INCIVILITY IN CONGRESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

Anthony J. Chergosky

A dissertation submitted to the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Political Science in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Chapel Hill 2018

Approved by:
Jason M. Roberts
Virginia Gray
Michael B. MacKuen
Sarah A. Treul
Isaac Unah
ABSTRACT

Anthony J. Chergosky: Incivility in Congressional Communication
(Under the direction of Jason M. Roberts)

Incivility is a significant feature of the contemporary Congress. In this dissertation, I treat incivility as a form of strategic behavior that members of Congress use, under certain circumstances, to pursue their goals. I examine incivility in three distinct venues of congressional communication. I begin by measuring and explaining incivility in campaign communication. I find evidence indicating that members of Congress strategically violate norms of civility in response to the type of electoral threat they face. Members who face the greatest electoral threat from within their own party target uncivil campaign messages to people who are relatively likely to participate in primary elections, while members who face the greatest electoral threat from the other party target uncivil campaign messages to a broader audience. Next, I turn to incivility in floor speeches. I find evidence indicating that minority party and ideologically extreme members respond to their disadvantaged position in the policymaking process through being particularly likely to violate norms of civility in floor speeches. I then examine incivility on partisan cable news networks, which are known for abandoning norms of civility. I find evidence indicating that ideologically extreme senators and party leaders tend to appeal to party activists in the mass public through violating norms of civility during interviews. Finally, I find that the more senators appear on cable news, the more they gain their campaign funds from outside of their state. This indicates that party activists respond favorably to members who appear frequently on uncivil media, through providing these members with key campaign resources. I conclude that incivility
in Congress is a form of a collective action problem. Incivility damages the collective reputation of Congress, but my dissertation identifies numerous instances in which individual members use incivility in attempting to achieve their own individual goals.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to a number of individuals who have provided support and assistance throughout the process of writing this dissertation. First, I would like to thank my advisor, Jason Roberts. I have worked with Jason in a number of ways during graduate school, and I have benefited greatly from these experiences. Jason has provided advice, feedback, and encouragement at all stages of this dissertation project, and for that, I am immensely appreciative. I would also like to thank my dissertation committee. Sarah Treul, Michael MacKuen, Tom Carsey, Isaac Unah, and Virginia Gray have all been generous with their time and have offered helpful feedback. As such, each member of my dissertation committee has contributed significantly to this project.

Additionally, I am grateful to the members of the State Politics Working Group at UNC for providing feedback on much of my dissertation. The members of this group include Tom Carsey, Virginia Gray, Chris Clark, Kelsey Shoub, Andrew Tyner, Ryan Williams, Steven Sparks, John Lovett, Eric Hansen, John Curiel, and Leah Christiani.

For sparking my interest in political science, I would like to thank two members of the political science faculty at the University of Minnesota: Kathryn Pearson and Joanne Miller. Kathryn and Joanne helped me develop an interest in Congress and political communication. They are also excellent teachers, and thus helped me gain an interest in political science education.

I would like to thank my family for the support they have provided. My parents, Mark and Bev, have not only read through my dissertation and offered feedback, but they have also
offered encouragement along the way. Brianna Jacoboski has been amazingly patient with me during graduate school. I appreciate her love and support.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the students I have had the pleasure of teaching at UNC. I have always had a sense of excitement when coming to campus during these past five years – a sense of excitement for the amazing insights my students always seemed to offer, and the vibrant classroom environment they would help create. I can only hope my students have learned as much from me as I have learned from them. My students have challenged and inspired me in more ways than I could possibly convey in this space. I dedicate this dissertation to them.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES ............................................................................................................................. ix

LIST OF FIGURES ............................................................................................................................ xi

CHAPTER 1: AN INTRODUCTION TO INCIVILITY IN CONGRESS ................................. 1

What is Incivility? .............................................................................................................................. 4

Incivility in Congress: The Contemporary Context ................................................................. 4

Why Study Incivility in Congress? ............................................................................................... 6

Overview of Dissertation ............................................................................................................ 8

CHAPTER 2: INCIVILITY IN CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGN COMMUNICATION ................................................................................................................................. 10

Incivility as a Campaign Strategy .................................................................................................. 12

The Relationship Between Incivility and Polarization ............................................................. 17

Operationalizing Incivility in Political Communication ......................................................... 19

Data and Methods ....................................................................................................................... 22

Results: Campaign Websites ....................................................................................................... 29

Results: Campaign Advertisements (Analysis #1) ...................................................................... 36

Results: Campaign Advertisements (Analysis #2) ...................................................................... 42

Discussion and Conclusion ......................................................................................................... 46

CHAPTER 3: INCIVILITY IN CONGRESSIONAL FLOOR SPEECHES .................................. 50

Incivility and Lawmaking ........................................................................................................... 52

Data and Methods ....................................................................................................................... 58
Results: Causes of Incivility in Floor Speeches .........................................................64
Discussion and Conclusion .........................................................................................76

CHAPTER 4: INCIVILITY IN CONGRESSIONAL MEDIA INTERVIEWS ..........................................................78
Partisan Surrogate Representation .............................................................................80
Data and Methods ........................................................................................................86
Results: Appearances in Uncivil Media .................................................................97
Results: Outrage Utterances in Interviews .............................................................104
Results: Out-of-State Fundraising ...........................................................................110
Discussion and Conclusion .......................................................................................116

CHAPTER 5: ASSESSING INCIVILITY IN CONGRESS .........................................................119
Directions for Future Research .................................................................................119
Implications for Understanding Incivility .................................................................122
APPENDIX 1: EXPLANATION OF OUTRAGE TYPES .....................................................126
APPENDIX 2: CODING RELIABILITY ............................................................................129
APPENDIX 3: SUPPLEMENTAL ANALYSIS FOR CHAPTER 2 .........................................131
APPENDIX 4: SUPPLEMENTAL ANALYSIS FOR CHAPTER 3 .........................................135
APPENDIX 5: SUPPLEMENTAL ANALYSIS FOR CHAPTER 4 .........................................139
REFERENCES .............................................................................................................140
### LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Counts and Percentages of Outrage Types on Campaign Websites</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics for Analysis of Campaign Websites</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Explaining Outrage Rhetoric on MCs’ Campaign Websites</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Counts and Percentages of Outrage Types on Campaign Advertisements</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics for Campaign Advertisements (Ad-Level Analysis)</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Explaining Outrage Rhetoric on Campaign Advertisements (Ad-Level Analysis)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics for Campaign Advertisements (MC-Level Analysis)</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Explaining Outrage Rhetoric on Campaign Advertisements (MC-Level Analysis)</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Counts and Percentages of Outrage Types in One-Minute Speeches</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics for Speech-Level Analysis</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Explaining Outrage Rhetoric in One-Minute Speeches (Speech-Level Analysis)</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics for MC-Level Analysis</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Explaining Outrage Rhetoric in One-Minute Speeches (MC-Level Analysis)</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics for Analysis of Cable News Appearances</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Explaining Appearances by MCs on Copartisan Cable News</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Counts and Percentages of Outrage Types in Interviews</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics for Analysis of Outrage Utterances</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 18: Explaining Outrage Rhetoric in Cable News Interviews ..........................108
Table 19: Descriptive Statistics for Analysis of Out-of-State Fundraising ......................112
Table 20: Explaining Out-of-State Fundraising by Senators ........................................113
Table 21: Descriptive Statistics for MCs With Campaign Website .................................131
Table 22: Descriptive Statistics for MCs Without Campaign Website ............................131
Table 23: Analysis of Outliers (Campaign Websites) ..............................................133
Table 24: Analysis of Outliers (One-Minute Speeches) ............................................136
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Distribution of Outrage Statements on Campaign Websites ........................................31

Figure 2: Primary Election Performance and Use of Outrage Statements on
Campaign Websites ..............................................................................................................34

Figure 3: General Election Competition and Use of Outrage Statements on
Campaign Websites ........................................................................................................35

Figure 4: Distribution of Outrage Statements on Campaign Advertisements .................38

Figure 5: Competitiveness of Race and Use of Outrage Statements on
Campaign Advertisements ..............................................................................................41

Figure 6: Distribution of Outrage Statements in MCs’ Ads (MC-Level
Analysis) ..............................................................................................................................43

Figure 7: Competitiveness of Race and Use of Outrage Statements by MCs ..................45

Figure 8: Distribution of Outrage Statements in One-Minute Speeches .......................65

Figure 9: Days Until Next Election and Outrage Statements in One-Minute
Speeches ...............................................................................................................................68

Figure 10: Distribution of Outrage Statements Uttered by Each MC .........................71

Figure 11: MCs’ Dw-Nominate Scores and Outrage Statements During a
Congress ...............................................................................................................................73

Figure 12: Distribution of Prime Time Cable News Appearances by Senators ............98

Figure 13: Distribution of Cable News Appearances by Senators .............................99

Figure 14: Senators’ Dw-Nominate Scores and Prime Time Cable News
Appearances .........................................................................................................................102

Figure 15: Senators’ Dw-Nominate Scores and Total Cable News
Appearances .........................................................................................................................103

Figure 16: Distribution of Outrage Statements by Senators in Cable News
Interviews ..............................................................................................................................106

Figure 17: Senators’ Dw-Nominate Scores and Outrage Statements During
Cable Interviews ..................................................................................................................109
Figure 18: Distribution of Out-of-State Fundraising by Senators .......................................111

Figure 19: Cable News Appearances and Out-of-State Fundraising .................................115

Figure 20: MCs’ Dw-Nominate Scores and Outrage Statements During a Congress .................................................................137
CHAPTER 1: AN INTRODUCTION TO INCIVILITY IN CONGRESS

On July 19, 2003, the Democrats of the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee were fed up. Outraged by last-minute changes to a pension bill, the Democrats on the committee staged a dramatic walk-out of a hearing. Congressman Pete Stark of California was the lone Democrat to stay behind, in order to monitor the actions of the Republican majority. As Stark belittled the members of the committee, Congressman Scott McInnis (R-CO) interjected and told Stark to “shut up.” “You think you are big enough to make me, you little wimp?” Stark retorted. “Come on. Come over here and make me, I dare you. You little fruitcake.”

A number of scholars, journalists, and political elites have expressed concern about the lack of civility in the contemporary Congress – the lack of civility illustrated by Stark. Lee Hamilton, a former member of the House of Representatives who served in Congress for 34 years, wrote that “certainly the history of Congress has been marked by rough periods, but too often in recent years politics has meant bitter partisan exchanges and mean personal attacks” (Hamilton 2004, 47). Political scientists and longtime congressional observers Thomas Mann and Norman Ornstein place “growing incivility” alongside “partisan tensions” and “the demise of regular order” as among the most significant problems facing the contemporary Congress, which they deem utterly dysfunctional and “broken” (Mann and Ornstein 2006, 11). Juliet Eilperin, a reporter for the Washington Post, observes that “it is hard to exaggerate how much House Republicans and Democrats dislike each other these days...They speak about their

---

opponents as if they hail from a distant land with strange customs, all of which are twisted” (Eilperin 2007, 6).

In the case of the public, the Center on Congress at Indiana University found in a December 2014 public opinion survey that 59% of Americans viewed incivility as a “significant problem” facing Congress. Meanwhile, 54.5% of those surveyed in December 2011 believed that the problem of incivility in Congress had gotten “significantly worse” in the past several years, and 90% responded that the level of civility would likely stay the same or get worse in the next several years. The Center on Congress also conducts regular surveys of political scientists who study Congress, and these observers share the public’s dim view of the civility and quality of deliberation in Congress. For instance, the survey conducted in 2013 asked the scholars to assign an A-F grade for the extent to which the House and Senate engage in productive discussion. 85% of those surveyed assigned the House a grade of D or F, while the “World’s Greatest Deliberative Body” received an A from none of the academics and a grade of D or F from 37.5% of respondents. In addition, 57.5% of the political scientists surveyed agreed that incivility is a “significant problem” in Congress.

---


4 The Senate’s reputation for having superior deliberation to the House comes from the “confusion and impersonality” of House floor debates contrasted with the “informal and friendly” nature of Senate floor debates (Froman 1967, 7). Although the ratings from political scientists indicate that deliberation in the Senate is still viewed favorably relative to deliberation in the House, the quality of deliberation, debate, and bargaining in the Senate has nevertheless appeared to decline quite significantly throughout the past few decades (Smith 2014).

Examples of incivility in Congress abound. The aforementioned Pete Stark (D-CA) once called Congresswoman Nancy Johnson (R-CT) a “whore for the [health] insurance industry” who got her information from “pillow talk.” More recently, Congressman Alan Grayson (D-FL) described Republicans in Congress as “utterly unscrupulous” and “foot-dragging, knuckle-dragging Neanderthals.” Grayson’s colleague from Florida, Congressman Allen West (R-FL), countered that Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels would be “very proud” of the Democratic Party due to its “incredible propaganda machine.” Meanwhile, Congressman Mo Brooks (R-AL) accused the Democratic Party of “dividing America by race” through “waging a war on whites.”

All told, incivility in the contemporary Congress has attracted attention and concern from a variety of observers, and egregious examples of incivility are not difficult to find. Incivility is seemingly a significant feature of the contemporary Congress. In the next three chapters of my

---

6 Stark said this to Johnson in a private meeting that took place in 1995. To defend his boss, Stark’s press secretary noted that “He didn’t call her a ‘whore.’ He called her a ‘whore of the insurance industry.’” Stark was known for insulting his colleagues in the House of Representatives. In addition to calling Scott McInnis a “fruitcake,” Stark accused Republican lawmakers of sending the nation’s troops to Iraq “to get their heads blown off for [President George W. Bush’s] amusement.” See Weisman, Jonathan. “Stark’s Latest Gaffe Is Just One In a Long Line.” Washington Post, 24 October 2007, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/10/23/AR2007102302165.html.

7 Grayson made this statement on September 30, 2009 in an interview with CNN. In the same interview, Grayson refused to apologize for claiming in a floor speech that “Republicans want you to die quickly if you get sick” to reduce the nation’s health care costs. See Mooney, Alexander. “Grayson calls Republicans ‘knuckle-dragging Neanderthals’.” CNN, 30 September 2009, http://politicaltickerblogs.cnn.com/2009/09/30/grayson-calls-republicans-knuckle-dragging-neanderthals/.


dissertation, I will systematically examine the characteristics, causes, and implications of congressional incivility. Doing so will enter the study of incivility into theoretical frameworks concerning partisanship, campaigning, representation, and legislating in the contemporary Congress.

