

## Signaling Incivility: The Role of Speaker, Substance, and Tone

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### **“I know it when I see it”?**

In early 2016, the *New York Times* published an article entitled “The 199 People, Places and Things Donald Trump Has Insulted on Twitter: A Complete List.”<sup>i</sup> By October 2017, the count had increased to 382. While entertaining to some, the article represents a continued focus by pundits, politicians and citizens on incivility in political discourse. In 2013, 83 percent of survey respondents stated their belief that politics have become increasingly uncivil, and they point to politicians and the media as the ones to blame.<sup>ii</sup>

These pundits, politicians and citizens wouldn’t be wrong—research demonstrates that negativity and incivility have been increasing since the 1980s, and that this trend has an impact on a range of important political behaviors.<sup>iii</sup> Americans exposed to incivility tend to exhibit greater close-mindedness, more polarized opinions and lower political trust.<sup>iv</sup> As I will show in this chapter, incivility also influences our evaluations of others, particularly when we can identify their demographic characteristics. Given incivility’s association with a range of negative political outcomes, scholars, politicians and citizens alike need to consider strategies for minimizing its effects.

One of the biggest challenges in understanding these harmful effects and in developing potential interventions that could mitigate them is articulating what incivility means. What is incivility and what components of incivility produce the range of effects mentioned above? Understanding incivility requires consideration of three elements—the message tone, the message substance, and the message sender. When people encounter

online political messages, for example, their assessment of the civility of that communication is determined by a combination of each of these three factors.

### **How it's said: Style or tone**

Many empirical tests of incivility focus on incivility as the style or tone of political discourse, rather than its content or substance. From this perspective, civility describes the manner in which political discussions are conducted, emphasizing adherence to cultural norms for polite, face-to-face conversation: “features of discussion that convey an unnecessarily disrespectful tone toward the discussion forum, its participants, or its topics.”<sup>v</sup> Incivility, from this perspective, includes language that is consistently seen as outside social norms (racial slurs, obscenity) as well as sarcasm, finger-pointing, name-calling and belittling.<sup>vi</sup> This emphasis on message style/ tone is present in the average American’s conceptualization of civility. Respondents to a 2016 survey by Allegheny College emphasized interruption (51%), shouting (65%), belittling or insulting someone (74%), and personal attacks (71%) as against the rules for civility.<sup>vii</sup> In other words, people see incivility in the tone of the message.

### **What is said: Substance or content**

Others insist that civility goes beyond a polite tone of communication, and describes instead a message’s substance and contents. In this definition, civility isn’t defined by compliance with widely shared norms about appropriate behavior, but by substantive content that demonstrates “deference to the social and democratic identity of an individual.”<sup>viii</sup> In that same survey of people’s perceptions of what constitutes incivility, over half of respondents reported that questioning someone’s patriotism (52%), comments about someone’s race or ethnicity (69%) and comments about someone’s

sexual orientation (65%) were against the rules for civility in politics.<sup>ix</sup> These responses align with three ways that a person might be labeled uncivil in their online commentary according to communication scholar Zizi Papacharissi: making threats to democracy, assigning stereotypes, and threatening others' rights.<sup>x</sup> In other words, incivility is determined by the content of the ideas within a message, and not the package carrying that message.

### **Who is saying it: Message source**

Finally, yet a third set of scholars argue that civility is about message source and issues relating to power. That is, identifying communication as civil or uncivil is inexorably tied to the nature and status of who is speaking, and to our perceptions of that individual.

For example, consider Greensboro, North Carolina in the early 1950s. As historian William Chafe explains, mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Southern progressives prided themselves on their civility: “abhorrence of personal conflict, courtesy toward new ideas, and a generosity toward those less fortunate than oneself.”<sup>xi</sup> In this environment, the emphasis on consensus and deference made it impossible for African Americans to assert their independence. It was only through “uncivil” acts—protests, sit-ins, direct challenges and conflict—that they could move towards racial justice. Incivility is a tool of marginalized groups to call attention to their concerns and of those in power to maintain the status quo.<sup>xii</sup>

Incivility is a function of an individual's place in the social and political hierarchy, but also of the individual characteristics and affiliations of both the speaker and the listener. In his June 16, 2015 announcement that he was running for president, Donald J. Trump referenced Mexican immigrants, noting, “They're bringing

drugs...they're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people."<sup>xiii</sup>

Opponents were quick to criticize this claim. Hillary Clinton remarked that he had used "deeply offensive rhetoric." Supporters, on the other hand, shook off his rhetoric as "careless and undisciplined."<sup>xiv</sup> The difference between calling this language offensive and calling it careless was dependent on where the listener stood on the political spectrum.

Unsurprisingly, an individual's partisanship colors her perception of and reaction to uncivil language. When an individual's own party uses incivility, or when incivility is used in attacks against the individual's party, they are more likely to use uncivil language themselves. In contrast, people's responses to incivility towards out-groups are less emotionally charged.<sup>xv</sup> Incivility's ability to polarize the electorate also depends on its source. Incivility depolarizes partisans when it comes from their own party, but when it comes from a source associated with the other party (e.g. MSNBC for Republicans, Fox News for Democrats) it polarizes.<sup>xvi</sup> As Druckman and colleagues explain, when Democrats hear incivility from MSNBC's Chris Hayes on the Dakota Access pipeline, they express more partisan ambivalence than when they hear incivility from Tucker Carlson on Fox.

## **How, what, and who?**

In two different experiments conducted in July 2016 and July 2017, I explored how uncivil tone and substance interact with perceptions of the speaker to influence people's perceptions of civility within a message. Participants were recruited through online survey platforms and randomly assigned to view one of several Tweets (or

exchanges on Instagram) that varied systematically in their presentation of the various elements discussed.

Study 1 involved three variations on the substance of a Tweet about President Obama: rights-threatening, rights-affirming, and rights-neutral comments. In the rights-threatening condition, the Tweet stated, “Obama restricts student expression on college campuses.” The rights-affirming condition read, “Obama endorses student expression on college campuses at the expense of academic integrity.” The rights-neutral tweet read, “Obama missed the funeral of another high-profile conservative.” Differences in tone in Study 1 included name-calling and character assassination. For example, rather than simply saying “Obama restricts student expression on college campuses,” one set of treatments said that “*self-centered, ignorant* Obama restricts student expression on college campuses.”

Some literature on incivility as a function of speaker characteristics focuses on power differentials, specifically that members of marginalized or less powerful groups will be more likely to be labeled as uncivil.<sup>xvii</sup> Based on these assertions, in Study 1, Tweets were attributed to a member of one of two groups, either the political elite, or group ostensibly being oppressed in the given political situation. The political elite was Congressman Ken Buck (R-CO) (@RepKenBuck). The group member being threatened by the substantive content of the Tweet (college students) was college student Ben Smith, a fictional character. We tried to highlight his status as a college student through his Twitter handle (@BulldogBen) and corresponding user photo (see Figure 1). Table 1 breaks down each experimental manipulation in Study 1 by category and type.

