the right to engage in acts of symbolism such as burning the American flag (Texas v. Johnson 1989) and even the use of offensive speech as political voice (Cohen v. California 1971).

The findings I present in this study merit further, serious discussion of the value of incivility in American politics. Yes, incivility causes numerous negative outcomes that should be curtailed and avoided to some extent, but it is arguable whether these documented effects mean that the entire business of incivility is somehow without value. After all, what can marginalized people do, precisely, to be better heard by sometimes-bigoted government officials that demand

civility? Rigorous, civil debates cannot occur when there is unequal access to the means of that sort of official deliberation (Karpowitz and Mendelberg 2014).

Those who argue that incivility erodes democratic institutions must contend with the evidence in this study: priming the historical importance of disruption in marginalized communities encourages political participation. Moreover, claims about civility—who is and is not civil—are really claims about *power*; that is, who has it, who wants it, and what will they do to maintain or obtain it. Those marginalized by formal institutions of power, like Black Americans, will likely seek to gain political capital through extra-systemic ways. They will obtain power with acts of protest and public voice, eschewing norms of politeness in the pursuit of racial justice. Even if the specific form of that participation is contrary to some *a priori* conceptions of "legitimate" political speech, one must recognize that the findings herein present a serious challenge to assumptions that incivility leads to the erosion of democracy. Contrary to that claim, this study shows that incivility can lead to the bolstering of democratic norms of participation in marginalized communities. Indeed, any so-called "crisis of civility" may present a renaissance of political participation for those most marginalized by the status quo that demands civility from them.

# 5 Conclusion

Scholars, politicians, and pundits alike have long bemoaned incivility as a perpetual plight on American democracy. Undoubtedly, incivility has many negative consequences and can be deleterious to a good, functioning democracy. Namely, incivility can lower trust in the government (Mutz 2015), make people angry with each other (Gervais 2019), and harm marginalized populations (Sobieraj 2020). But scholarship to this point has almost exclusively focused on these negative outcomes, with scant attention to normatively desirable outcomes that incivility can cause (e.g., Druckman et al. 2019). And even greater scholarship has emphasized the importance of *civility* in combating this "problem area" of American politics. Civility, these scholars often argue, is a panacea for issues of polarization, bad deliberation, and nasty politics (e.g., Foss and Griffin 1995; Gutmann and Thompson 1998; Neblo 2015). Some scholars even argue that incivility can lead to the death of a democracy if allowed to undermine important democratic norms of mutual toleration and respect (Frimer and Skitka 2020; Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018). These are important arguments to the study of incivility, and should be taken seriously given the wealth of empirical data supporting their claims.

That said, I argue that we must remember that incivility cannot be divorced from politics and studied as if it exists in a vacuum. This dissertation shows that incivility only exists insofar as someone is willing to perceive it, and those perceptions are subject to a host of biases and prejudices. Civil deliberation alone will not solve society's issues because "civility, for instance, will not in and of itself redress structural racism that affects infant mortality and life expectancy rates, nor the sexism that affects women's pay or safety" (Rood 2013, 342). But disruptive politics can change those things. People taking to the street and making themselves heard can

gain the political capital necessary to enact this sort of change that civility simply cannot do when those in power are fundamentally uninterested in the issues of marginalized peoples (Gillion 2020; McConnaughy 2013).

While scholars may present good faith arguments for why incivility is bad for democracy, I argue and find to some extent, that political actors are really only interested in civility insofar that it benefits them politically. The second empirical chapter of this dissertation shows that political actors routinely operate under a series of double standards and shifting goalposts for acceptable political behavior. When their side does something disruptive, it is good, democratic citizenship; when their political opponents take the same actions, they are disruptive or even violent actors not to be taken seriously. While outside the scope of this dissertation's focus on American politics, recent legislative efforts in the United Kingdom to curtail peaceful protests in the name of stopping "disruptive protests" reveal that political actors, when given the opportunity, will seek to solidify their power by silencing those without a seat at the table (Parkinson 2021). So, when politicians bemoan the death of civility in politics, or chastise someone for speaking too harshly about an injustice, we should question whether such arguments are being in good faith; my research shows that they probably are not.

Further, this dissertation reveals an incredibly, positive effect of incivility: increased political participation among Black Americans. Prior research on incivility to this point has not yet explored how incivility interacts with racial politics in the US. I argue that any scholars continuing to ignore this crucial competent do so to their own detriment. More often than not the sort of civility that these scholars often posit as crucial to American democracy "presupposes conditions of economic, political, and social equality among interlocutors," conditions that

simply do not exist in a democracy with so many underlying, systemic inequalities (Lozano-Reich and Cloud 2009, 220).

To this point, I am reminded of a young Black woman who attended a Kansas City Board of Police Commissioners meeting in the wake of George Floyd's death in May 2020 at the hands of Minneapolis police. At this meeting, Keiajah Brooks dispelled any notion of civility when she started her address by saying, "fair warning, I'm not nice and I don't seek to be respectable," before continuing to say:

> I'm not asking y'all for anything 'cause y'all can't and won't be both my savior and my oppressor. I don't want reform. I want to turn this building into luxury low-cost housing. These would make some really nice apartments… Firstly, stop using Black children as photo opportunities 'cause they're cute now, but in 10 years, they're Black male suspects in red shirts and khaki shorts. Eating cookies and drinking milk with children does not absolve you of your complicity in their oppression and denigration (Rahman 2020).

What Brooks understood here was that no degree of civility was owed to a group of power brokers and elites that she saw as her oppressors; civility is their language, not hers. So many Black Americans feel the same way, as the third empirical chapter of my dissertation showed. Being polite is less important than having a seat at the table and being heard. Indeed, how can we ask Black Americans to be civil when politics is often a matter of life and death for them? What sort of compromise should they try to peacefully reach with police or local officials who represent institutions that criminalize Blackness?

This is not to say that marginalized peoples should just burn down everything around them, but we need to understand that there are gradations to incivility and disruption. Some are necessary for the functioning of a good democracy where all people can participate, while others are seen as detrimental to those efforts, such as racial slurs and outright violence. We can have

meaningful debates about acceptable acts of public voice, but only when we stop treating incivility as if it is some bug in the system that needs to be removed in a patch. No. Incivility is a *feature* of democracy, and a damn good one at that.

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# Appendices

# Chapter 2 Appendix

### Appendix A: Survey demographics

| | |
|---|---|
| Female | 49.8% (51.0, ACS 2016) |
| Age 18-34 | 32% (26.0, ACS 2016) |
| 35-44 | 16% (14.5, ACS 2016) |
| 45-64 | 39.6% (35.5, ACS 2016) |
| 65-84 | 12.4% (20.5, ACS 2016) |
| 85+ | 0.0% (3.1, ACS 2016) |
| Income < $30,000 | 30.8% (22.5, ACS 2016) |
| $30,000 - $69,999 | 36.6% (35.1, ACS 2016) |
| $70,000 - $99,999 | 13.8% (13.0, ACS 2016) |
| $100,000 - $200,000 | 17.4% (21.9, ACS 2016) |
| > $200,000 | 1.3% (7.3, ACS 2016) |
| Less than high school | 2.7% (7.5, ACS 2016) |
| High school graduate | 20.4% (27.3, ACS 2016) |
| Some college | 44% (30.0, ACS 2016) |
| 4-year-degree | 24.2% (21.5, ACS 2016) |
| Advanced degree | 8.7% (13.3, ACS 2016) |
| Democrat | 43% |
| Republican | 38.2% |
| Independent | 18.4% |
| Liberal | 33.3% (26, Gallup 01/2019) |
| Conservative | 34.7% (35, Gallup 01/2019) |
| Moderate | 32% (35, Gallup 01/2019) |

Table A.1. Sample demographics compared to ACS benchmarks

**Appendix B: Regression tables from models in main paper**

| | Dependent Variable<br>Perception of Incivility |
|---|---|
| Slurs | 0.146*** |
| | (0.016) |
| Threats | 0.016 |
| | (0.019) |
| Civility Policing | -0.017 |
| | (0.014) |
| Elite Speaker | 0.001 |
| | (0.009) |
| Elite Target | -0.001 |
| | (0.010) |
| Speaker In-Party | -0.009 |
| | (0.015) |
| Target In-Party | 0.057*** |
| | (0.014) |
| Female Speaker | 0.023* |
| | (0.013) |
| Female Target | 0.046*** |
| | (0.013) |
| White Speaker | -0.009 |
| | (0.009) |
| White Target | -0.017* |
| | (0.009) |
| Constant | 0.568*** |
| | (0.020) |
| Observations | 2,528 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.046 |
| F Statistic | 12.164*** (df = 11; 2516) |
| Table 1. | *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01 |

| | Dependent Variable Perception of Incivility | |
|---|---|---|
| | H6a Racial Resentment | H6a SDO |
| Slurs | 0.145*** | 0.144*** |
| | (0.016) | (0.016) |
| Threats | 0.013 | 0.016 |
| | (0.019) | (0.019) |
| Civility Policing | -0.016 | -0.015 |
| | (0.014) | (0.014) |
| Elite Speaker | 0.002 | 0.0005 |
| | (0.009) | (0.009) |
| Elite Target | -0.001 | -0.0001 |
| | (0.010) | (0.010) |
| Speaker In-Party | -0.009 | -0.012 |
| | (0.015) | (0.015) |
| Target In-Party | 0.053*** | 0.052*** |
| | (0.014) | (0.014) |
| Female Speaker | 0.022* | 0.026** |
| | (0.013) | (0.013) |
| Female Target | 0.046*** | 0.050*** |
| | (0.013) | (0.013) |
| Black Target | 0.025* | 0.028** |
| | (0.013) | (0.013) |
| Black Speaker | 0.009 | -0.007 |
| | (0.023) | (0.021) |
| Racial Resentment | -0.099* | |
| | (0.051) | |
| Black Speaker*RR | 0.006 | |
| | (0.051) | |
| SDO | | -0.373*** |
| | | (0.066) |
| Black Speaker*SDO | | 0.084 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | (0.064) |
| Constant | 0.594*** | 0.644*** |
| | (0.029) | (0.026) |
| Observations | 2,524 | 2,522 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.051 | 0.082 |
| F Statistic | 11.334*** (df = 13; 2510) | 18.351*** (df = 13; 2508) |
| Table B.2 | *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01 | |

| | Dependent Variable | |
|---|---|---|
| | Perception of Incivility | |
| | H6b Racial Resentment | H6b SDO |
| Slurs | 0.145*** | 0.144*** |
| | (0.016) | (0.016) |
| Threats | 0.012 | 0.015 |
| | (0.019) | (0.019) |
| Civility Policing | -0.016 | -0.015 |
| | (0.014) | (0.013) |
| Elite Speaker | 0.001 | 0.0001 |
| | (0.009) | (0.009) |
| Elite Target | -0.001 | -0.0002 |
| | (0.010) | (0.010) |
| Speaker In-Party | -0.010 | -0.012 |
| | (0.015) | (0.014) |
| Target In-Party | 0.053*** | 0.052*** |
| | (0.014) | (0.014) |
| Female Speaker | 0.021 | 0.024* |
| | (0.013) | (0.013) |
| Female Target | 0.045*** | 0.049*** |
| | (0.013) | (0.013) |
| Black Speaker | 0.010 | 0.014 |
| | (0.013) | (0.012) |
| Black Target | 0.061** | 0.065*** |
| | (0.025) | (0.022) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Racial Resentment | -0.053 | |
| | (0.051) | |
| Black Target*RR | -0.087 | |
| | (0.054) | |
| SDO | | $-0.259^{***}$ |
| | | (0.068) |
| Black Target*SDO | | $-0.142^{*}$ |
| | | (0.077) |
| Constant | $0.576^{***}$ | $0.616^{***}$ |
| | (0.029) | (0.027) |
| Observations | 2,524 | 2,522 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.052 | 0.083 |
| F Statistic | $11.578^{***}$ (df = 13; 2510) | $18.604^{***}$ (df = 13; 2508) |
| Table B.3 | $^{*}p < 0.10$ $^{**}p < 0.05$ $^{***}p < 0.01$ | |

**Appendix C: Supplemental dyadic analyses**

| | Dependent Variable<br>Perception of Incivility |
|---|---|
| Slurs | 0.583*** |
| | (0.065) |
| Threats | 0.067 |
| | (0.076) |
| Civility Policing | -0.066 |
| | (0.055) |
| Constant | 3.484*** |
| | (0.065) |
| Observations | 2,528 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.035 |
| F Statistic | 31.999*** (df = 3; 2524) |
| Table C.1 | *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01 |

| | Dependent Variable<br>Perception of Incivility | |
|---|---|---|
| | H1a | H1b |
| Slurs | 0.583*** | 0.567*** |
| | (0.065) | (0.089) |
| Threats | 0.068 | 0.058 |
| | (0.076) | (0.107) |
| Civility Policing | -0.067 | -0.031 |
| | (0.055) | (0.078) |
| Speaker Elite | 0.008 | |
| | (0.036) | |
| Speaker Non-Elite x Target Elite | | 0.054 |
| | | (0.072) |
| Constant | 3.484*** | 3.444*** |
| | (0.065) | (0.087) |
| Observations | 2,528 | 1,291 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.035 | 0.031 |
| F Statistic | 24.002*** (df = 4; 2523) | 11.356*** (df = 4; 1286) |
| Table C.2 | *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01 | |

| | Dependent Variable Perception of Incivility | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | H2a Partisanship | H2a Gender | H2a Race |
| Slurs | 0.553*** | 0.571*** | 0.399*** |
| | (0.100) | (0.087) | (0.084) |
| Threats | 0.129 | 0.027 | 0.069 |
| | (0.109) | (0.104) | (0.106) |
| Civility Policing | -0.162* | -0.031 | -0.126* |
| | (0.085) | (0.082) | (0.074) |
| Speaker Out-Party x Target In-Party | 0.128 | | |
| | (0.083) | | |
| Speaker Out-Gender x Target In-Gender | | -0.022 | |
| | | (0.072) | |
| Speaker Out-Race x Target In-Race | | | 0.115 |
| | | | (0.074) |
| Constant | 3.594*** | 3.441*** | 3.457*** |
| | (0.095) | (0.088) | (0.084) |
| Observations | 1,034 | 1,228 | 1,257 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.035 | 0.033 | 0.019 |
| F Statistic | 10.463*** (df = 4; 1029) | 11.569*** (df = 4; 1223) | 7.168*** (df = 4; 1252) |

Table C.3 *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01

| | Dependent Variable Perception of Incivility | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | H2b Partisanship | H2b Gender | H2b Race |
| Slurs | 0.487*** | 0.613*** | 0.571*** |
| | (0.099) | (0.088) | (0.082) |
| Threats | 0.067 | -0.043 | 0.128 |
| | (0.105) | (0.108) | (0.105) |
| Civility Policing | -0.178** | -0.097 | -0.076 |
| | (0.089) | (0.076) | (0.073) |
| Speaker Out-Party x Target In-Party | 0.258*** | | |
| | (0.081) | | |
| Speaker Out-Gender x Target In-Gender | | -0.147* | |
| | | (0.076) | |
| Speaker Out-Race x Target In-Race | | | -0.049 |
| | | | (0.075) |
| Constant | 3.502*** | 3.602*** | 3.534*** |
| | (0.095) | (0.083) | (0.090) |
| Observations | 1,002 | 1,265 | 1,302 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.035 | 0.043 | 0.032 |
| F Statistic | 10.150*** (df = 4; 997) | 15.218*** (df = 4; 1260) | 11.834*** (df = 4; 1297) |