**What is Incivility?**

Settling on a definition of incivility has proven to be a difficult task for scholars. In fact, no single definition might prove adequate, because what qualifies as civility and incivility often depends on the situational context (Benson 2011). Thus, scholars from different disciplines have advanced different definitions of civility and incivility (Jamieson et al. 2017). Still, if there is a common thread to be identified among these various scholars, most scholars who study civility and incivility agree that “civility connotes a discourse that does not silence or derogate alternative views but instead evinces respect” (Jamieson et al. 2017, 206). Respect is arguably the key word here, as it is key to understanding the contrast between civility and incivility. Indeed, Coe, Kenski, and Rains (2014) offer a representative definition of incivility as communication that is “unnecessarily disrespectful” (660). Through conveying this sort of disrespect, those engaging in uncivil communication seek to insult, denigrate, and humiliate the target of their communication. In Chapter 2, I tackle the challenge of turning scholarly conceptualizations of incivility into something observable.

**Incivility in Congress: The Contemporary Context**

To be sure, when examined relative to the behavior of members during the nineteenth century, any concerns about incivility in the contemporary Congress might seem laughable. Throughout the nineteenth century, members engaged in duels and brutal physical altercations. Most infamously, Senator Charles Sumner was nearly killed after being beaten with a cane by
Representative Preston Brooks in May 1865 (Uslaner 1991). As Uslaner (1991) reports, Congress in the years surrounding the Civil War was a particularly “raucous” and uncivil place due to the breakdown of the political system (47).

Fortunately, standards of behavior in Congress have changed for the better, and violent outbursts on the House and Senate floor are a relic of congressional history. Still, meaningful variation in incivility can be observed throughout the history of Congress. Dodd and Schraufnagel (2013) examined the correlation between party polarization in Congress and references to congressional incivility in newspapers for a time series spanning 1891-2012. They report a strong, positive correlation and argue that increases in polarization lead to greater levels of incivility. Thus, as polarization declined during the late 1920s and early 1930s, and remained relatively low through the 1970s, incivility in Congress was relatively uncommon. Dodd and Schraufnagel (2013) report more media references to congressional incivility during the more polarized periods of the 1890s through the 1920s, as well as the 1980s through the present.

Uslaner (1991; 1996) agrees that civility in Congress has declined since the 1970s. However, he attributes this trend to the decline of comity in the broader social context. According to this argument, norms of comity and civility in Congress reflect adherence to these norms in the mass public. When the public places less of a priority on civil discourse, members reflect this in their own behavior within Congress and do not fear electoral punishment for doing so.

Whatever the causal mechanism, extant scholarly accounts of incivility in Congress agree that incivility is on the rise – and has been since at least the 1970s and 1980s (Ahuja 2008; Dodd and Schraufnagel 2013; Mann and Ornstein 2006; 2013; Uslaner 1991; 1996). Given that I will
examine incivility occurring in Congress since 2005, the context for my study is clear: during these years, incivility is at a relative high point in the broader context of congressional history.

**Why Study Incivility in Congress?**

The anecdotes from scholars, journalists, members of Congress (MCs), and public opinion data speak to a widespread concern about incivility in Congress. These are not the only reasons to study incivility in Congress, however. Theoretical insights can be gained through the systematic analysis of congressional incivility.

First, the literature on the role of parties in Congress has emphasized various dimensions of party conflict. Ideological conflict has been a particular point of focus, and for good reason. The two parties are more ideologically divided than they have been in over a century (Theriault 2008). However, as Lee (2009) points out, the principled ideological struggle between the two parties is not the only lens through which party conflict can be viewed. The parties also engage in non-ideological conflict (Lee 2009). The study of incivility contributes to this line of inquiry through measuring and explaining a type of conflict that is not explicitly ideological in nature.

While I observe and study incivility in a variety of different contexts, the incivility I observe is all aimed at attacking one’s political opponents. Thus, though studying incivility, I contribute to the growing scholarly emphasis on conflict in Congress that goes “beyond ideology,” to borrow the words of Lee (2009).

In addition, I emphasize MCs’ goal-seeking behavior throughout this dissertation, placing incivility within the context of how MCs pursue their objectives. In doing so, I follow the lead of Herbst (2010) in conceptualizing incivility as a strategic behavior. Depending on one’s perspective, this might seem obvious or counterintuitive. From one perspective, MCs are
intensely strategic and are always considering how their actions relate to their goals. According to this perspective, why should incivility be any different than other actions taken by MCs?

This perspective is quite understandable, but at the same time, some scholars would likely argue that incivility should be treated separately from other actions that MCs might take in pursuing their goals. Indeed, some scholarly accounts treat incivility as the triumph of passion over reason, as the expression of intense emotion rather than careful logic (Herbst 2010). To treat uncivil behavior in Congress as purely the actions of careful cost-benefit analyses and utility maximizing behavior, therefore, would likely encounter resistance from a number of scholars who have theorized about incivility in the political and social realms.

In my dissertation, I will form expectations based on the premise that incivility is a type of strategic behavior in Congress. If I find evidence that supports these expectations, then I will have found evidence that even incivility can be understood within the framework of MCs as strategic maximizers of their utility.

Consistent with my perspective that incivility is a strategic behavior, I will ask to what ends incivility might be employed. In this sense, I find that congressional incivility emerges as a type of collective action problem. On the whole, incivility damages the collective reputation of Congress because it prompts the public to lose faith that MCs are trying to sincerely address public policy issues (Atkinson 2017; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 1995). However, I demonstrate in the next three chapters that, under certain circumstances, incivility helps serve the individual needs and goals of MCs. Thus, incivility warrants study as a novel case of goal-seeking behavior by MCs that ultimately has destructive implications for the institution as a whole.
Overview of Dissertation

In Chapter 2, I examine uncivil communication in the context of congressional campaign rhetoric. I develop a coding scheme that I use to detect incivility in congressional campaign websites and televised campaign advertisements. I expect and find that MCs become more likely to use uncivil rhetoric as their electoral vulnerability increases. Specifically, I demonstrate that members who are vulnerable to an intra-party electoral challenge use more uncivil rhetoric on their campaign websites, while members who are vulnerable to an inter-party electoral challenge use more uncivil rhetoric on their televised campaign advertisements. In other words, MCs who face the greatest electoral risk from within their own party target uncivil rhetoric to a relatively small audience of their core supporters and fellow partisans. MCs who face the greatest electoral risk from the other major party target uncivil rhetoric to a broader audience of voters.

In Chapter 3, I analyze incivility in congressional floor speeches. I theorize that MCs will use more uncivil rhetoric in their floor speeches when they are unable to achieve their goal of enacting good public policy. My findings are consistent with this expectation. Through analyzing more than 7,000 speeches in the House of Representatives and measuring uncivil rhetoric in these speeches, I find that members of the minority party are more likely to violate norms of civility than members of the majority party. In addition, I find that violations of civility increase as the next election approaches and members decrease their focus on policymaking. Finally, I demonstrate that members who have relatively extreme ideological views and policy preferences are more likely to violate norms of civility than their relatively moderate colleagues. This is a notable finding because it links ideological polarization with incivility, indicating that ideologically extreme members account for a disproportionate share of congressional incivility.
As noted, some scholars have proposed that polarization and incivility are related (Dodd and Schraufnagel 2013), and Chapter 3 offers empirical evidence to support this notion.

In Chapter 4, I use television news transcripts to examine incivility in television appearances by members of Congress. My analysis is centered on appearances in the outrage industry – an industry of anger-inducing political media outlets that includes partisan cable news channels such as Fox News and MSNBC (Sobieraj and Berry 2011; 2014). Here, I again demonstrate a connection between ideology and incivility. Ideologically extreme senators not only make more appearances on Fox News and MSNBC, but the ideologically extreme senators are also more likely to use uncivil rhetoric in their media appearances. I then demonstrate that appearing on Fox News and MSNBC helps senators build a base of support beyond their state. Specifically, I use data on out-of-state fundraising to show that appearances on partisan news lead senators to gain more out-of-state dollars.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I summarize the central findings of the dissertation, offer suggested avenues for future research, and discuss the broader normative implications of my findings. Given that many citizens, commentators, and even MCs themselves find incivility to be distasteful and harmful to the institution, I reflect on what my findings convey about the prospects for reducing congressional incivility.

---

10 Indeed, cable news channels such as Fox News and MSNBC are crucial elements of the outrage industry. This industry also includes talk radio shows and websites that seek to prompt an angry emotional response from the audience.
CHAPTER 2: INCIVILITY IN CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGN COMMUNICATION

On his campaign website in 2016, Congressman Jody Hice (R-GA) had harsh words for the Obama administration. He referred to Obama’s energy policy programs as “inexcusable” and “unpatriotic.” He lamented that “sadly, many on the left today do not view our nation as good. They dishonor our founding principles and our history.” Hice characterized Obama’s foreign relations with Russia as both “radical” and “foolish.” To make matters worse, according to Hice, Obama and the Democrats in Congress “have abandoned loyalty to the Constitution” in pursuit of their “ultimate goal of a socialist America.”

Six years earlier, in the 2010 election cycle, Congressman Alan Grayson (D-FL) ran a television advertisement that referred to his Republican opponent, Daniel Webster, as “Taliban Dan” due to Webster’s anti-abortion views. The narrator warned that “Daniel Webster wants to impose his radical fundamentalism on us.” The ad concluded, “Taliban Daniel Webster. Hands off our bodies. And our laws.”

In the 2014 election cycle, Hice narrowly secured his party’s nomination. He barely won the first round of voting in the Republican primary with 33.5% of the vote, and then emerged victorious in the subsequent run-off election with 54.3% of the vote. He easily won the 2014 general election with 66.5% of the vote.

Although Grayson was running as an incumbent in 2010, he was viewed as an underdog in his bid to retain his seat in Congress. The Cook Political Report, a leading prognosticator of congressional elections, rated the race as “leans Republican.” Moreover, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Republican Congressional Committee identified Grayson as one of
the most vulnerable incumbents and one of their top targets in the 2010 election cycle (Bergerson and Banyan 2011).

Hice and Grayson exhibit one commonality: they both violated norms of civility in their campaign appeals. However, as I will demonstrate in this chapter, the nature of the electoral vulnerability that each of these two MCs faced prompted them to target their uncivil messages to different audiences. Rather than airing uncivil messages to a broad audience on television, Hice used these messages on his campaign website, a forum that draws engaged citizens and strong supporters of the candidate (Druckman, Kifer, and Parkin 2009). By contrast, Grayson targeted his uncivil messages to a much broader audience through airing his appeals on television.

In this dissertation chapter, I argue that incivility acts as an attention-grabber and call to action. By violating norms of civil discourse, MCs increase their ability to grab the attention of an audience and highlight the urgency of a situation. This helps them prompt some kind of response from the audience. Specifically, in this chapter, I present evidence that MCs use incivility to rally and motivate their supporters. In the context of campaigns and elections, this means that as the electoral risk to MCs heightens, they will be more likely to use uncivil rhetoric.

This dissertation chapter examines incivility in the context of congressional campaigns. I aim to make two contributions in this chapter. First, I develop a data source – campaign communication – and adapt a coding scheme that can overcome data-related obstacles to studying congressional incivility. Second, I develop and test a theory that explains MCs’ propensity to use uncivil campaign rhetoric. MCs target uncivil messages in response to the nature of the electoral threat they face. MCs who face the most electoral competition from the opposing party use the most uncivil rhetoric in their campaign’s television advertisements. Meanwhile, MCs who face the most electoral competition from within their own party use the
most uncivil rhetoric on their campaign websites. I do not find evidence that ideologically extreme MCs use more uncivil rhetoric than relatively moderate MCs. Uncivil campaign rhetoric is driven by responses to the electoral environment of MCs, and I find no direct link between ideological polarization and uncivil campaign rhetoric.

**Incivility as a Campaign Strategy**

Debates within Congress and on the campaign trail often involve vigorous disagreements about the merits of particular policy proposals and ideological perspectives. Such debates are important because they inform voters about the distinctions between candidates and parties (Geer 2008). In Congress, civil debates and exchanges are founded on the assumptions that “the differences between members and parties are philosophical not personal, that parties to a debate are entitled to the presumption that their views are legitimate even if not correct, and that those on all sides are persons of goodwill and integrity motivated by conviction.”

Through operating under these assumptions, MCs can passionately disagree and debate while still exhibiting decorum.

At some point, though, political debates and arguments can cross a line from constructive exchanges of ideas to exchanges that suggest “a lack of respect” for the opposition (Mutz and Reeves 2005, 5). When this happens, political communication is characterized by a sense of “rudeness or impoliteness” (Maisel 2012, 406). While civility facilitates the maintenance of relationships among people who disagree, incivility causes these relationships to become damaged or destroyed (Strachan and Wolf 2012).

When people remain civil through adhering to norms of politeness and respect, “communication between potentially aggressive parties” becomes possible (Brown and Levinson

---

Adherence to norms of respect helps an organization maintain a sense of comity (Uslaner 1996). By contrast, when people violate these norms and use an “unnecessarily disrespectful tone,” the substance of the communication is undermined and the level of civility is reduced (Coe, Kenski, and Rains 2014, 660).

Following Herbst (2010), I will treat incivility as a strategic political behavior. By this, I mean that MCs will use civil or uncivil rhetoric based on the expected costs and benefits of maintaining a civil communication style or using an uncivil communication style. I conceptualize incivility as a strategy that offers both potential benefits and potential risks. Violating norms of civil discourse can invite a backlash, but this can also excite the supporters of MCs and prompt these supporters to take action.

Congresswoman Michele Bachmann (R-MN) illustrates this dynamic. On October 17, 2008, Bachmann made an appearance on the MSNBC program *Hardball with Chris Matthews*. During her appearance, Bachmann expressed her concern that then-Senator Barack Obama “may have anti-American views” and called for a media investigation into which MCs are “pro-America or anti-America.”

National media attention quickly focused on Bachmann’s remarks. Bachmann’s Democratic opponent in the 2008 election, Elwin Tinklenberg, raised more than $1.9 million in the 18 days between Bachmann’s interview and the election. With money pouring in from across the country, Tinklenberg was able to triple his planned budget for this stretch of the campaign. However, Bachmann’s supporters did not abandon her. Instead, Bachmann’s campaign quickly raised around $1 million during this 18-day period and used the money to fund

---


attack ads against Tinklenberg. After narrowly defeating Tinklenberg, Bachmann faced new threats to her chances of reelection in the subsequent election cycle, but she was also able to quickly leverage and expand the fundraising prowess she developed during the 2008 cycle.

In the 2010 election, Bachmann faced a well-funded and well-known Democratic challenger, Tarryl Clark. Moreover, Bachmann continued attracting controversy through accusing Obama of “infantilism” and claiming that he was “turning our country into a nation of slaves,” among other attention-grabbing comments. Just as Bachmann continued to make news for her controversial comments, she raised eye-popping sums of campaign money. Bachmann raised nearly $13.6 million during the 2010 cycle, more than eight times the average fundraising haul for incumbent members of the House in 2010. Bachmann raised significantly more money than Clark and won reelection by a comfortable margin.