[Figure 1 about here]

[Table 1 about here]

While the first study focuses on how all three components work together, the second study focuses on the interplay between the speaker and tone, using a different set of issues and social groups. In Study 2, all participants were asked to watch a 1-minute video from CNN about Richard Spencer’s visit to Auburn University in April 2017. The video opens with shots of protestors at the university event, followed by clips of Spencer, a leader of the alt-right and a white supremacist, explaining his stance against racial diversity. Participants were told that the video was posted to CNN’s Instagram account and that the comments that followed were excerpted from comments posted on Instagram. They were then randomly assigned to one of four comment conditions that varied in the level of civility and racial composition of the two speakers. The comments were either civil or uncivil and were attributed either to two white men or to one white man and one black man. Figure 2 shows two versions of the exchange—the civil exchange by the white men and the uncivil exchange by the diverse group—to give a sense of the variation across the treatments. The race of the speaker is clear from the small, circular picture next to each comment.

While the central argument of this paper is that incivility is in the eye of the beholder,<sup>xviii</sup> there are nonetheless criteria that reliably classify political communication as more or less uncivil. These criteria primarily focus on the tone of the message and include the use of obscenity, mockery, insulting language, character assassination, lying, pejoratives and ideologically extremizing language, among others.<sup>xix</sup> The comments used in Study 2 draw on these criteria and include name-calling (“you idiot”), insults (“a whiny pansy liberal”), extensive capitalization (“FREE SPEECH DOES NOT EQUAL

HATE SPEECH”) and excessive punctuation use (“?!?!” and “!!!”). The civil condition still took a contentious, negative tone but without these specific indicators of incivility.

[Figure 2 here]

In each study, after the participants had read their randomly assigned Tweet or set of comments, they were asked about a variety of attitudes and perceptions, including their trust in politicians and the political system, the legitimacy of the arguments articulated in the posts, perceptions of the posts as undemocratic or uncivil, and their warmth towards the person making the comments. This approach lets us look first at the effects of each element of incivility separately, then at how elements—like the speaker and tone of communication—interact to affect our understanding of and reactions to incivility.

### **Does message content matter?**

Results indicate that on its own, substance seems to have little to no effect on identification of language as uncivil. Out of the two studies described above, only Study 1 manipulated content that has been tied theoretically with uncivil rhetoric: threats to individual rights. However, after holding the tone and speaker constant, there was no substantial or statistical difference in participants’ perceptions of incivility. Figure 3<sup>xx</sup> shows the difference in perceptions of incivility across the three different types of content. If anything, people found the rights-neutral treatment—the one that criticized Obama for missing a Republican funeral—more uncivil than either of the two Tweets that focused on free speech, though these differences are not statistically significant.

[Figure 3 here]

Even though the message substance did not affect participants' perceptions of message incivility, message content did have a small impact on their *general* assessment of political civility. In comparison to those who saw the rights-restricting message, those who read the rights-neutral Tweets reported that *they saw politics today as generally more civil* than those who read the rights-threatening tweet. These results weakly correspond with the results of survey data and scholarly research that ties the identification of incivility to stereotypes and threats to others rights. The substance of communication can have small but significant effects on overall perceptions of politics as civil, even if it has only minor impact on assessment of the message itself.

[Figure 4 here]

**Message tone definitely matters.**

While changing the content of Tweets did not have much effect on whether people saw the message as uncivil, changes to the tone produced a strong shift in assessments of incivility. In Study 1, participants rated tweets with an impolite tone as significantly less civil than the more polite Tweets, regardless of the *substance* of the message or the person to whom it was attributed (see Figure 5). Similarly, in Study 2, the main factor shaping perceptions of incivility was the change in *tone* between the two treatments. As Figure 6 shows, the average perception of the treatments that used name-calling, capitalization, etc. was almost a full point higher than the same treatments without those words. Clearly, our perceptions of incivility are driven primarily by our identification of certain words, phrases, and styles of writing that denote a rude or demeaning tone. While the public thinks that both style and substance matter in the abstract, their perceptions of

incivility in specific messages are driven far more by the tone of the message than its content.

[Figure 5 here]

[Figure 6 here]

### **Message source matters.**

While message tone certainly seems to drive people's perceptions of message civility, characteristics of the speaker can shift these perceptions as well. Study 1 and Study 2 focused on two different characteristics of speakers: age and race, and point to two different sets of effects. In Study 1, tweets that were attributed to the college-student were not seen as more or less uncivil than those that came from the Congressman. However, in Study 2, when the exchange was presented between two white men, it was perceived as more uncivil than when it was between a black man and a white man, regardless of the use of name-calling, insults, etc. As Figure 7 shows, the difference is relatively small—certainly smaller than the effects we saw for tone—but nonetheless suggests that the race of the speakers mattered for perceptions of incivility in that situation.

Like with the substance of the message, the age and experience of the speaker in Study 1 did not affect perceptions of the message itself as civil or uncivil, but it did affect perceptions of politics more generally. Unsurprisingly, people saw politics as more uncivil when the Tweet came from the Congressperson than when it came from the college student.

[Figure 8]

## **How these three factors interact.**

When you look at tone, substance, and speaker individually, it's easy to declare that incivility is a product of a message's tone and leave it at that. However, it's in the interaction between these three elements where we can more clearly see the effects of the speaker and the message content on individual attitudes.

First, let's consider how perceptions of incivility shift with the interactions between the speaker, substance, and tone. Figure 9 shows perceptions of incivility for each treatment in Study 1. Higher bars demonstrate that, on average, people perceived the Tweet as more uncivil. While the differences between treatments are not always statistically significant, there are clear patterns in which manipulation of each element changes perceptions of the Tweet as uncivil. For example, impolite rhetoric from the Congressman is seen as more civil as we move from rights-restricting rhetoric to rights-affirming to rights-neutral content. However the same pattern is not present when the Tweet is attributed to the student; here, rights-restricting and rights-affirming rhetoric are seen as slightly more civil than rights-neutral commentary. Results from the same question in Study 2 demonstrate that tone has the strongest effect on perceived incivility, but that the race of the speaker also plays a role (Figure 10).

[Figures 9 & 10 here]

The combination of a message's speaker, substance and tone not only affects individuals' identification of incivility in a message, but their broader political attitudes as well. Attitudes towards the speaker can be influenced by these factors, as can broad political attitudes like trust in the government. . The latter of these is particularly vital to the functioning of democracy, as citizens need to trust in their government in order for

institutions to be considered credible, which aids in democratic health.<sup>xxi</sup> However, as the results from both studies show, the impact of political incivility on these attitudes depends on who is using it.

To investigate how incivility affects political trust, Study 1 asked individuals a series of questions about the extent to which they trusted both politicians and the political system as a whole. Previous studies have shown that uncivil discourse reduces citizens' trust in government.<sup>xxii</sup> Study 1 does not show significant differences in government trust as a function of tone. Yet, political trust is affected by the interaction of tone and speaker. Participants' trust in government was more affected by the tone of the political elite (Congressperson) than by the tone of the college student. Specifically, looking at Tweets about rights restrictions, an impolite Tweet from a Congressperson is more damaging to political trust—in the system or in politicians—than is the same Tweet from a college student. Conversely, when the Congressperson's Tweet was polite, trust in government increased in comparison with the polite Tweet from the college student (Figure 11).