Table C.4 *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01

| | Dependent Variable Perception of Incivility | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | H2c Partisanship | H2c Gender | H2c Race |
| Slurs | 0.594*** | 0.556*** | 0.541*** |
| | (0.101) | (0.087) | (0.087) |
| Threats | 0.057 | 0.073 | 0.078 |
| | (0.118) | (0.096) | (0.098) |
| Civility Policing | -0.213** | -0.027 | -0.069 |
| | (0.087) | (0.070) | (0.073) |
| Speaker In-Party x Target Out-Party | -0.133* | | |
| | (0.077) | | |
| Speaker In-Gender x Target Out-Gender | | 0.125* | |
| | | (0.074) | |
| Speaker In-Race x Target Out-Race | | | 0.161** |
| | | | (0.078) |
| Constant | 3.626*** | 3.433*** | 3.388*** |
| | (0.098) | (0.086) | (0.086) |
| Observations | 1,056 | 1,267 | 1,247 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.041 | 0.033 | 0.031 |
| F Statistic | 12.236*** (df = 4; 1051) | 11.745*** (df = 4; 1262) | 10.869*** (df = 4; 1242) |

Table C.5 *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01

| | Dependent Variable Perception of Incivility | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | H2d Partisanship | H2d Gender | H2d Race |
| Slurs | 0.653*** | 0.561*** | 0.599*** |
| | (0.079) | (0.089) | (0.090) |
| Threats | 0.071 | 0.176* | 0.006 |
| | (0.097) | (0.099) | (0.098) |
| Civility Policing | 0.002 | -0.038 | -0.058 |
| | (0.069) | (0.076) | (0.074) |
| Speaker In-Party x Target In-Party | 0.157* | | |
| | (0.083) | | |
| Speaker In-Gender x Target In-Gender | | -0.042 | |
| | | (0.074) | |
| Speaker In-Race x Target In-Race | | | -0.153** |
| | | | (0.074) |
| Constant | 3.333*** | 3.457*** | 3.533*** |
| | (0.082) | (0.088) | (0.090) |
| Observations | 1,526 | 1,263 | 1,226 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.045 | 0.030 | 0.039 |
| F Statistic | 19.009*** (df = 4; 1521) | 10.852*** (df = 4; 1258) | 13.579*** (df = 4; 1221) |

Table C.6 *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01

| | Dependent Variable Perception of Incivility | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | H3a Racial Resentment | H3a SDO | H3a Sexism |
| Slurs | 0.575*** | 0.573*** | 0.681*** |
| | (0.064) | (0.063) | (0.096) |
| Threats | 0.057 | 0.067 | 0.177 |
| | (0.076) | (0.075) | (0.113) |
| Civility Policing | -0.062 | -0.060 | -0.110 |
| | (0.055) | (0.054) | (0.080) |
| Black Speaker | 0.040 | -0.016 | |
| | (0.091) | (0.082) | |
| Racial Resentment | -0.414** | | |
| | (0.205) | | |
| Black Speaker:Racial Resentment | 0.009 | | |
| | (0.203) | | |
| SDO | | -1.457*** | |
| | | (0.263) | |
| Black Speaker:SDO | | 0.278 | |
| | | (0.256) | |
| Female Speaker | | | 0.199 |
| | | | (0.158) |
| Hostile Sexism | | | -0.225 |
| | | | (0.275) |
| Female Speaker:Hostile Sexism | | | -0.341 |
| | | | (0.283) |
| Constant | 3.636*** | 3.837*** | 3.461*** |
| | (0.101) | (0.093) | (0.168) |
| Observations | 2,524 | 2,522 | 1,260 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.041 | 0.071 | 0.049 |
| F Statistic | 18.812*** (df = 6; 2517) | 32.964*** (df = 6; 2515) | 11.892*** (df = 6; 1253) |

Table C.7 *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01

| | Dependent Variable Perception of Incivility | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | H3b Racial Resentment | H3b SDO | H3b Sexism |
| Slurs | 0.577*** | 0.577*** | 0.674*** |
| | (0.064) | (0.063) | (0.095) |
| Threats | 0.048 | 0.060 | 0.178 |
| | (0.076) | (0.075) | (0.113) |
| Civility Policing | -0.060 | -0.058 | -0.105 |
| | (0.055) | (0.054) | (0.080) |
| Black Target | 0.258*** | 0.270*** | |
| | (0.098) | (0.089) | |
| Racial Resentment | -0.218 | | |
| | (0.204) | | |
| Black Target:Racial Resentment | -0.386* | | |
| | (0.216) | | |
| SDO | | -1.010*** | |
| | | (0.274) | |
| Black Target:SDO | | -0.608** | |
| | | (0.307) | |
| Female Target | | | 0.145 |
| | | | (0.156) |
| Hostile Sexism | | | -0.531* |
| | | | (0.273) |
| Female Target:Hostile Sexism | | | 0.255 |
| | | | (0.272) |
| Constant | 3.528*** | 3.694*** | 3.491*** |
| | (0.103) | (0.096) | (0.167) |
| Observations | 2,524 | 2,522 | 1,260 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.043 | 0.073 | 0.059 |
| F Statistic | 19.962*** (df = 6; 2517) | 34.298*** (df = 6; 2515) | 14.115*** (df = 6; 1253) |

Table C.8 *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01

| | Dependent Variable<br>Perception of Incivility | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | H4a | H4b Race | H4b Gender |
| Slurs | 0.584*** | 0.584*** | 0.585*** |
| | (0.064) | (0.065) | (0.064) |
| Threats | 0.069 | 0.072 | 0.070 |
| | (0.076) | (0.076) | (0.076) |
| Civility Policing | -0.068 | -0.069 | -0.067 |
| | (0.056) | (0.056) | (0.056) |
| Black Speaker | | 0.251** | |
| | | (0.128) | |
| Female Speaker | | | 0.151 |
| | | | (0.133) |
| System Justification | 0.186 | 0.431 | 0.267 |
| | (0.256) | (0.286) | (0.277) |
| Black Speaker:SJ | | -0.486* | |
| | | (0.270) | |
| Female Speaker:SJ | | | -0.172 |
| | | | (0.282) |
| Constant | 3.406*** | 3.279*** | 3.332*** |
| | (0.127) | (0.143) | (0.135) |
| Observations | 2,528 | 2,528 | 2,528 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.036 | 0.037 | 0.036 |
| F Statistic | 24.507*** (df = 4; 2523) | 17.054*** (df = 6; 2521) | 16.793*** (df = 6; 2521) |

Table C.9 *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01

**Appendix D: Full survey wording**

---

Start of Block: Demographics

age What is your age?

_____

---

gender What is your gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Other/prefer not to say (3)

---

Latino Are you Hispanic or Latino?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

---

race With which of the following races or ethnicities do you affiliate? (mark all that apply)

- ▢ White (1)
- ▢ Black or African American (2)
- ▢ American Indian or Alaska Native (3)
- ▢ Asian or Asian American (4)
- ▢ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)
- ▢ Other (6)
- ▢ Middle Eastern or North African (7)

---

Page Break

income What is an estimate of your family's annual household income (before taxes)?

- < $30,000 (1)
- $30,000 - $69,999 (2)
- $70,000 - $99,999 (3)
- $100,000 - $200,000 (4)
- > $200,000 (5)

---

education What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than high school (1)
- High school graduate (2)
- Some college (3)
- 2 year degree (4)
- 4 year degree (5)
- Advanced degree (6)

**End of Block: Demographics**

---

**Start of Block: Politics**

pid1 Generally speaking, which of the options below best describes your party identification?

- Democrat (1)
- Republican (2)
- Independent (3)

---

*Display This Question:*

*If Generally speaking, which of the options below best describes your party identification? = Democrat*

piddem Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?

- Strong Democrat (1)
- Not so strong Democrat (2)

---

*Display This Question:*

*If Generally speaking, which of the options below best describes your party identification? = Republican*

pidrep Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?

- Strong Republican (1)
- Not so strong Republican (2)

---

*Display This Question:*

*If Generally speaking, which of the options below best describes your party identification? = Independent*

pidlean Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic or the Republican Party?

- Democratic Party (1)
- Republican Party (2)
- Neither (3)

---

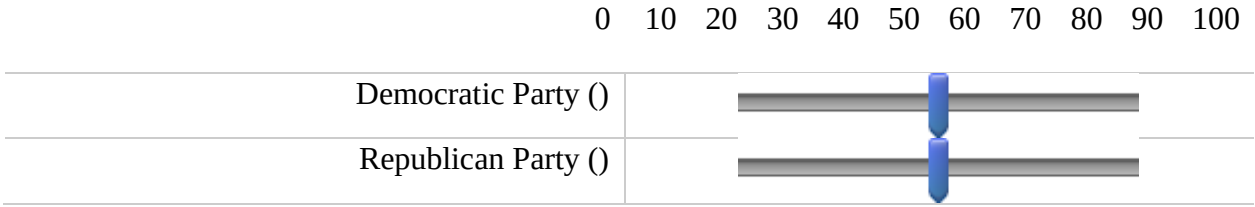
Page Break

ideology We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Here is a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place yourself on this scale?

- Very liberal (1)
- Liberal (2)
- Slightly liberal (3)
- Moderate, or middle of the road (4)
- Slightly conservative (5)
- Conservative (6)
- Very conservative (7)

---

negparty We'd like you to rate how you feel towards the Democratic and Republican Parties on a scale of 0 to 100. Zero (0) means very unfavorable and 100 means very favorable. Fifty (50) means you do not feel favorable or unfavorable. How would you rate your feeling toward each party?




End of Block: Politics

---

Start of Block: Gender ID

Q155 Please indicate how much you disagree or agree with the following statements:

---

GID1 I often think about the fact that I am a ${e://Field/GID}.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Strongly agree (4)

---

GID2 The fact that I am a ${e://Field/GID} is an important part of my identity.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Strongly agree (4)

---

GID3 Being a ${e://Field/GID} is an important part of how I see myself.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Strongly agree (4)

**End of Block: Gender ID**

---

**Start of Block: White identity**

White1 How often do you think about your identity as a white European-American?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Very often (4)
- Always (5)

---

White2 To what extent does your identity as white European-American influence your daily decisions?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Very often (4)
- Always (5)

---

White3 How well does the term white European-American describe you?

- Very well (1)
- Well (2)
- Fair (3)
- Poorly (4)
- Very poorly (5)

---

White4 When talking about people of white European heritage, how often do you say "we" instead of they?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Very often (4)
- Always (5)

---

White5 How important to your identity is being of white European heritage?

- Very important (1)
- Important (2)
- Moderately important (3)
- Slightly important (4)
- Not important (5)

**End of Block: White identity**

---

**Start of Block: Party SI Rep**

PSIR1 How important is being a Republican to you?

- Extremely important (1)
- Very important (2)
- Moderately important (3)
- Slightly important (4)
- Not at all important (5)

---

PSIR2 How well does the term Republican describe you?

- Extremely well (1)
- Very well (2)
- Moderately well (3)
- Slightly well (4)
- Not well at all (5)

---

PSIR3 When talking about Republicans, how often so you use "we" instead of "they"?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Very often (4)
- Always (5)

---

PSIR4 To what extent do you think of yourself as being a Republican?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Very often (4)
- Always (5)

**End of Block: Party SI Rep**

---

**Start of Block: Party SI Dem**

PSID1 How important is being a Democrat to you?

- Extremely important (1)
- Very important (2)
- Moderately important (3)
- Slightly important (4)
- Not at all important (5)

---

PSID2 How well does the term Democrat describe you?

- Extremely well (1)
- Very well (2)
- Moderately well (3)
- Slightly well (4)
- Not well at all (5)

---

PSID3 When talking about Democrats, how often so you use "we" instead of "they"?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Very often (4)
- Always (5)

---

PSID4 To what extent do you think of yourself as being a Democrat?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Very often (4)
- Always (5)

**End of Block: Party SI Dem**

---

**Start of Block: Party SI Ind**

PSII1 How important is being an Independent to you?

- Extremely important (1)
- Very important (2)
- Moderately important (3)
- Slightly important (4)
- Not at all important (5)

---

PSII2 How well does the term Independent describe you?

- Extremely well (1)
- Very well (2)
- Moderately well (3)
- Slightly well (4)
- Not well at all (5)

PSII3 When talking about Independents, how often so you use "we" instead of "they"?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Very often (4)
- Always (5)

PSII4 To what extent do you think of yourself as being an Independent?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Very often (4)
- Always (5)

**End of Block: Party SI Ind**

**Start of Block: RR**

Q168 Please indicate how much you disagree or agree with the following statements:

RR1 It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Strongly disagree (4)

RR2 Irish, Italian, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Strongly disagree (4)

RR3 Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Strongly disagree (4)

RR4 Over the past few years, blacks have gotten more economically than they deserve.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Strongly disagree (4)

**End of Block: RR**

**Start of Block: Sexism**

Q182 Please indicate how much you disagree or agree with the following statements:

sex1 Many women are actually seeking special favors, such as hiring policies that favor them over men, under the guise of asking for "equality".

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

sex2 Most women interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

---

sex3 Women seek to gain power by getting control over men.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

---

sex4 When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

**End of Block: Sexism**

---

**Start of Block: SDO7**

Q173 Please indicate how much you disagree or agree with the following statements:

---

SDO1
An ideal society requires some groups to be on top and others to be on the bottom.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

SDO2
Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups.
- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

SDO3
No one group should dominate in society.
- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

SDO4
Groups at the bottom are just as deserving as groups at the top.
- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

SDO5
Group equality should be our primary goal.
- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

SDO6
It is unjust to try to make groups equal.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

---

SDO7
We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

---

SDO8
We should work to give all groups an equal chance to succeed.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

**End of Block: SDO7**

---

**Start of Block: System Justification**

Q191 Please indicate how much you disagree or agree with the following statements:

---

SJ1 In general, you find society to be fair.
- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

---

SJ2 In general, the American political system operates as it should.
- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

---

SJ3 American society needs to be radically restructured.
- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

---

SJ4 The United States is the best country in the world to live in.
- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

---

SJ5 Most policies serve the greater good.
- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

SJ6 Everyone has a fair shot at wealth and happiness.
- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

SJ7 Our society is getting worse every year.
- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

SJ8 Society is set up so that people usually get what they deserve.
- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

**End of Block: System Justification**

**Start of Block: Intro to tasks**

Q19 We are interested in the things that Americans find newsworthy. What follows will be six different excerpts from recent newspaper articles on political interactions that took place in town hall meetings. For each scenario, please consider how newsworthy the interaction is, the emotions it makes you feel, and how uncivil it seems. For each scenario, mark the responses that most accurately reflect your opinions **(Reminder: there are six scenarios, total).**

**End of Block: Intro to tasks**

**Start of Block: Task 1 symmetry**

Sym_1 ${e://Field/Police_1}

"${e://Field/SParty_1} ${e://Field/SJob_1} ${e://Field/SF_1} ${e://Field/SL_1} told a ${e://Field/TJob_1}, ${e://Field/TF_1} ${e://Field/TL_1}, a fellow ${e://Field/TSym_1}, that ${e://Field/TL_1} was ${e://Field/Incivility_1} during last night's town hall meeting."