In sum, Bachmann experienced both positive and negative consequences after she violated norms of civility, as her uncivil remarks prompted increased political activity among both her supporters and detractors. Indeed, people exposed to violations of civility in the context of politics and campaigns experience increased levels of political interest and participation (Brooks and Geer 2007). Incivility generates an angry response from the audience (Herbst 2010), and anger prompts greater political participation (Valentino et al. 2011). Importantly, the audience could become angry at a politician for violating norms of civility in his or her rhetoric, or this politician could be causing the audience to become increasingly angry at the target of his or her remarks.

---


Therefore, I theorize that the example of Bachmann is broadly generalizable. When MCs violate norms of civility, they gain increased power to rally their supporters and copartisans. In doing so, MCs become more likely to prompt action from these groups. Partisans in the mass public have come to increasingly dislike the opposing party (Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012; Mason 2015), creating opportunities for MCs to tap into these emotions and call their supporters and copartisans to action through uncivil rhetoric that lights the fuse of anger toward the political opposition. However, MCs who pursue this strategy risk a backlash, as they may receive condemnation for violating norms of civil discourse and thereby generate a response from their political opponents. When MCs violate norms of civility, by definition, they deviate from patterns of expected behavior. This increases their ability to attract attention – from supporters and opponents alike.

In crafting an explanation for when and why MCs use uncivil rhetoric on the campaign trail, I will make the assumption that MCs are, above all else, driven by the goal of getting elected and reelected (Mayhew 1974). Thus, MCs can be expected to engage in strategic behavior that they believe will maximize their chances of prevailing in elections. Importantly for my theory, MCs must prevail in both the primary and general election in order to continue their congressional careers.

Drawing on the work of Fenno (1978), I assume that MCs perceive their constituency as four concentric circles: their geographic constituency, their reelection constituency, their primary constituency, and their personal constituency.\(^{16}\) The more vulnerable MCs are to an electoral

---

\(^{16}\) The geographic constituency consists of an MC's entire state or district, while the reelection constituency includes voters who are likely to support the MC in the general election. An MC's primary constituency includes strong supporters of the MC who may support the MC in a primary election and provide the MC's campaign with key resources, such as donations and volunteer hours. Finally, the personal constituency contains an MC's closest political advisors (Fenno 1978).
challenge from within their own party, the more they must focus their attention on maintaining the support of the primary constituency. In doing so, these MCs aim to protect themselves from losing their party’s nomination. Meanwhile, MCs who face a serious threat of defeat in the general election must focus on motivating the reelection constituency.

These strategic calculations carry observable implications for the use of uncivil campaign messages. I will assume that MCs would prefer to avoid violating norms of civility, given the potential backlash that such an action can invite. MCs are known for running scared, meaning that they view themselves as being more electorally vulnerable than is objectively the case (Fiorina 1989). Thus, MCs can be expected to avoid risk-taking actions on the campaign trail when taking such risks would expose them to the possibility of unnecessary electoral harm. However, as their electoral vulnerability increases, so will MCs’ risk acceptance (Druckman, Kifer, and Parkin 2009). As I have argued, incivility is a risky strategy, given that uncivil messages can rally one’s opponents and supporters alike. Consequently, I expect that MCs facing the greatest levels of electoral vulnerability will be the most likely to violate norms of civility in their campaign rhetoric.

Given their concentric circle perception of the district, MCs will strategically target uncivil messages. Targeting messages specifically to the primary constituency enables MCs to communicate with voters who are key to the outcomes of intra-party struggles and party nominations. When MCs face an electoral challenge from the other party, however, they must broaden their attention beyond the primary constituency. In such a situation, MCs will need to focus on rallying and motivating their reelection constituency.
Hypothesis 1: MCs who face relatively high levels of electoral competition from within their own party will be more likely than other MCs to target uncivil messages to their primary constituency.

Hypothesis 2: MCs who face relatively high levels of electoral competition from the other party will be more likely than other MCs to target uncivil messages to their reelection constituency.

The Relationship Between Incivility and Polarization

The study of political conflict in Congress has focused heavily on the growing ideological divisions between the two parties (Layman, Carsey, and Horowitz 2006). However, Theriault (2013) argues that focusing solely on ideological polarization in Congress could cause researchers to overlook a form of conflict called partisan warfare. Partisan warfare entails embarrassing, demeaning, and questioning the motives of one’s political opponents. In other words, partisan warfare involves violating the assumptions that are necessary for maintaining civility.

The relationship between partisan warfare and ideological polarization is unclear. Are members who engage in partisan warfare simply the more ideologically extreme members? If so, then polarization has not merely made Congress more ideologically divided. Indeed, under this scenario, ideologically extreme members have contributed to this growing ideological divide while also contributing to the lack of civility in politics. Given the implications of this potential connection between polarization and incivility, unpacking this relationship is important for furthering scholarly understandings of partisanship and polarization in Congress.

To examine this issue in the context of campaign communication, I will ask if more ideologically extreme MCs are more likely to use uncivil rhetoric than ideologically moderate
MCs. On the one hand, when members of an organization share a common set of values, the opportunity for discord declines and the probability of comity increases (Uslaner 1996). By contrast, widening gaps between individuals in their values produce opportunities for discord. Thus, ideologically extreme MCs could be more likely than other MCs to violate norms of civility. These MCs may perceive a greater sense of urgency than other MCs to attack the other party, given the difficulty that ideologically extreme MCs might experience in negotiating and agreeing to compromises with members of the opposing party. This sense of urgency could cause ideologically extreme MCs to use incivility as a way of motivating the public to rally against the other party.

However, a compelling case can also be made for treating incivility on the campaign trail as a distinct form of conflict, entirely separate from ideological conflict. In the context of crafting and executing a campaign strategy, if MCs are purely responding to the political environment and either taking or avoiding risks based on their level of electoral vulnerability, then ideology and polarization would have no significant connection with incivility. In such a scenario, MCs are purely acting to maximize their chances of reelection. Any other objective that could influence their actions is set aside.

Later chapters of my dissertation examine the connections among ideology, polarization, and incivility in the context of floor speeches and media interviews. In such contexts, I make the assumption that MCs are motivated by more than simply the goal of reelection. As I argue in these later chapters, this assumption leads to a more plausible relationship between incivility and polarization. My empirical tests in the next two chapters do, in fact, uncover such a relationship. Given the importance of understanding when and in what ways incivility and polarization are
similar or distinct forms of conflict, however, I will test the following hypothesis in the context of MCs’ campaigns:

*Hypothesis 3: MCs who have relatively extreme ideologies will be more likely to use uncivil messages in their campaign communications than MCs who have relatively moderate ideologies.*

**Operationalizing Incivility in Political Communication**

Given the theoretical value of studying MCs’ civility and incivility, one might wonder why political scientists have not produced more work addressing this subject. Challenges pertaining to data and measurement are the likely culprits. Indeed, a rich literature has developed exploring the causes, consequences, and dynamics of ideological polarization in Congress. This has occurred, in no small part, due to the development and widespread availability of Dw-Nominate scores, a measure of MCs’ ideology estimated via roll call votes (Poole and Rosenthal 2007). No such off-the-shelf measure of incivility is available.

The task of measuring political incivility remains in its infancy, and I could identify few extant attempts to measure the usage of uncivil rhetoric in congressional communication. I seek to develop such a measure, and two goals inform my efforts. First, I aim to develop a measurement procedure that validly operationalizes the concept of incivility. Second, I seek to develop a measurement strategy that can capture the variation in incivility that may exist across different MCs’ campaign communication.

To measure incivility in congressional campaign communication, I draw on the outrage framework developed by Sobieraj and Berry (2011; 2014). These scholars define outrage as political communication that prompts visceral and emotional responses through sidestepping the “messy nuances of complex political issues in favor of melodrama, misrepresentative
exaggeration, mockery, and improbable forecasts of impending doom” (Sobieraj and Berry 2011, 20). Under this framework, the presence and prevalence of outrage in political communication are measured through 13 factors: insulting language, name calling, emotional display, emotional language, verbal fighting/sparring, character assassination, misrepresentative exaggeration, mockery, conflagration, ideologically extremizing language, slippery slope, belittling, and obscene language.17

While Sobieraj and Berry (2011; 2014) focus their analysis on the usage of outrage rhetoric by television commentators, radio talk show hosts, bloggers, and newspaper columnists, this measurement framework ought to translate well to the domain of elite political discourse. The varying dimensions of outrage rhetoric all involve attempts to embarrass and denigrate one’s political opponents. This type of communication is therefore ideal for measuring the extent to which MCs violate norms of civility. Although the concepts of outrage and incivility are not synonymous, Sobieraj and Berry (2011; 2014) conceptualize outrage as being a particularly egregious form of uncivil communication. Thus, the outrage framework will not capture the full universe of uncivil rhetoric, but this approach will identify the most blatant and dramatic violations of civility.18

This is the case because in order to prompt an angry response from the audience, those who use outrage as a rhetorical strategy exhibit significant disrespect for the target of their communication. Some dimensions of outrage involve explicit expressions of derision toward a

---

17 Sobieraj and Berry provide in-depth descriptions of each factor in their outrage codebook, which can be accessed at http://as.tufts.edu/politicalscience/sites/all/themes/asbase/assets/documents/berry/codebookOutrageIndustry.pdf. As I will explain, I use a modified set of factors to measure outrage in campaign communications. In the appendix, I provide examples and brief explanations for each type of outrage speech that I examine.

18 In other words, my analysis will produce a conservative estimate of the amount of incivility in congressional campaign communication.
subject – particularly the insulting language, name calling, character assassination, mockery, and belittling dimensions of outrage. The obscene language dimension involves directing a vulgar, profane expression toward a subject. Emotional displays, emotional language, and verbal fighting/sparring each involve a speaker demonstrating his or her fury and resentment toward a subject, thereby demonstrating that the subject is not worthy of respect. Misrepresentative exaggeration, conflagration, ideologically extremizing language, and slippery slope might be seen as the relatively mild forms of outrage, but they nevertheless indicate the same disrespect toward a subject that the other forms of outrage do. These forms of outrage all involve expressions so hyperbolic in nature that they significantly obscure the truth about a subject. Moreover, they obscure the truth in a manner that portrays the subject in a negative light. Because these forms of outrage involve extreme fabrications and downright falsehoods, the speaker is engaging in bad faith tactics that undermine respect for the target of the communication.

In this chapter and in the next two, then, the outrage coding scheme (with some modifications that I shall note) serves as my method of measuring incivility in congressional communication. Although outrage and incivility are not precisely the same, the coding scheme will capture the expressions of incivility that have considerable power to stand out to the audience and undermine respect for the target of the communication. When outrage is used, subjects are portrayed as something they are not, and they are portrayed in a starkly negative manner. These two ingredients combine to demonstrate the speaker’s disrespect for the subject – and, as noted, disrespect is the key to most scholarly conceptualizations of incivility (Jamieson et al. 2017).
Data and Methods

To test my first and second hypotheses, I need to use forms of campaign communication that are targeted to two distinct audiences: an MC’s primary constituency, and an MC’s reelection constituency. In the case of communication aimed at MCs’ primary constituency, campaign websites serve as an ideal source of data. Designers of congressional campaign websites report that supportive activists, supportive voters, and highly engaged voters comprise a disproportionately large share of the website audience. These groups visit campaign websites significantly more often than undecided voters and voters in general (Druckman, Kifer, and Parkin 2009). For my first hypothesis to receive support, MCs who are relatively vulnerable to intra-party electoral challengers would use more outrage rhetoric on their campaign websites than MCs who are relatively safe from intra-party electoral challengers.

While accessing a campaign website involves an internet user actively making the decision to locate and browse the website, consuming a television advertisement is a more passive activity. Web users control which websites they access, but television viewers do not control which commercials air on a station they are watching. Television advertisements will therefore tend to reach a less politically engaged and interested audience than campaign websites. Still, MCs strategically air their advertisements on shows that generally attract an audience receptive to their message (Herrnson 2016). All told, television advertisements should appeal to the reelection constituency to a greater extent than campaign websites. Television advertisements are still aimed at generating and motivating support for the MC, but the audience is broader and less politically engaged than the audience for campaign websites. For my second hypothesis to receive support, MCs who are relatively vulnerable to inter-party electoral
challengers would use more outrage rhetoric in their campaign television commercials than MCs who are relatively safe from inter-party electoral challengers.

Throughout the two weeks before the 2016 general election, I located all of the active official websites for all major party U.S. House candidates. I saved screen shots for each main section of each website. These sections typically provided a biography of the candidate, a description of the candidate’s issue positions, photos and videos from the campaign trail, campaign news, and pages where people could donate to the campaign or sign up to volunteer.

In 2016, 42 incumbent members of the House declined to seek reelection, leaving 393 incumbents who did seek reelection. Of these 393 incumbents, five were defeated in primary elections. This leaves 388 incumbents who appeared on the ballot in the general election. I located active campaign websites for 375 of these 388 MCs.19

I read the biography and issues pages for these 375 websites.20 To code the content on these pages, I drew on the codebook that Sobieraj and Berry (2011; 2014) use in their content analysis of the political media. For each sentence I read, I asked if anything in the sentence could be categorized as outrage speech, according to the coding scheme. If not, I read to the next sentence. If content in the sentence could be categorized as outrage speech, I identified the category in the coding scheme that best reflected the type of outrage being used.

After testing this coding scheme with a small number of websites, I made some minor adjustments. I viewed the insulting language, name calling, and character assassination factors as

---

19 See the appendix for a comparison of MCs who had active campaign websites with those MCs who did not have active campaign websites.

20 While MCs’ campaign websites differ in content, virtually all include a biography and a statement of the MC’s issue positions. I randomly sampled 100 of these websites and viewed the version of each website in the sample that was archived on the nearest date to the MC’s primary election. On all 100 websites, I found that the biography and issues pages had not changed at all. In other words, the versions of the biography and issues web pages that I captured prior to the general election were identical to the versions that appeared on the websites prior to the primary election.
somewhat redundant, and thus collapsed the three categories into a single category that I termed insulting language. Similarly, I found the misrepresentative exaggeration and conflagration categories to be quite similar while attempting to distinguish between them, so I collapsed these two categories into a single category for misrepresentative exaggeration. Emotional display proved difficult to detect in the written word, so I did not code for this category. The verbal fighting/sparring category is used when there are multiple speakers, so this category did not apply to my coding of campaign websites. I expected that I would not encounter any obscene language in either the campaign websites or advertisements, and this expectation proved correct. These adjustments to the coding scheme, plus the lack of any obscene language, left me with seven categories of outrage that encompass the full range of outrage rhetoric I observed.  

With these categories established, I read and coded the content on the biography and issues pages for the 375 campaign websites included in my analysis. The main dependent variable I generated for my analysis of campaign websites is the total count of sentences on each website containing content coded as outrage.

I examined campaign television advertisements through drawing on data collected by the Wesleyan Media Project. I used data on television advertisements from the 2012 campaign, which was the most recent data available at the time I conducted my analysis.

