

**How Incivility on Partisan Media (De-)Polarizes  
the Electorate**

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## ABSTRACT

Partisan media—typically characterized by incivility—has become a defining element of the American political communication environment. While scholars have explored the consequences of partisan media for political attitudes and behaviors, past work cannot disentangle the distinct consequences of incivility from other features of partisan media, such as slant. The researchers outline a theory about why incivility on partisan outlets shapes attitudes, and how those effects depend on both the source and the audience. They test their argument using a population-based survey experiment and find support for their expectations. The researchers show that incivility depolarizes partisans when it comes from a same-party source (e.g., MSNBC for Democrats, Fox News for Republicans). When it comes from the other-party source, however, it polarizes. They find these effects, albeit to a smaller extent, even among those inclined to enjoy conflict. The results raise intriguing normative questions about the tradeoffs between polarization and incivility.

One of the most notable changes in the United States media environment over the past quarter-century is the rise of partisan outlets—sources that eschew objectivity and present the news from a particular point of view. Such outlets are notable not only for their partisan slant, but also for their relatively high levels of incivility (Mutz 2015, Sydnor 2015). While a large literature explores the effects of partisan media, it has not disentangled the effects of incivility from the effects of partisan slant. Our work here addresses this lacuna in the literature and unpacks the mechanisms through which partisan media affect viewers. In particular, we explore whether uncivil programming on partisan networks polarizes or depolarizes viewers.

Building on previous works on the effects of incivility, we argue that civility can polarize or depolarize audiences depending on the characteristics of the audience and the source. Using a large-scale population-based survey experiment (Mutz 2011), we find support for our argument. Perhaps our most notable result is that when partisan media comes from a same-party source (e.g., when a Republican watches Fox News), incivility *depolarizes*: partisans feel less close and trusting of their party and move away from the positions advocated by the news program. The effects are smaller among individuals who enjoy conflict but nonetheless remain. That said, in other conditions, we show that uncivil partisan media polarizes the audience, especially when individuals watch other-party media (e.g., when a Democrat watches Fox News). Our results make clear that studying polarization requires attention to partisan media, civility, and the interaction between the two.

### **The Effect of Incivility on Partisan Media Effects**

Partisan media are a type of contemporary programming that opts for a particular point of view over objectivity (e.g., Jamieson and Capella 2008). Such outlets can affect attitudes directly (Levendusky 2013, though see Arceneaux and Johnson 2013), as well as indirectly via two-stage

communication flows and inter-personal discussion (Druckman et al. n.d.). Scholars typically argue that these effects are due to partisan motivated reasoning: partisans are motivated to form opinions that are consistent with their party identification, regardless of the precise substance of the information provided (Leeper and Slothuus 2015). The results are that when one receives news from a like-minded partisan source (e.g. Fox for Republicans, MSNBC for Democrats), he or she moves in the direction of the issue positions advocated by that source to maintain partisan-consistent attitudes (regardless of actual substantive content). When one receives news from an other-party source (e.g., MSNBC for Republicans, Fox for Democrats), he or she counter-argues it, clinging to his or her partisan identity and often moves in the opposite direction of the advocated positions. The consequence is exposure to both same-party and other-party sources polarize issue positions (Arceneaux and Johnson 2013: 104, Druckman et al. n.d.). Partisan media also affects partisan affect and trust—exposure primes one’s in-group identity, which leads one to view his or her party more positively and the other party less positively (regardless of the partisan source). Thus, again, the result is polarization but this time in terms of affect and trust (Levendusky 2013: 58-60).

But prior research largely overlooks another important feature of partisan media: incivility. By incivility, we mean “communication that violates the norms of politeness for a given culture” (Mutz 2015: 6; also see Brooks and Geer 2007). In the political domain, this includes slurs, threats of harm, vulgarity, insults, and disrespect (Stryker et al. 2016). While partisan news exhibits more incivility than other programming (e.g., Berry and Sobieraj 2014), there is substantial variance and in fact, by one accounting, roughly 20% of segments on Fox News and MSNBC have no incivility (Sydnor 2015: 44). It is this variance that interests us, as extant studies of partisan media have not varied both partisan media source and civility, so they

cannot speak to their independent effects (see also Skytte 2017). This is an important oversight, in that we cannot know the mechanisms driving the partisan media effects found in earlier studies. While partisan motivated reasoning is undoubtedly a factor driving many of these effects, incivility, we argue, will also have its own independent effects. Unpacking these effects of incivility is our task here.

Why does incivility matter? It matters because civility sets up standards for what constitutes normal and polite interactions; most people therefore will see (at least extreme) uncivil partisan media as norm-violating. The violation of norms that comes with incivility can trigger negative emotional reactions and lead people to feel less sense of belonging (Prewitt-Freilino et al. 2012, van Kleef et al. 2015, Krumhuber et al. 2016). It then follows that individuals generate less “like” and more “dislike” for the (partisan) source of the incivility, creating increased partisan ambivalence—since these networks have such entrenched partisan identities, people’s feelings about the parties more generally will be affected. Partisan ambivalence, in turn, is well established to undermine motivated reasoning, and will therefore vitiate partisan polarization, affective attachment to one’s party, and trust in one’s party to do what is right (see Lavine et al. 2012, Bolsen et al. 2014, Klar 2014; for general discussion of other related work, see the appendix).

*Hypothesis 1:* Relative to civil partisan media communications, uncivil partisan media communications cause audience members to (a) become more ambivalent toward the party connected to the source, (b) feel less positive affect toward the source’s party, (c) become less trusting of the source’s party, and (d) become less likely to move their issue positions in ways advocated by the source, all else constant.

Hypothesis 1 implies that high levels of incivility from same-party partisan media sources (e.g., MSNBC for Democrats, Fox for Republicans) will *depolarize* partisans as they move away from the party aligned with the source. It is even plausible, as a corollary, that diminished

partisan identity will cause people to see the other party (i.e., the “outgroup”) more favorably in terms of affect and trust. The flip side is that high levels of incivility from an other-party source will polarize people away from that other-party and toward their own party.

Certain people, however, will view this incivility as less offensive because they are less averse to conflict. This is captured in one’s conflict orientation: “an individual’s willingness to make interpersonal conflicts explicit” (Mutz 2015: 81). Conflict-seeking, as opposed to conflict-avoidant, individuals have less negative reactions to incivility, sometimes finding it amusing or entertaining (Sydnor 2015: 73). They are therefore less affected by uncivil communications in some settings (Arceneaux and Johnson 2013: 144-145, Mutz 2015: 82).

*Hypotheses 2:* The effects of uncivil communications, relative to civil communications, posited by hypothesis 1 will be smaller for conflict seeking individuals compared to conflict avoidant individuals, all else constant.<sup>1</sup>

A concomitant point following on hypothesis 2 is that conflict-seeking individuals tend to be the ones most likely to tune into partisan media in the first place (Arceneaux and Johnson 2013: 133, Sydnor 2015: 91). While we put questions of selective exposure aside here, by examining the moderating effects of conflict orientation, we can still address concerns about heterogeneous treatment effects (Gaines and Kuklinski 2011). The most telling results concern those who are conflict-seeking since they are more likely to be exposed to such programming. Even so, as our data will show, even conflict-avoidant individuals do expose themselves at times to partisan media (see also Sydnor 2015).

## **Experiment**

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<sup>1</sup> We pre-registered versions of both our hypotheses at [Aspredicted.org](https://aspredicted.org) as Study #3326; our pre-analysis plan is provided in the appendix.

We conducted an experiment embedded in a nationally representative survey in the United States (implemented over the Internet) with a total of 5,031 participants.<sup>2</sup> Data were collected from March 18, 2017, to March 27, 2017. All respondents began the survey with a few basic demographic questions that included a standard partisanship question (to distinguish Democrats, Republicans, and Independents), and, to test hypothesis 2, a five-item measure of conflict orientation (Mutz and Reeves 2005, Arceneaux and Johnson 2013: 191, Mutz 2015: 230, Sydnor 2015: 28).<sup>3</sup> For our conflict orientation measure, we generated an average score (with higher scores indicating conflict-seeking); the items scaled together with an alpha of 0.76.

To test our hypotheses, we randomly assigned respondents to one of four conditions that varied two factors: partisan source (either Fox News or MSNBC) and level of civility (either civil or uncivil). Four points are relevant. First, we opted for Fox News as the “Republican network” and MSNBC as the “Democratic network;” this clearly reflects the partisan slant of both networks as characterized by outside observers, audience demographics, and previous research (Levendusky 2013; Arceneaux and Johnson 2013, Pew Research Center 2014, Druckman et al. n.d.). This means that for Democrats, MSNBC (Fox) is the same-party (other-party) source whereas for Republicans Fox News (MSNBC) is the same-party (other-party) source.

Second, our stimuli were text segments that we told respondents were from *All in with Chris Hayes* for MSNBC or *Tucker Carlson Tonight* for Fox (the original text was drawn from the stimuli used in Druckman et al. n.d. and other segments previously aired on Fox and

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<sup>2</sup> We hired the firm Bovitz Inc. to conduct the survey. They collected the data from a non-probability-based but representative (on all key census demographics) sample of the United States.

<sup>3</sup> The average partisanship score, in our sample, is 3.76 (std.dev. = 2.07) (measured on a 1 to 7 scale toward strong Republican, the average age (measured in 5 categories) fell in the range of 35-50, the average education (measured in 5 categories) fell in the “some college” category. The sample included 50% females and 71% whites.

MSNBC). The substantive focus was on Republican attempts to resurrect the Keystone XL and Dakota Access Pipelines (see the appendix for discussion of the issue choice, other design decisions, and how we specifically constructed the stimuli). The segments provided some background and then the MSNBC segment, consistent with partisan leanings, opposed the pipelines (focusing on environmental risks) while the Fox segment supported the pipelines (focusing on economic benefits).

Third, we introduced variations in civility. In the civil treatment, the host disputes the other side's claim (it is partisan), but he does so respectfully. The uncivil segments, by contrast, invoked the aforementioned aspects of incivility (slurs, threats of harm) with language such as "idiotic," "parasitic," "reckless," "despicable," etc. The segments were accompanied by either a neutral "civil" picture of the host or an uncivil picture displaying a seemingly outraged host. Given this is an initial test, we did opt for uncivil segments that are probably best construed as highly uncivil. The full stimuli are provided in the appendix. For the purposes of analyses and presentation, we consider respondents as being in one of four conditions: (1) same-party civil, (2) same-party uncivil, (3) other-party civil, or (4) other-party uncivil. We pre-tested our stimuli to ensure that they were differentially civil or uncivil, connected with the appropriated partisan source, made arguments in the directions we assumed, and were all equally "logically" effective. Details are in the appendix.

Fourth, our analytical focus, then, is *relative comparisons between the civil and uncivil communications holding the source constant*. That is, hypothesis 1 suggests that uncivil same-party segments will cause individuals to move against their party compared to same-party civil segments. Other-party uncivil segments will cause them to move against the other-party relative to other-party civil segments. Hypothesis 2 adds to hypothesis 1 by suggesting a moderating



effect. We do not have clear predictions across source (e.g., same-party uncivil versus other-party civil), and thus we analyze them separately (i.e., we compare civil vs. uncivil same-party sources).