---

uncivilsym_1 How uncivil do you think the above scenario was?

- ○ Not at all uncivil (1)
- ○ Slightly uncivil (2)
- ○ Somewhat uncivil (3)
- ○ Mostly uncivil (4)
- ○ Very uncivil (5)

---

PANASsym_1
The table below contains a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item (in the first column) and then mark the appropriate answer in the row after that word. Indicate to what extent you feel this way *right now*, that is, *at the present moment.*

| | Very slightly or not at all (1) | A little (2) | Moderately (4) | Quite a bit (5) | Extremely (6) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Enthusiasm (2) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Interest (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Sadness (4) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Fear (5) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Anger (6) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Anxiety (8) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

---

newssym_1 How newsworthy do you think the above scenario was?

- Not at all newsworthy (1)
- Slightly newsworthy (2)
- Somewhat newsworthy (3)
- Mostly newsworthy (4)
- Very newsworthy (5)

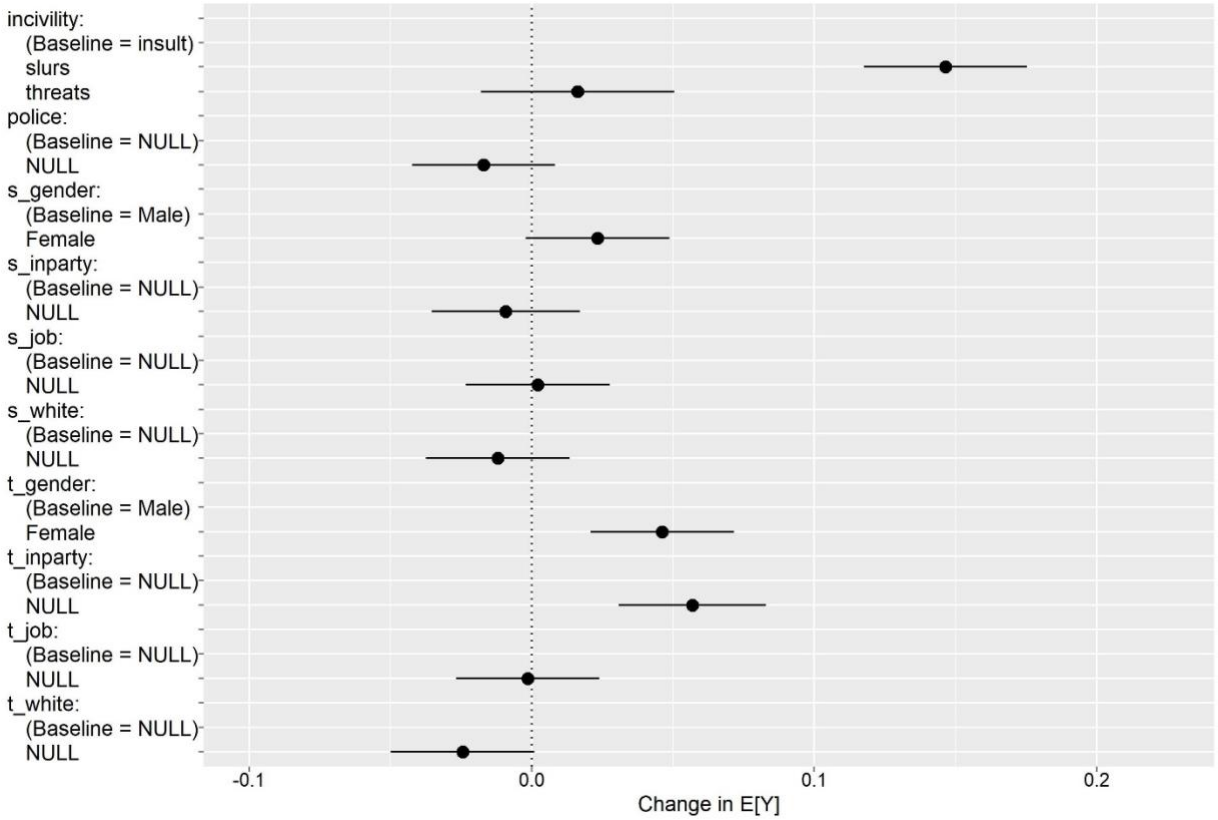
**Appendix E: Replication of Frimer and Skitka (2020)**

| | Dependent Variable<br>Perception of Incivility |
|---|---|
| Speaker In-Party Elite | 0.028 |
| | (0.019) |
| Slurs | 0.150*** |
| | (0.026) |
| Threats | 0.011 |
| | (0.030) |
| Civility Policing | -0.050** |
| | (0.022) |
| Female Speaker | -0.008 |
| | (0.020) |
| Female Target | 0.047** |
| | (0.021) |
| White Speaker | -0.007 |
| | (0.014) |
| White Target | -0.035** |
| | (0.015) |
| Constant | 0.605*** |
| | (0.027) |
| Observations | 1,056 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.047 |
| F Statistic | 7.508*** (df = 8; 1047) |
| Table E.1 | *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01 |

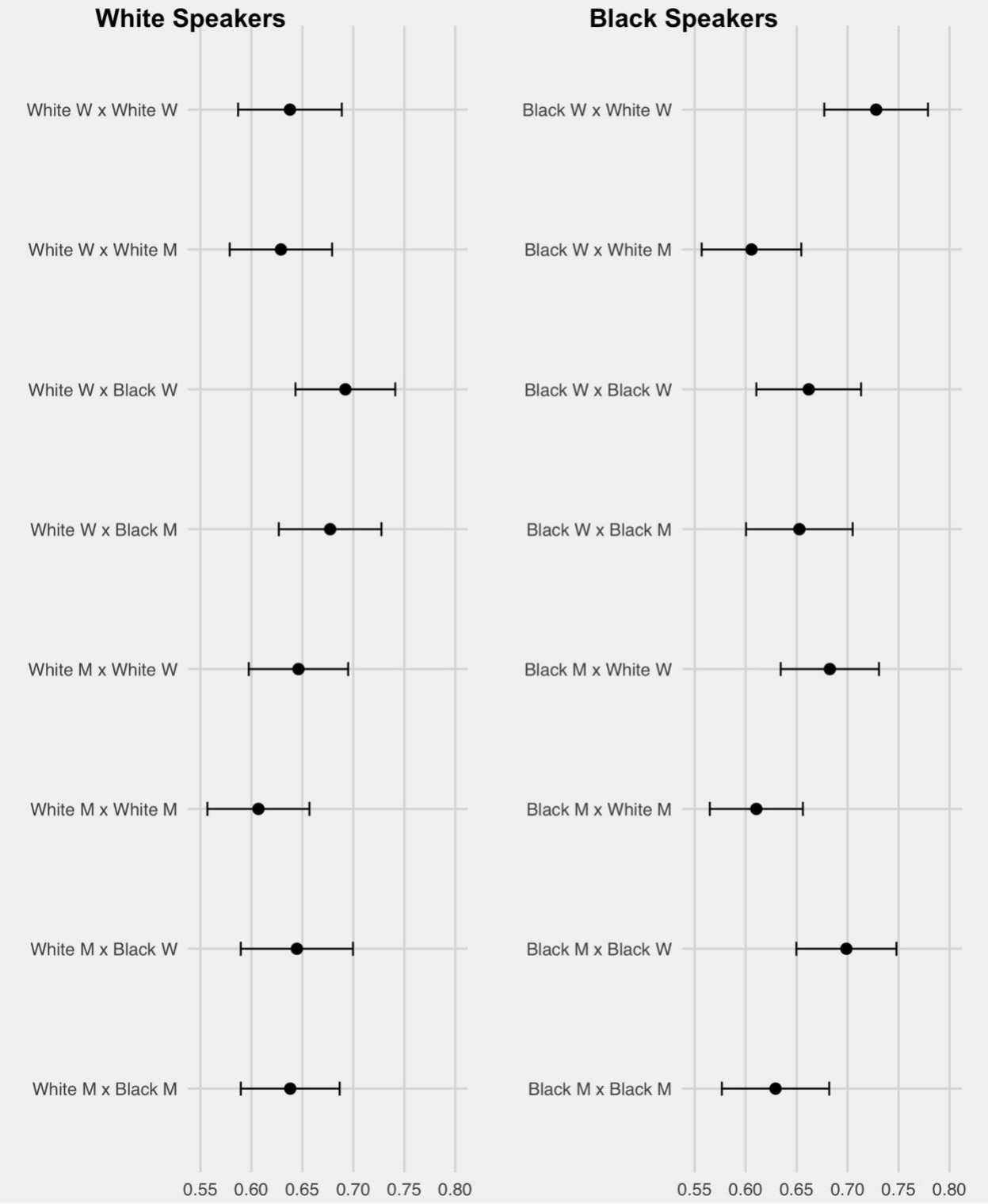
**Appendix F: First scenario analyses**

| | Dependent Variable<br>Perception of Incivility |
|---|---|
| Slurs | 0.095*** |
| | (0.035) |
| Threats | 0.001 |
| | (0.045) |
| Civility Policing | -0.004 |
| | (0.031) |
| Elite Speaker | 0.010 |
| | (0.021) |
| Elite Target | -0.007 |
| | (0.021) |
| Speaker In-Party | -0.031 |
| | (0.031) |
| Target In-Party | 0.069** |
| | (0.030) |
| Female Speaker | 0.005 |
| | (0.031) |
| Female Target | 0.071** |
| | (0.031) |
| White Speaker | 0.026 |
| | (0.021) |
| White Target | -0.019 |
| | (0.022) |
| Constant | 0.603*** |
| | (0.037) |
| Observations | 430 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.024 |
| F Statistic | 1.944** (df = 11; 418) |
| Table F.1 | *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01 |

## Appendix G: AMCE replication



**Appendix H: Speaker x target combinations (perception of incivility)**



## Appendix I: Names used in study

| Black last names: | Black male first names: | Black female names: | White last names: | White male names: | White female names: |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Banks | DaShawn* | Denisha | Walsh | Hunter | Katelyn |
| Jackson | Tremayne | Taniya | Decker | Jake | Claire |
| Washington | Jamal | Heaven | Becker | Seth | Laurie |
| Booker | DaQuan* | Ashanti | Nielsen | Zachary | Stephanie |
| Jefferson | DeAndre | Tyra | McGrath | Todd | Abigail |
| Mosley | Tyrone | Ebony | Andersen | Matthew | Megan |
| | Keyshawn | Shanice | Larsen | Logan | Kristen |
| | Denzel | Latoya* | Meyer | Ryan | Emily |
| | Latrell | Keyana | Hartman | Scott | Sarah |
| | Jayvon | Tionna | | Dustin | Molly |
| | Terrell | Latonya* | | Brett | Jill |
| | DeShawn | Lakisha* | | Ethan | Hilary |
| | Rasheed | Janae | | Connor | Meredith |
| | D'Andre | Tamika* | | Neil | Margaret |
| | Kareem | Tanisha | | Steven | Amy |

* indicates names that are low on SES, according to Gaddis (2017).

# Chapter 3 Appendix

## Appendix A Coding instructions

**Data:**
All content will be cable news transcripts, which read a lot like scripts, with speakers identified; this is helpful for our purposes.
**Unit of analysis:**
For the purposes of this project, the unit of analysis is the speaker, within a given story, discussing a given protest. That is, we will be analyzing the statement of any speaker involved in stories concerning protests; this can be a host, a guest, or even a clip of a video recorded at an earlier date played on the program in question. But each speaker will only have one entry associated with him/her per story. So, if Sean Hannity says that a recent Black Lives Matter protest was uncivil, then he says so again later in the same document, it still is just a single unique row, in which you can document the different aspects of what the speakers says in the appropriate column. There may be multiple speakers per story, and thus the information about the protesters will stay the same while the speaker information will change. There should be no such thing as a story with no speaker. At the very least, the host is always the speaker.
For each speaker name, we will later do a google search to further identify them, but this is not your goal at the moment; for now, simply document the speaker's full name and the other information in the spreadsheet.
As for the protesters, in the transcripts, it is often stated as a matter of reporting what the protest is about, and you can often infer race/gender from this to some degree (e.g., Black Lives Matters protest is most likely a majority Black protest). Of course, note your confidence in the appropriate column. If you would like to be certain of your coding, Google can never hurt, but it is difficult to assess this for every protest, as many protests are just a mix of people that are never described in racial or gendered terms. Partisanship may be the easiest feature to glean based on topic.
**What is in the spreadsheet:**

1 Coder name
2 Date coding.
3 Link to transcript in Nexus Uni database
4 Date of *document*
    4.a e.g., 11/02/2012
5 Network the transcript originated from
6 Show's name
7 Speaker's name
    7.a It should be fairly easy to identify all the speakers in a given story, as they often do not exceed a half dozen.
8 What is the protest is about? (check all that apply, but most protests are single-issue with how issues are defined here)
    8.a Labor issue
    8.b Race issue

8.c Gender issue
8.d Police Brutality
8.e LGBTQ issue
8.f Environment
8.g Pro life
8.h Pro choice
8.i Gun control
8.j 2nd Amendment
8.k Speech issue
8.l Foreign
8.m Economy
8.n Healthcare
8.o Religion
8.p Immigration
8.q Multiple
8.r Election
8.s COVID
8.t Unknown – explain why it is unknown.
8.u Other – note in column what it is.

9 Does the protest group have a name?
9.a Yes
9.b No

10 If the protest group has a name, write the name

11 What is the partisanship/group identity of the protesters?
11.a Democratic
11.b Republican
11.c Bi-partisan
11.d Non-partisan
11.e Other (e.g., Environmentalists). Note in column what other is.
11.f Unknown

12 Identity of protestors confidence (1-5)

13 Majority race of the protesters? ("Majority" as described in the story; often only clear when discussing a racial or gender protest)
13.a White
13.b Black
13.c Asian
13.d Latino
13.e MENA
13.f Mixed
13.g Other – note other
13.h Unknown

14 Race confidence (1-5)

15 Majority gender of protesters? (often only clear when discussing a gendered protest)
15.a Male

15.b Female
15.c Trans
15.d Mixed
15.e Unknown – explain why unknown

16 Gender confidence (1-5)

17 Are the protesters elites (hold elected office)?
17.a Yes
17.b No
17.c Partially
17.d Unknown

18 Elite confidence (1-5)

19 What tactic are the protesters said to be using? (check all that apply)
19.a Holding signs
19.b Boycotting
19.c Burning of items
19.d Chanting
19.e Lighting candles
19.f Civil disobedience (withholding obligations, sit-ins, blockade, building occupation, bannering, camping)
19.g Musical/vocal
19.h Drumming
19.i Loud noisemaking
19.j Photo exhibit
19.k Pushing or shoving
19.l Cross carrying
19.m Damaging property
19.n Symbolic display (e.g., taking a knee)
19.o Hitting or punching
19.p Marching
19.q Hunger strike
19.r Speechmaking
19.s Canvassing
19.t Press conference
19.u Film screening
19.v Yelling
19.w Throwing objects
19.x Petitioning
19.y Vigil
19.z Flag-waving
19.aa Lawsuits

19.bb Picket line
19.cc Praying
19.dd Singing collectively
19.ee Dramaturgy (e.g., “die-ins”)
19.ff Discussion
19.gg Leafleting
19.hh Recitation
19.ii Symbolic clothing
19.jj Lobbying
19.kk Blocking traffic
19.ll Other

20 If other, type it out

21 Then, for each speaker, determine the following about what they are saying about the protesters:

21.a Are the protestors acting uncivil? (“norm-violating behavior” such as being threatening, spewing insults/slurs, or being generally disrespectful, being violent). (There maybe multiple types of incivility.)

a.i.1 No
a.i.2 Yes (Check all that apply)

21.a.ii Protestors are making threats ( yes or no)?
21.a.iii Protesters are being violent (yes or no)?
21.a.iv Protestors are insulting others (yes or no)?
21.a.v Protesters are using slurs (yes or no)?