[Figure 11 here]

Study 2 looked at feelings of warmth toward fellow citizens, rather than political elites. After reading the full online exchange, participants were asked to rate how warmly or coolly they felt towards one of the speakers (the one whose race was also manipulated) on a scale from 0 (the coldest) to 100 (the warmest). Again, assessments of the speaker varied as a function of both the message tone and characteristics of the speaker. As illustrated in Figure 12, on average, participants felt somewhat warmly towards the commenter when he used a polite tone and towards the African-American speaker even when he used an impolite tone. Both speakers were viewed less warmly when they were

impolite than when they were polite. However, participants had much more negative reactions to the impolite white man than they did to the impolite black man; in this condition alone did ratings of the commenter dip below the neutral 50 mark.

[Figure 12]

When we examine the interaction of the speaker, substance and tone in a political message, it is clear that all three shape individuals' willingness to label that message as uncivil. A rights-restricting message from a politician who is calling his opponent names is identified as more uncivil than a rights-neutral message delivered politely by a college student. Beyond simple perceptions, however, we see that interactions between these three elements can also shape individuals' political attitudes. People's trust in government is affected more by impolite, rights-restricting Tweets from a Congressperson than from an average citizen. Their warmth towards a fellow citizen is shaped not only by the tone he uses in engaging in political discourse but also his racial background.

## **Implications and Recommendations.**

From these results, we have learned that changing the tone of political communication matters. Adding just two words that cast character aspersions can change perceptions of how civil a message is. However, we cannot understand the effects of an impolite tone on political behavior without taking context into account. Impolite or uncivil rhetoric has a greater impact on individuals' trust in politicians when it is wielded by political elites than when it is used by a fellow citizen. When a white online commenter uses incivility to attack white supremacist Richard Spencer, people feel less

warmly towards him than they do a black commenter using the same language. The speaker and substance of the message influence how we judge its incivility.

While the results of these studies suggest that people perceive language differently when it comes from different speakers, they do not offer a mechanism for *why* they see it differently. Consider the example above - does the simple presence of a diverse set of speakers suggest an effort to speak across differences that is more civil? Is there a social desirability effect, where participants are less willing to admit they see incivility on the part of a black man as equally civil to that of a white man? Or is it that people see the black speaker as having more authority on the issue of speech that is demeaning to minority groups? Future research will have to consider these questions as they explore perceptions of incivility as they relate to democratic health.

Based on these findings, I have several recommendations for scholars and advocates for greater political civility. First, these efforts should be targeted at political elites over the general citizenry, as this top-down approach has the potential to mitigate some of the negative effects of incivility. Americans are not reacting to Tweets by the average person the same way they react to Tweets by their Congressperson or President. Disregarding the effects of substance and tone, Tweets from the Congressman led participants to think that, in general, politics was more uncivil. Trust in government continues to drop; only 20% of adults surveyed by the Pew Research Center stated they trust the government to do what's right always or most of the time.<sup>xxiii</sup> As Mutz points out, "Incivility in political discourse, rather than political conflict per se, may be the root of the problem of low regard for politics and politicians."<sup>xxiv</sup> The evidence from Study 1 supports that claim, with an important caveat. It's not simply incivility in political

discourse, but incivility in *elite* public discourse that has the most damaging effect on political trust. Conversely, elite messaging that does not contain an uncivil tone leads to greater political trust than the same language from a college student. We hold politicians to a higher standard in many parts of life; let's challenge them to rebuild trust by engaging in civil discourse.

Second, Study 2 participants' "punishment" of the white man for using an uncivil tone speaks to the broader debate about identity politics in America today. From pedagogical practices to Facebook memes, people are being encouraged to consider notions of systemic injustice and inequality. And along with this important and admirable focus, frequently, comes an additional refrain: a white male should not be the one conveying this message. If you identify with groups that have historically been at the top of the social and political hierarchy, this train of thought goes, you cannot understand the experience of marginalization. Both men in the experiment were making an argument in favor of diversity and inclusion, and in doing so, employed some insults and online "shouting." We decry incivility because it breaks down the connections between citizens that are necessary for functioning democracy. Assuming one person has more of a right to uncivil speech than another by virtue of an ascribed trait leads to the same feelings of estrangement.

Finally, these findings offer insight for media companies who are trying to moderate online forums to encourage more productive conversation. Increasingly, academic research is being applied to media layout and web design in order to improve news organizations' ability to promote substantive discourse and help citizens expose themselves to and understand diverse views (see, for example, the work being done by

the University of Texas at Austin's Center for Media Engagement). Study 2 raises questions about the role of the avatar associated with certain social media or comment sections of media websites. On the one hand, the photo makes the commenter less anonymous. On the other hand, it has the potential to affect the way the commenter's message is viewed. Media organizations committed to minimizing incivility on their sites may want to consider alternatives to the photo or whether they want to include them at all. Individuals who seek to use Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram as platforms for uncivil political messages may want to consider how their photo is affecting recipients' reactions to their message.

These studies left me with one final question: what does civil politics look like in modern political discourse? In the first study, the Tweets that were designed to be the most civil read, "Obama endorses free speech on college campuses at the expense of academic integrity." While the statement is somewhat negative, emphasizing the trade-off between academic integrity and campus free speech, it reads more like a newspaper headline than an individual's opinion. Yet on average, participants who saw this Tweet reported that it was somewhere between moderately and somewhat civil. Answering this question requires more thought about the role that social media, or media context more generally, might play in branding a political exchange as uncivil. Previous research that suggests that we would see different results if these statements were made as part of a newspaper article or heard on the radio<sup>xxv</sup> and certainly there is a widespread assumption that incivility is worse on the internet. As Americans increasingly get their political news online, we must consider the ways in which the medium influences our ability to have a civil conversation.

**Notes:**

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**Table 1: Experimental Manipulations**

	Type	Manipulation
Speaker	College Student	College student, @BulldogBen
	Congressperson	U.S. Congressman @RepKenBuck
Substance	Democratic	Obama <u>endorses</u> student expression on college campuses <u>at the expense of</u> <u>academic integrity.</u>
	Anti-Democratic	Obama <u>restricts</u> student expression on college campuses.
	Neutral	Obama <u>missed the funeral</u> <u>of another high profile</u> <u>conservative.</u>
Tone	Polite	Obama...
	Impolite	<u>Self-centered, ignorant</u> Obama...

**Figure 1: Study 1 Treatments Showing Variation on Speaker and Tone**



## Figure 2: Study 2 Treatments

### *Civil x white treatment*



**rossparker4** So colleges should just let anyone come speak even if it's someone like Spencer who stands for racism and white superiority? Things that I might add go against the historically diverse atmosphere of universities!

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**jsmith** Look, Spencer is a brave man representing a culture that continuously gets ignored in America! The left thinks that black people should be on top, that diversity means stripping white people of their rights. Absolutely not, Spencer is a hero and he should be allowed to spread his message any and everywhere!

50m 1 like Reply

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**rossparker4** No, you Alt-Right members don't understand how destructive this speech is! The students at Auburn University held a peaceful protest against white supremacy, white privilege, and in favor of diversity. They understand that someone like him shouldn't be allowed to say these things. Free speech does not mean hate speech.

43m 1 like Reply

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**jsmith** @rossparker4 Oh look, a liberal...what a surprise. #freespeechisallspeech

37m 1 like Reply

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### *Uncivil x mixed treatment*



**rossparker4** Wow, so colleges should just let anyone come speak even if it's just some asshole like Spencer who literally stands for racism and white superiority? Things that I might add go against the historically diverse atmosphere of universities?!?!