Following exposure to the stimuli, respondents were first asked two manipulation check questions, rating the civility and politeness of the segment (on 5-point scales). We then asked them: (1) a partisan ambivalence measure that merged (a) same-party favorability/other-party unfavorability (which we coin “same-party likes”), and (b) other-party favorability/same-party unfavorability (which we coin “other-party likes”; Lavine et al. 2012: 57-58; both sets of party favorability are on 5-point scales), (2) affective thermometer ratings of each party on scales ranging from 0 to 100 (Levendusky and Malhotra 2016, appendix: 5), (3) trust in each party to do what is right for the country (on 5-point scales) (Levendusky 2013: 174), and (4) two items on support for the pipelines and the production of oil (on 7-point scales)—we merged these two items together ( $\alpha = 0.82$ ). Respondents were then debriefed. Full question wordings and the stimuli are in the appendix.

## **Results**

To ensure that our manipulations worked as intended, we asked respondents to rate the civility of the segments they read.<sup>4</sup> We should find that those assigned the civil conditions to perceive those segments to be less uncivil. We find that this is the case: participants rated the civil conditions to be 1 full point (on a 5-point scale) more civil relative to the uncivil conditions ( $t_{5024}=28.02, p < 0.01$  for a two-tailed test); the same pattern would hold if we looked at same-party and other-party media separately. This gives us confidence that we successfully manipulated civility in our treatment. In a pre-test (see the appendix), we showed that

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<sup>4</sup> We also asked respondents how polite they found the segments to be (for analyses of that and other dynamics, see the appendix).

respondents did not perceive differences in partisan slant between the civil and uncivil same-party sources (likewise for the other-party sources), so we can interpret differences between the segments as functions of civility, not partisan slant.

Hypothesis 1 predicts that same-party incivility will depolarize, while other-party incivility will polarize. So, after watching same-party uncivil media, participants should have more partisan ambivalence (fewer same-party likes, more other-party likes), lower same-party feeling thermometers and higher other-party feeling thermometers, and lower same-party trust and higher other-party trust; watching other-party uncivil media reverses those predictions.

In the interest of simplicity, we present our results graphically in Figure 1, and we put the accompanying regressions in the appendix. In Figure 1, all variables have been rescaled to the [0,1] range for ease of presentation.<sup>5</sup>

**[Insert Figure 1 about here]**

Figure 1 shows strong support for hypothesis 1. Begin in the top panel, which shows the effects of same-party incivility. The graph shows that, relative to civil same-party media, uncivil same-party media decreases affect for one's own party, and increases it for the opposing party. Participants exhibit fewer likes for their party, rate it lower on the feeling thermometer, and trust it less. But they also like the opposing party more, and are less likely to take their party's position on the issues. Same-party incivility ironically depolarizes the electorate. We return to this point and its implications below.

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<sup>5</sup> Figures 1 and 2 below focus on partisans, and we treat leaning partisans as partisans for our purposes (though excluding them does not change our substantive results). We present results for pure Independents in the appendix. We find interestingly that incivility significantly affected the reactions of pure Independents, but mostly, only with regard to the partisan sources (e.g., attitudes towards Democrats when exposed to the MSNBC segments). We also find no moderating effect of conflict orientation among pure Independents (also see Mutz 2015: 106).

The bottom panel of Figure 1 shows the effects of other-party incivility. Here, we find the opposite effects from same-party civility above: incivility polarizes attitudes, making individuals like their own party more and the opposing party less. This also supports hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2 predicts that these effects will differ for those who are conflict-avoidant: these individuals—who dislike the uncivil discourse—will react more strongly to the treatments, and display larger effects. This implies an interactive model; we present the graphical output of that model in Figure 2 (the underlying regressions are again in the appendix). Here, we call those in the bottom 25 percent of the conflict avoidance scale as conflict-avoidant, and the remainder of the same as conflict-seeking (see Mutz 2015: 105-106). We make this division because we expect those who are most conflict avoidant to react most strongly to the treatment, but we find very substantively similar effects with other definitions of conflict-avoidant, including treating the conflict avoidance scale as a continuous measure (see the appendix).

**[Insert Figure 2 about here]**

We find some, but not definitive, support for hypothesis 2. Specifically, Figure 2 shows that the confidence intervals for the two groups overlap in most cases, and thus there are few statistically significant differences (see the appendix for formal tests via regressions). However, the consistency of larger effects for conflict-avoidant individuals across measures suggests these individuals are more affected. There is a clear trend that conflict avoidant individuals react more strongly to incivility on both same-party and other-party media sources. Figure 2 also makes clear, however, that there are still important—and statistically significant—effects of incivility even for those who are conflict seeking. This is a notable finding given that these individuals are most likely to tune into partisan networks. We asked respondents whether they watch various TV programs at least once a month. We find viewers of both Fox News and MSNBC registered

significantly higher conflict seeking scores (also see Arceneaux and Johnson 2013: 133, Sydner 2015: 91).<sup>6</sup> While our study does not directly address selective exposure issues except to the extent that those who selectively expose are conflict-seeking, the impact of incivility on these people speaks more directly to the impact on the modal audience member.<sup>7</sup>

## Conclusion

Partisan media has become a defining feature of the contemporary American political landscape. While previous efforts have highlighted the effects of these outlets, they have been unable to differentiate the effects of partisan slant from incivility. Our findings show that civility has an effect, even holding partisan slant fixed. The precise impact is contingent on the partisan media source, and the size of the effect depends on an individual's conflict orientation. Perhaps the most intriguing finding is that exposure to same-party incivility works to depolarize partisans, even those who seek conflict (and therefore are most likely to tune in).

Our findings raise an important question: if same-party incivility hurts one's own party, why do Fox and MSNBC do it? The answer, we suspect, lies in another effect of this uncivil rhetoric: it helps to maintain an audience. While our study did demonstrate that even those who tend to enjoy conflict were depolarized by same-party sources, we did not model the selection decision in the first place. It is quite plausible that, despite this de-polarizing effect, conflict and incivility may help maintain an audience given conflict has been shown to be attention grabbing

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<sup>6</sup> The average conflict seeking score (on a scale ranging from 1 to 5) for those who reporting watching Fox News in the last month is 2.75 (std. dev. = .85; N = 2,624) while those who reported not watching score 2.59 (.83; 2,406) ( $t_{5028} = 7.04$ ;  $p < .01$  for a two-tailed test). The respective scores for MSNBC are 2.85 (.83; 1,726) and 2.58 (.83; 3,304) ( $t_{5028} = 11.17$ ;  $p < .01$  for a two-tailed test). We additionally find, not surprisingly, that the average Fox viewer is significantly more Republican than a non-watcher while the average MSNBC viewer is significantly more Democratic than a non-watcher.

<sup>7</sup> In the appendix, we report that conflict orientation significantly moderates Democratic reactions in a number of cases whereas it never does for Republicans. Thus, the differences, albeit not statistically significant often, as noted, in Figure 2 stem mostly from Democrats (for whom there is more statistical significance). This is consistent with earlier work by Mutz (2015: 106), who shows that Republicans (and Independents) claim to be less bothered by incivility, but react to it more strongly.

(e.g., Berry and Sobieraj 2014). Future work should explore explicit selection decisions to test our ironic suggestion that same-party incivility may draw an audience that it subsequently depolarizes (i.e., people find it entertaining but don't want to "own" it).

Nevertheless, perhaps there is a silver lining to this partisan media incivility, in that it does partially depolarize the electorate. Given the rise in polarization, particularly affective polarization in recent years, one can certainly make a case that this benefit should not be overlooked. But two additional factors make this less appealing than it might seem at first glance. First, there's the issue of the relative size of the depolarizing effect of same-party media compared to the polarizing out-party effect we found. While most partisan media consumption is same-party media consumption, there is a substantial portion of crossover (Stroud 2011). Second, as we found here, same-party incivility also decreases trust in government, something already in short supply in the contemporary political environment. It could also demobilize partisans and weaken parties as sources of information and constraint. In the end, the depolarizing effects of incivility may well not outweigh the costs.