In the first step of my analysis of campaign advertisements, the population of interest is all airings of campaign advertisements sponsored by House incumbents. From this population, I randomly selected 200 observations. I viewed each advertisement in my sample and coded each sentence spoken during the advertisement as either containing outrage rhetoric or not containing

---

21 I provide examples and explanations for each of these categories in the appendix.
outrage rhetoric. For the sentences that did contain outrage rhetoric, I determined which category of outrage rhetoric best represented the content of the sentence. I used the seven categories of outrage that I employed for the campaign websites, with one slight adjustment: I changed the “emotional language” category to “emotional language/display,” since I was able to identify emotional displays in campaign advertisements. The main dependent variable I generated for my analysis of campaign advertisements is the total count of sentences spoken during each advertisement containing content coded as outrage.

In the second step of my analysis of campaign advertisements, the population of interest is all MCs who aired at least one campaign advertisement during the 2012 general election. I found that this population comprised 128 MCs. From this population, I took a random sample of 80 MCs. For each MC in the sample, I viewed all of the advertisements that his or her campaign committee produced during the 2012 general election campaign. I counted all outrage utterances contained in all of the campaign advertisements produced by the MC’s campaign committee. This time, then, my unit of analysis is the individual incumbent MC, and my dependent variable of interest is the count of sentences containing outrage in all commercials produced by the MC’s campaign committee. I will therefore evaluate my second hypothesis through using two different approaches – one approach that uses the individual advertisement as the unit of analysis, and one approach that uses the individual MC as the unit of analysis.

---

22 Each of the advertisements in the sample was 30 seconds in duration.

23 I use a single category for emotional language and emotional displays because, as Sobieraj and Berry’s codebook explains, these two forms of expression “will often present concurrently.” Emotional language involves someone saying that they feel a negative emotion (for example, saying “I am disgusted with President Obama!”), while emotional displays involve communicating in a way that demonstrates a negative emotion (for instance, shouting or speaking with an angry tone). As I found, most of the emotional language in campaign advertisements could also arguably be coded as emotional displays.
My first hypothesis involves the level of intra-party electoral competition faced by an MC. I measure this through the percentage of the vote that each MC received in the primary election during the previous election cycle. I expect that the percentage of the vote an MC receives in the primary is negatively associated with an MC’s vulnerability to an electoral challenge from within his or her own party. A relatively low vote share will signal to potential future challengers that the MC maintains weak support from within the party and is thus is vulnerable to a primary challenge. A relatively high vote share will signal the opposite – that the MC maintains strong support from within his or her own party, and credible prospective challengers should therefore avoid launching a primary challenge to the MC.

My second hypothesis involves the level of electoral competition an MC faces from the opposing party. To measure this level of competition, I used the electoral forecasts from the Cook Political Report to generate a measure of each race’s competitiveness. The Cook Political Report classifies each individual House race as tossup, lean, likely, or safe for each party. I scored an MC’s race as a 0 if it was categorized as a safe victory for the MC, 1 if the race was categorized as likely victory for the MC, 2 if the race leaned toward the MC, 3 if the race was a tossup, and 4 if the race leaned toward the candidate of the other party.

To generate these scores, I used the Cook Political Report’s first forecasts of congressional election outcomes that were published in the election years I examine. The

---

24 Thus, I use vote shares from the 2010 primaries for my analysis of campaign advertisements, and vote shares from the 2014 primaries for my analysis of campaign websites.

25 No MCs in my data set were in races categorized by the Cook Political Report as being a likely or safe victory for the other party.

26 I am not the first to use these forecasts to measure the competitiveness of House general elections. See Evans, Cordova, and Sipole (2014) as well as Keele, Fogarty, and Stimson (2004) for examples of political science research that use the Cook ratings to measure the competitiveness of congressional elections. I use the February ratings because Cook’s ratings typically become less favorable to incumbents as the general election draws nearer. Thus,
The forecasts I use for my analysis of the campaign websites from the 2016 election cycle were released in February 2016. Meanwhile, the forecasts I use for my analysis of campaign advertisements from the 2012 election cycle were released in February 2012.

In my analysis, I include a dummy variable indicating whether or not each MC faced a challenger from the opposing major party in the general election. MCs who are uncontested in the general election could use their lack of inter-party competitors as an opportunity to focus attention on their primary constituency and solidify support from within their own party. The same could be true of MCs who face token opposition from the opposing party.

To measure MCs’ ideology, I rely on Poole and Rosenthal’s Dw-Nominate scores from the 114th Congress (January 2015 through January 2017) for my analysis of campaign websites and Dw-Nominate scores from the 112th Congress (January 2011 through January 2013) for my analysis of campaign advertisements. I calculated the absolute value of each MC’s Dw-Nominate score to create a measure of ideological extremism. Scores that are relatively close to zero indicate more ideologically moderate MCs, while scores that are relatively far from zero indicate more ideologically extreme MCs. For my third hypothesis to receive support, more ideologically extreme MCs would use more outrage rhetoric in their campaign communications than less ideologically extreme MCs.

Since I am interested in how MCs respond to particular elements of their constituency rather than their full geographic constituency, I will statistically account for the average mass-level ideology of congressional districts. To do so, I use the estimates of district-level policy preferences generated by Tausanovitch and Warshaw (2013). Drawing on data from approximately 240,000 respondents in the Cooperative Congressional Election Studies, the February ratings will provide a conservative measure of how much electoral danger incumbents are experiencing.
Tausanovitch and Warshaw (2013) estimate the mean policy preference, along the liberal-conservative dimension, for the citizens in each congressional district. These scores range from a low of -1.08 (indicating the district with the most liberal average policy preferences) to 0.70 (indicating the district with the most conservative average policy preferences). Here, I am interested in how ideologically extreme a district is relative to the average district. Since the mean score is 0 (representing a district with a perfectly centrist average policy preference), I simply used the absolute value of the district ideology scores. Higher values on this variable therefore indicate mean district policy preferences that are relatively extreme, while lower values on this variable indicate mean district policy preferences that are relatively moderate.

In my statistical models, I include a dummy variable for MCs’ party affiliation, with Democrats coded as 1 and Republicans coded as 0. The electoral context can create elections that are particularly competitive for candidates from one of the two major parties. While uncertainty surrounded exactly which party the broader context in 2012 and 2016 favored, I opted to be cautious and thus controlled for the effects of differences in party affiliation.

I also include a dummy variable to indicate the gender of each MC, with female MCs coded as 1 and male MCs coded as 0. Female candidates tend to face more competition in congressional primary elections than do male candidates (Lawless and Pearson 2008). In addition, cultural norms may make violations of civility by female MCs less acceptable to the public than violations of civility by male MCs.

For my analysis of campaign websites, I need to account for the fact that MCs vary in the amount of content they offer on these websites. As such, I account for the number of pages I read on each MC’s website. I assume that more pages offer more opportunities for MCs to violate norms of civility.
Similarly, for the second step of my campaign advertisement analysis, in which my outcome of interest is the total count of outrage utterances in all of the ads produced by an MC’s campaign, I control for the number of advertisements produced by a candidate’s campaign committee. I assume that producing more advertisements offers more opportunities for MCs to violate norms of civility.

Finally, I use a dummy variable to account for whether or not an MC is in a state that uses a top-two primary system. In such states, candidates from all parties compete in a single primary election, with the top two vote-getters advancing to compete in the general election. Suggestive evidence indicates that the top-two primary system encourages more candidates to run, in comparison to the traditional primary election system. Reformers argue that the top-two system favors moderate candidates who have broad appeal, while political science research has found little evidence to support these claims and has actually found that candidates cater to their party’s base even more after the implementation of the top-two system. Out of an abundance of caution, I will account for whether or not MCs competed in top-two primary systems due to the added competition they may face and the uncertain effects of this system on their campaign strategy.

Results: Campaign Websites

I begin my analysis by inspecting the distribution of outrage types I observed from the campaign websites. All told, I found 1,202 sentences that contained one of the seven outrage


types. This amounts to an average of 3.21 sentences on the pages I read from each MC’s campaign website. Misrepresentative exaggeration and ideologically extremizing language were the two most common types of outrage rhetoric I observed. Combined, these two types of rhetoric comprised 59.65% of all outrage instances. Mockery/sarcasm was the least common type of outrage rhetoric I observed, as just nine of the 1,202 sentences containing outrage rhetoric were coded as containing mockery/sarcasm.

Table 1: Counts and Percentages of Outrage Types on Campaign Websites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Misrepresentive Exaggeration</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>37.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideologically Extremizing Language</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>21.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Language</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>12.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slippery Slope</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>11.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belittling</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>9.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insulting Language</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>6.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mockery/Sarcasm</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1,202</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The count of total outrage statements on an MC’s campaign website is the dependent variable for this stage of my analysis. Figure 1 offers a visual display of this variable. 1 is the modal number of outrage statements that appeared on MCs’ campaign websites, as 86 of the 375 campaign websites (22.93%) contained a single sentence that I coded as an outrage statement. The second most common outcome was 0 outrage statements, as 85 of the 375 campaign websites (22.67%) did not contain any sentences that I coded as an outrage statement.

Still, a handful of campaign websites did prove to be relatively uncivil in their content. 25 of the 375 campaign websites (6.67%) contained 10 or more sentences that I coded as containing an outrage statement. The campaign websites for Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA), Paul Gosar (R-
AZ), and Raul Grijalva (D-AZ) tied for the maximum observed count of sentences coded as containing a form of outrage. In total, 25 outrage statements appeared on the campaign websites for each of these MCs.\textsuperscript{29}

![Distribution of Outrage Statements on Campaign Websites](image)

Figure 1: Histogram displaying the frequency of various amounts of outrage statements appearing on MCs’ campaign websites.

To analyze why some MCs use more outrage rhetoric than others, I conducted a regression analysis to explain variation in this type of rhetoric. The dependent variable for this analysis is the count of sentences on the MC’s website containing some type of outrage rhetoric.

\textsuperscript{29} In the appendix, I present an analysis that excludes apparent outliers.
My key independent variables of interest include the percentage of the vote in the primary
election the MC received in 2014, a dummy variable indicating whether or not the 2016 general
election was uncontested, the competitiveness of the 2016 general election as measured through
the *Cook Political Report’s* forecasts from February 2016, the absolute value of the MC’s Dw-
Nominate score from the 114th Congress (January 2015 through January 2017), and the absolute
value of the mean policy preference (along the liberal-conservative dimension) for each MC’s
district, as reported by Tausanovitch and Warshaw (2013). The model also contains a dummy
variable indicating the party affiliation of the MC, a dummy variable indicating the gender of the
MC, the number of pages I read on the MC’s website, and whether or not the MC is from a state
that uses a top-two primary system. Because the dependent variable is measured as a count, I use
negative binomial regression for the analysis. Table 3 displays the results of the analysis.

Consistent with the expectations derived from my theory, I find a negative association
between the percentage of the vote MCs received in the previous primary election and the count
of outrage statements on their campaign website. Figure 2 depicts this association. The model

---

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Analysis of Campaign Websites**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St. Dev.</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Outrage Statements</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Vote</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>84.42</td>
<td>17.79</td>
<td>32.20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Uncontested</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Competitiveness</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Ideology</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abs. Dw-Nominate</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website Pages</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>8.83</td>
<td>6.07</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top-Two Primary</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
predicts 7.91 outrage statements for an MC who received 40% of the vote in the primary, 3.60 for an MC who received 70% of the vote, and 1.64 for an MC who was uncontested and received all of the votes cast in the primary. These results support Hypothesis 1. I expected that MCs facing high levels of electoral vulnerability from within their own party would be more likely than other MCs to target uncivil messages to their primary constituency, as measured through their usage of outrage rhetoric on their campaign website. This is precisely what I find.

Table 3: Explaining Outrage Rhetoric on MCs’ Campaign Websites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable:</th>
<th>Total Outrage Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Vote</td>
<td>-0.03**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Uncontested</td>
<td>0.47**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Competitiveness</td>
<td>-0.22**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Ideology</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abs. Dw-Nominate</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>-0.74**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website Pages</td>
<td>0.07**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top-Two Primary</td>
<td>-0.66**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.81**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log Likelihood</td>
<td>-770.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Estimates are from a negative binomial model. Dependent variable is the total count of outrage statements appearing on a given campaign website. *p < .05; **p < .01
In addition, I find a statistically significant association between whether or not the general election was uncontested and the count of outrage statements an MC used on his or her campaign website. This is consistent with my theoretical expectations. The model predicts that MCs who did not face any major party opposition in the 2016 election used 3.74 outrage statements on their campaign websites, while MCs who did face a major party opponent used 2.33 outrage statements on their campaign websites. Similarly, the competitiveness of the general election has a negative association with the utilization of outrage statements. Candidates

Figure 2: Plot displaying the relationship between the expected count of outrage statements on MCs’ campaign websites and the percentage of the vote received by MCs in the 2014 primary election. All other variables in the model reported in Table 3 are held constant at their means or modes. The shaded region indicates 95% confidence intervals around the predicted counts.
who entered 2016 as virtually certain to win the general election (scoring a 0 on the competitiveness measure) were predicted to use 2.60 outrage statements on their campaign websites, while candidates whose race slightly favored their challenger (scoring a 4 on the competitiveness measure) were predicted to use 1.04 outrage statements. Such outcomes are explainable through my theory. Candidates who are unopposed or only face token opposition in the general election could perceive an intra-party challenge as their most pressing electoral
threat, leading them to place more emphasis on targeting uncivil campaign appeals to their primary constituency.

The coefficient for the measure of absolute district ideology does not significantly differ from 0. Thus, MCs in relatively centrist districts did not tend to use more or less outrage rhetoric on their campaign websites than MCs in more ideologically extreme districts. Just as the average ideological distance from the center among the district’s mass public had no effect on MCs’ usage of outrage rhetoric, neither did the ideological positioning of the MCs themselves. The coefficient for the measure of each MC’s absolute Dw-Nominate score from the 114th Congress (January 2015 through January 2017) does not significantly differ from 0. Thus, my third hypothesis – predicting that ideologically extreme MCs would use more uncivil rhetoric than ideologically moderate MCs – does not receive support from my analysis of campaign websites.

My statistical model also finds that incumbent Democratic MCs used significantly fewer outrage statements on their campaign websites than did incumbent Republican MCs, controlling for the effects of the other variables in the model. Candidates in states with a top-two primary system used significantly fewer outrage statements on their campaign websites than did the candidates from states that do not use the top-two system. Female MCs did not use fewer outrage statements on their campaign websites than did male MCs.

Results: Campaign Advertisements (Analysis #1)

As with my analysis of campaign websites, I begin my analysis of campaign advertisements from the 2012 election with an inspection of the various types of outrage rhetoric used by MCs in this medium. For the 200 ads I randomly sampled from the population of all airings of all ads, I recorded the types of outrage I observed. My intention is that this represents
the types of outrage present across the broader population of all airings of all ads, so that I can get a sense of the most prevalent types of outrage that the television audience encounters.