21.b Confidence 1-5

21.c Acting civil? (“indication that an opponent’s policies would positively change American values or institutions, acknowledgement of common ground, and use of complementary language or praise of an opponent”) (e.g., “peaceful” “seeking comprise” “bridging divides”)

c.i.1 No
c.i.2 Yes (Check all that apply)

21.c.ii Protestors are acting peaceful (yes or no)?
21.c.iii Protestors are seeking compromise (yes or no)?
21.c.iv Protestors are bridging divides (yes or no)?

21.d Confidence 1-5

22 How many times did the speaker say the protesters were uncivil of any type? (distinct sentences, as separated by periods, in the transcript, but by the same speaker)

22.a Enter number (“10+” when over 10)

23 How many times did the speaker say the protesters were civil of any type? (distinct sentences, as separated by periods, in the transcript, but by the same speaker)

23.a Enter number (“10+” when over 10)

24 Overall, is the speaker positive or negative about the protests?

24.a Scale 1-5

25 Confidence 1-5

26 Should protesters be silenced? (up to your interpretation; often phrases like "they should go to work/go home" or "they are being a public nuisance and should be shut down" or if they say police need to be brought in to manage things)
- 26.a Yes
- 26.b No

27 Confidence 1-5

**Speaker identity coding**

The goal is to find the person's race, gender, occupation, and partisanship for each speaker, to the best of our ability. In some instances, the person will be fairly obvious and not require this search process, either because the person is well known (e.g., President Trump, Nancy Pelosi) or because we already have searched for that person in the past. In other cases, it will be more difficult, especially in the case of guests.

NOTE: Make sure that the name you reference matches the full name you see in the transcript. The easiest way to collect this information is to find the author's website (or Wikipedia page even) and a photo. Google will be your best bet for collecting these pieces of information, using the speaker's full name and maybe their institution/job if the transcript provides that. Sometimes, a guest is a frequent contributor to that cable network, and you can search their name and the name of the network to find the right person. (e.g., Preston Smith Fox News).

**What is in the spreadsheet:**

28 Speaker's race (Google)
- 28.a White
- 28.b Black
- 28.c Asian
- 28.d Latino
- 28.e MENA
- 28.f Mixed
- 28.g Other – note other
- 28.h Unknown

29 Race confidence (1-5)

30 Speaker's gender (Google)
- 30.a Male
- 30.b Female
- 30.c Trans (only code when clearly identified as such)
- 30.d Unclear/mixed

31 Gender confidence (1-5)

32 Speaker's partisanship (Google and best judgment; mark non-partisan if traditional journalist and Unknown when unsure)
- 32.a Democratic
- 32.b Republican
- 32.c Bi-partisan
- 32.d Non-partisan
- 32.e Other (e.g., foreign partisan). Note in column what "other" is.

32.f Unknown

33 Partisanship confidence

33.a 1-5, with 5 meaning the transcript provides the partisanship or it's a documented fact easily searched (e.g., former congressmen and women).

34 Speaker job (Google)

34.a Host (of the show you're reading)
34.b Host (of another show)
34.c Network pundit
34.d Intellectual (professor, think tank worker)
34.e Student
34.f Activist
34.g Protester (associated with the protest that is the subject of the transcript)
34.h Law enforcement
34.i Politician
34.j Former politician
34.k Non-political job (e.g., waiter, truck driver, etc.)
34.l Other (write out)

**Appendix B Full regression results**

| | *Dependent variable:* Protesters called uncivil | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Fox News | MSNBC | CNN |
| Out party protesters | 0.155** | 0.419*** | 0.336*** |
| | (0.062) | (0.063) | (0.066) |
| Second amendment protest | | -0.410** | -0.475** |
| | | (0.164) | (0.216) |
| COVID lockdown protest | -0.007 | 0.591*** | -0.331 |
| | (0.184) | (0.176) | (0.247) |
| Economy protest | -0.076 | -0.030 | 0.004 |
| | (0.192) | (0.113) | (0.229) |
| Election protest | 0.668*** | 0.101 | 0.443** |
| | (0.208) | (0.192) | (0.215) |
| Environmental protest | 0.183 | -0.075 | 0.221 |
| | (0.218) | (0.129) | (0.250) |
| Foreign issue protest | 0.310 | -0.106 | 0.075 |
| | (0.200) | (0.155) | (0.340) |
| Gender issue protest | 0.367*** | -0.110 | 0.121 |
| | (0.133) | (0.195) | (0.313) |
| Gun control protest | 0.085 | -0.184 | -0.140 |
| | (0.216) | (0.158) | (0.225) |
| Healthcare protest | 0.106 | -0.046 | -0.067 |
| | (0.188) | (0.179) | (0.229) |
| Immigration protest | 0.047 | 0.002 | -0.006 |
| | (0.180) | (0.172) | (0.239) |
| Labor issue protest | 0.140 | -0.158 | -0.093 |
| | (0.210) | (0.152) | (0.223) |
| LGBTQ issue protest | 0.294 | 0.047 | 0.116 |
| | (0.214) | (0.232) | (0.248) |
| Multiple issues protest | 0.286 | 0.020 | 0.230 |
| | (0.186) | (0.131) | (0.209) |
| Other protest | 0.104 | 0.051 | 0.060 |
| | (0.186) | (0.166) | (0.221) |
| Police brutality protest | 0.395** | 0.096 | 0.196 |
| | (0.170) | (0.136) | (0.219) |
| Pro-choice protest | -0.144 | -0.201 | -0.186 |
| | (0.161) | (0.151) | (0.225) |
| Pro-life protest | -0.051 | -0.720*** | -0.235 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | (0.197) | (0.230) | (0.292) |
| Race issue protest | 0.236 | 0.041 | 0.187 |
| | (0.163) | (0.185) | (0.228) |
| Religious issue protest | -0.074 | -0.235 | -0.558** |
| | (0.177) | (0.208) | (0.226) |
| Speech issue protest | 0.232 | -0.142 | -0.132 |
| | (0.210) | (0.152) | (0.242) |
| Blocking traffic | 0.113 | 0.216 | -0.120 |
| | (0.117) | (0.143) | (0.134) |
| Boycotting | -0.042 | -0.066 | -0.265** |
| | (0.094) | (0.118) | (0.119) |
| Burning items | 0.433*** | 0.570*** | -0.080 |
| | (0.109) | (0.218) | (0.190) |
| Chanting | 0.251*** | 0.076 | 0.057 |
| | (0.080) | (0.077) | (0.091) |
| Civil disobedience | 0.341*** | 0.001 | -0.200 |
| | (0.128) | (0.070) | (0.124) |
| Damaging property | 0.490*** | 0.704*** | 0.314*** |
| | (0.062) | (0.120) | (0.110) |
| Dramaturgy | 0.962*** | 0.194** | -0.361*** |
| | (0.073) | (0.079) | (0.079) |
| Flag-waving | 0.250 | 0.588** | -0.165 |
| | (0.263) | (0.294) | (0.219) |
| Hitting or punching | 0.645*** | 0.800*** | 0.623*** |
| | (0.088) | (0.106) | (0.067) |
| Holding signs | 0.201* | 0.310** | -0.147** |
| | (0.120) | (0.130) | (0.068) |
| Hunger strike | | -0.025 | |
| | | (0.072) | |
| Interrupting event | 0.413*** | 0.228*** | 0.364*** |
| | (0.076) | (0.063) | (0.096) |
| Lawsuits | | | -0.434*** |
| | | | (0.099) |
| Leafleting | 0.772*** | | 0.351 |
| | (0.107) | | (0.433) |
| Lobbying | 0.144 | | 0.074 |
| | (0.114) | | (0.257) |
| Loud noisemaking | -0.255*** | 0.156 | -0.159 |
| | (0.081) | (0.098) | (0.129) |
| Marching | 0.155** | 0.103** | -0.006 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | (0.076) | (0.044) | (0.079) |
| Musical/vocal | 0.229 | -0.273 | 0.605*** |
| | (0.406) | (0.191) | (0.113) |
| Occupation | 0.211** | 0.143 | -0.204* |
| | (0.099) | (0.088) | (0.108) |
| Other protest activity | 0.101 | 0.093 | -0.291** |
| | (0.115) | (0.084) | (0.117) |
| Petitioning | | 0.063 | |
| | | (0.085) | |
| Picket line | 0.479*** | 0.124* | 0.076 |
| | (0.184) | (0.071) | (0.133) |
| Praying | | 0.310** | |
| | | (0.130) | |
| Press conference | 0.962*** | | 0.494*** |
| | (0.073) | | (0.141) |
| Pushing or shoving | 0.373* | 0.959*** | 0.593*** |
| | (0.206) | (0.088) | (0.107) |
| Rally | 0.112* | 0.101** | -0.027 |
| | (0.065) | (0.048) | (0.086) |
| Recitation | | | -0.240 |
| | | | (0.270) |
| Singing collectively | 0.021 | | |
| | (0.089) | | |
| Speechmaking | -0.192* | | |
| | (0.099) | | |
| Strike | 0.017 | 0.226** | 0.007 |
| | (0.124) | (0.104) | (0.168) |
| Symbolic clothing | -0.270** | 0.580*** | -0.395*** |
| | (0.136) | (0.077) | (0.113) |
| Symbolic display | 0.533*** | 0.113* | -0.257* |
| | (0.083) | (0.065) | (0.145) |
| Throwing objects | 0.524*** | 0.983*** | 0.575*** |
| | (0.104) | (0.048) | (0.093) |
| Vigil | -0.135 | 0.159 | |
| | (0.089) | (0.165) | |
| Yelling | 0.440*** | 0.258** | 0.257 |
| | (0.153) | (0.130) | (0.238) |
| Constant | -0.068 | -0.010 | 0.165 |
| | (0.166) | (0.154) | (0.219) |
| Observations | 688 | 592 | 436 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| $R^2$ | 0.299 | 0.373 | 0.309 |
| F Statistic | $5.445^{***}$ (df = 50; 637) | $6.575^{***}$ (df = 49; 542) | $3.444^{***}$ (df = 50; 385) |

*Note:* $^{*}p < 0.10$ $^{**}p < 0.05$ $^{***}p < 0.01$

**Appendix C Robustness check: "Unknown" protest topic and activity removed as NA**

| | *Dependent variable:* Protesters called uncivil*:* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Fox News | MSNBC | CNN |
| Out party protesters | 0.116 | 0.458*** | 0.326*** |
| | (0.074) | (0.075) | (0.072) |
| COVID lockdown protest | | | 0.301** |
| | | | (0.145) |
| Economy protest | -0.035 | 0.459*** | 0.457*** |
| | (0.096) | (0.121) | (0.142) |
| Election protest | 0.460*** | 0.527*** | 0.896*** |
| | (0.057) | (0.135) | (0.092) |
| Environmental protest | 0.322* | 0.372*** | 0.578*** |
| | (0.168) | (0.114) | (0.164) |
| Foreign issue protest | 0.386*** | 0.222 | 0.587* |
| | (0.122) | (0.196) | (0.303) |
| Gender issue protest | 0.676*** | 0.328** | 0.692** |
| | (0.099) | (0.151) | (0.329) |
| Gun control protest | 0.166 | 0.258** | 0.329*** |
| | (0.166) | (0.111) | (0.088) |
| Healthcare protest | 0.101 | 0.374*** | 0.459*** |
| | (0.106) | (0.100) | (0.111) |
| Immigration protest | 0.160 | 0.450*** | 0.487*** |
| | (0.139) | (0.105) | (0.163) |
| Labor issue protest | 0.225** | 0.274** | 0.389*** |
| | (0.102) | (0.119) | (0.115) |
| LGBTQ issue protest | 0.451** | 0.475** | 0.594*** |
| | (0.192) | (0.185) | (0.143) |
| Multiple issues protest | 0.346*** | 0.451*** | 0.583*** |
| | (0.081) | (0.119) | (0.122) |
| Other protest | 0.163* | 0.512*** | 0.566*** |
| | (0.091) | (0.093) | (0.106) |
| Police brutality protest | 0.482*** | 0.553*** | 0.645*** |
| | (0.087) | (0.103) | (0.093) |
| Pro-choice protest | -0.116 | 0.227* | 0.283*** |
| | (0.074) | (0.129) | (0.109) |
| Pro-life protest | -0.001 | -0.300* | 0.306 |
| | (0.078) | (0.154) | (0.264) |
| Race issue protest | 0.290** | 0.491*** | 0.637*** |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | (0.113) | (0.115) | (0.088) |
| Religious issue protest | -0.008 | 0.143 | -0.089 |
| | (0.061) | (0.247) | (0.094) |
| Speech issue protest | 0.359** | 0.307** | 0.342*** |
| | (0.146) | (0.134) | (0.125) |
| Boycotting | -0.160 | -0.271 | -0.149 |
| | (0.148) | (0.194) | (0.164) |
| Burning items | 0.339** | 0.353 | 0.063 |
| | (0.141) | (0.247) | (0.227) |
| Chanting | 0.154 | -0.123 | 0.178 |
| | (0.131) | (0.143) | (0.162) |
| Civil disobedience | 0.226 | -0.199 | -0.045 |
| | (0.180) | (0.121) | (0.172) |
| Damaging property | 0.392*** | 0.500** | 0.447** |
| | (0.118) | (0.203) | (0.182) |
| Dramaturgy | 0.913*** | 0.002 | -0.230* |
| | (0.157) | (0.133) | (0.134) |
| Flag-waving | 0.110 | 0.398 | |
| | (0.280) | (0.328) | |
| Hitting or punching | 0.554*** | 0.535*** | 0.752*** |
| | (0.125) | (0.161) | (0.139) |
| Holding signs | 0.097 | 0.101 | -0.053 |
| | (0.154) | (0.191) | (0.147) |
| Hunger strike | | -0.232 | |
| | | (0.152) | |
| Interrupting event | 0.337** | 0.019 | 0.445*** |
| | (0.135) | (0.157) | (0.148) |
| Lawsuits | | | -0.370** |
| | | | (0.154) |
| Leafleting | 0.673*** | | 0.438 |
| | (0.159) | | (0.472) |
| Lobbying | 0.048 | | 0.194 |
| | (0.147) | | (0.297) |
| Loud noisemaking | -0.361** | 0.022 | -0.072 |
| | (0.148) | (0.127) | (0.205) |
| Marching | 0.054 | -0.099 | 0.112 |
| | (0.131) | (0.120) | (0.135) |
| Musical/vocal | 0.138 | -0.502** | 0.832*** |
| | (0.388) | (0.204) | (0.165) |
| Occupation | 0.131 | -0.069 | -0.060 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | (0.133) | (0.119) | (0.161) |
| Other protest activity | 0.008 | -0.117 | -0.181 |
| | (0.156) | (0.156) | (0.174) |
| Petitioning | | -0.133 | |
| | | (0.182) | |
| Picket line | 0.366* | -0.083 | 0.180 |
| | (0.199) | (0.140) | (0.200) |
| Praying | | 0.101 | |
| | | (0.191) | |
| Press conference | 0.913*** | | 0.632*** |
| | (0.157) | | (0.181) |
| Pushing or shoving | 0.259 | 0.747*** | 0.667*** |
| | (0.238) | (0.157) | (0.162) |
| Rally | 0.014 | -0.106 | 0.089 |
| | (0.123) | (0.132) | (0.138) |
| Recitation | | | -0.172 |
| | | | (0.303) |
| Singing collectively | -0.146 | | |
| | (0.135) | | |
| Speechmaking | -0.265* | | |
| | (0.152) | | |
| Strike | -0.091 | 0.040 | 0.111 |
| | (0.171) | (0.174) | (0.193) |
| Symbolic clothing | -0.424** | 0.316** | -0.168 |
| | (0.192) | (0.143) | (0.165) |
| Symbolic display | 0.464*** | -0.093 | -0.127 |
| | (0.135) | (0.169) | (0.184) |
| Throwing objects | 0.433*** | 0.795*** | 0.751*** |
| | (0.142) | (0.127) | (0.133) |
| Vigil | -0.262** | -0.043 | |
| | (0.122) | (0.198) | |
| Yelling | 0.348** | 0.040 | 0.329 |
| | (0.177) | (0.192) | (0.246) |
| Constant | -0.014 | -0.260* | -0.415*** |
| | (0.123) | (0.153) | (0.153) |
| Observations | 599 | 528 | 380 |
| $R^2$ | 0.297 | 0.375 | 0.315 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.236 | 0.315 | 0.218 |
| Residual Std. Error | 0.436 (df = 550) | 0.355 (df = 481) | 0.422 (df = 332) |
| F Statistic | 4.850*** (df = 48; 550) | 6.265*** (df = 46; 481) | 3.251*** (df = 47; 332) |