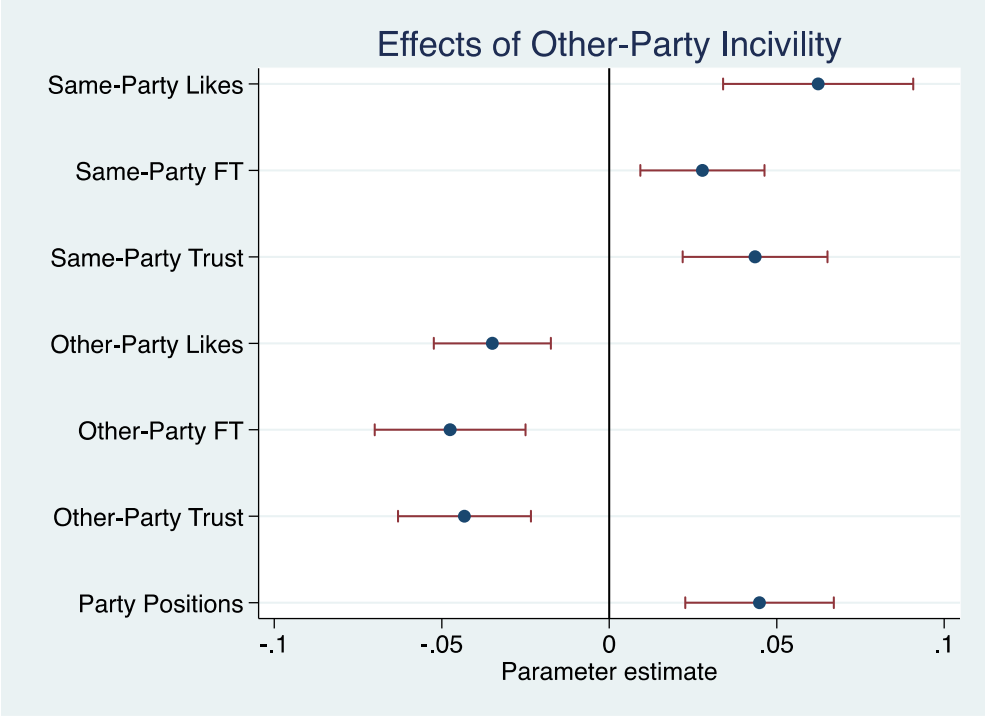
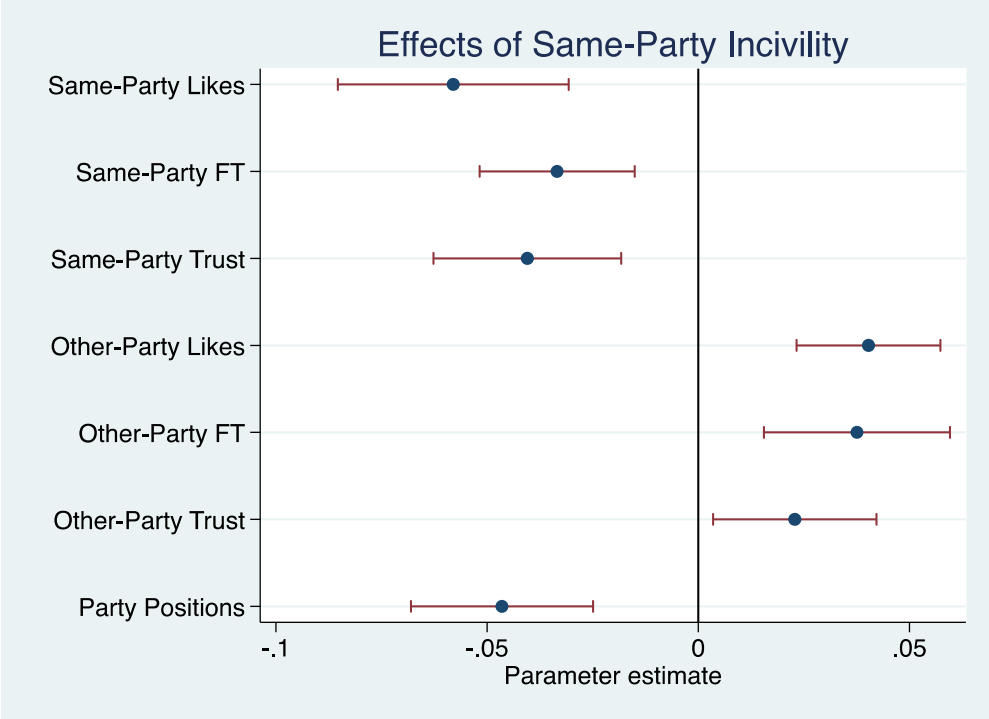
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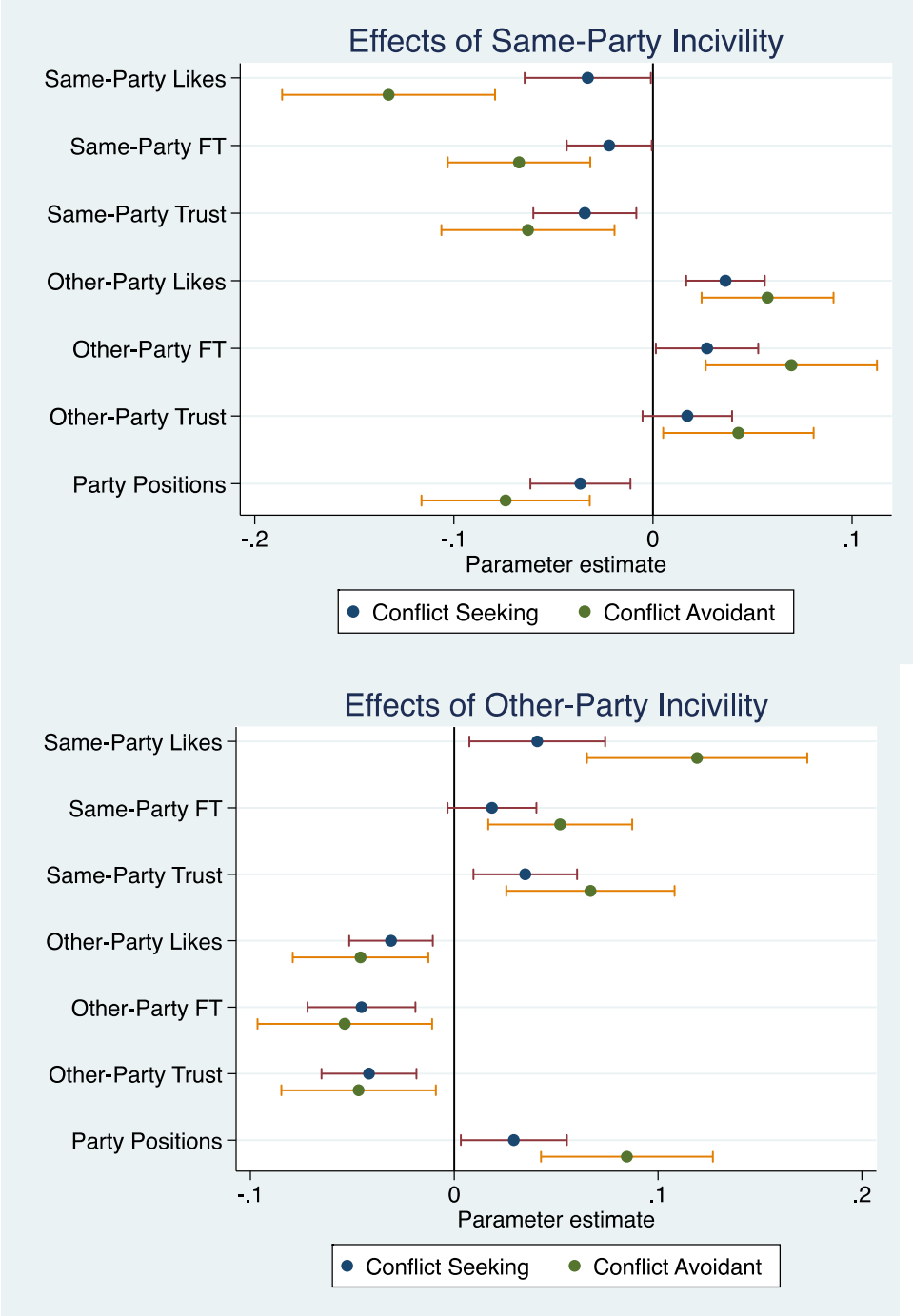
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**Figure 1: Effects of Same-Party & Other-party Incivility**

*Note:* The figure shows the effect of uncivil media (relative to civil media); dots represent point estimates and bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Associated regressions are presented in the appendix.



**Figure 2: The Moderating Effects of Conflict Avoidance**

*Note:* The figure shows the effect of uncivil media (relative to civil media); dots represent point estimates and bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Associated regressions are presented in the appendix.

## **Appendix**

1. Related Work
2. Details on the Stimuli and Pre-tests
3. Pre-Analysis Plan
4. Manipulation Check Items.
5. Regression Analyses.
6. Regression Analyses by Party
7. Regression Analyses for Pure Independents
8. Survey and Stimuli.
9. Appendix References.

## 1. Related Work

The work that comes closest to our study is Arceneaux and Johnson (2013). They show that partisan outlets can reduce trust in institutions and media, consistent with earlier work on the general effects of incivility (e.g., Mutz and Reeves 2005). But they do not independently vary slant and civility, so they cannot speak to their independent effects. More generally, our study is consistent with some past work such as Klar and Krupnikov's (2016) finding that partisan disagreement vitiates partisan identity and trust, Levendusky and Malhotra's (2016) finding that what amounts to uncivil polarization moderates issue positions, and Mutz's (2015) finding that incivility decreases trust. These works do not explore the impact of incivility from different partisan programs. Also relevant is Gervais (2014, 2015, n.d.), who shows that incivility tends to activate anger in people, consistent with reactions to norm violations.

## 2. Details on the Stimuli and Pre-tests

Our substantive focus stemmed in part because the Pipelines and/or the issue of drilling has been used in prior studies of partisan reasoning (Levendusky 2010; Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013; Druckman et al. n.d) and, while clearly being an issue that divides the parties, it is also one on which participants were unlikely to have strong priors and thus their opinions were susceptible to influence. It is worth noting that during data collection the Trump administration approved the Keystone XL line but that action received extremely little media attention. While our study was in the field, searching for the phrase "Keystone XL Pipeline" yields 417 hits in the Proquest NewsBank Archive. In contrast, during that same period, both immigration and the Affordable Care Act generated approximately 4,000 hits.

In terms of creating the stimuli, Sydnor (2015: 55) reports that incivility is more clearly perceived with visuals but it still is seen in text segments. We took a number of steps to ensure this was the case, including the use of trait-based incivility (Brooks and Geer 2007), emotionally histrionic language (Gervais 2016), and visuals (Mutz 2015). Also, we opted to avoid the most notable sources from each network (O'Reilly and Maddow), since each may have a clearer strong reputation when it comes to civility and we wanted to avoid such pre-treatment conditioning. Notably, however, we drew substantially from real-life segments of *Hannity* and the *Rachel Maddow Show*, which aired April 6, 2012 and March 15, 2013, respectively (and Chris Hayes was the substitute host for the episode of the *Rachel Maddow Show* we utilized). All respondents were debriefed about the origins of the segments.

Note that we opted not to include a control condition as we are not interested in the impact of civility from non-partisan sources. It also would have been unclear what a "middle civility" condition would look like, and most importantly, our hypotheses focus squarely on civil versus uncivil coverage from a particular partisan network and thus a control of any sort was not needed *per se*. The main drawback is we have no bench-line to compare movement sans stimuli but, again, that is beyond our theoretical focus. Not having a control also ensured we would have sufficient statistical power (by having few conditions), which is important given our heterogeneous treatment prediction (hypothesis 2).

To assess our stimuli, we conducted a pre-test with 88 undergraduates at a private Midwestern university. We randomly assigned respondents to read one of our four news segments (the number of respondent imbalance is due to random non-response to the survey rather than roll-off). We asked respondents to rate the perceived civility, perceived politeness, perceived ineffectiveness, perceived pipeline opposition, and perceived partisan slant. We present the results in the below table. Respondents perceived the uncivil segments to be significantly less civil and less polite than the civil segments (from each given source). They did not, however, perceive differences in the effectiveness, partisan slant, or opposition/support based on the civility of the segment (from each given source). We are thus confident that differences in treatment effects reflect civility rather than argument quality or argument direction.

|                  | Perceived Civility Mean (5-point scale with higher scores indicating more civil) | Perceived Politeness Mean (5-point scale with higher scores indicating more polite) | Perceived Ineffectiveness Mean (4-point scale with higher scores indicating ineffective) | Perceived Opposition to Pipelines Mean (5-point scale with higher scores indication more opposition) | Perceived Partisan Slant Mean (5-point scale with higher scores indicating more Republican) |
|------------------|--|---|--|--|---|
| MSNBC Uncivil    | 1.50<br>(std. dev.: .67; N = 32)   | 1.44<br>(.76; 32)   | 2.78<br>(.71; 32)  | 4.72<br>(.73; 32)  | 1.32<br>(.79; 31)   |
| MSNBC Civil      | 2.50***<br>(1.15; 20)  | 2.50***<br>(.89; 20)  | 2.79<br>(.79; 19)  | 4.70<br>(.73; 20)  | 1.40<br>(.88; 20)   |
| Fox News Uncivil | 1.47<br>(.70; 19)  | 1.42<br>(.51; 19)   | 2.58<br>(.67; 19)  | 1.47<br>(1.07; 19)   | 4.53<br>(.84; 19)   |
| Fox News Civil   | 2.82***<br>(1.19; 17)  | 2.77***<br>(1.25; 17)   | 2.94<br>(.90; 17)  | 1.65<br>(1.12; 17)   | 4.41<br>(1.00; 17)  |

**Table A26: Pre-Test Results**

*Note:* \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests. All tests are within-source (e.g., MSNBC Uncivil versus MSNBC Civil).

### 3. Manipulation Check Items

Tables A1 and A2 below show the post-test manipulation check items. After the treatment, each participant was asked to rate the incivility and impoliteness of the treatment segment received (see appendix section on survey and stimuli for exact measures).