Table 4: Counts and Percentages of Outrage Types on Campaign Advertisements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insulting Language</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>25.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belittling</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>21.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misrepresentative Exaggeration</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>18.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideologically Extremizing Language</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Language/Display</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mockery/Sarcasm</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slippery Slope</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>233</td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Insulting language and belittling emerge as the two most frequently utilized forms of outrage communication on the campaign advertisements in my sample. Together, insulting language and belittling accounted for 47.21% of all the outrage statements in the campaign advertisements. These two types of outrage only accounted for 15.48% of all outrage statements on the campaign websites I analyzed. The two most common types of outrage statements on the campaign websites, misrepresentative exaggeration and ideologically extremizing language, were the third and fourth most common types of outrage on the campaign advertisements.

The modal number of outrage statements for campaign advertisements is 0. Of the 200 advertisements I coded, 104 did not contain any outrage statements. Thus, 52% of the 200 advertisements contained no outrage statements, while 48% of the advertisements contained at least one outrage statement. Congresswoman Michele Bachmann (R-MN) ran an advertisement that contained seven outrage statements in just 30 seconds – the maximum observed count of outrage statements in any of the advertisements I sampled.
For the MCs who sponsored an advertisement in my sample, I identified the share of the primary election vote received by the MC in 2010. I used the Cook Political Report's forecasts from February 2012 to rate the competitiveness of each MC’s general election. However, I found that no MCs in the sample were uncontested in the general election, so I did not include the dichotomous uncontested general election measure in my analysis of campaign advertisements. Finally, I found the absolute value of the average ideology reported by Tausanovitch and Warshaw (2013) for each district in which the MCs sought election, I identified the absolute value of each MC’s Dw-Nominate score from the 112th Congress (January 2011 through
January 2013), and I created dichotomous indicators for the MCs’ party affiliation, gender, and the type of primary election used by their state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St. Dev.</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Outrage Statements in Ad</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Vote for Ad Sponsor</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>83.61</td>
<td>19.62</td>
<td>39.10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Competitiveness for Ad Sponsor</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Ideology for Ad Sponsor</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abs. Dw-Nominate of Ad Sponsor</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad Sponsor a Democrat?</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad Sponsor a Female?</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad Sponsor in Top-Two Primary State?</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With these variables, I estimated a negative binomial regression model to identify the factors that explain the usage of outrage rhetoric in campaign advertisements. The model is reported in Table 6. Only one coefficient significantly differs from 0 at conventional levels of statistical significance, as I find a positive and significant coefficient for the competitiveness of the general election. The model indicates that ads sponsored by MCs in more competitive general election races are expected to contain relatively more outrage rhetoric than ads sponsored by MCs in less competitive general election races. My second hypothesis therefore receives support from the statistical model, as I hypothesized that more uncivil messages would be targeted to an MC’s reelection constituency when an MC faces relatively high levels of electoral competition from the other party.
Figure 5 displays the relationship between the competitiveness of the general election and the utilization of outrage rhetoric in campaign advertisements. An advertisement sponsored by an MC with a competitiveness score of 0 (indicating the lowest possible level of competitiveness) is predicted to contain 0.60 sentences containing outrage rhetoric. An advertisement sponsored by an MC with a competitiveness score of 2 (indicating a slight advantage for the MC over his or her opponent) is predicted to use 1.11 sentences containing outrage rhetoric. Finally, an advertisement sponsored by an MC in a race scoring a 4 for competitiveness (indicating that the Cook Political Report slightly favored the candidate of the other party to win) is predicted to use 2.04 sentences containing outrage rhetoric in a given 30 second campaign advertisement.

Table 6: Explaining Outrage Rhetoric on Campaign Advertisements (Ad-Level Analysis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dependent variable:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outrage Statements in Ad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Vote</td>
<td>-0.01 (0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Competitiveness</td>
<td>0.31** (0.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Ideology</td>
<td>-0.16 (0.87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abs. Dw-Nominate</td>
<td>1.14 (0.97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>-0.34 (0.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.08 (0.27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top-Two Primary</td>
<td>-0.93 (0.62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.38 (0.99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log Likelihood</td>
<td>-283.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Estimates are from a negative binomial model. Dependent variable is the total count of outrage statements appearing on a given campaign television commercial. *p < .05; **p < .01
While the level of intra-party vulnerability faced by an MC influenced incivility on campaign websites, this characteristic of the primary election environment had no association with incivility in campaign advertisements. This supports my theoretical expectations that MCs will tend to target uncivil messages to their primary constituency when their electoral vulnerability comes from within their own party, and they will tend to target uncivil messages to their reelection constituency when their electoral vulnerability comes from the other major party.

Figure 5: Plot displaying the relationship between the expected count of outrage statements on MCs’ campaign television advertisements and the competitiveness of the general election. Higher competitiveness scores indicate more competitive races. All other variables in the model reported in Table 6 are held constant at their means or modes. The vertical bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.
Uncivil campaign messages are strategically targeted to different parts of the constituency in response to the nature of an MC’s electoral threat.

Just as my third hypothesis did not receive support from my analysis of campaign websites, this hypothesis does not receive support from the first step of my analysis of campaign advertisements. The coefficient for absolute Dw-Nominate scores does not significantly differ from 0, indicating that an ad sponsor’s distance from the ideological center did not influence the usage of uncivil rhetoric in campaign advertisements.

**Results: Campaign Advertisements (Analysis #2)**

As I have noted, I can also evaluate my hypotheses through altering the unit of analysis and examining television advertisements at the MC level. Altering the unit of analysis in this way yields an additional potential dependent variable of interest: the total count of outrage statements in all of the advertisements produced by a given MC’s campaign. In what follows, I provide an analysis that employs this dependent variable.

For 80 randomly selected MCs, I viewed all of the ads produced by the MC’s campaign and counted the total amount of outrage statements in these ads. As Figure 6 displays, 26 of the 80 MCs (32.50%) did not use any outrage statements in any of the ads produced by their campaign. The remaining 54 MCs (67.50%) used at least one outrage statement in the ads produced by their campaign. 16 of the 80 MCs (20.00%) used at least 10 outrage statements in the ads produced by their campaign.
Table 7: Descriptive Statistics for Campaign Advertisements (MC-Level Analysis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St. Dev.</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outrage Statements in All of MC’s Ads</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>5.53</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Vote Share for MC</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>84.49</td>
<td>18.61</td>
<td>33.00</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Competitiveness for MC</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Ideology for MC</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abs. Dw-Nominate of MC</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC a Democrat?</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC a Female?</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC in a Top-Two Primary State?</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count of Ads Produced by MC</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>7.91</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6: Histogram displaying the frequency of various amounts of outrage statements appearing in the ads produced by each of the 80 MCs included in the sample.
The findings reported in Table 8 provide even more support for Hypothesis 2. Controlling for the effects of the other variables in the model, the competitiveness of the general election is positively associated with the count of outrage statements contained in the ads produced by an MC’s campaign.

Figure 7 offers a visual display of these results. Holding the other variables in the model constant at their means or modes, I find that an MC in a general election that scores a 0 for competitiveness is expected to produce television ads containing a total of 2.50 outrage...
statements. An MC scoring a 1 for general election competitiveness (indicating a likely victory for the MC) is expected to produce television ads containing a total of 3.77 outrage statements, while an MC scoring a 2 for general election competitiveness (indicating that the race leans toward the MC) is expected to produce television ads containing a total of 5.69 outrage statements.

Figure 7: Plot displaying the relationship between the expected count of outrage statements contained in all of an MC’s ads and the competitiveness of the general election. Higher competitiveness scores indicate more competitive races. All other variables in the model reported in Table 8 are held constant at their means or modes. The vertical bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.
Further increases can be observed for MCs in even more competitive races. MCs in races considered a “toss-up” (a 3 on the general election competitiveness variable) are expected to produce ads containing a total of 8.57 outrage statements. Finally, the MCs I observed who were in the most electoral trouble – scoring a 4 on the general election competitiveness scale – are expected to produce ads containing a total of 12.93 outrage statements.

While these results support Hypothesis 2, I once again find no support for Hypothesis 3. The results reported in Table 8 indicate no statistically significant association between the absolute Dw-Nominate score of an MC, and the count of outrage statements in the campaign advertisements produced by the MC. Yet again, the ideology of an MC has no apparent association with the usage of outrage statements in the context of campaign communication.

Discussion and Conclusion

Through drawing on the measurement scheme developed by Sobieraj and Berry (2011; 2014), I have sought to measure the utilization of uncivil rhetoric in congressional campaign communication. I found that the usage of such rhetoric is positively associated with electoral vulnerability. MCs strategically target uncivil rhetoric in response to the nature of this vulnerability. Those who exhibit vulnerability to a challenger from within their own party narrowly target uncivil rhetoric to their primary constituency. By contrast, those who display vulnerability in the context of a general election target uncivil rhetoric more broadly, using modes of communication for this rhetoric that will reach their reelection constituency. I found no evidence to suggest that the civility or incivility of campaign rhetoric is driven by the ideological position of the candidate. Instead, MCs crafted and targeted campaign messages in a manner that strategically responds to the nature of the electoral threat they face.
The findings in this chapter contribute to the broader literature on campaign strategy. Prior research has shown that MCs in competitive races are more likely to use negative campaigning than MCs in uncompetitive races (Kahn and Kenney 1999). However, negative campaigning is a broad concept. Negative campaigning can involve the expression of “facts and differences,” just as it can involve “name-calling, contempt, and derision of the opposition” (Brooks and Geer 2007, 1). The outrage framework steers the researcher toward examining the attacks that tend to fall in the latter camp. Indeed, outrage rhetoric seeks to caricature, embarrass, and deride the political opposition. Thus, the competition of races influences the utilization of negative campaigning as a whole (which previous research has shown), and competition more specifically influences the usage of the uncivil type of negative campaigning (which this chapter has shown). Moreover, intra-party and inter-party competition both appear to motivate the uncivil form of negative campaigning.

This chapter displays the importance of examining campaigns with multiple types of data. In their review of research on the conduct and strategy of political campaigns, Lau and Rovner (2009) write that “limiting attention to only one aspect of a political campaign provides at best an incomplete image, and at worst a misleading picture, of the entire campaign” (301). This chapter shows why Lau and Rovner (2009) offer an important insight. With multiple communication methods at their disposal, candidates can strategically target different elements of their constituency with different messages.

The next two chapters of my dissertation extend the analysis in this chapter through examining other ways that MCs use uncivil rhetoric to pursue their goals. For instance, MCs may appear on cable news shows – where outrage rhetoric is commonplace (Sobieraj and Berry 2014) – and use a brand of uncivil discourse to appeal to the audience. This could result in the MC
gaining more support and donations from outside his or her state and district, as the MC builds a reputation for faithfully engaging in partisan warfare. Building this reputation could also help an MC gain political influence, given the emphasis in the contemporary Congress on waging the permanent campaign and fighting the unceasing battle for majority control (Lee 2016).

Finally, this analysis might be applied to the public policy goals of MCs. Jones (1970) argues that in pursuing their goal of enacting good public policy, minority party members confront a choice between constructively engaging in the policymaking process or attempting to gain the majority. The premise is that MCs can pursue their policy goals through a legislatively-based or electorally-based approach, either devoting their time and resources to actual legislating or aiming to get more like-minded members elected. In the present political context – a polarized Congress with changes in majority control frequently viewed as possible – minority party members would likely prefer the electorally-based approach. Indeed, polarization could cause MCs to view the odds of fruitful cooperation with the opposing party as slim, and they would view the prospect of gaining majority control as tantalizing for their pursuit of good public policy. Thus, within the context of the perpetual campaign, uncivil rhetoric could act as a tool that minority party members use to generate outrage and advocate for the election of more copartisans.

This chapter is just the beginning, then, of understanding incivility as a strategic political behavior. By contrast, one common conceptualization of civility and incivility focuses on the regulation of one’s emotions. Maintaining control of one’s emotions, in this account, enables one to behave rationally and civilly. Losing control of one’s emotions leads to irrational behavior and incivility (Herbst 2010). This chapter, as well as the next two chapters, challenge this prominent conceptualization of civility and incivility. MCs are motivated by the goals of reelection,
increased influence within Congress, and the pursuit of good public policy (Fenno 1973). Rather than being an irrational behavior, violating norms of civility can be entirely consistent with the pursuit of these goals.
CHAPTER 3: INCIVILITY IN CONGRESSIONAL FLOOR SPEECHES

Having argued that uncivil communication serves as a strategic campaign tactic for MCs facing strong electoral competition, I now turn to a different communication context. This chapter examines communication that occurs within Congress itself and investigates the interplay between civility and the policymaking process. When MCs communicate inside the halls of Congress, what prompts these MCs to use a civil or uncivil approach?

The divergence between Bob Michel (R-IL) and Newt Gingrich (R-GA) is instructive. In 1983, several years before he gained a spot in party leadership, Gingrich and other Republican MCs formed the Conservative Opportunity Society (COS), a group with the mission of “sharpening partisan distinctions on the House floor” (Connelly and Pitney 1994, 27). The COS members became well-known for their “bomb-throwing” tactics in the floor speeches they frequently gave, as Gingrich and his COS colleagues often violated norms of civility in expressing harsh criticisms of the majority Democrats (Pearson 2015, 26). By contrast, in his role as the House Republican minority leader from 1981 through 1995, Michel was known for being particularly civil in his dealings with the Democrats. Michel regularly compromised and cooperated with MCs on the other side of the aisle, and he criticized the incivility of Gingrich and the COS (Pearson 2015). In a remarkable public rebuke of a prominent faction within his own party, Michel commented, “I am personally uncomfortable being a perpetual antagonist or
having to get on the floor every day bitching and griping about being run over by the majority. I think there are more important things to be done.”

Gingrich and the COS were unwilling to compromise or cooperate with the Democrats, and they signaled this through frequently using uncivil rhetoric in their floor speeches. While Michel’s cooperation and compromises with the Democrats may have won modest policy victories for his party, Gingrich and the COS were not seeking modest victories. They were seeking more drastic change – and incivility is often a tool used by individuals seeking this kind of change (Schudson 1997). As I argued in the previous chapter, this is because incivility violates social and institutional norms, and thereby serves as an attention-grabber. Gingrich and the COS certainly grabbed attention and contributed to the disruption of comity in Congress (Theriault 2013).

The linkage between incivility and the legislative process matters for scholarly understandings of MCs’ goal-seeking behavior. Rather than simply being a rude behavior or a sign of emotional volatility, I continue to theorize that incivility is a form of strategic behavior driven by the incentives and goal-seeking behavior of MCs. Incivility is attention-grabbing, as it represents a departure from social norms. Incivility is also disruptive, as it invites a response from the target of the incivility. In developing my theory, then, I ask: which MCs benefit from grabbing attention and starting a fight? I argue that it is those MCs who do not believe that constructive engagement in the lawmaking process will lead to the achievement of their

---


31 The chamber was typically empty during these speeches, but the speeches were recorded and broadcast by the C-SPAN cameras in the chamber. As an excellent example of how incivility prompts further incivility, then-Speaker Tip O’Neill (D-MA) became agitated by the COS floor speeches. O’Neill had “the cameras pan the empty chamber, and he verbally struck out” at the COS (Frantzich and Sullivan 1996, 289). In fact, O’Neill’s remarks were struck from the Congressional Record for being a personal attack against Gingrich, which violated House rules.
policymaking goals. Indeed, as I will argue, a variety of MCs have more to gain from using
attention-grabbing, disruptive tactics on the floor of the House than they do from contributing to
a more civil environment.