*Note:* $^{*}p < 0.10$ $^{**}p < 0.05$ $^{***}p < 0.01$

# Chapter 4 Appendix

### Appendix A: Survey demographics and recruitment/consent details

| | |
|---|---|
| Female | 50.3% (51.1, ACS 2019) |
| Age 18-34 | 31.4% (25.6, ACS 2019) |
| 35-44 | 17.1% (14.7, ACS 2019) |
| 45-64 | 35.0% (34.0, ACS 2019) |
| 65-84 | 16.3% (22.5, ACS 2019) |
| 85+ | 0.10% (3.1, ACS 2019) |
| Income < $30,000 | 31.9% (19.3, ACS 2019) |
| $30,000 - $69,999 | 34.9% (32.7, ACS 2019) |
| $70,000 - $99,999 | 16.6% (13.4, ACS 2019) |
| $100,000 - $200,000 | 14.2% (25.0, ACS 2019) |
| > $200,000 | 2.4% (9.7, ACS 2019) |
| Less than high school | 2.7% (5.7, ACS 2019) |
| High school graduate | 24.8% (26.8, ACS 2019) |
| Some college/associate degree | 38.3% (29.6, ACS 2019) |
| 4-year-degree | 24.1% (22.6, ACS 2019) |
| Advanced degree | 10.1% (14.3, ACS 2019) |
| Democrat | 43.6% (39, Pew 2020) |
| Republican | 41.3% (53, Pew 2020) |
| Independent | 15.2% (5.0, Pew 2020 |

Table A.1. White sample demographics compared to ACS benchmarks

| | |
|---|---|
| Female | 58.3% (53.2, ACS 2019) |
| Age 18-34 | 38.0% (34.4, ACS 2019) |
| 35-44 | 22.9% (17.3, ACS 2019) |
| 45-64 | 34.7% (32.2, ACS 2019) |
| 65-84 | 4.4% (14.5, ACS 2019) |
| 85+ | 0.0% (1.6, ACS 2019) |
| Income < $30,000 | 40.8% (35.3, ACS 2019) |
| $30,000 - $69,999 | 38.5% (36.9, ACS 2019) |
| $70,000 - $99,999 | 12.8% (10.4, ACS 2019) |
| $100,000 - $200,000 | 6.3% (14.2, ACS 2019) |
| > $200,000 | 1.7% (3.1, ACS 2019) |
| Less than high school | 2.7% (12.9, ACS 2019) |
| High school graduate | 25.8% (31.9, ACS 2019) |
| Some college/associate degree | 46.6% (23.8, ACS 2019) |
| 4-year-degree | 19.9% (13.9, ACS 2019) |
| Advanced degree | 5.0% (8.6, ACS 2019) |

| | |
|---|---|
| Democrat | 75.9% (83, Pew 2020) |
| Republican | 8.3% (10, Pew 2020) |
| Independent | 15.5% (7.0, Pew 2020) |

Table A.2. Black sample demographics compared to ACS benchmarks

*Adherence to Principles and Guidelines for Human Subjects Research*

Participants were recruited through Bovitz, Inc. Bovitz uses a paid, "by-invitation-only" online panel recruitment method, a method of exclusively inviting (by email) pre-validated individuals or individuals who share known characteristics, as applicable. Recruitment is done through the online platforms above and the systems in place within those platforms. Bovitz screens possible participants by inviting them to their subject pool that they maintain to generate the samples for researchers. In these initial screenings, they document the race, gender, age, and other demographic characteristics so that they can better generate the samples from the pool. By the time they are invited to participate in our survey, they have already been screened sometime prior.

Bovitz sends the invites out to their existing subject pool members, based on their demographic information provided; this is how the sample is constructed. As the researchers, we are not privy to any recruitment processes or information. Bovitz is not privy to the survey responses provided on our end, since the survey is hosted on the PI's institutional Qualtrics account. We do not directly engage with the participants. They receive a link from Bovitz, provided by us, take our survey, provide the data should they opt in. Then we pay Bovitz for their services, and they pay their participants the $1.50 amount owed. We do not directly pay participants in any form; we just pay Bovitz for services rendered.

There are three deceptions in this study; all are fairly low risk to the respondents. The vignette we present was described as coming from a newspaper editorial when it is, in fact, been created by the researchers. The second deception is the implicit understanding that respondents will believe the list they are presented with is complete and not different for other respondents. The third deception is that the respondents were not aware that we were recruiting an entirely

Black and White American sample (a deception of omission). We performed these deceptions for three reasons. First, it is necessarily to lead the participants to believe that what they are reading is from a published source and not the researchers; if they do not believe that, then the results are of little interest. Second, it is necessary to deceive the participants on the reality of the list experiment because the validity of the experiment relies on people not understanding the nature of the test. Third, it is not necessary to tell respondents they are being recruited because they are either Black or White because that could, in turn, affect how they understand the survey and possibly reveal the study's true purpose, undermining the validity of the experiment.

The consent process did not state that deception is in the study, as that would defeat the purpose of the deception. But the consent document does allude to the full purpose of the study not being disclosed at that time, with a promise of further disclosure at the survey's conclusion. To that end, we will include a debriefing section at the end of the survey. This section will detail exactly what the deceptive elements of the survey were, and why they were necessary. At this point, participants will be allowed to opt out of having their data recorded (and thus opting out of compensation); those who opt out will have their data promptly deleted.

Informed consent is the first thing participants are exposed to in the survey, before any questions are asked, and was collected electronically. We use the IRB template provided by our home university for online consent. We detail the nature of study, as we did in the solicitation, and remind them that participation is completely voluntary. We also instruct the participant that they are free to opt out at any point, even after they provide consent, as they can merely exit the survey at any time; doing so, however, will affect their compensation and they will be instructed as much. Contact information for the PI, graduate student investigator, and university IRB office is provided at this time. If participants do not provide consent, the survey ends promptly.

## Appendix B: Difference-in-means and regression tables from models in main paper

| Table B.1. Results from protesting rating task (5-point scale; not at all uncivil – extremely uncivil) Note. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p <0.01 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Protest activity** | **Black Americans average (n = 691)** | **White Americans average (n = 736)** | **Difference in means (Black - White)** |
| *More disruptive activities* | | | |
| Blocking traffic | 3.41 | 3.95 | -0.54*** |
| Damaging property | 4.42 | 4.58 | -0.16*** |
| Graffiti | 3.62 | 3.82 | -0.20*** |
| Interrupting a public event | 3.00 | 3.42 | -0.42*** |
| Occupying private property | 3.43 | 3.90 | -0.47*** |
| Punching | 4.38 | 4.56 | -0.18*** |
| Throwing objects | 4.36 | 4.48 | -0.12** |
| Verbal threats | 3.66 | 3.80 | -0.14** |
| *Less disruptive activities* | | | |
| Boycotting | 1.71 | 1.86 | -0.15** |
| Camping out on public property | 2.25 | 2.74 | -0.49*** |
| Candlelight vigils | 1.57 | 1.48 | 0.09 |
| Chanting | 1.73 | 1.96 | -0.23*** |
| Lawsuits | 1.80 | 2.01 | -0.21*** |
| Leaflets | 1.80 | 1.61 | 0.19*** |
| Marches | 1.45 | 1.64 | -0.19*** |
| Parades | 1.37 | 1.44 | 0.07 |
| Petitions | 1.35 | 1.36 | 0.01 |
| Picket lines | 1.75 | 1.94 | -0.19*** |
| Sit-ins | 1.62 | 2.11 | -0.49*** |
| Taking a knee | 1.47 | 2.52 | -0.95*** |

| | *Dependent variable:* | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Punching | Interrupting | Property destruction | Throwing objects | Blocking traffic | Occupying private property | Graffiti | Verbal threats |
| Treatment | -0.080*** | -0.080*** | -0.068*** | -0.064*** | -0.068*** | -0.048** | -0.068*** | -0.038** |
| | (0.017) | (0.018) | (0.016) | (0.016) | (0.019) | (0.020) | (0.019) | (0.019) |
| Constant | 0.846*** | 0.499*** | 0.856*** | 0.841*** | 0.602*** | 0.608*** | 0.656*** | 0.666*** |
| | (0.012) | (0.013) | (0.011) | (0.011) | (0.014) | (0.014) | (0.013) | (0.013) |
| Observations | 1,353 | 1,352 | 1,351 | 1,351 | 1,351 | 1,350 | 1,351 | 1,350 |
| $R^2$ | 0.016 | 0.014 | 0.013 | 0.011 | 0.009 | 0.004 | 0.009 | 0.003 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.016 | 0.013 | 0.012 | 0.011 | 0.008 | 0.004 | 0.009 | 0.002 |
| Residual Std. Error | 0.309 (df = 1351) | 0.335 (df = 1350) | 0.295 (df = 1349) | 0.296 (df = 1349) | 0.358 (df = 1349) | 0.358 (df = 1348) | 0.354 (df = 1349) | 0.340 (df = 1348) |
| F Statistic | 22.395*** (df = 1; 1351) | 19.096*** (df = 1; 1350) | 18.068*** (df = 1; 1349) | 15.616*** (df = 1; 1349) | 12.098*** (df = 1; 1349) | 6.055** (df = 1; 1348) | 12.592*** (df = 1; 1349) | 4.308** (df = 1; 1348) |

*Table B.2. Black sample and incivility perceptions. Note:* *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01

| | *Dependent variable:* | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Punching | Interrupting | Property destruction | Throwing objects | Blocking traffic | Occupying private property | Graffiti | Verbal threats |
| Treatment | -0.013 | -0.085*** | 0.007 | -0.012 | -0.045*** | -0.023 | -0.025 | -0.015 |
| | (0.013) | (0.017) | (0.012) | (0.013) | (0.017) | (0.017) | (0.017) | (0.017) |
| Constant | 0.891*** | 0.606*** | 0.896*** | 0.871*** | 0.738*** | 0.725*** | 0.705*** | 0.699*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.012) | (0.008) | (0.009) | (0.012) | (0.012) | (0.012) | (0.012) |
| Observations | 1,430 | 1,430 | 1,429 | 1,430 | 1,430 | 1,430 | 1,430 | 1,430 |
| $R^2$ | 0.001 | 0.017 | 0.0003 | 0.001 | 0.005 | 0.001 | 0.001 | 0.001 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.00002 | 0.017 | -0.0004 | -0.0001 | 0.004 | 0.001 | 0.001 | -0.0001 |
| Residual Std. Error | 0.237 (df = 1428) | 0.320 (df = 1428) | 0.226 (df = 1427) | 0.241 (df = 1428) | 0.324 (df = 1428) | 0.328 (df = 1428) | 0.320 (df = 1428) | 0.313 (df = 1428) |
| F Statistic | 1.033 (df = 1; 1428) | 25.284*** (df = 1; 1428) | 0.360 (df = 1; 1427) | 0.859 (df = 1; 1428) | 6.908*** (df = 1; 1428) | 1.779 (df = 1; 1428) | 2.134 (df = 1; 1428) | 0.817 (df = 1; 1428) |

*Table B.3. White sample and incivility perceptions. Note:* *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01

| | *Dependent variable:* | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Punching | Interrupting | Property destruction | Throwing objects | Blocking traffic | Occupying private property | Graffiti | Verbal threats |
| Treatment | 0.033** | 0.064*** | 0.036*** | 0.043*** | 0.054*** | 0.022 | 0.037** | 0.053*** |
| | (0.014) | (0.018) | (0.013) | (0.014) | (0.017) | (0.017) | (0.016) | (0.016) |
| Constant | 0.117*** | 0.263*** | 0.099*** | 0.104*** | 0.204*** | 0.216*** | 0.174*** | 0.153*** |
| | (0.010) | (0.013) | (0.009) | (0.010) | (0.012) | (0.012) | (0.011) | (0.011) |
| Observations | 1,353 | 1,351 | 1,352 | 1,351 | 1,349 | 1,351 | 1,352 | 1,353 |
| $R^2$ | 0.004 | 0.009 | 0.005 | 0.007 | 0.007 | 0.001 | 0.004 | 0.008 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.003 | 0.009 | 0.004 | 0.006 | 0.006 | 0.0005 | 0.003 | 0.008 |
| Residual Std. Error | 0.254 (df = 1351) | 0.331 (df = 1349) | 0.246 (df = 1350) | 0.255 (df = 1349) | 0.317 (df = 1347) | 0.313 (df = 1349) | 0.294 (df = 1350) | 0.289 (df = 1351) |
| F Statistic | 5.595** (df = 1; 1351) | 12.715*** (df = 1; 1349) | 7.057*** (df = 1; 1350) | 9.487*** (df = 1; 1349) | 9.772*** (df = 1; 1347) | 1.613 (df = 1; 1349) | 5.446** (df = 1; 1350) | 11.385*** (df = 1; 1351) |