Both measures reinforce the same conclusion: participants see the uncivil treatment as more uncivil and impolite, as we would expect. There is also an interesting tendency for participants to engage in some motivated reasoning: all participants perceive the same-party treatment as more civil and polite (so they perceive greater out-party incivility; see columns 2 and 3). Nevertheless,

even in the other-party conditions, we find strong evidence that our civility manipulation functioned as intended. Further, we should note that these effects are not moderated by conflict orientation (consistent with Sydnor 2015: 60). Fascinatingly, as we show in column 4, Republicans are more sensitive to incivility than Democrats are (consistent with findings we report below and with Mutz 2015: 106).

|                                       | (1)               | (2)                | (3)                | (4)                |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Same-Party Outlet                     |                   | -0.78***<br>(0.04) | -0.73***<br>(0.05) | -0.48***<br>(0.08) |
| Uncivil Treatment                     | 1.00***<br>(0.04) | 1.00***<br>(0.04)  | 1.05***<br>(0.05)  | 1.27***<br>(0.08)  |
| Same-Party Outlet*Uncivil Treatment   |                   |                    | -0.10<br>(0.07)    | -0.52***<br>(0.11) |
| Democrat                              |                   |                    |                    | 0.28***<br>(0.07)  |
| Same-Party Outlet*Democrat            |                   |                    |                    | -0.45***<br>(0.10) |
| Uncivil Treatment*Democrat            |                   |                    |                    | -0.38***<br>(0.11) |
| Same-Party*Uncivil Treatment*Democrat |                   |                    |                    | 0.76***<br>(0.15)  |
| Constant                              | 2.60***<br>(0.03) | 3.00***<br>(0.03)  | 2.97***<br>(0.04)  | 2.81***<br>(0.06)  |
| Observations                          | 4,009             | 4,009              | 4,009              | 4,009              |
| R-squared                             | 0.14              | 0.23               | 0.23               | 0.24               |

**Table A1: Incivility Manipulation Check**

*Note:* cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. Statistical significance is denoted by: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests.

|                                       | (1)                | (2)                | (3)                | (4)                |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Same-Party Outlet                     |                    | 0.65***<br>(0.03)  | 0.68***<br>(0.05)  | 0.25***<br>(0.07)  |
| Uncivil Treatment                     | -1.02***<br>(0.04) | -1.02***<br>(0.03) | -0.99***<br>(0.05) | -1.25***<br>(0.07) |
| Same-Party Outlet*Uncivil Treatment   |                    |                    | -0.06<br>(0.07)    | 0.42***<br>(0.10)  |
| Democrats                             |                    |                    |                    | -0.53***<br>(0.07) |
| Same-Party Outlet*Democrat            |                    |                    |                    | 0.76***<br>(0.10)  |
| Uncivil Treatment*Democrat            |                    |                    |                    | 0.46***<br>(0.10)  |
| Same-Party*Uncivil Treatment*Democrat |                    |                    |                    | -0.86***<br>(0.14) |
| Constant                              | 3.01***<br>(0.03)  | 2.68***<br>(0.03)  | 2.67***<br>(0.03)  | 2.97***<br>(0.05)  |
| Observations                          | 4,010              | 4,010              | 4,010              | 4,010              |
| R-squared                             | 0.17               | 0.24               | 0.24               | 0.25               |

**Table A2: Politeness Manipulation Check Item**

*Note:* cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. Statistical significance is denoted by: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests.

#### 4. Pre-Analysis Plan (Answers to Questions at Aspredicted.org)

##### 1) Have any data been collected for this study already?

No, data collection has not yet begun.

##### 2) Hypothesis. What's the main question being asked or hypothesis being tested in this study?

We seek to understand how civility conditions the effects of partisan media messages. We argue that civility will have different effects based on the partisan source and the respondent's level of conflict avoidance.

We will have four conditions as follows.

|         | Same-Party (e.g., MSNBC for Dems; Fox for Republicans) | Out-Party |
|---------|--|-----------|
| Civil   | 1  | 3         |
| Uncivil | 2  | 4         |

We focus our comparisons *strictly* within source. That is, our predictions are about the relative impact of civility from a given source. We do not compare across sources as that would require a rank ordering of expectations which is beyond what we can theorize.

Like others (e.g., Mutz), we operationalize conflict orientation as a version of the Approach /Avoidance Scale. Also like others, we do not have a strong basis to expect linear changes as we suspect people generally group into being conflict oriented or not. We thus focus our analyses on conflicted oriented vs. conflict seeking, using distinct groups. Mutz uses three groups; we may use two with a median split.

We suspect conflict avoidant individuals will be off-put by same-party incivility and out-party incivility (they will see both as norm violating). We suspect conflict seeking individuals to be swayed (relatively) by same party incivility but be put-off by out-party incivility (since they will see it as insulting). This leads to an increase in partisan motivated reasoning for conflict avoidant individuals in same-party civil versus uncivil conditions but less partisan motivated reasoning in the out-party civil condition versus uncivil condition (since the former uncivil rhetoric will be norm violating whereas the latter will be off-putting and accentuate group differences). Conflict seeking individuals will engage in more partisan motivated reasoning in the same-party uncivil versus civil condition and the out-party uncivil versus civil condition (since both accentuate group differences).



Here are our predictions.

| <b>Outcome Variable</b> | <b>Measure Source</b>   | <b>Prediction (All predictions are within party source. WE do NOT have a rank ordering of predictions across sources.)</b><br><br><b>Conflict Avoidant:</b><br><b>(1) for issue conditions</b><br><br><b>Conflict Seeking:</b><br><b>(2) for issue conditions</b> |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Ambivalence             | Lavine et al. (2012: 57-58)   | (1) condition 2 > 1; 3 > 4.<br><br>(2) 1 > 2; 3 > 4   |
| Issue Extremity*        | Issue questions (e.g. Levendusky and Malhotra 2016, appendix page 4-5)  | (1) 1 > 2; 4 > 3<br><br>(3) 2 > 1; 4 > 3  |
| Same-Party Thermometer  | Levendusky and Malhotra (2016, appendix page 5)   | (1) 1 > 2; 4 > 3<br><br>(2) 2 > 1; 4 > 3  |
| Out-Party Thermometer   | Levendusky and Malhotra (2016, appendix page 5)   | (1) 2 = 1; 3 > 4<br><br>(2) 1 > 2; 3 > 4  |
| Same-Party Trust        | Levendusky (2013: 174), although we will keep it as general trust of the parties rather than Congress since our text won't entirely focus on Congress <i>per se</i> . | (1) 1 > 2; 4 > 3<br><br>(2) 2 > 1; 4 > 3  |
| Out-Party Trust         | Levendusky (2013: 174)  | (1) 2 = 1; 3 > 4<br><br>(2) 1 > 2; 3 > 4  |

**3) Dependent variable.** Describe the key dependent variable(s) specifying how they will be measured.

We use standard measures in the partisan motivated reasoning literature. They are detailed above. To repeat, the key dependent variables are:

- +partisan ambivalence, drawn from Lavine et al. (2012), see their pages 57-59.
- + party feeling thermometers, using the standard NES items
- + trust in the party (drawn from Levendusky 2013)
- + issue-position measures (adapted from Druckman, Levendusky, and McLain Forthcoming)

**4) Conditions.** How many and which conditions will participants be assigned to?

Subjects are randomly assigned to one of four conditions: same-party uncivil, same-party civil, out-party civil, out-party uncivil. Stimuli are based on the treatments used by Druckman et al. (Forthcoming), adapted by the authors to shorten them and vary their civility. The design is presented above.

**5) Analyses.** Specify exactly which analyses you will conduct to examine the main question/hypothesis.

We will run regressions and difference of means tests/ANOVA to analyze the data. Our key test is with-in the party source (same party or out party), what are the effects of civility vs. incivility on individuals, moderated by conflict orientation (using perhaps a median split)?

**6) More analyses.** Any secondary analyses?

We also measure propensity to watch partisan media, and we suspect it will correlate with conflict orientation but conflict orientation is our expected moderator. We also will measure perceptions of civility and perceptions of norm violations as manipulation checks on the treatment and conflict orientation measure.

**7) Sample Size.** How many observations will be collected or what will determine sample size? No need to justify decision, but be precise about exactly how the number will be determined.

Because our core hypotheses are all sub-group effects (looking at conflict seeking/avoidant individuals), we ran power testing to determine our sample size. We anticipate an N of 5000 but will exclude pure Independents from the analyses as past work does on partisan media (e.g. Druckman et al. forthcoming)

**8) Other.** Anything else you would like to pre-register? (e.g., data exclusions, variables collected for exploratory purposes, unusual analyses planned?)

No.

**9) Name.** Give a title for this AsPredicted pre-registration  
Suggestion: use the name of the project, followed by study description.

How Incivility On Partisan Media (De-) Polarizes the Electorate

## 5. Regression Analyses

In the body of the paper, we presented our main set of results graphically (see Figures 1 and 2). Below in Tables A3-A6, we present the regression results that underlie those graphs. As in the body of the paper, all dependent variables have been rescaled to the [0,1] interval.

Tables A3 and A4 show the baseline effects of incivility on our outcome measures, for both other-party (A3) and same-party (A4) sources; these are the regressions that underlie Figure 1 in the paper. Tables A5 and A6 show the interactive effects of conflict avoidance; these underlie Figure 2 in the paper. Tables A7 and A8 replicate Tables A5 and A6, but using the continuous measure of conflict seeking (rather than the dichotomous measure we use in Figure 2 and tables A5 and A6).

|                   | (1)<br>Same-Party<br>Likes | (2)<br>Same-Party<br>FT | (3)<br>Same-Party<br>Trust | (4)<br>Other-Party<br>Likes | (5)<br>Other-Party<br>FT | (6)<br>Other-Party<br>Trust | (7)<br>Party<br>Positions |
|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Uncivil Treatment | 0.06***<br>(0.01)          | 0.03***<br>(0.01)       | 0.04***<br>(0.01)          | -0.03***<br>(0.01)          | -0.05***<br>(0.01)       | -0.04***<br>(0.01)          | 0.04***<br>(0.01)         |
| Constant          | 0.52***<br>(0.01)          | 0.75***<br>(0.01)       | 0.60***<br>(0.01)          | 0.20***<br>(0.01)           | 0.28***<br>(0.01)        | 0.23***<br>(0.01)           | 0.63***<br>(0.01)         |
| Observations      | 1,980                      | 1,964                   | 1,984                      | 1,982                       | 1,952                    | 1,984                       | 1,984                     |
| R-squared         | 0.01                       | 0.00                    | 0.01                       | 0.01                        | 0.01                     | 0.01                        | 0.01                      |

**Table A3: Effects of Incivility, Other-Party Source**

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. Statistical significance is denoted by: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests.

|                   | (1)<br>Same-Party<br>Likes | (2)<br>Same-Party<br>FT | (3)<br>Same-Party<br>Trust | (4)<br>Other-Party<br>Likes | (5)<br>Other-Party<br>FT | (6)<br>Other-Party<br>Trust | (7)<br>Party<br>Positions |
|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Uncivil Treatment | -0.06***<br>(0.01)         | -0.03***<br>(0.01)      | -0.04***<br>(0.01)         | 0.04***<br>(0.01)           | 0.04***<br>(0.01)        | 0.02**<br>(0.01)            | -0.05***<br>(0.01)        |
| Constant          | 0.56***<br>(0.01)          | 0.78***<br>(0.01)       | 0.62***<br>(0.01)          | 0.16***<br>(0.01)           | 0.23***<br>(0.01)        | 0.19***<br>(0.01)           | 0.73***<br>(0.01)         |
| Observations      | 2,023                      | 2,009                   | 2,026                      | 2,021                       | 2,001                    | 2,027                       | 2,028                     |
| R-squared         | 0.01                       | 0.01                    | 0.01                       | 0.01                        | 0.01                     | 0.00                        | 0.01                      |

**Table A4: Effects of Incivility, Same-Party Source**

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. Statistical significance is denoted by: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests.

|                              | (1)<br>Same-Party<br>Likes | (2)<br>Same-Party<br>FT | (3)<br>Same-Party<br>Trust | (4)<br>Other-Party<br>Likes | (5)<br>Other-Party<br>FT | (6)<br>Other-Party<br>Trust | (7)<br>Party<br>Positions |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Uncivil Treatment            | 0.04**<br>(0.02)           | 0.02*<br>(0.01)         | 0.03***<br>(0.01)          | -0.03***<br>(0.01)          | -0.05***<br>(0.01)       | -0.04***<br>(0.01)          | 0.03**<br>(0.01)          |
| Conflict Avoidant            | -0.05**<br>(0.02)          | -0.03**<br>(0.01)       | -0.01<br>(0.02)            | -0.02<br>(0.01)             | -0.02<br>(0.02)          | 0.00<br>(0.02)              | -0.06***<br>(0.02)        |
| Uncivil*Conflict<br>Avoidant | 0.08**<br>(0.03)           | 0.03<br>(0.02)          | 0.03<br>(0.02)             | -0.01<br>(0.02)             | -0.01<br>(0.03)          | -0.01<br>(0.02)             | 0.06**<br>(0.03)          |
| Constant                     | 0.53***<br>(0.01)          | 0.76***<br>(0.01)       | 0.60***<br>(0.01)          | 0.20***<br>(0.01)           | 0.29***<br>(0.01)        | 0.23***<br>(0.01)           | 0.65***<br>(0.01)         |
| Observations                 | 1,980                      | 1,964                   | 1,984                      | 1,982                       | 1,952                    | 1,984                       | 1,984                     |
| R-squared                    | 0.01                       | 0.01                    | 0.01                       | 0.01                        | 0.01                     | 0.01                        | 0.01                      |