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**jsmith** Look, Spencer is a brave man representing a culture that continuously gets ignored in America!! You f#%&\*@!% communists think that black people should be on top, that diversity means stripping white people of their God given rights. Absolutely not, Spencer is a hero and he must be allowed to spread his message any and everywhere!!!

50m 1 like Reply

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**rossparker4** No, you idiot Alt-Right members don't even understand how destructive this speech is! All the sensible students at Auburn University held a peaceful protest against white supremacy, white privilege, and in favor of diversity. They understand that a monster like him should never be allowed to spew this kind of hatred. FREE SPEECH DOES NOT MEAN HATE SPEECH.

43m 1 like Reply

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**jsmith** @rossparker4 Oh look...a whiny liberal pansy what a surprise. #freespeechisallspeech

37m 1 like Reply

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Figure 3:

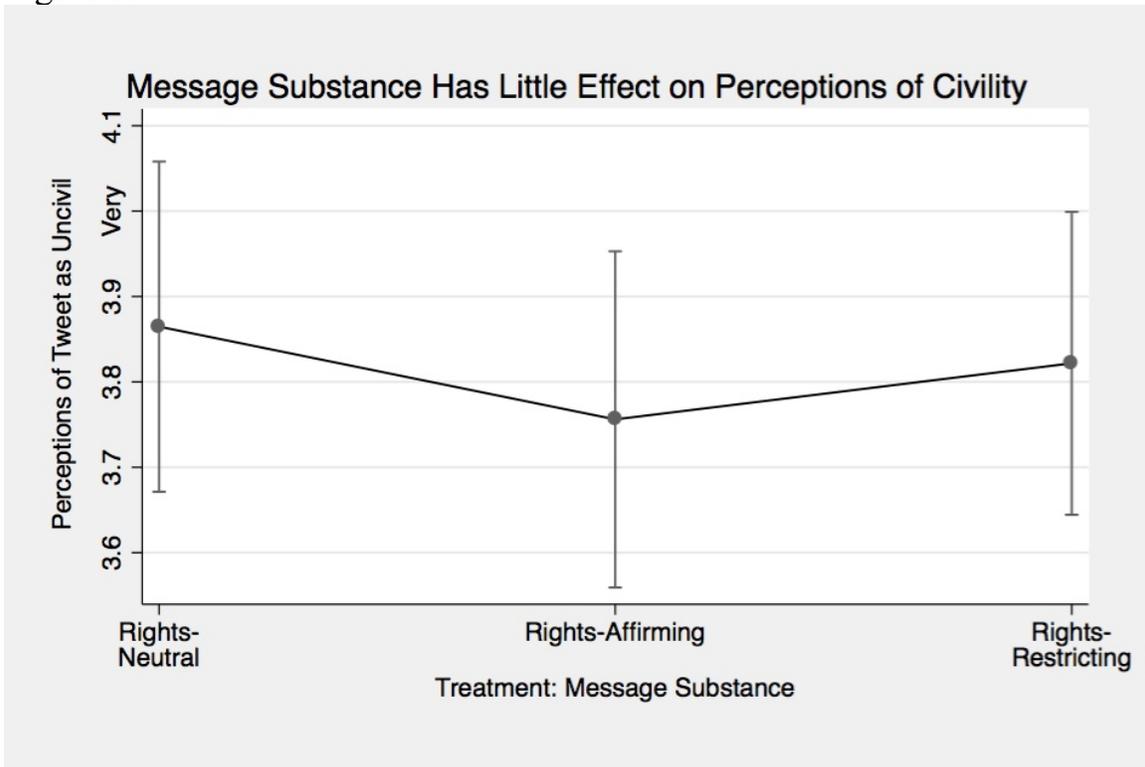


Figure 4:

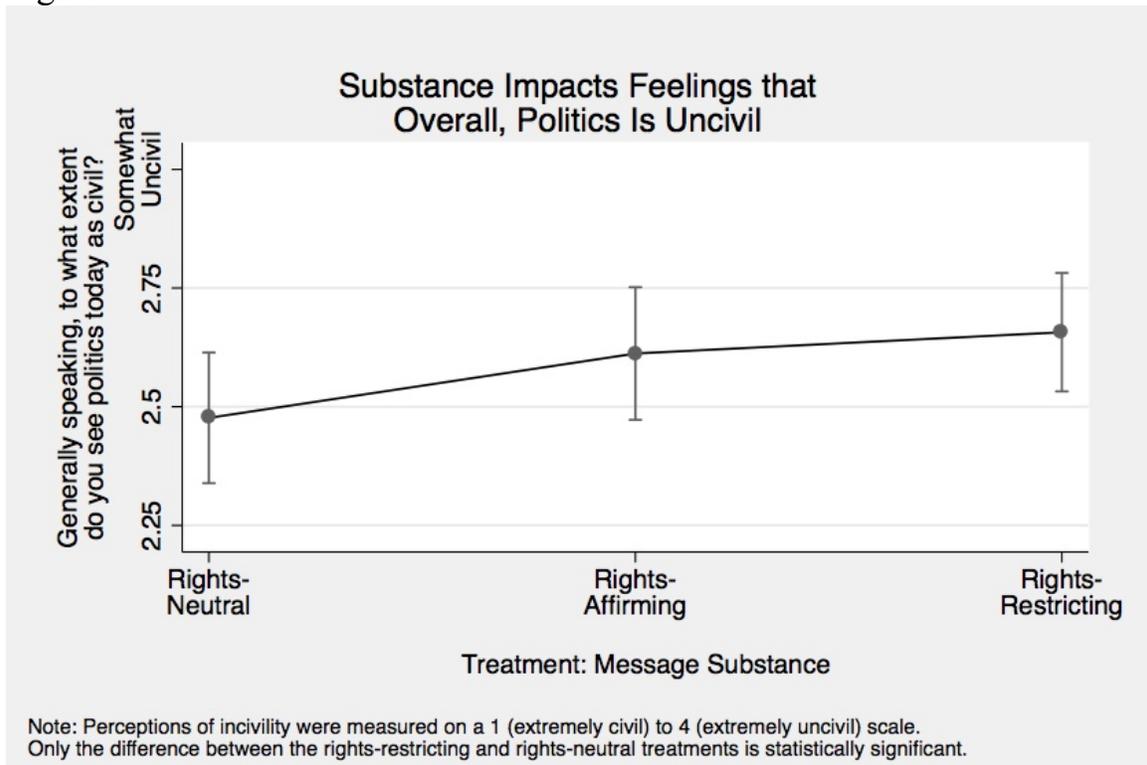


Figure 5:

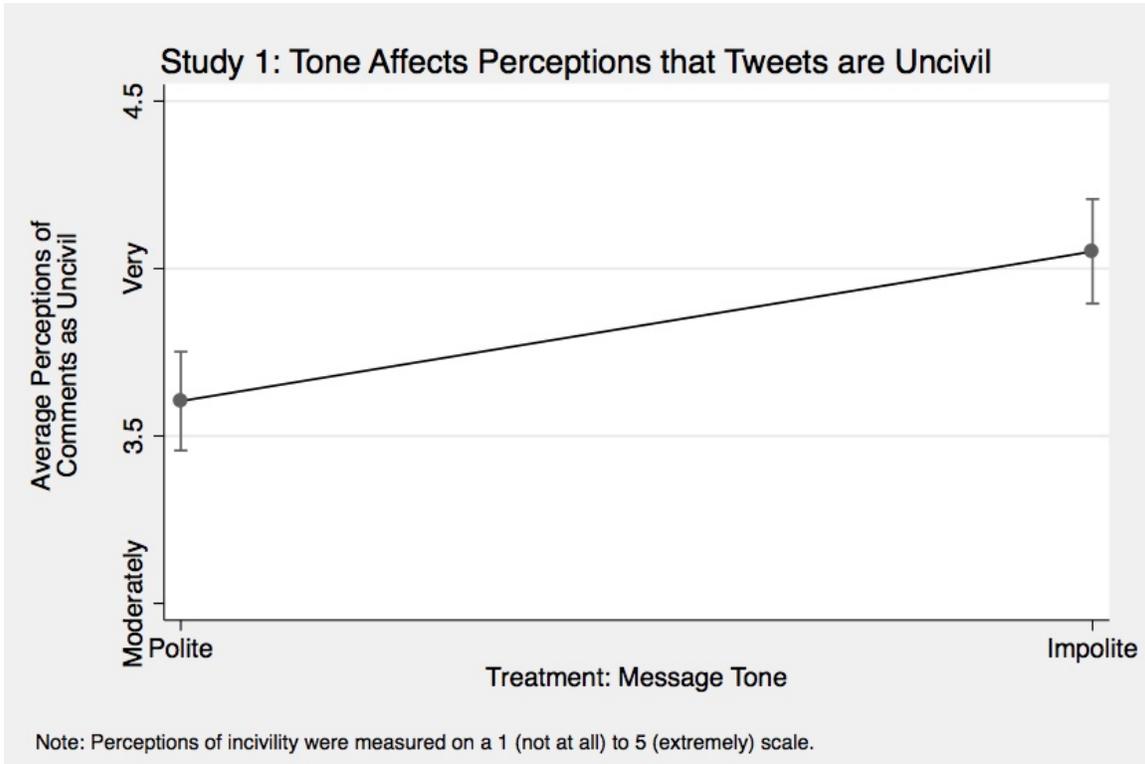


Figure 6:

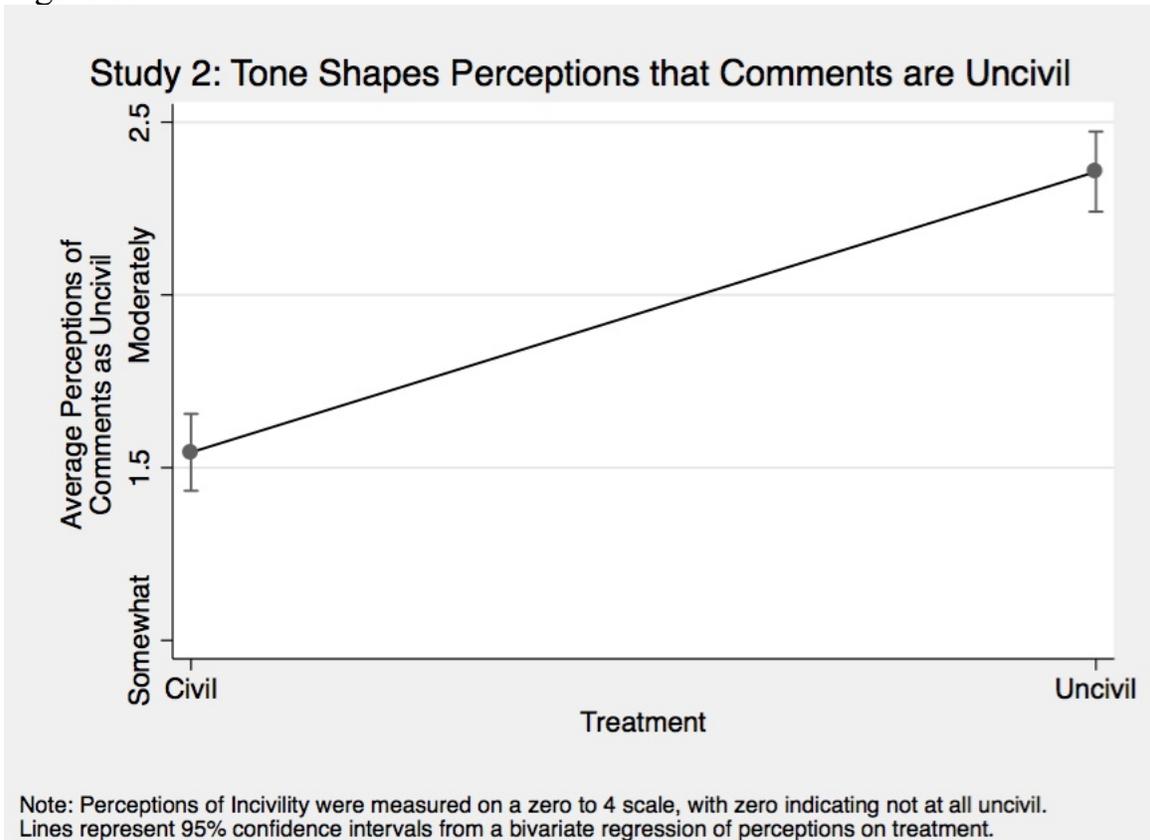


Figure 7:

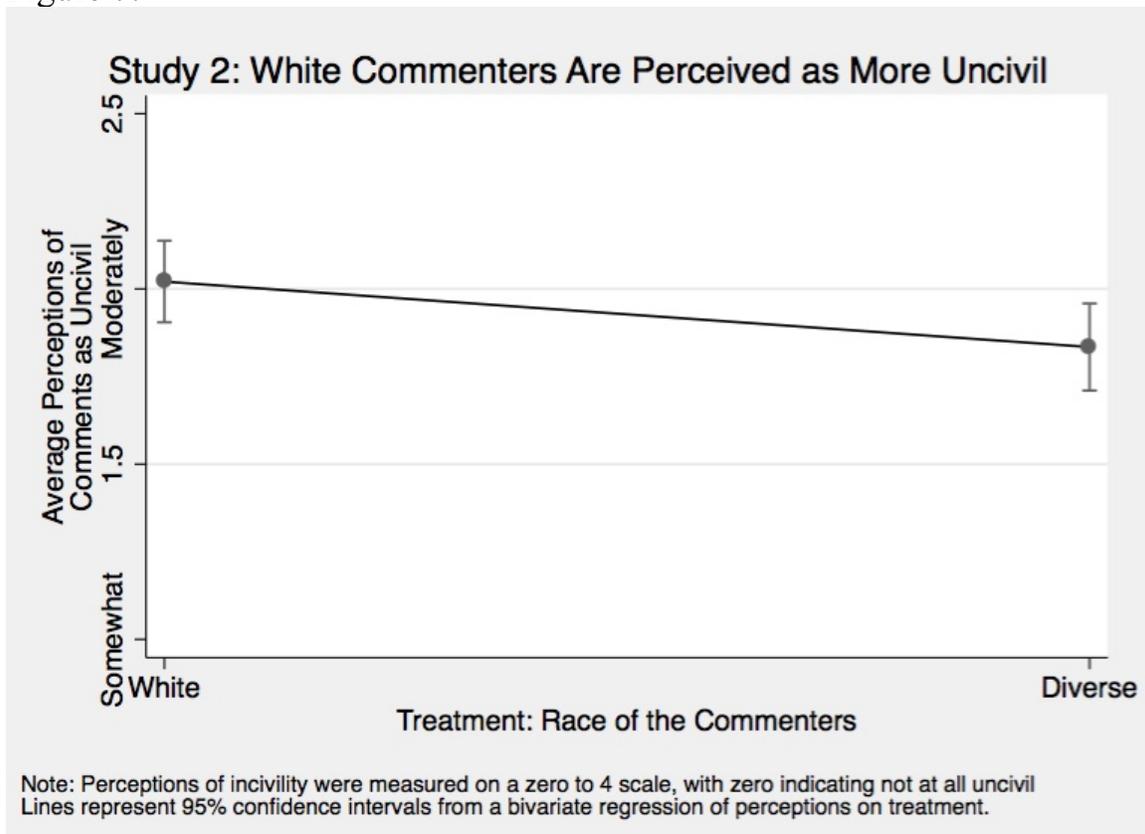


Figure 8

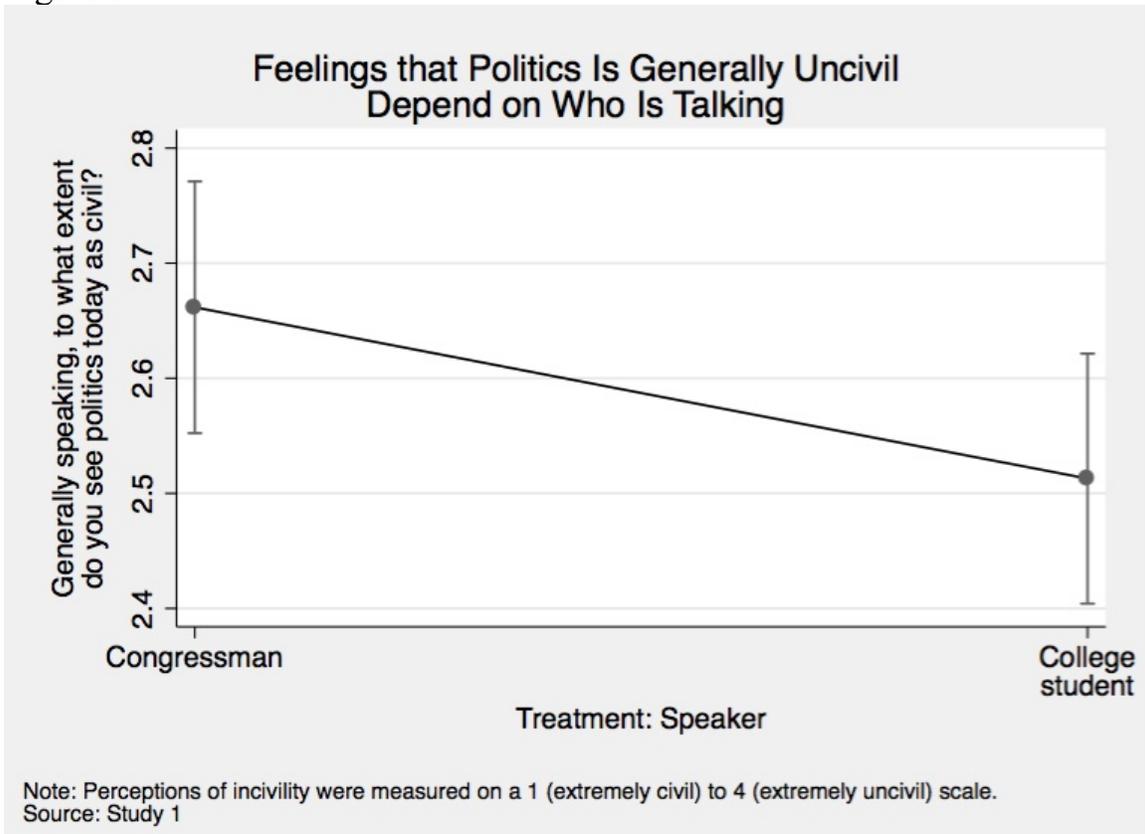


Figure 9

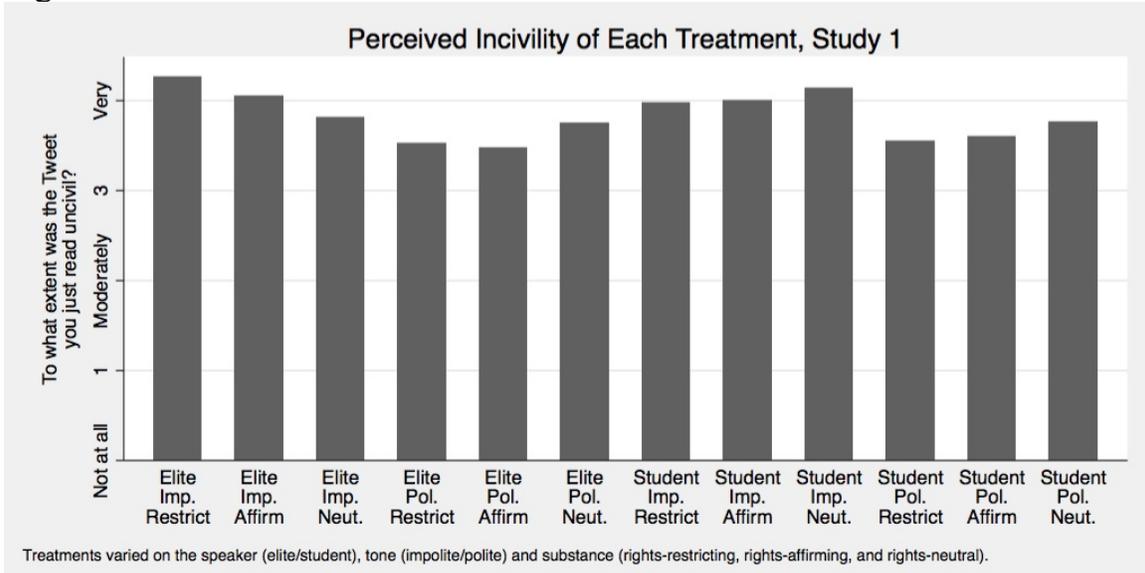


Figure 10