*Table B.4. Black sample and protest participation likelihood. Note:* $^{*}p < 0.10$ $^{**}p < 0.05$ $^{***}p < 0.01$

| | *Dependent variable:* | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Punching | Interrupting | Property destruction | Throwing objects | Blocking traffic | Occupying private property | Graffiti | Verbal threats |
| Treatment | 0.004 | 0.041*** | 0.008 | 0.015 | 0.016 | 0.023* | 0.030** | 0.015 |
| | (0.010) | (0.015) | (0.009) | (0.010) | (0.013) | (0.013) | (0.013) | (0.011) |
| Constant | 0.069*** | 0.187*** | 0.059*** | 0.065*** | 0.125*** | 0.127*** | 0.106*** | 0.096*** |
| | (0.007) | (0.011) | (0.006) | (0.007) | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.008) |
| Observations | 1,430 | 1,430 | 1,429 | 1,430 | 1,430 | 1,430 | 1,430 | 1,430 |
| $R^2$ | 0.0001 | 0.005 | 0.001 | 0.002 | 0.001 | 0.002 | 0.004 | 0.001 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | -0.001 | 0.004 | -0.0002 | 0.001 | 0.0003 | 0.001 | 0.003 | 0.001 |
| Residual Std. Error | 0.196 (df = 1428) | 0.288 (df = 1428) | 0.176 (df = 1427) | 0.189 (df = 1428) | 0.249 (df = 1428) | 0.252 (df = 1428) | 0.241 (df = 1428) | 0.215 (df = 1428) |
| F Statistic | 0.135 (df = 1; 1428) | 7.191*** (df = 1; 1428) | 0.768 (df = 1; 1427) | 2.262 (df = 1; 1428) | 1.447 (df = 1; 1428) | 2.915* (df = 1; 1428) | 5.492** (df = 1; 1428) | 1.776 (df = 1; 1428) |

*Table B.5. White sample and protest participation likelihood. Note:* *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01

## Appendix C: Bonferroni-corrected p-values

| *Table C.1.* Bonferroni-corrected p-values for perceptions of incivility outcome (Black sample) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Protest activity** | **Original p-value** | **Corrected p-value** |
| Punching | 0.00001*** | 0.00001*** |
| Interrupting a public event | 0.00001*** | 0.0001*** |
| Property destruction | 0.00001*** | 0.0002*** |
| Throwing objects | 0.0001*** | 0.0007*** |
| Blocking traffic | 0.0005*** | 0.0042*** |
| Occupying private property | 0.0140** | 0.1119 |
| Graffiti | 0.0004*** | 0.0032*** |
| Verbal threats | 0.0381** | 0.3050 |

| *Table C.2.* Bonferroni-corrected p-values for perceptions of incivility outcome (White sample) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Protest activity** | **Original p-value** | **Corrected p-value** |
| Punching | 0.3096 | 1.0000 |
| Interrupting a public event | 0.00001*** | 0.00001*** |
| Property destruction | 0.5488 | 1.0000 |
| Throwing objects | 0.3543 | 1.0000 |
| Blocking traffic | 0.0087*** | 0.0694* |
| Occupying private property | 0.1824 | 1.0000 |
| Graffiti | 0.1443 | 1.0000 |
| Verbal threats | 0.3662 | 1.0000 |

| *Table C.3.* Bonferroni-corrected p-values for participation outcome (Black sample) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Protest activity** | **Original p-value** | **Corrected p-value** |
| Punching | 0.0182** | 0.1452 |
| Interrupting a public event | 0.0004*** | 0.0030*** |
| Property destruction | 0.0080*** | 0.0639* |
| Throwing objects | 0.0021*** | 0.0169** |
| Blocking traffic | 0.0018*** | 0.0145** |
| Occupying private property | 0.2043 | 1.0000 |
| Graffiti | 0.0198** | 0.1581 |
| Verbal threats | 0.0008*** | 0.0061*** |

| *Table C.4.* Bonferroni-corrected p-values for participation outcome (White sample) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Protest activity** | **Original p-value** | **Corrected p-value** |
| Punching | 0.7136 | 1.0000 |
| Interrupting a public event | 0.0074*** | 0.0593* |
| Property destruction | 0.3811 | 1.0000 |
| Throwing objects | 0.1328 | 1.0000 |
| Blocking traffic | 0.2292 | 1.0000 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Occupying private property | 0.0879* | 0.7036 |
| Graffiti | 0.0192** | 0.1539 |
| Verbal threats | 0.1829 | 1.0000 |

## Appendix D. Pilot study results

*Table D.1.* Results from protesting rating task (5-point scale; not at all uncivil – extremely uncivil)
Note. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p <0.01.

| **Protest activity** | **Weighted national average (n = 308)** | **White Americans average (n = 153)** | **Black Americans average (n = 105)** | **Difference in means (Black - White)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bannering/graffiti | 3.78 | 3.92 | 3.52 | -0.39** |
| Blockading traffic | 3.62 | 3.81 | 3.21 | -0.60*** |
| Boycotting | 1.97 | 1.92 | 1.68 | -0.24 |
| Camping out on public property | 2.62 | 2.73 | 2.30 | -0.42** |
| Candlelight vigils | 1.51 | 1.43 | 1.54 | 0.11 |
| Chanting | 1.94 | 1.95 | 1.83 | -0.13 |
| Damaging property | 4.38 | 4.53 | 4.24 | -0.29 |
| Hitting/punching | 4.53 | 4.64 | 4.37 | -0.27** |
| Interrupting a public event | 3.32 | 3.47 | 3.03 | -0.44*** |
| Lawsuits | 2.24 | 2.31 | 1.85 | -0.47*** |
| Leaflets | 1.59 | 1.46 | 1.68 | 0.22* |
| Marches | 1.79 | 1.78 | 1.69 | -0.10 |
| Occupation of private property | 3.22 | 3.48 | 2.62 | -0.86*** |
| Parades | 1.66 | 1.59 | 1.70 | 0.12 |
| Petitions | 1.47 | 1.41 | 1.61 | 0.20 |
| Picket lines | 2.09 | 2.14 | 1.95 | -0.19 |
| Sit-ins | 1.92 | 1.94 | 1.70 | -0.24 |
| Taking a knee during the national anthem | 2.37 | 2.61 | 1.78 | -0.83*** |
| Throwing objects | 4.31 | 4.45 | 4.11 | -0.34** |
| Verbal threats | 3.85 | 3.98 | 3.77 | -0.21 |

## Appendix E. Difference-in-means for likelihood to participate in the control

*Table E.1.* Results from protesting rating task (0-1 scale; "very unlikely to participate" to "certain to participate") Note. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

| **Protest activity** | **Black Americans average (n = 691)** | **White Americans average (n = 736)** | **Difference in means (Black - White)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| *More disruptive activities* | | | |
| Blocking traffic | 0.20 | 0.13 | 0.07*** |
| Damaging property | 0.10 | 0.06 | 0.04*** |
| Graffiti | 0.17 | 0.11 | 0.06*** |
| Interrupting a public event | 0.26 | 0.19 | 0.07*** |
| Occupying private property | 0.22 | 0.13 | 0.09*** |
| Punching | 0.12 | 0.07 | 0.05*** |
| Throwing objects | 0.10 | 0.06 | 0.04*** |
| Verbal threats | 0.15 | 0.10 | 0.05*** |
| *Less disruptive activities* | | | |
| Boycotting | 0.66 | 0.54 | 0.12*** |
| Camping out on public property | 0.31 | 0.22 | 0.09*** |
| Candlelight vigils | 0.67 | 0.58 | 0.09*** |
| Chanting | 0.50 | 0.36 | 0.14*** |
| Lawsuits | 0.57 | 0.40 | 0.17*** |
| Leaflets | 0.56 | 0.49 | 0.07*** |
| Marches | 0.58 | 0.44 | 0.14*** |
| Parades | 0.61 | 0.48 | 0.13*** |
| Petitions | 0.72 | 0.65 | 0.07*** |
| Picket lines | 0.43 | 0.36 | 0.07*** |
| Sit-ins | 0.50 | 0.34 | 0.16*** |
| Taking a knee during the national anthem | 0.61 | 0.31 | 0.30*** |

**Appendix F. Anger regarding racial inequality moderation effects**

| | *Dependent variable:* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Punching | Interrupting an event | Property destruction | Throwing objects |
| Treatment | -0.045* | 0.046 | -0.041* | -0.028 |
| | (0.024) | (0.035) | (0.021) | (0.023) |
| Anger about racial injustice | -0.006 | -0.064*** | -0.003 | -0.002 |
| | (0.010) | (0.014) | (0.009) | (0.010) |
| Treatment:Anger | 0.032** | -0.002 | 0.032** | 0.028** |
| | (0.014) | (0.021) | (0.013) | (0.014) |
| Constant | 0.078*** | 0.282*** | 0.063*** | 0.068*** |
| | (0.016) | (0.024) | (0.015) | (0.016) |
| Observations | 1,430 | 1,430 | 1,429 | 1,430 |
| $R^2$ | 0.005 | 0.032 | 0.008 | 0.006 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.003 | 0.030 | 0.006 | 0.004 |
| Residual Std. Error | 0.196 (df = 1426) | 0.284 (df = 1426) | 0.175 (df = 1425) | 0.189 (df = 1426) |
| F Statistic | 2.404* (df = 3; 1426) | 15.829*** (df = 3; 1426) | 3.718** (df = 3; 1425) | 3.061** (df = 3; 1426) |

*Table F.1. Note:* *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01

| | *Dependent variable:* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Blocking traffic | Occupying private property | Graffiti | Verbal threats |
| Treatment | 0.011 | 0.005 | 0.015 | -0.037 |
| | (0.030) | (0.031) | (0.029) | (0.026) |
| Anger about racial injustice | -0.037*** | -0.044*** | -0.013 | -0.007 |
| | (0.013) | (0.013) | (0.012) | (0.011) |
| Treatment:Anger | 0.004 | 0.013 | 0.010 | 0.034** |
| | (0.018) | (0.018) | (0.017) | (0.016) |
| Constant | 0.180*** | 0.192*** | 0.126*** | 0.107*** |
| | (0.021) | (0.021) | (0.020) | (0.018) |
| Observations | 1,430 | 1,430 | 1,430 | 1,430 |
| $R^2$ | 0.012 | 0.014 | 0.005 | 0.006 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.009 | 0.012 | 0.003 | 0.004 |
| Residual Std. Error (df = 1426) | 0.248 | 0.251 | 0.241 | 0.215 |
| F Statistic (df = 3; 1426) | 5.536*** | 6.740*** | 2.247* | 2.737** |

*Table F.2. Note:* *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01

**Appendix G. Black respondents' moderation analyses**

| | *Dependent variable:* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Punching | Interrupting public event | Damaging property | Throwing objects |
| Treatment | -0.135*** | -0.063 | -0.065* | -0.061* |
| | (0.037) | (0.039) | (0.035) | (0.035) |
| Linked Fate | -0.052 | -0.164*** | -0.032 | -0.020 |
| | (0.032) | (0.034) | (0.031) | (0.031) |
| Treatment * Linked fate | 0.076* | -0.026 | -0.005 | -0.004 |
| | (0.045) | (0.048) | (0.043) | (0.043) |
| Constant | 0.884*** | 0.619*** | 0.879*** | 0.856*** |
| | (0.026) | (0.028) | (0.025) | (0.025) |
| Observations | 1,353 | 1,352 | 1,351 | 1,351 |
| $R^2$ | 0.019 | 0.053 | 0.015 | 0.012 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.016 | 0.051 | 0.013 | 0.010 |
| Residual Std. Error | 0.309 (df = 1349) | 0.328 (df = 1348) | 0.295 (df = 1347) | 0.296 (df = 1347) |
| F Statistic | 8.528*** (df = 3; 1349) | 25.159*** (df = 3; 1348) | 6.874*** (df = 3; 1347) | 5.541*** (df = 3; 1347) |

*Table G.1.* Perceptions of incivility moderated by linked fate (part 1)
*Note:* *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01

| | *Dependent variable:* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Blocking traffic | Occupying private property | Graffiti | Verbal threats |
| Treatment | -0.057 | -0.056 | -0.074* | -0.001 |
| | (0.042) | (0.043) | (0.042) | (0.040) |
| Linked fate | -0.162*** | -0.079** | -0.134*** | -0.019 |
| | (0.037) | (0.037) | (0.037) | (0.035) |
| Treatment * Linked fate | -0.018 | 0.010 | 0.005 | -0.052 |
| | (0.051) | (0.052) | (0.051) | (0.049) |
| Constant | 0.721*** | 0.666*** | 0.754*** | 0.680*** |
| | (0.030) | (0.031) | (0.030) | (0.029) |
| Observations | 1,351 | 1,350 | 1,351 | 1,350 |
| $R^2$ | 0.041 | 0.010 | 0.028 | 0.007 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.039 | 0.008 | 0.026 | 0.004 |
| Residual Std. Error | 0.352 (df = 1347) | 0.358 (df = 1346) | 0.351 (df = 1347) | 0.340 (df = 1346) |
| F Statistic | 19.020*** (df = 3; 1347) | 4.734*** (df = 3; 1346) | 13.099*** (df = 3; 1347) | 2.940** (df = 3; 1346) |

*Table G.2.* Perceptions of incivility moderated by linked fate (part 2)
*Note:* *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01

| | *Dependent variable:* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Punching | Interrupting public event | Damaging property | Throwing objects |
| Treatment | 0.088*** | 0.074* | 0.078*** | 0.072** |
| | (0.030) | (0.038) | (0.029) | (0.030) |
| Linked fate | 0.059** | 0.188*** | 0.027 | 0.049* |
| | (0.026) | (0.034) | (0.026) | (0.027) |
| Treatment * Linked fate | -0.076** | -0.010 | -0.058 | -0.039 |
| | (0.037) | (0.047) | (0.036) | (0.037) |
| Constant | 0.074*** | 0.126*** | 0.080*** | 0.069*** |
| | (0.022) | (0.028) | (0.021) | (0.022) |
| Observations | 1,353 | 1,351 | 1,352 | 1,351 |
| $R^2$ | 0.008 | 0.052 | 0.007 | 0.010 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.006 | 0.050 | 0.005 | 0.007 |
| Residual Std. Error | 0.254 (df = 1349) | 0.324 (df = 1347) | 0.246 (df = 1348) | 0.255 (df = 1347) |
| F Statistic | 3.702** (df = 3; 1349) | 24.544*** (df = 3; 1347) | 3.240** (df = 3; 1348) | 4.339*** (df = 3; 1347) |

*Table G.3.* Likelihood to participate moderated by linked fate (part 1)
*Note:* *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01

| | *Dependent variable:* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Blocking traffic | Occupying private property | Graffiti | Verbal threats |
| Treatment | 0.102*** | 0.087** | 0.109*** | 0.113*** |
| | (0.037) | (0.037) | (0.035) | (0.034) |
| Linked fate | 0.139*** | 0.136*** | 0.081*** | 0.088*** |
| | (0.033) | (0.032) | (0.031) | (0.030) |
| Treatment * Linked fate | -0.065 | -0.089** | -0.098** | -0.082** |
| | (0.046) | (0.045) | (0.043) | (0.042) |
| Constant | 0.102*** | 0.117*** | 0.115*** | 0.089*** |
| | (0.027) | (0.026) | (0.025) | (0.024) |
| Observations | 1,349 | 1,351 | 1,352 | 1,353 |
| $R^2$ | 0.024 | 0.016 | 0.009 | 0.015 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.022 | 0.013 | 0.007 | 0.012 |
| Residual Std. Error | 0.315 (df = 1345) | 0.311 (df = 1347) | 0.294 (df = 1348) | 0.288 (df = 1349) |
| F Statistic | 11.085*** (df = 3; 1345) | 7.151*** (df = 3; 1347) | 4.274*** (df = 3; 1348) | 6.670*** (df = 3; 1349) |