**Table A5: Effects of Incivility & Conflict Avoidance, Other-Party Source**

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. Conflict avoidant are the respondents who score in the bottom 25% of our conflict seeking scale (i.e., the most conflict avoidant individuals). Statistical significance is denoted by: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests.

|                              | (1)<br>Same-Party<br>Likes | (2)<br>Same-Party<br>FT | (3)<br>Same-Party<br>Trust | (4)<br>Other-Party<br>Likes | (5)<br>Other-Party<br>FT | (6)<br>Other-Party<br>Trust | (7)<br>Party<br>Positions |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Uncivil Treatment            | -0.03**<br>(0.02)          | -0.02**<br>(0.01)       | -0.03***<br>(0.01)         | 0.04***<br>(0.01)           | 0.03**<br>(0.01)         | 0.02<br>(0.01)              | -0.04***<br>(0.01)        |
| Conflict Avoidant            | 0.07***<br>(0.02)          | 0.04**<br>(0.02)        | 0.05***<br>(0.02)          | -0.06***<br>(0.01)          | -0.04**<br>(0.02)        | -0.04***<br>(0.02)          | 0.01<br>(0.02)            |
| Uncivil*Conflict<br>Avoidant | -0.10***<br>(0.03)         | -0.05**<br>(0.02)       | -0.03<br>(0.03)            | 0.02<br>(0.02)              | 0.04*<br>(0.03)          | 0.03<br>(0.02)              | -0.04<br>(0.03)           |
| Constant                     | 0.54***<br>(0.01)          | 0.77***<br>(0.01)       | 0.61***<br>(0.01)          | 0.17***<br>(0.01)           | 0.24***<br>(0.01)        | 0.20***<br>(0.01)           | 0.72***<br>(0.01)         |
| Observations                 | 2,023                      | 2,009                   | 2,026                      | 2,021                       | 2,001                    | 2,027                       | 2,028                     |
| R-squared                    | 0.01                       | 0.01                    | 0.01                       | 0.02                        | 0.01                     | 0.01                        | 0.01                      |

**Table A6: Effects of Incivility & Conflict Avoidance, Same-Party Source**

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. Conflict avoidant are the respondents who score in the bottom 25% of our conflict seeking scale (i.e., the most conflict avoidant individuals). Statistical significance is denoted by: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests.

|                             | (1)<br>Same-Party<br>Likes | (2)<br>Same-Party<br>FT | (3)<br>Same-Party<br>Trust | (4)<br>Other-Party<br>Likes | (5)<br>Other-Party<br>FT | (6)<br>Other-Party<br>Trust | (7)<br>Party<br>Positions |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Uncivil Treatment           | 0.20***<br>(0.05)          | 0.07**<br>(0.03)        | 0.09**<br>(0.04)           | -0.03<br>(0.03)             | -0.10***<br>(0.04)       | -0.08**<br>(0.03)           | 0.10***<br>(0.04)         |
| Conflict Seeking            | 0.04***<br>(0.01)          | 0.01<br>(0.01)          | 0.00<br>(0.01)             | 0.02***<br>(0.01)           | 0.00<br>(0.01)           | -0.01<br>(0.01)             | 0.04***<br>(0.01)         |
| Uncivil*Conflict<br>Seeking | -0.05***<br>(0.02)         | -0.02<br>(0.01)         | -0.02<br>(0.01)            | -0.00<br>(0.01)             | 0.02<br>(0.01)           | 0.01<br>(0.01)              | -0.02<br>(0.01)           |
| Constant                    | 0.41***<br>(0.03)          | 0.72***<br>(0.02)       | 0.59***<br>(0.03)          | 0.13***<br>(0.02)           | 0.28***<br>(0.03)        | 0.25***<br>(0.02)           | 0.53***<br>(0.03)         |
| Observations                | 1,980                      | 1,964                   | 1,984                      | 1,982                       | 1,952                    | 1,984                       | 1,984                     |
| R-squared                   | 0.02                       | 0.01                    | 0.01                       | 0.02                        | 0.01                     | 0.01                        | 0.02                      |

**Table A7: Effects of Incivility & Conflict Seeking, Other-Party Source**

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. Conflict seeking is the continuous measure of conflict seeking, with higher values indicating those who prefer conflict. Statistical significance is denoted by: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests.

|                             | (1)<br>Same-Party<br>Likes | (2)<br>Same-Party<br>FT | (3)<br>Same-Party<br>Trust | (4)<br>Other-Party<br>Likes | (5)<br>Other-Party<br>FT | (6)<br>Other-Party<br>Trust | (7)<br>Party<br>Positions |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Uncivil Treatment           | 0.20***<br>(0.05)          | 0.07**<br>(0.03)        | 0.09**<br>(0.04)           | -0.03<br>(0.03)             | -0.10***<br>(0.04)       | -0.08**<br>(0.03)           | 0.10***<br>(0.04)         |
| Conflict Seeking            | 0.04***<br>(0.01)          | 0.01<br>(0.01)          | 0.00<br>(0.01)             | 0.02***<br>(0.01)           | 0.00<br>(0.01)           | -0.01<br>(0.01)             | 0.04***<br>(0.01)         |
| Uncivil*Conflict<br>Seeking | -0.05***<br>(0.02)         | -0.02<br>(0.01)         | -0.02<br>(0.01)            | -0.00<br>(0.01)             | 0.02<br>(0.01)           | 0.01<br>(0.01)              | -0.02<br>(0.01)           |
| Constant                    | 0.41***<br>(0.03)          | 0.72***<br>(0.02)       | 0.59***<br>(0.03)          | 0.13***<br>(0.02)           | 0.28***<br>(0.03)        | 0.25***<br>(0.02)           | 0.53***<br>(0.03)         |
| Observations                | 1,980                      | 1,964                   | 1,984                      | 1,982                       | 1,952                    | 1,984                       | 1,984                     |
| R-squared                   | 0.02                       | 0.01                    | 0.01                       | 0.02                        | 0.01                     | 0.01                        | 0.02                      |

**Table A8: Effects of Incivility & Conflict Seeking, Same-Party Source**

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. Conflict seeking is the continuous measure of conflict seeking, with higher values indicating those who prefer conflict. Statistical significance is denoted by: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests.

## 6. Regression Analyses by Party

Tables A9 – A20 replicate the results above, split by party. Here, we treat Independent leaning partisans as partisans (Keith et al. 1992).

Tables A9 – A12 show the effects of incivility for same-party and other-party sources separately for Democrats and Republicans. Note that here, incivility has a very similar effect for both parties.

|                   | (1)<br>Same-Party<br>Likes | (2)<br>Same-Party<br>FT | (3)<br>Same-Party<br>Trust | (4)<br>Other-Party<br>Likes | (5)<br>Other-Party<br>FT | (6)<br>Other-Party<br>Trust | (7)<br>Party<br>Positions |
|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Uncivil Treatment | -0.06***<br>(0.02)         | -0.03**<br>(0.01)       | -0.04**<br>(0.02)          | 0.02**<br>(0.01)            | 0.03**<br>(0.02)         | 0.01<br>(0.01)              | -0.04***<br>(0.01)        |
| Constant          | 0.54***<br>(0.01)          | 0.78***<br>(0.01)       | 0.62***<br>(0.01)          | 0.16***<br>(0.01)           | 0.24***<br>(0.01)        | 0.20***<br>(0.01)           | 0.67***<br>(0.01)         |
| Observations      | 1,125                      | 1,117                   | 1,126                      | 1,126                       | 1,110                    | 1,126                       | 1,127                     |
| R-squared         | 0.01                       | 0.00                    | 0.00                       | 0.00                        | 0.00                     | 0.00                        | 0.01                      |

**Table A9: Effects of Incivility for Democrats Only, Other-Party Source**

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. Statistical significance is denoted by: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests.

|                   | (1)<br>Same-Party<br>Likes | (2)<br>Same-Party<br>FT | (3)<br>Same-Party<br>Trust | (4)<br>Other-Party<br>Likes | (5)<br>Other-Party<br>FT | (6)<br>Other-Party<br>Trust | (7)<br>Party<br>Positions |
|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Uncivil Treatment | -0.06***<br>(0.02)         | -0.04***<br>(0.01)      | -0.05***<br>(0.02)         | 0.06***<br>(0.01)           | 0.05***<br>(0.02)        | 0.04**<br>(0.02)            | -0.06***<br>(0.02)        |
| Constant          | 0.58***<br>(0.01)          | 0.79***<br>(0.01)       | 0.63***<br>(0.01)          | 0.16***<br>(0.01)           | 0.21***<br>(0.01)        | 0.18***<br>(0.01)           | 0.79***<br>(0.01)         |
| Observations      | 898                        | 892                     | 900                        | 895                         | 891                      | 901                         | 901                       |
| R-squared         | 0.01                       | 0.01                    | 0.01                       | 0.02                        | 0.01                     | 0.01                        | 0.01                      |

**Table A10: Effects of Incivility for Republicans Only, Other-Party Source**

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. Statistical significance is denoted by: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests.

|                   | (1)<br>Same-Party<br>Likes | (2)<br>Same-Party<br>FT | (3)<br>Same-Party<br>Trust | (4)<br>Other-Party<br>Likes | (5)<br>Other-Party<br>FT | (6)<br>Other-Party<br>Trust | (7)<br>Party<br>Positions |
|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Uncivil Treatment | 0.07***<br>(0.02)          | 0.02*<br>(0.01)         | 0.03**<br>(0.01)           | -0.03**<br>(0.01)           | -0.04**<br>(0.02)        | -0.04***<br>(0.01)          | 0.04**<br>(0.01)          |
| Constant          | 0.51***<br>(0.01)          | 0.76***<br>(0.01)       | 0.61***<br>(0.01)          | 0.19***<br>(0.01)           | 0.29***<br>(0.01)        | 0.23***<br>(0.01)           | 0.61***<br>(0.01)         |
| Observations      | 1,114                      | 1,107                   | 1,115                      | 1,114                       | 1,102                    | 1,115                       | 1,115                     |
| R-squared         | 0.01                       | 0.00                    | 0.00                       | 0.00                        | 0.01                     | 0.01                        | 0.01                      |

**Table A11: Effects of Incivility for Democrats Only, Same-Party Source**

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. Statistical significance is denoted by: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests.

|                   | (1)<br>Same-Party<br>Likes | (2)<br>Same-Party<br>FT | (3)<br>Same-Party<br>Trust | (4)<br>Other-Party<br>Likes | (5)<br>Other-Party<br>FT | (6)<br>Other-Party<br>Trust | (7)<br>Party<br>Positions |
|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Uncivil Treatment | 0.05**<br>(0.02)           | 0.03**<br>(0.01)        | 0.06***<br>(0.02)          | -0.05***<br>(0.01)          | -0.06***<br>(0.02)       | -0.05***<br>(0.02)          | 0.06***<br>(0.02)         |
| Constant          | 0.53***<br>(0.02)          | 0.75***<br>(0.01)       | 0.59***<br>(0.01)          | 0.20***<br>(0.01)           | 0.28***<br>(0.01)        | 0.23***<br>(0.01)           | 0.67***<br>(0.01)         |
| Observations      | 866                        | 857                     | 869                        | 868                         | 850                      | 869                         | 869                       |
| R-squared         | 0.01                       | 0.01                    | 0.01                       | 0.01                        | 0.01                     | 0.01                        | 0.01                      |

**Table A12: Effects of Incivility for Republicans Only, Same-Party Source**

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. Statistical significance is denoted by: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests.