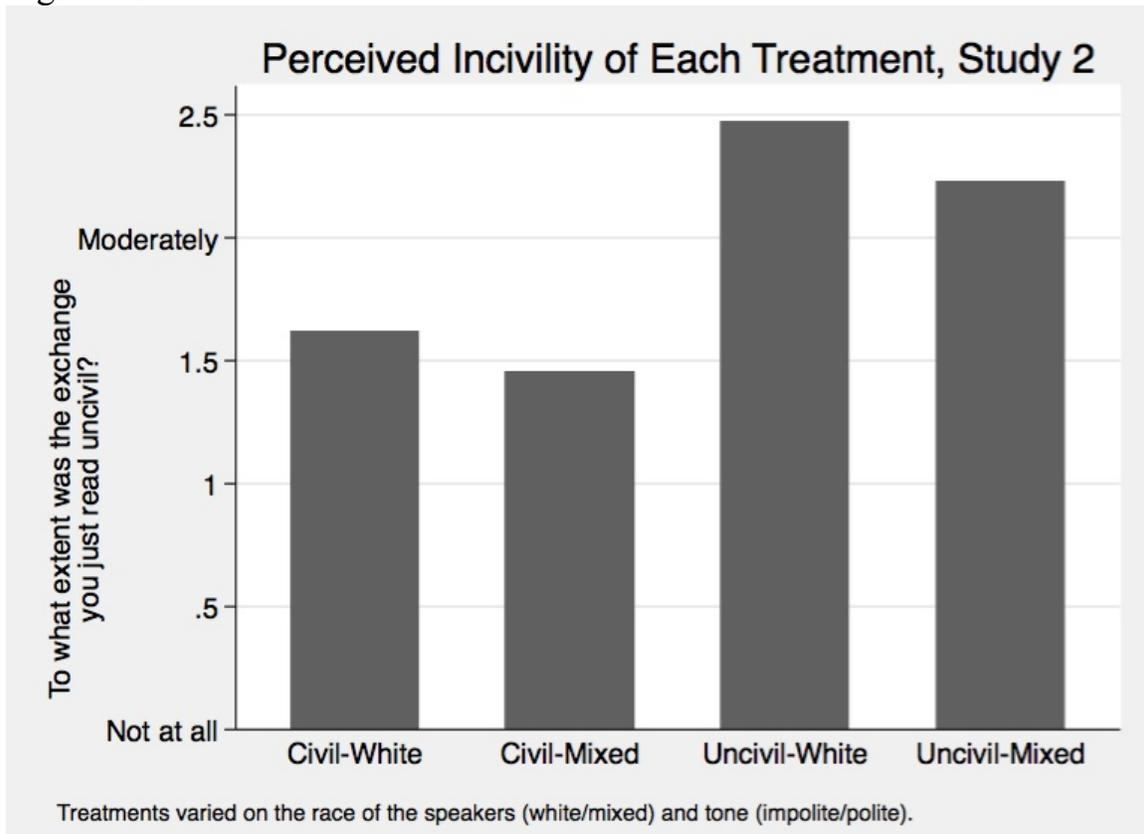


Figure 11: Joint effect of tone and speaker on trust

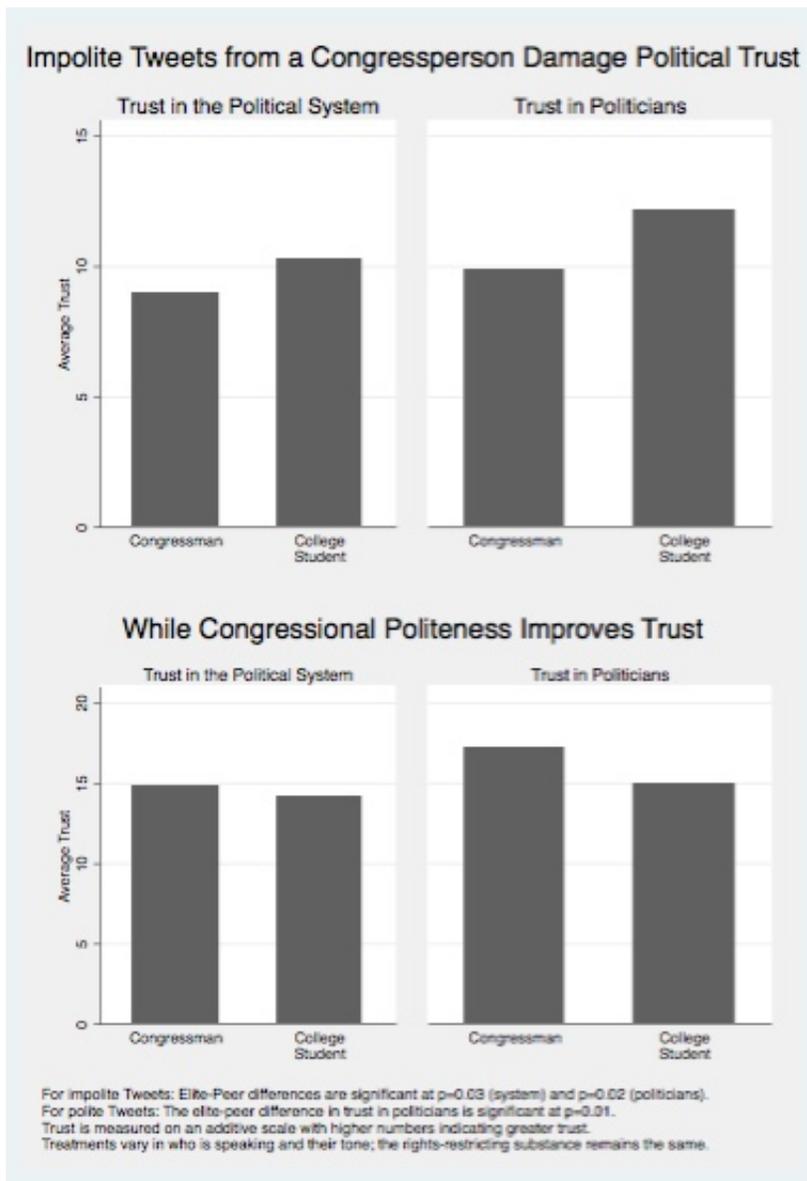
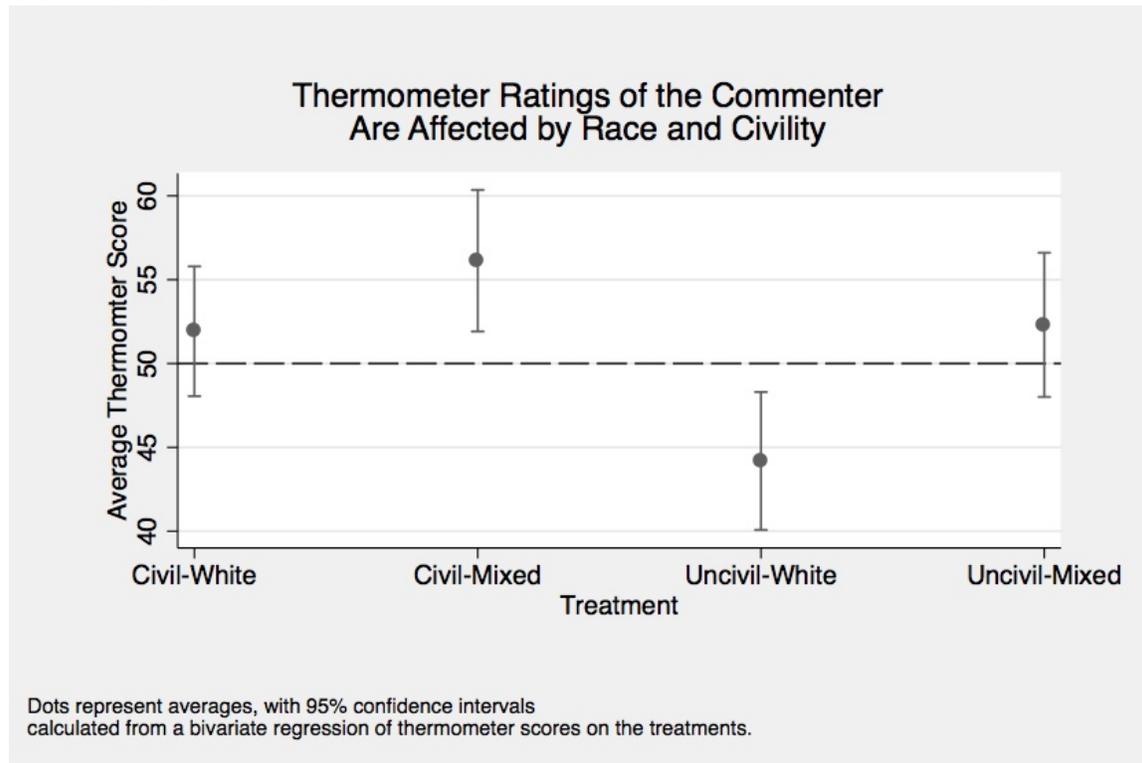