*Table G.4.* Likelihood to participate moderated by linked fate (part 2)
*Note:* *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01

| | *Dependent variable:* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Punching | Interrupting a public event | Damaging property | Throwing objects |
| Treatment | -0.129*** | -0.104** | -0.101*** | -0.130*** |
| | (0.039) | (0.043) | (0.037) | (0.037) |
| Age | 0.047*** | 0.002 | 0.074*** | 0.066*** |
| | (0.012) | (0.013) | (0.011) | (0.011) |
| Treatment * Age | 0.026 | 0.012 | 0.019 | 0.035** |
| | (0.017) | (0.019) | (0.016) | (0.016) |
| Constant | 0.747*** | 0.495*** | 0.702*** | 0.703*** |
| | (0.028) | (0.031) | (0.026) | (0.026) |
| Observations | 1,350 | 1,349 | 1,348 | 1,348 |
| $R^2$ | 0.051 | 0.015 | 0.084 | 0.084 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.049 | 0.013 | 0.082 | 0.082 |
| Residual Std. Error | 0.304 (df = 1346) | 0.335 (df = 1345) | 0.284 (df = 1344) | 0.285 (df = 1344) |
| F Statistic | 24.026*** (df = 3; 1346) | 6.736*** (df = 3; 1345) | 41.030*** (df = 3; 1344) | 41.310*** (df = 3; 1344) |

*Table G.5.* Perceptions of incivility moderated by age cohorts (part 1)
*Note:* *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01

| | *Dependent variable:* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Blocking traffic | Occupying private property | Graffiti | Verbal threats |
| Treatment | -0.072 | -0.102** | -0.087* | -0.061 |
| | (0.046) | (0.046) | (0.046) | (0.044) |
| Age | 0.047*** | 0.054*** | 0.037*** | 0.055*** |
| | (0.014) | (0.014) | (0.014) | (0.013) |
| Treatment * Age | 0.003 | 0.029 | 0.011 | 0.013 |
| | (0.020) | (0.020) | (0.020) | (0.019) |
| Constant | 0.504*** | 0.495*** | 0.578*** | 0.552*** |
| | (0.032) | (0.032) | (0.032) | (0.031) |
| Observations | 1,348 | 1,347 | 1,348 | 1,347 |
| $R^2$ | 0.025 | 0.038 | 0.022 | 0.033 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.023 | 0.036 | 0.020 | 0.031 |
| Residual Std. Error | 0.355 (df = 1344) | 0.352 (df = 1343) | 0.352 (df = 1344) | 0.335 (df = 1343) |
| F Statistic | 11.698*** (df = 3; 1344) | 17.665*** (df = 3; 1343) | 10.155*** (df = 3; 1344) | 15.124*** (df = 3; 1343) |

*Table G.6.* Perceptions of incivility moderated by age cohorts (part 2)
*Note:* *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01

| | *Dependent variable:* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Punching | Interrupting a public event | Damaging property | Throwing objects |
| Treatment | 0.045 | 0.039 | 0.032 | 0.037 |
| | (0.032) | (0.043) | (0.031) | (0.032) |
| Age | -0.051*** | -0.047*** | -0.059*** | -0.063*** |
| | (0.010) | (0.013) | (0.010) | (0.010) |
| Treatment * Age | -0.007 | 0.011 | -0.001 | 0.001 |
| | (0.014) | (0.019) | (0.014) | (0.014) |
| Constant | 0.224*** | 0.362*** | 0.222*** | 0.236*** |
| | (0.023) | (0.030) | (0.022) | (0.023) |
| Observations | 1,350 | 1,348 | 1,349 | 1,348 |
| $R^2$ | 0.046 | 0.024 | 0.058 | 0.060 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.044 | 0.022 | 0.055 | 0.058 |
| Residual Std. Error | 0.249 (df = 1346) | 0.329 (df = 1344) | 0.239 (df = 1345) | 0.249 (df = 1344) |
| F Statistic | 21.460*** (df = 3; 1346) | 10.939*** (df = 3; 1344) | 27.368*** (df = 3; 1345) | 28.684*** (df = 3; 1344) |

*Table G.7.* Likelihood to participate moderated by age cohorts (part 1)
*Note:* *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01

| | *Dependent variable:* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Blocking traffic | Occupying private property | Graffiti | Verbal threats |
| Treatment | 0.036 | 0.013 | 0.009 | 0.085** |
| | (0.041) | (0.040) | (0.038) | (0.036) |
| Age | -0.067*** | -0.061*** | -0.060*** | -0.063*** |
| | (0.012) | (0.012) | (0.012) | (0.011) |
| Treatment * Age | 0.007 | 0.002 | 0.011 | -0.018 |
| | (0.018) | (0.018) | (0.017) | (0.016) |
| Constant | 0.343*** | 0.343*** | 0.299*** | 0.284*** |
| | (0.029) | (0.028) | (0.026) | (0.026) |
| Observations | 1,346 | 1,348 | 1,349 | 1,350 |
| $R^2$ | 0.043 | 0.034 | 0.035 | 0.064 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.041 | 0.032 | 0.033 | 0.062 |
| Residual Std. Error | 0.312 (df = 1342) | 0.308 (df = 1344) | 0.289 (df = 1345) | 0.280 (df = 1346) |
| F Statistic | 20.149*** (df = 3; 1342) | 15.841*** (df = 3; 1344) | 16.136*** (df = 3; 1345) | 30.798*** (df = 3; 1346) |

*Table G.8.* Likelihood to participate moderated by age cohorts (part 2)
*Note:* *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01

## Appendix H. White respondent experiment results

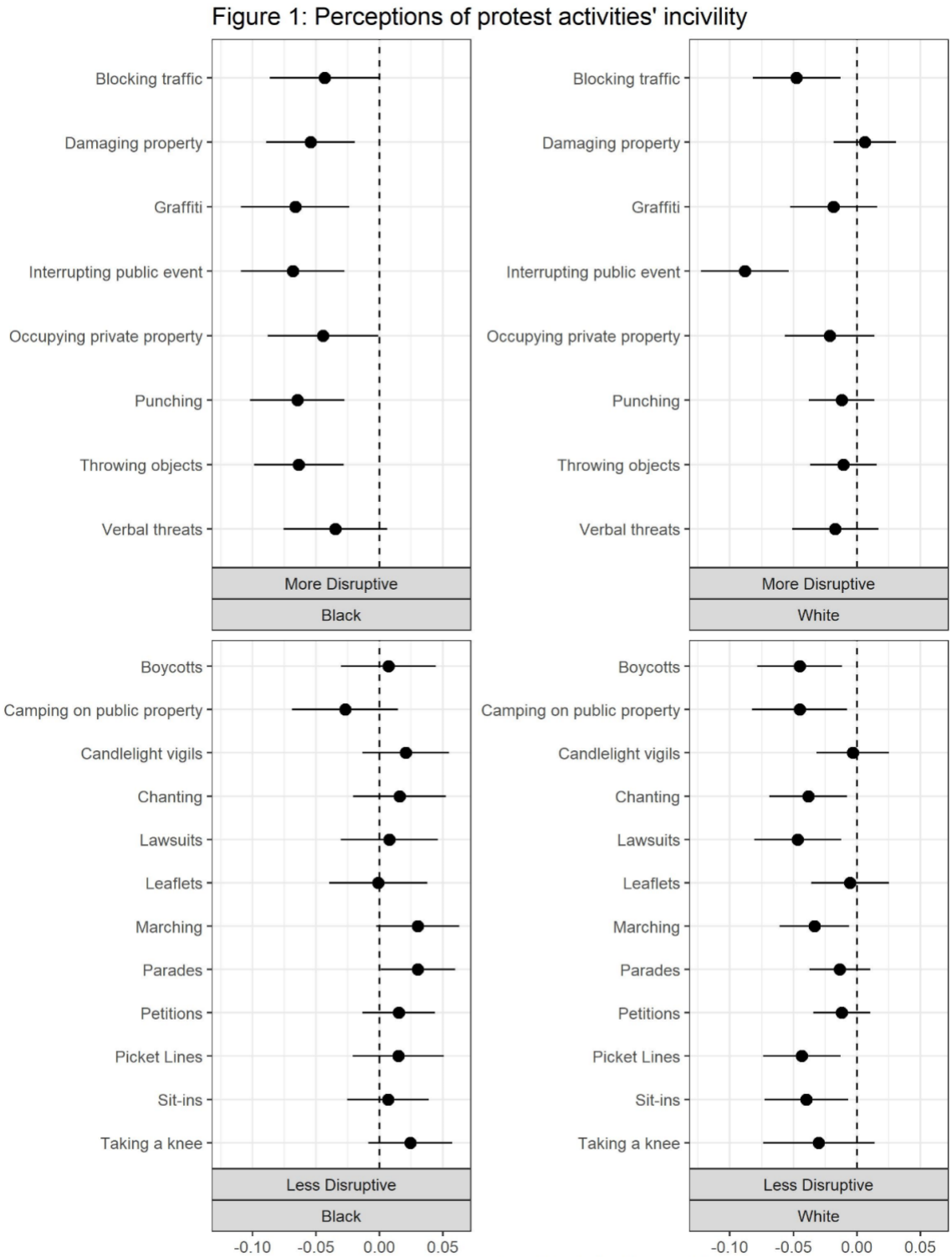
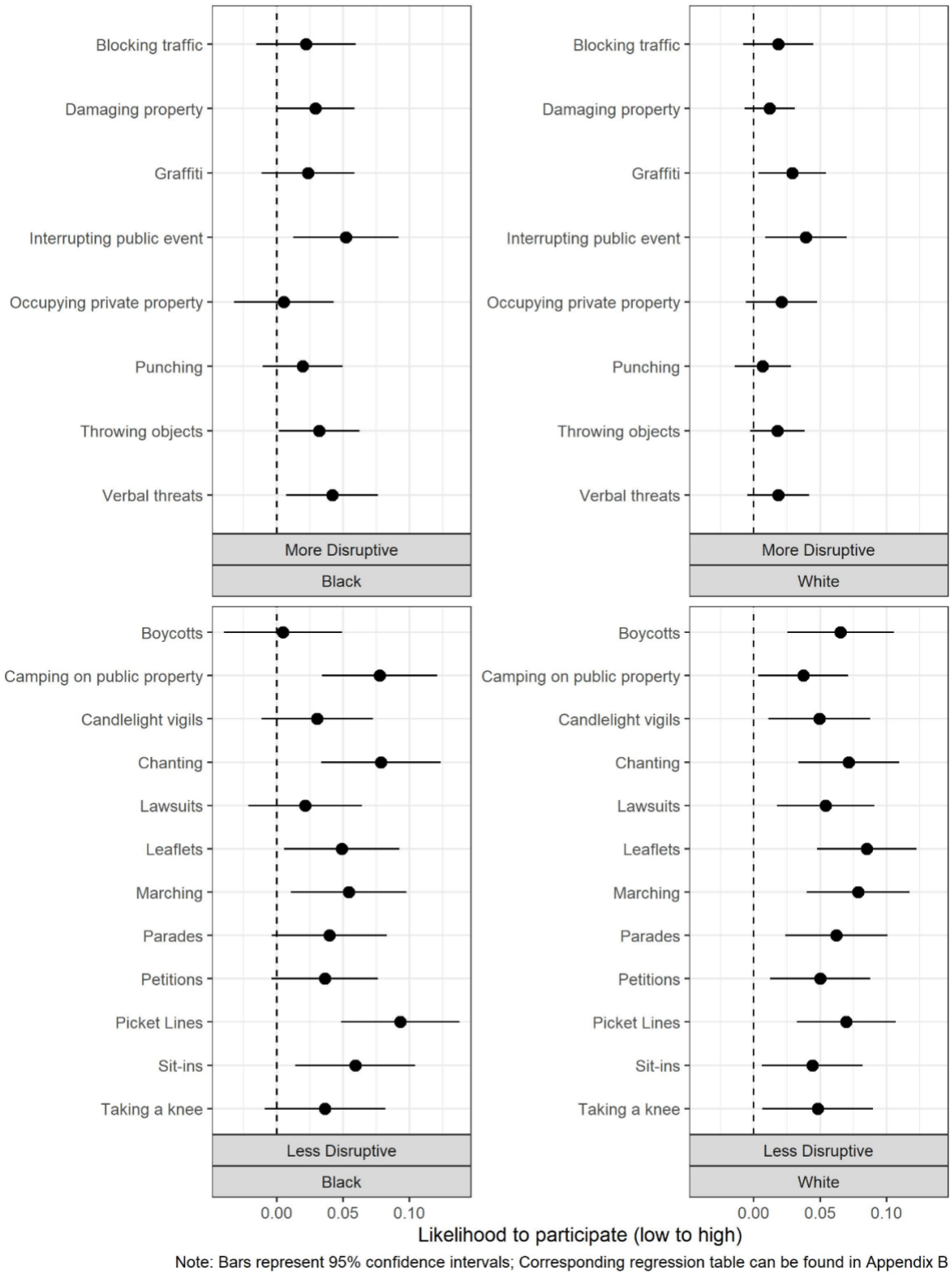


Figure 2: Likelihood to participate in protest activities




Note: Bars represent 95% confidence intervals; Corresponding regression table can be found in Appendix B

**Appendix I: Overall treatment effect**

| | *Dependent variable:* Perceptions of incivility | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Whole sample** | **Black** | **White** |
| Treatment | -0.024*** | -0.020*** | -0.028*** |
| | (0.003) | (0.004) | (0.003) |
| Boycott | -0.456*** | -0.387*** | -0.522*** |
| | (0.008) | (0.012) | (0.011) |
| Camping out on public property | -0.289*** | -0.273*** | -0.304*** |
| | (0.008) | (0.012) | (0.011) |
| Chanting | -0.440*** | -0.380*** | -0.498*** |
| | (0.008) | (0.012) | (0.011) |
| Graffiti | 0.014* | 0.054*** | -0.023** |
| | (0.008) | (0.012) | (0.011) |
| Interrupting a public event | -0.131*** | -0.109*** | -0.152*** |
| | (0.008) | (0.012) | (0.011) |
| Taking a knee | -0.393*** | -0.440*** | -0.350*** |
| | (0.008) | (0.012) | (0.011) |
| Lawsuit | -0.427*** | -0.366*** | -0.484*** |
| | (0.008) | (0.012) | (0.011) |
| Leaflet | -0.468*** | -0.366*** | -0.563*** |
| | (0.008) | (0.012) | (0.011) |
| Marching | -0.510*** | -0.446*** | -0.571*** |
| | (0.008) | (0.012) | (0.011) |
| Occupying private property | 0.006 | 0.015 | -0.003 |
| | (0.008) | (0.012) | (0.011) |
| Parade | -0.541*** | -0.463*** | -0.615*** |
| | (0.008) | (0.012) | (0.011) |
| Petition | -0.555*** | -0.474*** | -0.632*** |
| | (0.008) | (0.012) | (0.011) |
| Picket line | -0.439*** | -0.373*** | -0.502*** |
| | (0.008) | (0.012) | (0.011) |
| Damaging property | 0.217*** | 0.254*** | 0.183*** |
| | (0.008) | (0.012) | (0.011) |
| Punching | 0.202*** | 0.238*** | 0.168*** |
| | (0.008) | (0.012) | (0.011) |
| Sit-in | -0.436*** | -0.413*** | -0.458*** |
| | (0.008) | (0.012) | (0.011) |
| Verbal threat | 0.026*** | 0.078*** | -0.024** |
| | (0.008) | (0.012) | (0.011) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Throwing objects | 0.193*** | 0.241*** | 0.149*** |
| | (0.008) | (0.012) | (0.011) |
| Candlelight vigil | -0.511*** | -0.421*** | -0.596*** |
| | (0.008) | (0.012) | (0.011) |
| Constant | 0.657*** | 0.579*** | 0.730*** |
| | (0.006) | (0.009) | (0.008) |
| Observations | 55,606 | 27,011 | 28,595 |
| $R^2$ | 0.443 | 0.414 | 0.487 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.443 | 0.413 | 0.487 |
| Residual Std. Error | 0.304 (df = 55585) | 0.309 (df = 26990) | 0.294 (df = 28574) |
| F Statistic | 2,210.974*** (df = 20; 55585) | 952.022*** (df = 20; 26990) | 1,356.735*** (df = 20; 28574) |