Tables A13 – A20 show the moderating effects of conflict avoidance, again estimated separately by party. Here, we see that the moderating effect of incivility is stronger for Democrats than Republicans.

|                              | (1)<br>Same-Party<br>Likes | (2)<br>Same-Party<br>FT | (3)<br>Same-Party<br>Trust | (4)<br>Other-Party<br>Likes | (5)<br>Other-Party<br>FT | (6)<br>Other-Party<br>Trust | (7)<br>Party<br>Positions |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Uncivil Treatment            | 0.05**<br>(0.02)           | 0.01<br>(0.01)          | 0.01<br>(0.02)             | -0.02<br>(0.01)             | -0.04**<br>(0.02)        | -0.04**<br>(0.02)           | 0.02<br>(0.02)            |
| Conflict Avoidant            | -0.05<br>(0.03)            | -0.04*<br>(0.02)        | 0.00<br>(0.02)             | -0.03<br>(0.02)             | -0.03<br>(0.03)          | -0.02<br>(0.02)             | -0.08***<br>(0.02)        |
| Uncivil*Conflict<br>Avoidant | 0.09*<br>(0.05)            | 0.05*<br>(0.03)         | 0.07**<br>(0.03)           | -0.02<br>(0.03)             | 0.00<br>(0.04)           | 0.00<br>(0.03)              | 0.08**<br>(0.03)          |
| Constant                     | 0.52***<br>(0.02)          | 0.77***<br>(0.01)       | 0.60***<br>(0.01)          | 0.20***<br>(0.01)           | 0.30***<br>(0.01)        | 0.24***<br>(0.01)           | 0.63***<br>(0.01)         |
| Observations                 | 1,114                      | 1,107                   | 1,115                      | 1,114                       | 1,102                    | 1,115                       | 1,115                     |
| R-squared                    | 0.01                       | 0.01                    | 0.01                       | 0.01                        | 0.01                     | 0.01                        | 0.02                      |

**Table A13: Effects of Incivility & Conflict Avoidance for Democrats, Other-Party Source**

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. Conflict avoidant are the respondents who score in the bottom 25% of our conflict seeking scale (i.e., the most conflict avoidant individuals). Statistical significance is denoted by: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests.

|                              | (1)<br>Same-Party<br>Likes | (2)<br>Same-Party<br>FT | (3)<br>Same-Party<br>Trust | (4)<br>Other-Party<br>Likes | (5)<br>Other-Party<br>FT | (6)<br>Other-Party<br>Trust | (7)<br>Party<br>Positions |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Uncivil Treatment            | 0.03<br>(0.03)             | 0.03<br>(0.02)          | 0.06***<br>(0.02)          | -0.04***<br>(0.02)          | -0.05***<br>(0.02)       | -0.05**<br>(0.02)           | 0.04**<br>(0.02)          |
| Conflict Avoidant            | -0.05<br>(0.03)            | -0.02<br>(0.02)         | -0.02<br>(0.03)            | -0.01<br>(0.02)             | -0.01<br>(0.03)          | 0.03<br>(0.02)              | -0.05*<br>(0.03)          |
| Uncivil*Conflict<br>Avoidant | 0.07<br>(0.05)             | 0.01<br>(0.03)          | -0.02<br>(0.04)            | -0.01<br>(0.03)             | -0.02<br>(0.04)          | -0.01<br>(0.03)             | 0.03<br>(0.04)            |
| Constant                     | 0.55***<br>(0.02)          | 0.76***<br>(0.01)       | 0.59***<br>(0.02)          | 0.20***<br>(0.01)           | 0.28***<br>(0.01)        | 0.22***<br>(0.01)           | 0.68***<br>(0.01)         |
| Observations                 | 866                        | 857                     | 869                        | 868                         | 850                      | 869                         | 869                       |
| R-squared                    | 0.01                       | 0.01                    | 0.02                       | 0.01                        | 0.02                     | 0.02                        | 0.01                      |

**Table A14: Effects of Incivility & Conflict Avoidance for Republicans, Other-Party Source**

Note: Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. Conflict avoidant are the respondents who score in the bottom 25% of our conflict seeking scale (i.e., the most conflict avoidant individuals). Statistical significance is denoted by: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests.

|                              | (1)<br>Same-Party<br>Likes | (2)<br>Same-Party<br>FT | (3)<br>Same-Party<br>Trust | (4)<br>Other-Party<br>Likes | (5)<br>Other-Party<br>FT | (6)<br>Other-Party<br>Trust | (7)<br>Party<br>Positions |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Uncivil Treatment            | -0.02<br>(0.02)            | -0.02<br>(0.01)         | -0.03*<br>(0.02)           | 0.02<br>(0.01)              | 0.01<br>(0.02)           | 0.00<br>(0.02)              | -0.02<br>(0.02)           |
| Conflict Avoidant            | 0.09***<br>(0.03)          | 0.04*<br>(0.02)         | 0.06***<br>(0.02)          | -0.06***<br>(0.02)          | -0.07***<br>(0.03)       | -0.04*<br>(0.02)            | -0.00<br>(0.02)           |
| Uncivil*Conflict<br>Avoidant | -0.13***<br>(0.04)         | -0.05*<br>(0.03)        | -0.03<br>(0.03)            | 0.02<br>(0.03)              | 0.08**<br>(0.03)         | 0.04<br>(0.03)              | -0.05<br>(0.03)           |
| Constant                     | 0.52***<br>(0.02)          | 0.77***<br>(0.01)       | 0.61***<br>(0.01)          | 0.17***<br>(0.01)           | 0.26***<br>(0.01)        | 0.21***<br>(0.01)           | 0.68***<br>(0.01)         |
| Observations                 | 1,125                      | 1,117                   | 1,126                      | 1,126                       | 1,110                    | 1,126                       | 1,127                     |
| R-squared                    | 0.02                       | 0.01                    | 0.01                       | 0.02                        | 0.01                     | 0.00                        | 0.01                      |

**Table A15: Effects of Incivility & Conflict Avoidance for Democrats, Same-Party Source**

Note: Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. Conflict avoidant are the respondents who score in the bottom 25% of our conflict seeking scale (i.e., the most conflict avoidant individuals). Statistical significance is denoted by: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests.

|                              | (1)<br>Same-Party<br>Likes | (2)<br>Same-Party<br>FT | (3)<br>Same-Party<br>Trust | (4)<br>Other-Party<br>Likes | (5)<br>Other-Party<br>FT | (6)<br>Other-Party<br>Trust | (7)<br>Party<br>Positions |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Uncivil Treatment            | -0.05**<br>(0.02)          | -0.03*<br>(0.02)        | -0.04**<br>(0.02)          | 0.05***<br>(0.02)           | 0.05**<br>(0.02)         | 0.03*<br>(0.02)             | -0.05***<br>(0.02)        |
| Conflict Avoidant            | 0.05<br>(0.03)             | 0.04<br>(0.02)          | 0.03<br>(0.03)             | -0.06**<br>(0.02)           | -0.01<br>(0.03)          | -0.05**<br>(0.02)           | 0.03<br>(0.03)            |
| Uncivil*Conflict<br>Avoidant | -0.06<br>(0.05)            | -0.04<br>(0.03)         | -0.03<br>(0.04)            | 0.03<br>(0.03)              | -0.01<br>(0.04)          | 0.01<br>(0.03)              | -0.02<br>(0.04)           |
| Constant                     | 0.57***<br>(0.02)          | 0.78***<br>(0.01)       | 0.62***<br>(0.01)          | 0.17***<br>(0.01)           | 0.21***<br>(0.01)        | 0.19***<br>(0.01)           | 0.78***<br>(0.01)         |
| Observations                 | 898                        | 892                     | 900                        | 895                         | 891                      | 901                         | 901                       |
| R-squared                    | 0.01                       | 0.01                    | 0.01                       | 0.03                        | 0.01                     | 0.01                        | 0.02                      |

**Table A16: Effects of Incivility & Conflict Avoidance for Republicans, Same-Party Source**

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. Conflict avoidant are the respondents who score in the bottom 25% of our conflict seeking scale (i.e., the most conflict avoidant individuals). Statistical significance is denoted by: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests.

|                             | (1)<br>Same-Party<br>Likes | (2)<br>Same-Party<br>FT | (3)<br>Same-Party<br>Trust | (4)<br>Other-Party<br>Likes | (5)<br>Other-Party<br>FT | (6)<br>Other-Party<br>Trust | (7)<br>Party<br>Positions |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Uncivil Treatment           | 0.25***<br>(0.07)          | 0.12***<br>(0.04)       | 0.17***<br>(0.05)          | -0.08*<br>(0.04)            | -0.11**<br>(0.05)        | -0.12***<br>(0.05)          | 0.14***<br>(0.05)         |
| Conflict Seeking            | 0.05***<br>(0.02)          | 0.02*<br>(0.01)         | 0.00<br>(0.01)             | 0.02*<br>(0.01)             | 0.00<br>(0.01)           | -0.01<br>(0.01)             | 0.05***<br>(0.01)         |
| Uncivil*Conflict<br>Seeking | -0.07***<br>(0.02)         | -0.04**<br>(0.01)       | -0.05***<br>(0.02)         | 0.02<br>(0.01)              | 0.03<br>(0.02)           | 0.03**<br>(0.02)            | -0.04**<br>(0.02)         |
| Constant                    | 0.38***<br>(0.05)          | 0.70***<br>(0.03)       | 0.60***<br>(0.03)          | 0.14***<br>(0.03)           | 0.28***<br>(0.04)        | 0.25***<br>(0.03)           | 0.47***<br>(0.03)         |
| Observations                | 1,114                      | 1,107                   | 1,115                      | 1,114                       | 1,102                    | 1,115                       | 1,115                     |
| R-squared                   | 0.02                       | 0.01                    | 0.02                       | 0.02                        | 0.01                     | 0.01                        | 0.02                      |

**Table A17: Effects of Incivility & Conflict Seeking for Democrats, Other-Party Source**

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. Conflict seeking is the continuous measure of conflict seeking, with higher values indicating those who prefer conflict. Statistical significance is denoted by: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests.