Figure 12: Joint Effects of Speaker and Tone on Feelings Towards Commenter



<sup>i</sup> Jasmine C. Lee and Kevin Quealy, “The 239 People, Places and Things Donald Trump Has Insulted on Twitter: A Complete List,” *The New York Times*, January 28, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/01/28/upshot/donald-trump-twitter-insults.html>.

<sup>ii</sup> Weber Shandwick, KRC Research, and Powell Tate, “Civility in America 2013” (Washington, D.C., 2013).

<sup>iii</sup> John G. Geer, “The News Media and the Rise of Negativity in Presidential Campaigns,” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 45, no. 3 (2012): 422–27; Daniel M. Shea and Alex Sproveri, “The Rise and Fall of Nasty Politics in America,” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 45, no. 3 (2012): 416–21; Weber Shandwick, KRC Research, and Powell Tate, “Civility in America 2013.”

<sup>iv</sup> Deborah Jordan Brooks and John G. Geer, “Beyond Negativity: The Effects of Incivility on the Electorate,” *American Journal of Political Science* 51, no. 1 (2007): 1–16, doi:10.1111/j.1540-5907.2007.00233.x; John Geer and Richard R. Lau, “Filling in the Blanks: A New Method for Estimating Campaign Effects,” *British Journal of Political Science* 36, no. 2 (April 1, 2006): 269–90; Diana C. Mutz, “Effects of ‘In-Your-Face’ Television Discourse on Perceptions of a Legitimate Opposition,” *American Political Science Review*, 2007, 621–45; Diana C. Mutz and Byron Reeves, “The New Videomalaise: Effects of Televised Incivility on Political Trust,” *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 1 (2005): 1–15.

<sup>v</sup> Kevin Coe, Kate Kenski, and Stephen A. Rains, “Online and Uncivil? Patterns and Determinants of Incivility in Newspaper Website Comments,” *Journal of Communication* 64, no. 4 (August 1, 2014): 658–79, doi:10.1111/jcom.12104; Diana C. Mutz, *In-Your-Face Politics: The Consequences of Uncivil Media* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015).

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- <sup>vii</sup> “Allegheny Survey.”
- <sup>viii</sup> Papacharissi, “Democracy Online: Civility, Politeness, and the Democratic Potential of Online Political Discussion Groups.”
- <sup>ix</sup> “Allegheny Survey: 2016 Presidential Campaign Reveals Chilling Trend Lines For Civility in U.S. Politics « News and Events | Allegheny College - Meadville, PA,” *Allegheny College News and Events*, October 17, 2016, <http://sites.allegheny.edu/news/2016/10/17/allegheny-survey-2016-presidential-campaign-reveals-chilling-trend-lines-for-civility-in-u-s-politics/>.
- <sup>x</sup> Papacharissi, “Democracy Online: Civility, Politeness, and the Democratic Potential of Online Political Discussion Groups.”
- <sup>xi</sup> William H. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 7.
- <sup>xii</sup> Chafe; Linda M.G. Zerilli, “Against Civility: A Feminist Perspective,” in *Civility, Legality, and Justice in America*, ed. Austin Sarat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
- <sup>xiii</sup> Daniel Engber and Jamelle Bouie, “Donald Trump Is a Racist,” *Slate*, November 11, 2016, [http://www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/politics/2016/11/the\\_people\\_who\\_look\\_at\\_trump\\_and\\_don\\_t\\_see\\_a\\_racist.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2016/11/the_people_who_look_at_trump_and_don_t_see_a_racist.html); Lee and Quealy, “The 239 People, Places and Things Donald Trump Has Insulted on Twitter”; Dana Milbank, “Donald Trump Is a Bigot and a Racist,” *The Washington Post*, December 1, 2015, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/donald-trump-is-a-bigot-and-a-racist/2015/12/01/a2a47b96-9872-11e5-8917-653b65c809eb\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/donald-trump-is-a-bigot-and-a-racist/2015/12/01/a2a47b96-9872-11e5-8917-653b65c809eb_story.html).
- <sup>xiv</sup> Engber and Bouie, “Donald Trump Is a Racist.”
- <sup>xv</sup> Bryan T. Gervais, “Following the News? Reception of Uncivil Partisan Media and the Use of Incivility in Political Expression,” *Political Communication* 31, no. 4 (October 2, 2014): 564–83, doi:10.1080/10584609.2013.852640; Bryan T. Gervais, “More than Mimicry? The Role of Anger in Uncivil Reactions to Elite Political Incivility,” *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 2016, 1–22.
- <sup>xvi</sup> James N. Druckman et al., “How Incivility on Partisan Media (De-)Polarizes the Electorate” May 15, 2017.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Zerilli, “Against Civility: A Feminist Perspective”; Leti Volpp, “Civility and the Undocumented Alien,” in *Civility, Legality, and Justice in America*, by Austin Sarat (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom*.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Susan Herbst, *Rude Democracy: Civility and Incivility in American Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011).
- <sup>xix</sup> Berry and Sobeiraj, *The Outrage Industry*; Mutz, *In-Your-Face Politics*; Gervais, “More than Mimicry?”
- <sup>xx</sup> Most of the figures in this chapter represent results from bivariate ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions of the treatments on relevant dependent variables. From these regressions, the figures are then created using Stata’s marginsplot function, which produces the predicted probability or marginal effects of each dependent variable, with a 95% confidence interval, for the specified levels of the independent variable. While I do not report the results of these regressions or

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analyses here, they are available in the online appendix (if there is one, otherwise can link to OSF page).

<sup>xxi</sup> Mutz, *In-Your-Face Politics*; Myra Marx Ferree et al., “Four Models of the Public Sphere in Modern Democracies,” *Theory and Society* 31 (2002): 289–324.

<sup>xxii</sup> Mutz, *In-Your-Face Politics*; Mutz and Reeves, “The New Videomalaise: Effects of Televised Incivility on Political Trust.”

<sup>xxiii</sup> Pew Research Center, “Public Trust in Government Remains Near Historic Lows as Partisan Attitudes Shift,” *Pew Research Center for the People and the Press*, May 3, 2017, <http://www.people-press.org/2017/05/03/public-trust-in-government-remains-near-historic-lows-as-partisan-attitudes-shift/>.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Mutz, *In-Your-Face Politics*, 90.

<sup>xxv</sup> Emily Sydnor, “Platforms for Incivility: Examining Perceptions Across Media,” *Political Communication* 0, no. 0 (2017): 1–20, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2017.1355857>.