To test my theoretical expectations, I measure incivility in 7,155 speeches given
throughout a four-year period in the House of Representatives. Consistent with my theoretical
expectations, I find that ideologically extreme MCs and members of the minority party account
for a disproportionately large share of uncivil rhetoric. I also find that MCs are more likely to
violate norms of civility as the next general election draws nearer. Consistent with my
expectations, I find that majority party leaders are less likely than other MCs to engage in
incivility, while minority party leaders are more likely than other MCs to engage in incivility.
However, I do not find evidence that relatively ineffective legislators use more uncivil rhetoric
than relatively effective legislators. All told, I largely find that incivility is the tool of MCs who
have more to gain through an electoral approach to pursuing their policy goals rather than
engaging in the legislative process.

Incivility and Lawmaking

I begin by returning to the assumption that MCs are motivated by three goals: getting
reelected, enacting good public policy, and increasing their political power (Fenno 1973). In this
chapter, I focus on MCs’ goal of enacting good public policy. I will theorize about how civility
and incivility relate to MCs’ pursuit of their legislative goals.

When legislation in Congress is successfully passed, the winning coalitions tend to be
bipartisan, ideologically diverse, and significantly larger than the minimum-winning coalition
(Krehbiel 1998). Indeed, addressing important public policy problems and passing substantive
legislation typically involves constructing broad, bipartisan majorities (Adler and Wilkerson
Unsurprisingly, then, the most effective lawmakers in Congress are adept at building bipartisan support for their proposals (Volden and Wiseman 2014).

As Jones (1970) argues, MCs confront a choice in pursuing their goal of good public policy. They can constructively engage in the lawmaking process, or they can focus on the goal of getting more like-minded MCs elected. The former option often involves making compromises and building coalitions across party and ideological divides. The latter option, meanwhile, involves resisting compromises and refusing to become part of the broad, diverse coalitions that are often constructed to achieve policy changes. This option involves making the case to one’s colleagues, the media, and the public that the ideal policy outcomes are best pursued through withdrawing from legislative participation, and through focusing on the next election. After all, the desired policy outcomes could be an election away, once more like-minded MCs join the institution.

This is where incivility enters the picture. A crucial function of incivility is to distinguish between an in-group and an out-group, between the “us” and “them” (Jamieson et al. 2017). To accomplish this, incivility makes the views of the out-group appear particularly extreme, and it generates anger among the in-group toward the out-group (Jamieson and Cappella 2008; Ost 2004). Meanwhile, the target of incivility may experience a strong emotional response, and a reduction in “effective cognitive processing, productivity, and creativity” (Jamieson et al. 2017, 208) For these reasons, targets of incivility will frequently use uncivil retorts of their own. Incivility begets incivility. Thus, for people who want to do battle with their political opponents in a disruptive manner, incivility is often their tool of choice. Indeed, incivility serves as a “strategic tool in the arsenal of individuals seeking dramatic social or political change”
(Jamieson et al. 2017, 209). When people use uncivil rhetoric, they are signaling that they find the status quo to be unacceptable.

Because of this, incivility can be placed within the framework of Jones (1970). When asking which MCs are likely to be civil or uncivil within the legislative context, one must also ask which MCs are likely able to participate effectively in the legislative process and be pleased with the products of this process. If MCs can effectively participate in the lawmaking process and are likely to be pleased by the policy outcomes produced in Congress, then they will likely remain civil when communicating within Congress because they have nothing to gain from starting a partisan battle. The disruption and battling produced by incivility are impediments to their desired outcomes.

On the other hand, MCs who have little ability or little desire to pursue their goal of good public policy through participating and engaging in the legislative process are less likely to remain civil. This is because they are likely to take the second path detailed by Jones (1970) – they are likely to prefer an electoral approach to achieving their goal of enacting good public policy. These MCs can gain from an uncivil communication strategy. Because incivility is attention-grabbing, these MCs can use incivility to disrupt cooperation and comity within Congress. In doing so, they can signal to colleagues, the press, and the public that the parties and various ideological factions should not be working together, that the policies being produced are unsatisfactory, and that the focus should be squarely on the next election. In sum, MCs who do not have their needs met by the legislative process have little to lose through disrupting institutional comity.

This discussion leads me to argue that incivility within the legislative context can be understood as a strategic behavior. MCs who do not desire to cooperate or compromise with the
other side will be more likely to violate norms of civility compared to MCs who are willing to cooperate or compromise with the other side. This is because incivility carries the potential of disrupting the normal operations of an institution. In Congress, this means the disruption of the legislative process. Indeed, because incivility is a demonstration of disrespect for the other side, incivility signals that an MC prefers to pursue their public policy objectives through focusing on electing more like-minded members rather than constructively engaging with the other side.

If my framework is valid, there are multiple outcomes that I should observe when empirically examining incivility. First, as an election draws nearer, MCs are likely to prefer to pursue their policy objectives through an electoral rather than a legislative strategy. Elections provide opportunities for MCs to highlight the flaws of the other side and to promote the idea of electing more like-minded members. Indeed, as elections approach, MCs should feel more of a need to crystalize the differences between the parties, and to denigrate the other side. This is particularly the case due to the competitiveness of congressional majorities (Lee 2016). As each election approaches, each party finds itself confronted with the possibility of gaining or losing the majority. Thus, as elections approach, MCs will tend to pursue their public policy goal through the electoral approach rather than constructive, vigorous engagement in the legislative process.

_Hypothesis 1: As a general election approaches, MCs will use uncivil rhetoric at increasingly high rates._

Second, MCs in the minority party have much more difficulty constructively engaging in the lawmaking process than MCs in the majority party. Particularly in the House, the majority party controls the policy agenda and can block proposals of the minority party from being considered (Cox and McCubbins 1993; 2005). I predict that this will lead MCs in the minority
party to tend to prefer an electorally-based strategy of pursuing their public policy goals, as opposed to focusing on constructive engagement in the policymaking process. Minority party MCs should perceive little cost in disrupting the operations of the institution because the status quo is biased against the achievement of their policy goals.

MCs in the majority party have more of an interest in maintaining a sense of comity in Congress. Due to majority party’s greater ability to control the agenda and achieve its desired policy outcomes, majority party MCs will experience greater satisfaction than minority party MCs with the status quo functioning of the policymaking process. This gives the majority party MCs little reason to disrupt the institutional comity in Congress or to pursue an electoral approach to achieving their policy goals. After all, majority party MCs should find that the structure of the policymaking process is stacked in their favor. They can therefore pursue their policy goals through constructive engagement in the policymaking process, as opposed to disruptive tactics that aim to spark partisan battles.

**Hypothesis 2: MCs belonging to the minority party will use more uncivil rhetoric than MCs belonging to the majority party.**

Third, ideologically extreme MCs will quite plausibly tend to be unsatisfied with the type of legislation that often gets enacted into law. Because the enactment of laws often requires cobbling together a broad, diverse coalition (Krehbiel 1998), these laws will often be the product of compromises. Each party might get some, but not all, of what it wants. Such outcomes could prove displeasing to ideologically extreme MCs, as bipartisan dealmaking is not conducive to constructing the type of legislation that MCs on the extremes view as consistent with their ideological positioning. As with Gingrich, these MCs will likely tend to prefer more extreme change than the normal outcomes of the legislative process usually provide. Thus, I predict that
ideologically extreme MCs are likely to prefer an electorally-based approach to advancing their policymaking goals.

*Hypothesis 3: The more ideologically extreme MCs will use more uncivil rhetoric than the less ideologically extreme MCs.*

Fourth, in choosing between an electorally-based or legislatively-based strategy of pursuing policy goals, some MCs might find that for a variety of potential reasons, their ability to make a legislative impact is limited. These MCs might discover that their lack of lawmaking talent, their lack of experience, or their lack of power within the institution inhibits their ability to pursue their policymaking goals through constructive engagement in the legislative process. This could lead these MCs to turn to an electoral approach for pursuing their policymaking goals. Such MCs might perceive that they have little stake in maintaining institutional comity, given their relative inability to achieve desired policy outcomes.

*Hypothesis 4: MCs who are less effective legislators will use more uncivil rhetoric than MCs who are more effective legislators.*

If I am correct that MCs perceive a trade-off between incivility and legislative productivity, then majority party leaders should prefer to avoid uncivil rhetoric when communicating with their colleagues. These MCs have the greatest opportunity and responsibility to pass policies and maintain legislative productivity. Given the institutional structuring of the policymaking process, achieving these outcomes tends to require at least some bipartisan compromising. This gives majority party leaders an interest in maintaining a sense of institutional comity. Since they will often need the cooperation of at least some minority party MCs, majority party leaders should have little interest in going out of their way to offend these MCs.
Hypothesis 5: Majority party leaders and committee chairs will use less uncivil rhetoric than other MCs.

The incentives for minority party leaders are quite different than those of majority party leaders. The battle between Newt Gingrich and Bob Michel was a battle about what a congressional minority party should be. Gingrich won the battle. House Republicans ultimately came to prefer the bomb-throwing tactics of Gingrich over the cool-headed compromising of Michel (Theriault 2013). I hypothesize that Gingrich provided a model for minority party leaders to follow. Gingrich believed that his policy goals could best be pursued through disrupting the institutional comity in Congress, and using this disruption to highlight the distinctions between the two parties. In doing so, he could set his party up for the next election, in hopes that his party would take the majority and thus be able to control the policy agenda. Rather than cooperating with the majority party, then, Gingrich opted for a strategy that aimed to disrupt the majority’s ability to govern while also crystalizing the differences between the parties in advance of the next election.

Hypothesis 6: Minority party leaders and ranking committee members will use more uncivil rhetoric than other MCs.

Data and Methods

To test my hypotheses, I draw on one-minute speeches in the House of Representatives. One-minute speeches provide an opportunity for members of the House to speak on a topic of their choice. Typically, these speeches take place at the beginning of each day of legislative business, following the opening prayer, the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, and approval of the Journal from the previous day of legislative business.32 Since 1979, one-minute speeches

---

32 The Journal provides a summary of the House’s legislative proceedings.
have been broadcast on C-SPAN (Cook 1989). Along with those who are physically present on
the House floor, the audience for one-minute speeches often includes a television audience of
other MCs, congressional staffers, the party leadership teams, members of the press, and
congressional observers (Pearson and Dancey 2011).

These speeches matter. Because they are given at the beginning of the day, news outlets
might use footage from the speeches when covering the day’s events. Members commonly share
videos of their one-minute speeches online. The party leadership teams often use the speeches to
transmit the party’s message of the day to other members of Congress, members of the media,
and anyone else who views the speeches on television or the internet. One-minute speeches have
the ability to set a particular tone for the day. In fact, during the 104th, 105th, and 106th
Congresses, a bipartisan coalition of over 50 MCs called for one-minute speeches to be
eliminated or moved to the end of the day, given that these speeches often feature partisan and
uncivil rhetoric. These MCs perceived that the partisan, uncivil rhetoric from one-minute
speeches set a contentious tone that carried through the rest of the day.

In sum, the content of one-minute speeches is an ideal source of data for understanding
incivility within the halls of Congress. Since MCs can discuss whatever they wish, examining
one-minute speeches will effectively capture an MC’s inclination to use civil or uncivil rhetoric.
Indeed, due to the freedom given to MCs in one-minute speeches, these speeches are likely to
reflect MCs’ broader communication style and strategy. In addition, MCs have identified
incivility in these speeches as being problematic, as undermining institutional comity. This
indicates that one-minute speeches are not ignored, but rather provide MCs an important

33 This stretch of three Congresses spans from January 1995 to January 2001.

opportunity to perform for one another, to be seen and heard by a variety of their colleagues. MCs interested in grabbing attention and disrupting institutional comity can therefore use one-minute speeches to help pursue these goals.

To measure uncivil rhetoric in one-minute speeches, I use the modified outrage coding scheme that I developed for my analysis of campaign websites and advertisements. As with my analysis in Chapter 2, I seek to measure outrage rhetoric through identifying instances of the seven types of outrage in the coding scheme: misrepresentative exaggeration, ideologically extremizing language, emotional language, slippery slope, belittling, insulting language, and mockery/sarcasm. I read all one-minute speeches given in the 109th Congress (January 2005 to January 2007) and the 110th Congress (January 2007 to January 2009). As I read each sentence in each one-minute speech, I asked if the sentence contained any content qualifying as one of the seven types of outrage. Through following this process, I recorded a count of sentences in each individual one-minute speech containing some form of outrage. For each Congress, I also determined the total count of outrage statements uttered in all of the one-minute speeches by each MC.

For each speech, I identified the count of days between the speech and the next general election. This enables me to test Hypothesis 1, as I expect a negative association between the count of days until the next election and the count of outrage statements contained in a given one-minute speech.

Given my measures of outrage at the speech level and at the MC level, I can test Hypothesis 2 in two ways. First, for each speech in my data set, I determined the party affiliation of the speaker and coded my majority party variable 1 if the speaker belonged to the majority

---

35 These are currently the two most recent Congresses for which I have the full text files of all one-minute speeches given during the Congress.
party, and 0 if the speaker belonged to the minority party. In this way, I can test Hypothesis 2 through using each speech as the unit of analysis. I expect that speeches delivered by minority party MCs will contain more outrage statements than speeches delivered by majority party MCs. With my measure of the count of outrage statements uttered by each MC, I can also test Hypothesis 2 through using each individual MC as the unit of analysis. I expect that MCs belonging to the minority party will utter more outrage statements during a Congress than MCs belonging to the majority party. Importantly, majority control of Congress flipped between the two Congresses I am examining. The Republicans maintained majority control of the House during the 109th Congress, while the Democrats gained majority control of the House for the 110th Congress. Thus, my analysis will address how MCs who served in both Congresses changed in their use of uncivil rhetoric when they moved from the minority to the majority, or vice versa.

Testing Hypothesis 3 requires that I obtain a measure of ideological extremity. As with the previous chapter, I will do this through computing the absolute Dw-Nominate score for each MC. Higher scores on this variable indicate MCs who have relatively extreme ideological stances. For my speech-level analysis, I determined the absolute Dw-Nominate score for each speaker. I expect that speeches given by more ideologically extreme MCs will contain more outrage statements than speeches given by less ideologically extreme MCs. For my MC-level analysis, meanwhile, I expect that more ideologically extreme MCs will utter more outrage statements during a Congress than less ideologically extreme MCs.