|                             | (1)<br>Same-Party<br>Likes | (2)<br>Same-Party<br>FT | (3)<br>Same-Party<br>Trust | (4)<br>Other-Party<br>Likes | (5)<br>Other-Party<br>FT | (6)<br>Other-Party<br>Trust | (7)<br>Party<br>Positions |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Uncivil Treatment           | 0.15**<br>(0.07)           | 0.01<br>(0.05)          | 0.01<br>(0.06)             | 0.02<br>(0.04)              | -0.09*<br>(0.05)         | -0.03<br>(0.05)             | 0.06<br>(0.06)            |
| Conflict Seeking            | 0.04**<br>(0.02)           | 0.00<br>(0.01)          | 0.00<br>(0.01)             | 0.03***<br>(0.01)           | -0.00<br>(0.01)          | -0.01<br>(0.01)             | 0.02*<br>(0.01)           |
| Uncivil*Conflict<br>Seeking | -0.04<br>(0.02)            | 0.01<br>(0.02)          | 0.02<br>(0.02)             | -0.02<br>(0.01)             | 0.01<br>(0.02)           | -0.01<br>(0.02)             | -0.00<br>(0.02)           |
| Constant                    | 0.43***<br>(0.05)          | 0.74***<br>(0.03)       | 0.58***<br>(0.04)          | 0.13***<br>(0.03)           | 0.28***<br>(0.04)        | 0.25***<br>(0.03)           | 0.60***<br>(0.04)         |
| Observations                | 866                        | 857                     | 869                        | 868                         | 850                      | 869                         | 869                       |
| R-squared                   | 0.01                       | 0.01                    | 0.02                       | 0.02                        | 0.01                     | 0.01                        | 0.02                      |

**Table A18: Effects of Incivility & Conflict Seeking for Republicans, Other-Party Source**

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. Conflict seeking is the continuous measure of conflict seeking, with higher values indicating those who prefer conflict. Statistical significance is denoted by: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests.

|                             | (1)<br>Same-Party<br>Likes | (2)<br>Same-Party<br>FT | (3)<br>Same-Party<br>Trust | (4)<br>Other-Party<br>Likes | (5)<br>Other-Party<br>FT | (6)<br>Other-Party<br>Trust | (7)<br>Party<br>Positions |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Uncivil Treatment           | 0.25***<br>(0.07)          | 0.12***<br>(0.04)       | 0.17***<br>(0.05)          | -0.08*<br>(0.04)            | -0.11**<br>(0.05)        | -0.12***<br>(0.05)          | 0.14***<br>(0.05)         |
| Conflict Seeking            | 0.05***<br>(0.02)          | 0.02*<br>(0.01)         | 0.00<br>(0.01)             | 0.02*<br>(0.01)             | 0.00<br>(0.01)           | -0.01<br>(0.01)             | 0.05***<br>(0.01)         |
| Uncivil*Conflict<br>Seeking | -0.07***<br>(0.02)         | -0.04**<br>(0.01)       | -0.05***<br>(0.02)         | 0.02<br>(0.01)              | 0.03<br>(0.02)           | 0.03**<br>(0.02)            | -0.04**<br>(0.02)         |
| Constant                    | 0.38***<br>(0.05)          | 0.70***<br>(0.03)       | 0.60***<br>(0.03)          | 0.14***<br>(0.03)           | 0.28***<br>(0.04)        | 0.25***<br>(0.03)           | 0.47***<br>(0.03)         |
| Observations                | 1,114                      | 1,107                   | 1,115                      | 1,114                       | 1,102                    | 1,115                       | 1,115                     |
| R-squared                   | 0.02                       | 0.01                    | 0.02                       | 0.02                        | 0.01                     | 0.01                        | 0.02                      |

**Table A19: Effects of Incivility & Conflict Seeking for Democrats, Same-Party Source**

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. Conflict seeking is the continuous measure of conflict seeking, with higher values indicating those who prefer conflict. Statistical significance is denoted by: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests.

|                             | (1)<br>Same-Party<br>Likes | (2)<br>Same-Party<br>FT | (3)<br>Same-Party<br>Trust | (4)<br>Other-Party<br>Likes | (5)<br>Other-Party<br>FT | (6)<br>Other-Party<br>Trust | (7)<br>Party<br>Positions |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Uncivil Treatment           | 0.15**<br>(0.07)           | 0.01<br>(0.05)          | 0.01<br>(0.06)             | 0.02<br>(0.04)              | -0.09*<br>(0.05)         | -0.03<br>(0.05)             | 0.06<br>(0.06)            |
| Conflict Seeking            | 0.04**<br>(0.02)           | 0.00<br>(0.01)          | 0.00<br>(0.01)             | 0.03***<br>(0.01)           | -0.00<br>(0.01)          | -0.01<br>(0.01)             | 0.02*<br>(0.01)           |
| Uncivil*Conflict<br>Seeking | -0.04<br>(0.02)            | 0.01<br>(0.02)          | 0.02<br>(0.02)             | -0.02<br>(0.01)             | 0.01<br>(0.02)           | -0.01<br>(0.02)             | -0.00<br>(0.02)           |
| Constant                    | 0.43***<br>(0.05)          | 0.74***<br>(0.03)       | 0.58***<br>(0.04)          | 0.13***<br>(0.03)           | 0.28***<br>(0.04)        | 0.25***<br>(0.03)           | 0.60***<br>(0.04)         |
| Observations                | 866                        | 857                     | 869                        | 868                         | 850                      | 869                         | 869                       |
| R-squared                   | 0.01                       | 0.01                    | 0.02                       | 0.02                        | 0.01                     | 0.01                        | 0.02                      |

**Table A20: Effects of Incivility & Conflict Seeking for Republicans, Same-Party Source**

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. Conflict seeking is the continuous measure of conflict seeking, with higher values indicating those who prefer conflict. Statistical significance is denoted by: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests.

## 7. Regressions Analyses Pure Independents

In the body of the paper, we analyzed partisans (including partisan leaners) given our focus on partisan motivated reasoning as one of the dynamics underlying our process. But we can analyze pure Independents as well. Here, there is no partisan motivated reasoning, but given the nature of our argument, we would expect that the uncivil MSNBC treatment would decrease positive feelings toward Democrats (relative to the civil MSNBC treatment), and likewise the uncivil Fox treatment would decrease positive feelings for Republicans.

Tables A21 and A22 test these expectations for pure Independents. When they are assigned to the uncivil MSNBC treatment, they become more negative toward Democrats (relative to the civil MSNBC treatment), and when assigned the uncivil Fox treatment, they become more negative toward Republicans (again, relative to the civil Fox treatment).

|                   | (1)<br>Democrat<br>Likes | (2)<br>Democrat FT  | (3)<br>Democrat<br>Trust | (4)<br>Republican<br>Likes | (5)<br>Republican<br>FT | (6)<br>Republican<br>Trust |
|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Uncivil Treatment | -0.18<br>(0.17)          | -11.54***<br>(2.39) | -0.30***<br>(0.09)       | 0.55***<br>(0.17)          | -1.97<br>(2.43)         | -0.11<br>(0.09)            |
| Constant          | 1.70***<br>(0.12)        | 49.25***<br>(1.71)  | 2.38***<br>(0.06)        | 1.38***<br>(0.12)          | 43.97***<br>(1.74)      | 2.22***<br>(0.06)          |
| Observations      | 510                      | 495                 | 510                      | 510                        | 493                     | 510                        |
| R-squared         | 0.00                     | 0.05                | 0.02                     | 0.02                       | 0.00                    | 0.00                       |

**Table A21: Effects of Incivility on Independents, MSNBC as the Source**

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. Statistical significance is denoted by: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests.

|                   | (1)<br>Democrat<br>Likes | (2)<br>Democrat<br>FT | (3)<br>Democrat<br>Trust | (4)<br>Republican<br>Likes | (5)<br>Republican<br>FT | (6)<br>Republican<br>Trust |
|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Uncivil Treatment | 0.26<br>(0.17)           | -0.76<br>(2.48)       | -0.00<br>(0.08)          | -0.33*<br>(0.18)           | -9.12***<br>(2.52)      | -0.30***<br>(0.09)         |
| Constant          | 1.69***<br>(0.12)        | 41.71***<br>(1.78)    | 2.20***<br>(0.06)        | 1.97***<br>(0.13)          | 45.77***<br>(1.81)      | 2.40***<br>(0.06)          |
| Observations      | 505                      | 486                   | 507                      | 506                        | 485                     | 507                        |
| R-squared         | 0.00                     | 0.00                  | 0.00                     | 0.01                       | 0.03                    | 0.02                       |

**Table A22: Effects of Incivility on Independents, Fox News as the Source**

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. Statistical significance is denoted by: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests.

Tables A23 and A24 show the moderating effects of conflict avoidance for pure Independents. Here the evidence of interactive effects is weaker, though this may well be due to small sample size considerations.

|                           | (1)<br>Democrat<br>Likes | (2)<br>Democrat FT  | (3)<br>Democrat<br>Trust | (4)<br>Republican<br>Likes | (5)<br>Republican<br>FT | (6)<br>Republican<br>Trust |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Uncivil Treatment         | -0.27<br>(0.20)          | -11.58***<br>(2.75) | -0.17*<br>(0.10)         | 0.45**<br>(0.20)           | -1.12<br>(2.79)         | -0.05<br>(0.10)            |
| Conflict Avoidant         | -0.46<br>(0.28)          | -7.99**<br>(3.96)   | 0.33**<br>(0.15)         | -0.46<br>(0.28)            | -5.48<br>(4.04)         | 0.09<br>(0.14)             |
| Uncivil*Conflict Avoidant | 0.35<br>(0.39)           | 0.63<br>(5.48)      | -0.50**<br>(0.20)        | 0.40<br>(0.39)             | -3.01<br>(5.59)         | -0.24<br>(0.20)            |
| Constant                  | 1.81***<br>(0.14)        | 51.21***<br>(1.96)  | 2.30***<br>(0.07)        | 1.49***<br>(0.14)          | 45.30***<br>(1.99)      | 2.20***<br>(0.07)          |
| Observations              | 510                      | 495                 | 510                      | 510                        | 493                     | 510                        |
| R-squared                 | 0.01                     | 0.06                | 0.03                     | 0.03                       | 0.01                    | 0.01                       |

**Table A23: Effects of Incivility & Conflict Avoidance for pure Independents, MSNBC as the Source**

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. Conflict avoidant are the respondents who score in the bottom 25% of our conflict seeking scale (i.e., the most conflict avoidant individuals). Statistical significance is denoted by: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests.

|                           | (1)<br>Democrat<br>Likes | (2)<br>Democrat<br>FT | (3)<br>Democrat<br>Trust | (4)<br>Republican<br>Likes | (5)<br>Republican<br>FT | (6)<br>Republican<br>Trust |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Uncivil Treatment         | 0.32<br>(0.20)           | -0.00<br>(2.87)       | -0.04<br>(0.10)          | -0.31<br>(0.21)            | -10.34***<br>(2.92)     | -0.30***<br>(0.10)         |
| Conflict Avoidant         | 0.18<br>(0.28)           | -1.25<br>(4.02)       | -0.02<br>(0.14)          | -0.19<br>(0.29)            | -8.33**<br>(4.08)       | -0.07<br>(0.14)            |
| Uncivil*Conflict Avoidant | -0.23<br>(0.39)          | -3.25<br>(5.68)       | 0.15<br>(0.19)           | -0.10<br>(0.41)            | 4.21<br>(5.75)          | -0.02<br>(0.20)            |
| Constant                  | 1.65***<br>(0.14)        | 42.05***<br>(2.09)    | 2.21***<br>(0.07)        | 2.02***<br>(0.15)          | 48.01***<br>(2.12)      | 2.42***<br>(0.07)          |
| Observations              | 505                      | 486                   | 507                      | 506                        | 485                     | 507                        |
| R-squared                 | 0.01                     | 0.00                  | 0.00                     | 0.01                       | 0.04                    | 0.02                       |

**Table A24: Effects of Incivility & Conflict Avoidance for pure Independents, Fox News as the Source**

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses. Conflict avoidant are the respondents who score in the bottom 25% of our conflict seeking scale (i.e., the most conflict avoidant individuals). Statistical significance is denoted by: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$  for two-tailed tests.