*Table I.1. Overall treatment effect on perceptions of incivility*
*Note:* *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01

| | *Dependent variable:* Likelihood to participate | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Whole sample** | **Black** | **White** |
| Treatment | 0.044*** | 0.044*** | 0.042*** |
| | (0.003) | (0.004) | (0.004) |
| Boycott | 0.439*** | 0.435*** | 0.442*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.012) |
| Camping out on public property | 0.113*** | 0.117*** | 0.110*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.012) |
| Chanting | 0.283*** | 0.301*** | 0.266*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.012) |
| Graffiti | -0.024*** | -0.038*** | -0.012 |
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.012) |
| Interrupting a public event | 0.069*** | 0.065*** | 0.074*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.012) |
| Taking a knee | 0.291*** | 0.393*** | 0.195*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.012) |
| Lawsuit | 0.322*** | 0.356*** | 0.289*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.012) |
| Leaflet | 0.376*** | 0.351*** | 0.399*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.012) |
| Marching | 0.358*** | 0.376*** | 0.341*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.012) |
| Occupying private property | 0.001 | -0.004 | 0.005 |
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.012) |
| Parade | 0.388*** | 0.401*** | 0.376*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.012) |
| Petition | 0.520*** | 0.506*** | 0.533*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.012) |
| Picket line | 0.250*** | 0.242*** | 0.257*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.012) |
| Damaging property | -0.091*** | -0.114*** | -0.070*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.012) |
| Punching | -0.079*** | -0.097*** | -0.062*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.012) |
| Sit-in | 0.258*** | 0.290*** | 0.228*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.012) |
| Verbal threat | -0.040*** | -0.052*** | -0.029** |
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.012) |
| Throwing objects | -0.082*** | -0.105*** | -0.061*** |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.012) |
| Candlelight vigil | 0.464*** | 0.459*** | 0.468*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.012) |
| Constant | 0.159*** | 0.208*** | 0.112*** |
| | (0.006) | (0.009) | (0.008) |
| Observations | 55,629 | 27,031 | 28,598 |
| $R^2$ | 0.278 | 0.291 | 0.285 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.278 | 0.291 | 0.285 |
| Residual Std. Error | 0.326 (df = 55608) | 0.332 (df = 27010) | 0.309 (df = 28577) |
| F Statistic | 1,070.853*** (df = 20; 55608) | 554.429*** (df = 20; 27010) | 570.595*** (df = 20; 28577) |

*Table I.2. Overall treatment effect on intent to participate*
*Note:* *p < 0.10 **p < 0.05 ***p < 0.01

**Appendix J. Full survey wording**

Start of Block: Demographics

Q5 What is your age? (enter as numeric)

_____

Q6 What is your gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Other/prefer not to say (3)

Q7 With which of the following races or ethnicities do you affiliate? (mark all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaska Native (1)
- Asian or Asian American (2)
- Black or African American (3)
- Hispanic or Latino/a (4)
- Middle Eastern or North African (5)
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (6)
- White (7)
- Other (8)

Page Break

*Display This Question:*

*If If With which of the following races or ethnicities do you affiliate? (mark all that apply) q://QID4/SelectedChoicesCount Is Greater Than 1*

*Carry Forward Selected Choices from "With which of the following races or ethnicities do you affiliate? (mark all that apply)"*

Q9 If you had to choose which you identify most as, which would it be?

- American Indian or Alaska Native (1)
- Asian or Asian American (2)
- Black or African American (3)
- Hispanic or Latino/a (4)
- Middle Eastern or North African (5)
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (6)
- White (7)
- Other (8)

---

Q10 Timing
First Click (1)
Last Click (2)
Page Submit (3)
Click Count (4)

---

Page Break

Q11 What is an estimate of your family's annual household income (before taxes)?

- < $30,000 (1)
- $30,000 - $69,999 (2)
- $70,000 - $99,999 (3)
- $100,000 - $200,000 (4)
- > $200,000 (5)

---

Q12 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than high school (1)
- High school graduate (2)
- Some college (3)
- 2 year degree (4)
- 4 year degree (5)
- Advanced degree (6)

---

Q13 Timing
First Click (1)
Last Click (2)
Page Submit (3)
Click Count (4)

End of Block: Demographics

---

Start of Block: Politics

Q14 Generally speaking, which of the options below best describes your party identification?

- Democrat (1)
- Republican (2)
- Independent (3)

---

*Display This Question:*

*If Generally speaking, which of the options below best describes your party identification? = Democrat*

Q16 Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?

- Strong Democrat (1)
- Not so strong Democrat (2)

---

*Display This Question:*

*If Generally speaking, which of the options below best describes your party identification? = Republican*

Q18 Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?

- Strong Republican (1)
- Not so strong Republican (2)

---

*Display This Question:*

*If Generally speaking, which of the options below best describes your party identification? = Independent*

Q20 Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic or the Republican Party?

- Democratic Party (1)
- Republican Party (2)
- Neither (3)

---

Q22 We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Here is a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place yourself on this scale?

- Very liberal (1)
- Liberal (2)
- Slightly liberal (3)
- Moderate, or middle of the road (4)
- Slightly conservative (5)
- Conservative (6)
- Very conservative (7)

---

Q23 Timing
First Click (1)
Last Click (2)
Page Submit (3)
Click Count (4)

End of Block: Politics

Start of Block: Linked fate

Q24 Do you think what happens to Black people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

*Display This Question:*

*If Do you think what happens to Black people in this country will have something to do with what hap... = Yes*

Q26 How much will what happens to Black people in this country affect you?

- A great deal (1)
- A lot (2)
- A moderate amount (3)
- A little (4)

---

Q27 Timing
First Click (1)
Last Click (2)
Page Submit (3)
Click Count (4)

**End of Block: Linked fate**

---

**Start of Block: SDO7**

Q28 Please indicate how much you disagree or agree with the following statements:

---

Q29
An ideal society requires some groups to be on top and others to be on the bottom.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q30
Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q31
No one group should dominate in society.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q32
Groups at the bottom are just as deserving as groups at the top.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q33
Group equality should not be our primary goal.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q34
It is unjust to try to make groups equal.
- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q35
We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups.
- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q36
We should work to give all groups an equal chance to succeed.
- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

---

Q37 Timing
First Click (1)
Last Click (2)
Page Submit (3)
Click Count (4)

**End of Block: SDO7**

---

**Start of Block: FIRE**

Q38 Please indicate how much you disagree or agree with the following statements:

Q39 I am fearful of people of other races.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Strongly disagree (4)

Q40 White people in the US have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Strongly disagree (4)

Q41 Racial problems in the US are rare, isolated situations.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Strongly disagree (4)

Q42 I am angry that racism exists.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Strongly disagree (4)

Q43 Timing
First Click (1)
Last Click (2)
Page Submit (3)
Click Count (4)

**End of Block: FIRE**

Start of Block: primer

Q97 You are about to read one of several curated articles that the research team has collected for this study. The topic of the text you are about to read is random, ranging from entertainment news to political arguments. All curated articles are between 150 and 250 words. We may ask you questions about the article you read later in the survey, so please read your article closely.

End of Block: primer

---

Start of Block: treatment

Q44 What follows is an editorial recently published online. Please read this closely, as you may be asked about it later.

Q45

## Disruptive protests as a means for change, justice, and equality

In a perfect world, we would not need to protest for our rights. But the world is not perfect and protests are often the only means for change. And these protests must sometimes be **disruptive**. Our ancestors knew that, sometimes, being polite is less important than being heard.

It took disruptive protests to end segregation—the men and women who sat at segregated lunch counters were called uncivil and 'disruptive elements' for not following segregation laws.

Generations before that, escaping slavery or assisting escaped slaves was seen as a type of unlawful and disruptive protest, and called an insult to the South's honor.

Today, some say, 'slow down and let the system work itself out.' Yet, at times we have to take action, as our ancestors did, to ensure justice and equality.

This means: going out, protesting, even aggressively so when needed, and obtaining our rights for ourselves.

- A.J. Smith, op/ed contributor



Q46 Timing
First Click (1)
Last Click (2)
Page Submit (3)
Click Count (4)

End of Block: treatment

Start of Block: control

Q47 What follows is an article recently published online. Please read this closely, as you may be asked about it later.

---

Q48

After fourteen years and twenty seasons, *Keeping Up with the Kardashians* is coming to an end.

On Tuesday, **Kim Kardashian** announced on Instagram that her family had made "the difficult decision" to move on and that the long-running reality TV show would air its final episodes in 2021. She thanked her fans and loyal viewers, saying "I wouldn't be where I am today" without them and the series. But what Kim didn't reveal is exactly why she and her siblings had decided now was the best moment to walk away from the lucrative franchise.

According to sources who spoke with *Page Six*, it was simply that the family wanted to end on a "high note," adding, "It was a good time to end." A source who spoke to *Entertainment Tonight* more or less confirmed that reasoning, saying, "There was no big reason why the family decided to end *KUWTK*; it was a mutual decision. The kids who started the show now have their own kids and it's getting very hard to film all together or get enough footage separately. The family is grateful for their time and is happy they have all of these memories filmed for the rest of their lives. The family wanted time to focus more on their family and future projects and the show is a major job that takes up a lot of time." They also added that despite the rumors, it is "not true" that **Kris Jenner** will be joining *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*.

---

Q49 Timing
First Click (1)
Last Click (2)
Page Submit (3)
Click Count (4)

End of Block: control

Start of Block: protest perceptions

Q50 What follows are a series of protest activities that have occurred in the past few years. We would like to know your thoughts about them, ***in general***, regardless of the purpose of the protest.

It may be worth reminding you that all responses all anonymous.

Q51 Please indicate to what degree you find the following protest activities, in general, *uncivil.*

| | Not at all uncivil (1) | Slightly uncivil (2) | Somewhat uncivil (3) | Mostly uncivil (4) | Very uncivil (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Picket lines (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Chanting (2) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Marches (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Hitting/punching (4) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Interrupting a public event (5) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q53 Please indicate to what degree you find the following protest activities, in general, *uncivil.*

| | Not at all uncivil (1) | Slightly uncivil (2) | Somewhat uncivil (3) | Mostly uncivil (4) | Very uncivil (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parades (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Taking a knee during the national anthem (2) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Petitions (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Damaging property (4) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Throwing objects (5) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q55 Please indicate to what degree you find the following protest activities, in general, *uncivil.*

| | Not at all uncivil (1) | Slightly uncivil (2) | Somewhat uncivil (3) | Mostly uncivil (4) | Very uncivil (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sit-ins (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Blocking traffic (2) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Occupation of private property (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Bannering/graffiti (4) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Camping out on public property (5) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q57 Please indicate to what degree you find the following protest activities, in general, *uncivil.*

| | Not at all uncivil (1) | Slightly uncivil (2) | Somewhat uncivil (3) | Mostly uncivil (4) | Very uncivil (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lawsuits (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Boycotting (2) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Candlelight vigils (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Verbal threats (4) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Leaflets (5) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q58 Timing
First Click (1)
Last Click (2)
Page Submit (3)
Click Count (4)

**End of Block: protest perceptions**

**Start of Block: participation**

Q59 Now we would like to know how likely you would be to participate in some of the following protest activities if the opportunity presented itself on an issue **you care very deeply about**. Again, there is no way to identify you from your survey responses.

Q60 Please indicate how likely you would be to participate in the following activities if you were protesting <u>for an issue you care very deeply about.</u>

| | Very unlikely to participate (1) | Somewhat unlikely to participate (2) | Neither unlikely nor likely (3) | Somewhat likely to participate (4) | Certain to participate (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Picket lines (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Chanting (2) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Marches (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Hitting/punching (4) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Interrupting a public event (5) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q62 Please indicate how likely you would be to participate in the following activities if you were protesting <u>for an issue you care very deeply about.</u>

| | Very unlikely to participate (1) | Somewhat unlikely to participate (2) | Neither unlikely nor likely (3) | Somewhat likely to participate (4) | Certain to participate (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parades (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Taking a knee during the national anthem (2) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Petitions (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Damaging property (4) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Throwing objects (5) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q64 Please indicate how likely you would be to participate in the following activities if you were protesting for an issue you care very deeply about.

| | Very unlikely to participate (1) | Somewhat unlikely to participate (2) | Neither unlikely nor likely (3) | Somewhat likely to participate (4) | Certain to participate (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sit-ins (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Blocking traffic (2) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Occupation of private property (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Bannering/graffiti (4) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Camping out on public property (5) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q66 Please indicate how likely you would be to participate in the following activities if you were protesting for an issue you care very deeply about.

| | Very unlikely to participate (1) | Somewhat unlikely to participate (2) | Neither unlikely nor likely (3) | Somewhat likely to participate (4) | Certain to participate (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lawsuits (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Boycotting (2) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Candlelight vigils (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Verbal threats (4) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Leaflets (5) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Start of Block: engaged in protests

Q80 Have you attended a protest at any time in the past 6 months?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)
- ○ Prefer not to answer (3)

*Display This Question:*

*If Have you attended a protest at any time in the past 6 months? = Yes*

Q82 What was the protest about?

- COVID-19 lockdown restrictions (1)
- Race relations (2)
- Labor strike (3)
- Other (please specify) (4) _____

*Display This Question:*

*If What was the protest about? = COVID-19 lockdown restrictions*

Q84 Was it to protest against government-mandated lock-downs? Protest in favor of them?

- Protest against lockdowns (1)
- Protest in favor of lockdowns (2)
- Other (please specify) (3) _____

*Display This Question:*

*If What was the protest about? = Race relations*

Q86 Was it to protest against police actions? Protest in defense of police actions?

- Protest against police actions (1)
- Protest in favor of police actions (2)
- Other (please specify) (3) _____

Q87 Timing
First Click (1)
Last Click (2)
Page Submit (3)
Click Count (4)

End of Block: engaged in protests

Start of Block: uncivil open ended

Q88 Please tell us in your own words what you think it means to be "uncivil."

_____

*Display This Question:*

*If condition = treatment*

Q90 What was the *argument* of the editorial you read earlier? NOTE: This is *not* asking what you believe; it is asking what the argument of the editorial was, whether you agree with it or not.

- Protests should always be nonviolent (1)
- Protests can be disruptive if there are few alternatives. (2)
- Protests rarely accomplish much of anything. (3)
- The Civil Rights Movement was violent. (4)

*Display This Question:*

*If condition = control*

Q92 What was the *subject* of the editorial you read earlier?

- Keeping Up with the Kardashians has been renewed for two more seasons (1)
- Keeping Up with the Kardashians is ending soon (2)
- Kim Kardashian has a new fashion line (3)
- Chloe Kardashian is starting a new reality show (4)