To assess Hypothesis 4, I draw on the Legislative Effectiveness Scores (LES) generated by Volden and Wiseman (2014). LES encompass the number of bills sponsored by each member, as well as the number of those bills that received action in committee, beyond committee, or on
the floor of the House. LES also account for whether or not a bill gaining action beyond committee consideration was passed by the House or became law. The further along a bill travels in the legislative process, the more the sponsor is rewarded in his or her LES. These rewards are weighted differently across bill types – members receive the largest boosts in their LES for substantive and significant bills, lower boosts for substantive bills, and the lowest boosts for bills of a commemorative nature. Thus, higher LES indicate more legislatively effective MCs.

For my speech-level analysis, I identified the LES for each speaker. Hypothesis 4 will gain support if speeches delivered by MCs with lower LES contain more outrage statements than speeches delivered by MCs with higher LES. For my MC-level analysis, Hypothesis 4 will gain support if MCs with lower LES utter more outrage statements during a Congress than MCs with higher LES. Such a finding would indicate that MCs with greater propensities to violate norms of civility are less effective legislators than MCs who tend to be more civil.

Assessing Hypotheses 5 and 6 involves identifying the party and committee leaders for both the majority and minority parties. I define party leaders as the Speaker of the House, the majority and minority leaders, and the majority and minority whips. These constitute the party leadership positions that are particularly high-profile in nature. Committee leaders include the chair and ranking member of all standing committees. I created two dummy variables to assess Hypotheses 5 and 6. The first of these variables codes all MCs as 1 who are majority party leaders or committee chairs. All other MCs are coded as 0 for this variable. The second of these

---

36 Volden and Wiseman (2014) consider a bill substantive and significant if it was mentioned in a *CQ Almanac* article and consider a bill commemorative if it involved renaming something or offering recognition. All other bills fall into the substantive category. Substantively significant legislation is weighted 10 times more than commemorative legislation and twice as much as substantive legislation, in terms of how each type factors into the overall LES for a member.
variables codes all MCs as 1 who are minority party leaders or ranking committee members. All other MCs are coded as 0 for this variable.

Hypothesis 5 will gain support in my speech-level analysis if speeches given by majority party and committee leaders contain significantly fewer outrage statements than speeches given by other MCs. This hypothesis will be supported by my MC-level analysis if MCs holding majority leadership positions utter significantly fewer outrage statements during a Congress than other MCs. Hypothesis 6, meanwhile, will be supported by my speech-level analysis if speeches given by minority party and committee leaders contain significantly more outrage statements than speeches given by other MCs. This hypothesis will be supported by my MC-level analysis if MCs holding minority leadership positions utter significantly more outrage statements during a Congress than other MCs.

In both my speech-level analysis and my MC-level analysis, I will account for the number of years served by each MC prior to the Congress in which they are serving. Long-serving MCs are more likely than newer MCs to be effective legislators (Volden and Wiseman 2014). In addition, to the extent that such norms still existed in the 109th and 110th Congresses, long-serving MCs may be relatively likely to have learned and adhere to norms of civility. A relatively long career of service in the House could lead MCs to learn the importance of civil, bipartisan cooperation for achieving their public policy goals. However, the opposite could also be true – that the longer MCs serve in an institution that lacks comity (Uslaner 1996), the more they have been socialized into an institution in which incivility is the norm. Thus, longer-serving MCs might also be relatively uncivil compared to newer MCs. Given my uncertainty about the effect of seniority on incivility, my statistical models will account for the years served by each MC.
Results: Causes of Incivility in Floor Speeches

In total, members of the House gave 7,155 one-minute speeches throughout the 109th and 110th Congresses. Table 9 depicts the counts and percentages of the various types of outrage I observed in these speeches. All told, I coded 4,174 sentences in the 7,155 speeches as containing some form of outrage. On average, then, I identified 0.58 sentences containing outrage in each one-minute speech. Misrepresentative exaggeration was the most frequently observed form of outrage by a comfortable margin, while mockery/sarcasm was the least frequently observed form of outrage by a noticeable margin. The other five types of outrage tended to cluster together in the frequency at which I observed them.

Table 9: Counts and Percentages of Outrage Types in One-Minute Speeches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Misrepresentative Exaggeration</td>
<td>1,240</td>
<td>29.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Language</td>
<td>744</td>
<td>17.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideologically Extremizing Language</td>
<td>632</td>
<td>15.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slippery Slope</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>13.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insulting Language</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>11.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belittling</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>10.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mockery/Sarcasm</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4,174</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I now turn to my speech-level analysis of outrage in one-minute speeches. My unit of analysis is each of the 7,155 one-minute speeches in my data set. The independent variables in my analysis include the number of days until the next election at the time the speech was given, a dummy variable indicating whether or not the speaker belonged to the majority party, the absolute Dw-Nominate score of the speaker, and the LES of the speaker. I also account for whether or not the speaker was a party or committee leader in the majority or minority party. As
controls, I include a measure of how many years of experience MCs had in office, and I use a
dummy variable to indicate speeches and MCs of the 110th Congress. My dependent variable
is the count of sentences containing outrage in a given one-minute speech.

Figure 8: Histogram displaying the frequency of various amounts of outrage statements in MCs’ one-minute speeches.

37 For this variable in my speech-level analysis, speeches given during the 110th Congress are coded as 1, leaving speeches given during the 109th Congress to be scored 0 on this variable. In my MC-level analysis, MCs in the 110th Congress are coded as 1, and MCs in the 109th Congress are coded as 0.
The distribution of the dependent variable is depicted in Figure 8. In each one-minute speech I read, the modal outcome is 0 outrage statements. Out of the 7,155 one-minute speeches in the 109th and 110th Congresses, 5,301 (74.09%) did not contain any outrage statements. Meanwhile, 768 (10.73%) speeches contained a single outrage statement, 474 (6.62%) speeches contained two outrage statements, and 300 (4.19%) speeches contained three outrage statements. Finally, 312 speeches (the remaining 4.37%) contained at least four outrage statements, with 12 outrage statements being the maximum observed value.

The results of my speech-level analysis are displayed in Table 11. I find a negative, statistically significant relationship between the count of outrage statements contained in a given speech and the days between the time the speech was given and the next election. This supports Hypothesis 1. The fewer days there are until the next election, the greater the expected count of outrage statements in a given speech. This relationship is depicted in Figure 9. As the figure displays, the model predicts 0.72 outrage statements in each one-minute speech given 23 days before the next election. By contrast, the model predicts 0.44 outrage statements in each one-minute speech given 723 days before the next election. Thus, moving from the maximum to
minimum observed value of the days until the next election variable increases the expected count of outrage statements by 0.28.

Table 11: Explaining Outrage Rhetoric in One-Minute Speeches (Speech-Level Analysis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dependent variable:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outrage Statements in Speech</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days Until Election</td>
<td>−0.0008**</td>
<td>(0.0002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority Party Speaker</td>
<td>−0.42**</td>
<td>(0.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Abs. Dw-Nominate</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>(0.51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker LES</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>(0.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker in Majority Leadership</td>
<td>−0.45</td>
<td>(0.46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker in Minority Leadership</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>(0.32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Years in Office</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110th Congress</td>
<td>0.25*</td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>−0.58*</td>
<td>(0.29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>7,155</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log Likelihood</td>
<td>−6,945.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Estimates are from a negative binomial model. Dependent variable is the total count of outrage statements in a given one-minute speech. Standard errors clustered by MC in parentheses. *p < .05; **p < .01
Figure 9: Plot displaying the relationship between the expected count of outrage statements in a given one-minute speech, and the days until the next election on the day that the speech was given. All other variables in the model reported in Table 11 are held constant at their means or modes. The shaded area indicates a 95% confidence interval surrounding the predicted counts.

My analysis also identifies a negative, statistically significant relationship between the count of outrage statements contained in a given speech and my dichotomous indicator for the party affiliation of the speaker. This supports Hypothesis 2. Controlling for the effects of the other variables in the model, I find that speeches contain significantly fewer outrage statements when the speaker belongs to the majority party than when the speaker belongs to the minority party. When the MC giving a speech belongs to the majority party, the model predicts that the speech will contain 0.45 outrage statements. By contrast, when the MC giving a speech belongs
to the minority party, the model predicts that the speech will contain 0.70 outrage statements. Thus, holding the other variables in the model constant at their means or modes, I find that moving from a majority party speaker to a minority party speaker increases the expected count of outrage statements in a given one-minute speech by 0.25.

To this point, the results I have discussed have been consistent with my theoretical expectations. However, my speech-level analysis does not fully support these expectations. I find no significant association between the absolute Dw-Nominate score of the speaker and the count of outrage statements contained in a speech, nor do I identify a significant association between the LES of the speaker and the count of outrage statements contained in a speech. Thus, Hypotheses 3 and 4 are not supported by the results reported in Table 11. Finally, Hypotheses 5 and 6 do not receive support from this step of my analysis. When the speaker is a majority party leader or committee chair, a given speech does not contain significantly greater or fewer outrage utterances than when the speaker is not a majority party leader or committee chair. The same is true of when the speaker is a minority party leader or the ranking member of a committee.

Before declaring that my theoretical expectations about the associations between ideology, legislative effectiveness, leadership positions, and incivility are incorrect, however, I will examine these associations through changing the level of analysis from the individual speech to each individual MC. After all, previous research indicates that ideologically extreme MCs deliver more speeches than ideologically moderate MCs, and MCs who lack the ability to make a legislative impact deliver more speeches than MCs who possess a greater ability to make a legislative impact (Maltzman and Sigelman 1996; Morris 2001; Rocca 2007). Thus, ideologically extreme MCs and legislatively ineffective MCs may account for a disproportionate
share of incivility simply because they deliver a significant amount of speeches – and thus have more opportunities than other MCs to violate norms of civility.

In addition, party and committee leaders deliver significantly fewer speeches than other MCs (Maltzman and Sigelman 1996; Morris 2001; Rocca 2007). In the few speeches they give, majority party leaders might be careful to avoid violating norms of civility. Meanwhile, in the few speeches that minority party leaders give, they might be inclined to make a stark, memorable statement to their colleagues and the broader audience through violating norms of civility.

I also need to consider the possibility that certain speaker attributes are correlated with the “days until election” variable. Anecdotally, for instance, I found that the few speeches given by majority party leaders tended to occur near the beginning of a Congress, while the few speeches given by minority party leaders tended to occur near the end of a Congress. Correlations between these speaker attributes and the “days until election” variable could explain some of the non-significant findings in my speech-level analysis.

Table 12 presents descriptive statistics for the variables in my MC-level analysis of incivility. My dependent variable is the total number of outrage statements uttered by an MC in all of the MC’s one-minute speeches during a Congress. Figure 10 depicts the distribution of this variable, with the x-axis cut off at 50 outrage statements in order to more clearly display the distribution. As can be seen, the majority of MCs did not utter any outrage statements during any one-minute speeches. This could result from failing to deliver any one-minute speeches during a Congress, or delivering one-minute speeches that do not contain any outrage statements. An uncivil minority of MCs is responsible for a disproportionate amount of outrage statements, it seems. Indeed, 61 MCs (6.90%) uttered more than 20 outrage statements during a Congress, and 17 MCs (1.92%) uttered more than 50 outrage statements.
Table 12: Descriptive Statistics for MC-Level Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St. Dev.</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outrage Statements by MC</td>
<td>884</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>13.84</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority Party</td>
<td>884</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abs. Dw-Nominate</td>
<td>884</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LES</td>
<td>884</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority Leader</td>
<td>884</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority Leader</td>
<td>884</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Office</td>
<td>884</td>
<td>9.86</td>
<td>8.31</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110th Congress</td>
<td>884</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speeches Given</td>
<td>884</td>
<td>8.08</td>
<td>18.70</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10: Histogram displaying the frequency of various amounts of outrage statements uttered by each MC in the MC’s one-minute speeches during a Congress.
The results of my MC-level analysis are displayed in Table 13. I find a statistically significant relationship between the party affiliation of an MC and the propensity of the MC to use outrage statements. Holding constant the other variables in the model at their means and modes, I find that minority party MCs are predicted to utter 2.27 outrage statements per Congress, while majority party MCs are predicted to utter 1.02 outrage statements per Congress. Thus, minority party MCs are predicted to utter more than twice the outrage statements that majority party MCs are predicted to utter.

Table 13: Explaining Outrage Rhetoric in One-Minute Speeches (MC-Level Analysis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable:</th>
<th>Outrage Statements by MC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majority Party</td>
<td>$-0.79^{**}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abs. Dw-Nominate</td>
<td>$1.64^{**}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LES</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority Leader</td>
<td>$-2.22^{**}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority Leader</td>
<td>$1.13^{**}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Office</td>
<td>$-0.02^*$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110th Congress</td>
<td>$0.36^{**}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speeches Given</td>
<td>$0.10^{**}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>$-0.78^{**}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log Likelihood</td>
<td>$-1,533.15$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Estimates are from a negative binomial model. Dependent variable is the count of outrage statements uttered by an MC in the MC’s one-minute speeches during a Congress. Standard errors clustered by MC in parentheses. $^{*}p < .05; ^{**}p < .01$
The results also provide support for Hypothesis 3, as I find a positive, statistically significant association between an MC’s absolute Dw-Nominate score and the count of outrage statements uttered by the MC during a Congress. I visualize the results in Figure 11. The MC with the lowest absolute Dw-Nominate score (0) is predicted to utter 0.67 outrage statements during a Congress. The MC with the median absolute Dw-Nominate score (0.48) is predicted to utter 1.46 outrage statements during a Congress, while the MC at the 90th percentile of the absolute Dw-Nominate variable (scoring a 0.71) is predicted to utter 2.18 outrage statements.

Figure 11: Plot displaying the relationship between the count of outrage statements an MC makes in all of his or her one-minute speeches during a Congress, and the absolute Dw-Nominate score of the MC. All other variables in the model reported in Table 13 are held constant at their means or modes. The shaded area indicates a 95% confidence interval surrounding the predicted counts.
during a Congress. Finally, the MC with the maximum observed absolute Dw-Nominate score (1.42) is predicted to utter 6.96 outrage statements during a Congress. While these increases are substantively modest, I still find results that are consistent with Hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 4 receives no support from the model presented in Table 13. I find no significant association between an MC’s LES and the count of outrage statements uttered by an MC during a Congress. This could either be because Hypothesis 4 is simply incorrect, or because I have already included important predictors of LES in the model. Indeed, being in the majority versus minority party, the count of years served by an MC, and whether or not the MC holds a leadership position are all crucial predictors of an MC’s LES (Volden and Wiseman 2014).

Hypothesis 5, however, does receive support from the model reported in Table 13. In this hypothesis, I predicted that majority party leaders and committee chairs would utter significantly fewer outrage statements during a Congress than other MCs. This is precisely what I find. Holding constant the other variables in the model at their means and modes, the model produces a predicted count of 0.18 outrage statements for majority party leaders and committee chairs during a Congress, compared to a predicted count of 1.68 outrage statements for other MCs.