## 8. Survey and Stimuli

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

strong                      weak                      lean                      Independent                      lean                      weak                      strong  
*Democrat*                      *Democrat*                      *Democrat*                      *Republican*                      *Republican*                      *Republican*

Using the scale provided, please indicate to what extent do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements:

|   | <u>Strongly Agree</u> | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Strongly Disagree</u> |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| <u>I hate arguments</u>                           |                       |              |                                   |                 |                          |
| <u>I find conflicts exciting</u>                  |                       |              |                                   |                 |                          |
| <u>I enjoy challenging the opinions of others</u> |                       |              |                                   |                 |                          |
| <u>Arguments don't bother me</u>                  |                       |              |                                   |                 |                          |
| <u>I feel upset after an argument</u>             |                       |              |                                   |                 |                          |

Some people watch particular television news programs or channels regularly, while others rarely or never watch. We are going to ask you about a few programs. For each, please select yes if you watch it at least once per month.

Do you watch [PROGRAM NAME] at least once per month?

Yes                      No

[Respondents are asked about: “your local nightly news, on any network,” “NBC Nightly News,” “ABC World News Tonight,” “The CBS Evening News,” “MSNBC,” “Fox News,” “CNN”, and “C-SPAN.” ]

What is the highest level of education you have completed?



Less than  
High school

High  
school graduate

Some  
college

4-yr college  
degree

Advanced  
degree

Which of the following do you consider to be your primary racial or ethnic group?

White  
.....

African American

Asian American

Hispanic

Native American/  
Pacific Islander

other

What is your age?

under 18

18-24

25-34

35-50

51-65

over 65

Are you male or female?

Male

Female

**Many people don't know the answers to these questions, so if there are any you don't know, just check "don't know."**

How much of a vote is required for the U.S. Senate and House to override a Presidential veto?

Cannot  
override

1/3

1/2

2/3

3/4

Don't know

Do you know what country is the world's largest exporter of crude oil?

United States

Russia

Iran

Saudi Arabia

Don't know

Which of the following is NOT a renewable energy source?

Hydroelectricity

Biomass

Coal

Solar

Hydrogen

Don't know

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

Democrats

Republicans

Tie

Don't know

Whose responsibility is it to determine if a law is constitutional?

President

Congress

Supreme Court

Don't know

Who is the current U.S. Vice President?

                      
*Mike Pence*

                      
*Joe Biden*

                      
*Paul Ryan*

                      
*Mitch McConnell*

                      
*Don't know*

*True or False:* There currently is a ban on drilling for oil and gas off the Atlantic Coast and in the eastern Gulf of Mexico.

                      
*True*

                      
*False*

                      
*Don't know*

Would you say that one of the major parties is more conservative than the other at the national level? If so, which party is more conservative?

                      
*Democrats*

                      
*Republicans*

                      
*Neither*

                      
*Don't know*

*True or False:* Most of the oil imported by the United States comes from the Middle East.

                      
*True*

                      
*False*

                      
*Don't know*

**RANDOMLY ASSIGN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOUR**

Please carefully read the following excerpt from a news segment. It is about the construction of oil pipelines in the United States. The segment comes from *All In with Chris Hayes* that appears on **MSNBC**. Once you have read the segment, we will ask you a few questions about it.



Idiotic Republican lawmakers are trying to resurrect construction of the disastrous Keystone XL and Dakota Access Pipelines. These pipelines would carry thousands of gallons of oil from Canada into the United States. The spills that will result due to sloppy Republican regulation will threaten life as we know it. When things fall apart, these parasitic Republicans will be to blame.

Republicans are weak and despicable, caving into special interests that only care about short-term jobs. **These parasitic Republican lawmakers want a massive environmental bomb.** Democrats **MUST** stand firm against these reckless proposals and use **any means necessary** to obstruct such proposals in Congress and the Courts. Bottom-feeding Republicans—and their fossil fuel masters—cannot be allowed to destroy the planet for their greed.

Please carefully read the following excerpt from a news segment. It is about the construction of oil pipelines in the United States. The segment comes from *All In with Chris Hayes* that appears on **MSNBC**. Once you have read the segment, we will ask you a few questions about it.



Republican lawmakers are trying to resurrect construction of the ill-conceived Keystone XL and Dakota Access Pipelines. These pipelines would carry thousands of gallons of oil from Canada into the United States. Republicans are too pro-business and encourage lax regulation. This in turn will make spills from these pipelines more likely, and the effects will damage the environment.

Republicans may think re-starting these projects will create jobs, but they miss the point and are caving in to special interests who only care about short term-jobs. Even if Republicans think they are bridging the interests of workers and others, the truth is they are creating a massive environmental risk. Democrats must stand firm against these misguided proposals and use any means to oppose such proposals in Congress and the Courts. This is one case where we can respect them but we must stop the Republican agenda.

Please carefully read the following excerpt from a news segment. It is about the construction of oil pipelines in the United States. The segment comes from *Tucker Carlson Tonight* that appears on **Fox News**. Once you have read the segment, we will ask you a few questions about it.



Idiotic Democrats. Why do I say that? Well, Republican lawmakers are working on creating good-paying jobs by restarting construction of the Keystone XL and Dakota Access Pipelines. These pipelines would carry thousands of gallons of oil from Canada into the United States, employing Americans and lowering gas prices. And what did the morons in the Democratic Party do? They cry about it – **these parasitic Democrats want to destroy the American way of life.**

Democrats whine about oil spills that will never happen, and stupidly argue that we should spend billions on useless technologies. All Democrats do is obstruct in Congress, and are to blame for bureaucratic rules that stop hard-working Americans. Democrats are **weak and despicable** and are threatening the American economy. Republicans **MUST** stand and fight these bottom-feeding Democrats and make America economically secure.

Please carefully read the following excerpt from a news segment. It is about the construction of oil pipelines in the United States. The segment comes from *Tucker Carlson Tonight* that appears on **Fox News**. Once you have read the segment, we will ask you a few questions about it.



Republican lawmakers are working on creating good-paying jobs by restarting construction of the Keystone XL and Dakota Access Pipelines. These pipelines would carry thousands of gallons of oil from Canada into the United States, employing Americans and lowering gas prices. And what does the Democratic Party do? They cry about it – these irresponsible Democrats want to stymie the economy.

Democrats may think these projects will harm the environment, but they miss the point and are caving in to special interest environmental groups who care nothing about the American worker. Even if Democrats think they are bridging the interests of environmentalists and others, the truth is they are worrying about risks that do not exist and, in the process, taking away jobs from hard-working citizens. Republicans must make sure the pipelines move forward, and we stand firm against this misguided Democratic obstruction. This is one case where we can respect them, but we must stop the Democratic agenda.

To what extent was the news segment you just read civil or uncivil?

|                           |                          |                                     |                            |                             |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <u>Extremely</u><br>Civil | <u>Somewhat</u><br>Civil | <u>Neither civil</u><br>Nor uncivil | <u>Somewhat</u><br>Uncivil | <u>Extremely</u><br>Uncivil |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|

How impolite or polite was the language in the news segment you just read?

|                         |                             |  |                           |                       |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| <u>Very</u><br>Impolite | <u>Somewhat</u><br>Impolite | <u>Neither</u><br>Impolite Nor<br>Polite | <u>Somewhat</u><br>Polite | <u>Very</u><br>Polite |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------|-----------------------|

To what extent do you personally oppose or support the proposed Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines that would carry oil from Canada to the U.S.?

|                                |                                  |                                |   |                                 |                                   |                                 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <u>1</u><br>strongly<br>oppose | <u>2</u><br>moderately<br>oppose | <u>3</u><br>slightly<br>oppose | <u>4</u><br>neither oppose<br>nor support | <u>5</u><br>slightly<br>support | <u>6</u><br>moderately<br>support | <u>7</u><br>strongly<br>support |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|

To what extent do you personally oppose or support efforts to increase the production of oil in North America (Canada, the U.S., and Mexico)?

|                                |                                  |                                |   |                                 |                                   |                                 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <u>1</u><br>strongly<br>oppose | <u>2</u><br>moderately<br>oppose | <u>3</u><br>slightly<br>oppose | <u>4</u><br>neither oppose<br>nor support | <u>5</u><br>slightly<br>support | <u>6</u><br>moderately<br>support | <u>7</u><br>strongly<br>support |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|

You might have some favorable thoughts or feelings about the Democratic Party. Or you might have unfavorable thoughts or feelings about the Democratic Party. Or you might have some of each. We would like to ask you first about any favorable thoughts and feelings you might have about the Democratic Party. Then, we'll ask you some separate questions about any unfavorable thoughts and feelings you might have.<sup>8</sup>

Do you have any favorable thoughts or feelings about the Democratic Party, or do you not have any?

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <u>No Favorable</u><br>Thoughts or Feelings | <u>Yes at least one Favorable Thought or Feeling</u> |
|---|--|

**IF AT LEAST ONE, ASK (IF Said no skip the next question):**

How favorable are your favorable thoughts and feelings about the Democratic Party?

|                 |                   |             |                  |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------|------------------|
| <u>Slightly</u> | <u>Moderately</u> | <u>Very</u> | <u>Extremely</u> |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------|------------------|

<sup>8</sup> **PROGRAMMING NOTE:** For the partisan items that follow (thoughts/feelings, favorable, feeling thermometer, trust, always have the respondent's party come first, then the opposing party. So, for example, if the respondent is a Democrat, ask about Democrats first, then about Republicans. If the respondent is a pure Independent (doesn't lean toward either party), then ask about Democrats first (on the issue of oil drilling more generally, pure Independents are closer to Democrats than to Republicans).

Favorable Favorable Favorable Favorable

Do you have any unfavorable thoughts or feelings about the Democratic Party, or do you not have any?

No Unfavorable Thoughts of Feelings Yes at least one Unfavorable Thought or Feeling

**IF AT LEAST ONE, ASK (IF Said no skip the next question):**

How unfavorable are your unfavorable thoughts and feelings about the Democratic Party?

Slightly Unfavorable Moderately Unfavorable Very Unfavorable Extremely Unfavorable

You might have some favorable thoughts or feelings about the Republican Party. Or you might have unfavorable thoughts or feelings about the Republican Party. Or you might have some of each. We would like to ask you first about any about any favorable thoughts and feelings you might have about the Republican Party. Then, we'll ask you some separate questions about any unfavorable thoughts and feelings you might have.

Do you have any favorable thoughts or feelings about the Republican Party, or do you not have any?

No Favorable Thoughts or Feelings Yes at least one Favorable Thought or Feeling

**IF AT LEAST ONE, ASK (IF Said no skip the next question):**

How favorable are your favorable thoughts and feelings about the Republican Party?

Slightly Favorable Moderately Favorable Very Favorable Extremely Favorable

Do you have any unfavorable thoughts or feelings about the Republican Party, or do you not have any?

No Unfavorable Thoughts of Feelings Yes at least one Unfavorable Thought or Feeling

**IF AT LEAST ONE, ASK (IF Said no skip the next question):**

How unfavorable are your unfavorable thoughts and feelings about the Republican Party?

Slightly Unfavorable Moderately Unfavorable Very Unfavorable Extremely Unfavorable

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

Democratic Party \_\_\_\_\_  
Republican Party \_\_\_\_\_



How much of the time do you think you can trust the Democratic Party to do what is right for the country?

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Almost  
Never*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Once in a  
While*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*About Half  
the Time*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Most of the  
Time*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Almost  
Always*

How much of the time do you think you can trust Republican Party to do what is right for the country?

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Almost  
Never*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Once in a  
While*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Half  
the Time*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Most of the  
Time*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Almost  
Always*

## 9. Appendix References (that do not appear in the main text)

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