I also find support for Hypothesis 6 in Table 13. Holding the other variables in the model constant at their means and modes, I find that minority party leaders and ranking committee members are predicted to utter 4.35 outrage statements during a Congress. Other MCs are predicted to utter 1.40 outrage statements during a Congress. Minority party leaders and ranking committee members did not speak often, as they gave less than 1% of the one-minute speeches. When these MCs did make their voices heard, however, they were more
likely than other MCs to use outrage as a rhetorical strategy.

Finally, I can assess how majority versus minority status influences incivility through comparing MCs who served in both the 109th and 110th Congresses. Thus, I identified all MCs who served in the House during each Congress. For each MC, I determined how many outrage statements he or she uttered in the 109th and 110th Congresses, and I calculated the difference in outrage utterances for each MC between these two Congresses. In other words, this is a within-MC approach to assessing the association between majority status and outrage statement utterances. As noted, Democrats became the majority party in the 110th Congress after being the minority party in the 109th Congress. For Hypothesis 2 to receive even more support, I would find that Democrats who served in both the 109th and 110th Congresses uttered fewer outrage statements in the 110th Congress than in the 109th Congress. I would also find that Republicans who served in both Congresses uttered more outrage statements in the 110th Congress than in the 109th Congress.

This is precisely what I find. In the 110th Congress, each Democratic MC uttered an average of 3.03 fewer outrage statements than they did in the 109th Congress. Democratic MCs who served in both the 109th and 110th Congress each averaged 3.94 outrage statements per Congress while in the majority and 6.97 outrage statements per Congress while in the minority. Meanwhile, in the 110th Congress, each Republican MC uttered an average of 2.69 more outrage statements than they did in the 109th Congress. Republican MCs who served in both the 109th and 110th Congress each averaged 2.69 outrage statements per Congress while in the majority and 5.38 outrage statements per Congress while in the minority. Through comparing the outrage utterances of the very same MCs across two Congresses, I find additional support for Hypothesis 2.
Discussion and Conclusion

As expected, MCs in the minority party were more likely to violate norms of civility than MCs in the majority party, and ideologically extreme MCs accounted for more violations of civility than ideologically moderate MCs. In addition, speeches contained greater counts of uncivil utterances as the next general election approached. Also as expected, congressional leaders veered in opposite directions, with majority party leaders being more civil than other MCs and minority party leaders being less civil than other MCs.

While my first chapter identified no discernible relationship between ideology and incivility, this chapter does uncover evidence of such a relationship. Thus, the relationship between ideology and incivility depends on the communication context. MCs craft their communication strategy according to how the context of the communication relates to their goals. Policy goals have little to do with how MCs craft and convey campaign messages, but as I theorized and found, policy goals play an important role in explaining the communication strategy that MCs use within the halls of Congress.

My theory and findings demonstrate that increased civility in Congress is unlikely. The minority party lacks incentives to cooperate on legislation, given the competitive nature of congressional majorities and the uncertainty surrounding which party will capture the majority after any given election (Lee 2016). This has prompted some scholars to describe Congress as being in a permanent campaign, in which MCs and the parties are constantly positioning themselves for the next election rather than engaging in the serious work of legislating and governing (Ornstein and Mann 2000). To be sure, I did observe variation in incivility across each two-year Congress I examined; if the permanent campaign was literally permanent, I would not observe such variation. At the same time, my theory suggests that incivility in
Congress will not decline unless MCs find it beneficial to tone down the campaign-style atmosphere in Congress.

This raises a concerning question: is incivility in Congress the new normal, to the extent that norms requiring civil behavior do not have any particular sway over MCs? If so, this would reinforce the low public regard for Congress and continue to increase the difficulty of recruiting qualified candidates for Congress (Maisel 2012). Therefore, exploring if and how congressional incivility is a costly act emerges as an important task for future research. Such research will build on my argument that understanding incivility requires theorizing about and examining the incentives underlying incivility. If incivility within the legislative context carries potential benefits for certain MCs along with minimal (or no) costs, then the prospects for increased civility within Congress are slim indeed.
CHAPTER 4: INCIVILITY IN CONGRESSIONAL MEDIA INTERVIEWS

Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) was hardly on the national radar from 2009 through 2014. Prior to his longshot bid for the Democratic Party’s presidential nomination in 2016, Sanders was considered an “obscure” political figure. Members of the political press stated that Sanders’ success in the presidential campaign “seemed to come out of nowhere,” given his status as a “little-known” figure to most voters.

There was, however, one group who was likely familiar with Sanders even before his presidential campaign: regular viewers of MSNBC. By the beginning of the 111th Congress in January 2009, MSNBC had established itself as the liberal counterpoint to Fox News and stood alone as the leading left-wing television cable news channel. During the 111th Congress (January 2009 through January 2011), Sanders made 63 appearances on MSNBC. By contrast, the average Democratic senator made 11.45 MSNBC appearances during this Congress. Sanders then made 91 appearances on MSNBC during the 112th Congress (January 2011 through January 2013), and 84 appearances during the 113th Congress (January 2013 through 2015).

---


January 2015). Again, he easily beat his party’s averages, as Democratic senators averaged 10.66 MSNBC appearances during the 112th Congress and 8.64 appearances during the 113th Congress.

Scholars have characterized MSNBC and Fox News as being central elements of the outrage industry, which refers to political media outlets that contain uncivil content while also generating an angry emotional response from the audience (Sobieraj and Berry 2011; 2014). Not coincidentally, party activists comprise a disproportionately large share of the outrage industry’s audience (Levendusky 2013).

When Bernie Sanders spent a significant amount of time communicating via MSNBC, I argue that he was engaging in a form of representation that I call partisan surrogate representation. This representation takes place when MCs appeal to and express the views of party activists. Moreover, this representation is not constrained by state or district boundaries, as MCs engage in this representation to develop a national base of supporters.

Cable news interviews matter. The emergence of cable news has given MCs new opportunities to communicate with the public – opportunities that MCs previously did not have. When MCs appear on cable news, they are acting as a public face of Congress, visible to the millions of viewers who consume cable news each day. Thus, on cable news, MCs have the power to shape perceptions of themselves, their party, and the institution of Congress. In addition, when MCs develop a strategy of growing their national visibility and support, they defy traditional views of representation that emphasize the geographic boundedness of representation. Thus, studying these topics is important because doing so involves

---

41 Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) was the only senator to make more appearances than Sanders on MSNBC during the 111th Congress. Meanwhile, Sanders made more appearances on MSNBC than any other senator during the 112th Congress and the 113th Congress.
understanding how Congress and its members are portrayed to the public, as well as how MCs break free of the geographic constraints of their representational role.

In this chapter, I measure partisan surrogate representation through examining the presence of MCs on Fox News and MSNBC, and through examining the content of what MCs say during their appearances on these networks. I consistently find that ideologically extreme MCs are more likely than their more moderate colleagues to engage in partisan surrogate representation. I also find evidence suggesting that MCs become more likely to engage in partisan surrogate representation when they are communicating on platforms that attract a relatively large audience of party activists. Finally, I find that party activists respond to the partisan surrogate representation by MCs. The more an MC engages in partisan surrogate representation, the more the MC’s campaign resources come from a national base of party activists.

**Partisan Surrogate Representation**

In his foundational work, Fenno (1978) finds that MCs perceive their constituency as a series of concentric circles. This idea figured prominently into my second chapter, as I provided evidence that MC’s target their primary constituency with uncivil campaign messages when vulnerable to an intra-party electoral challenge, and they target their reelection constituency with uncivil messages when vulnerable to an inter-party electoral challenge.

According to Fenno (1978), the outer-most circle is the geographic constituency. This constituency is the MC’s entire state or district. Importantly, Fenno (1978) does not consider the possibility that MCs could perceive their constituency as reaching beyond the geographic limits of their state or district. This is understandable. Of course, MCs are concerned above all else about getting reelected, so they might be expected to concentrate on representing and
reaching the people who are eligible to vote in their reelection contests. In addition, Fenno (1978) conducted his study at a time before the emergence of communication modes, such as cable news and social media, that MCs could use to communicate with people outside of their state or district. Thus, at first glance, MCs might appear to have little opportunity or incentive to broaden their constituency beyond the outermost concentric circle identified by Fenno (1978).

Other scholarship, however, has called for the reconsideration of representation as being geographically based. This scholarship has noted that MCs can represent the views and interests of people beyond their district. For instance, MCs can focus on representing a specific demographic group that might be contained both within and beyond their district (Weissberg 1978). Moreover, Mansbridge (2003) describes surrogate representation as taking place when legislators represent people who reside beyond the geographic borders of their district. As an example, Barney Frank, the first MC to openly come out as a gay man, reported feeling a desire and obligation to represent and address the concerns of gays and lesbians who lived outside of his district (Mansbridge 2003). In her interviews with female MCs, Carroll (2002) finds similar attitudes. Given the paucity of women in Congress, many female MCs reported feeling a duty to represent women both within and beyond their district. These examples illustrate that representation is not necessarily bound by geography, and that people can both seek and receive representation from MCs in other states and districts.

For surrogate representation to take place, there must be a demand for this representation as well as a supply of willing surrogate representatives. I argue that both a demand and supply exist for partisan surrogate representation. By partisan surrogate representation, I refer to party activists in the mass public having their views represented by
MCs from outside of their state or district. Partisan surrogate representation involves an MC serving the interests of party activists beyond the boundaries of the MC’s geographic constituency. Indeed, surrogate representation often occurs when an MC perceives shared interests with people beyond their district (Mansbridge 2003), so partisan surrogate representation results from shared interests pertaining to one’s political party. When MCs engage in partisan surrogate representation, they employ platforms that enable them to reach an audience that stretches beyond the boundaries of their state or district.

Party activists are likely to generate a substantial demand for partisan surrogate representation. Party activists are highly attentive to politics, they are more ideologically extreme than others in the mass public, and they express significant hostility toward the opposing party (Aldrich 2011; Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012; Layman, Carsey, and Horowitz 2006; Sinclair 2006). Moreover, party activists ought to be especially prone to perceiving party conflict as a national struggle, one that is not confined to their specific state or district. Motivated by a commitment to the issues along with a dislike, or even hatred, of the other party (Aldrich 2011; Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012), activists are likely to be invested in the permanent campaign for majorities in Congress. Indeed, since the pivotal elections of 1980 (for the Senate) and 1994 (for the House), neither party has been perceived as having a secure hold on congressional majorities (Lee 2016). Party activists are therefore likely to be motivated to engage in politics on a national scale, due to the possibility that their party could gain or lose the majority in any given election, and the corresponding possibility that the other party could gain or lose the majority.

The demand for partisan surrogate representation is only half of the equation, however. For partisan surrogate representation to take place, there must be a supply of willing surrogate
representatives. Upon first glance, this supply might seem limited. After all, surrogate representation does not involve the same type of electoral relationship that MCs have with members of their geographic constituency. Put simply, constituents in a surrogate representation relationship cannot cast a vote for an MC. However, as I will argue, engaging in surrogate representation can be potentially useful for MCs from an electoral standpoint, as party activists living beyond an MC’s geographic constituency can still provide valuable resources that help MCs pursue their most important objective – getting reelected. MCs are also progressively ambitious, are motivated to preserve and increase their political power, and desire to make good public policy (Fenno 1973; Rohde 1979). Party activists can be useful in helping MCs achieve these goals through the resources they can provide MCs and their outsized influence in the party.

Still, not all MCs are equally likely to contribute to the supply of partisan surrogate representation. Some MCs may find that their ideological and policy positions do not resonate with activists. Other MCs may view the opposing party as potential partners in governance rather than adversaries who must be defeated at all costs – a view that puts them out of step with party activists. Some MCs may need to focus more intently than others on shoring up their electoral security back home in their state or district. This allocation of their focus could prevent them from serving as a surrogate representative of any sort. Thus, in understanding partisan surrogate representation, one must consider which MCs have the ability and incentive to serve in this role.

First, I argue that ideologically extreme MCs will eagerly contribute to the supply of partisan surrogate representation. Previous research has found indications that these MCs began using social media platforms sooner than other MCs (Straus et al. 2013). This indicates
that ideologically extreme MCs are particularly interested in communicating on platforms that reach across the geographic boundaries of districts and states. In order to achieve their goal of good public policy, ideologically extreme MCs may be motivated to reshape their party through pulling the party closer to their own ideological position. Thus, ideologically extreme MCs can be expected to engage in activities that enable them to tap into support from party activists nationwide who share similarly extreme views.

*Hypothesis 1: Ideologically extreme MCs will be more likely to act as partisan surrogate representatives than ideologically moderate MCs.*

Next, I predict an association between an MC’s electoral vulnerability and the MC’s probability of serving as a partisan surrogate representation. In comparison to electorally secure MCs, electorally vulnerable MCs devote more resources to communicating with their geographic constituents (Peskowitz 2018). Additionally, a study of MCs’ press releases demonstrated that electorally vulnerable MCs tend to emphasize appropriations and issues specific to their geographic constituency, rather than controversial, divisive, partisan issues. MCs who enjoy a geographic constituency full of copartisan constituents – and are thus electorally secure – eagerly emphasize position-taking on partisan, polarizing issues in their press releases (Grimmer 2013).

Therefore, to a greater extent than their electorally vulnerable counterparts, I expect that electorally secure MCs will find partisan surrogate representation to be an appealing activity. Electorally secure MCs already tend to use partisan appeals in their messaging to local constituents and the press, so they will incur little cost through expanding these appeals beyond their geographic constituency. By contrast, electorally vulnerable MCs quite understandably seem to focus intently on maintaining support among their geographic constituency. I thus
expect that these MCs will not have the desire to engage in partisan surrogate representation.

*Hypothesis 2: More electorally secure MCs will be more likely to act as partisan surrogate representatives than less electorally secure MCs.*

Third, I predict that party leaders in Congress will account for a significant amount of partisan surrogate representation activity. Party leaders maintain the responsibility to promote and protect the brand, or reputation, of their party (Cox and McCubbins 1993; 2005). This leads me to expect that party leaders will engage in activities that are aimed at appealing to a national base of party activists. Maintaining a healthy party brand likely involves assuring party activists that the party is in good shape – particularly in relation to the other party. Through assuring party activists that their own party is healthy, and that the other party is as distasteful as ever, party leaders can make sure that activists nationwide continue to provide the party with the resources it needs to remain competitive.

*Hypothesis 3: MCs with party leadership positions will be more likely to act as partisan surrogate representatives than other MCs.*

In my next hypothesis, I shift from an emphasis on variation between MCs to variation between different platforms on which MCs may communicate. If I am correct that MCs engage in partisan surrogate representation in order to seek and maintain support from party activists, then I ought to observe variation in partisan surrogate representation depending on which platform an MC is using to convey a message. If an MC appears on a particular platform that attracts a large, devoted following of party activists, then I predict that the MC’s message will be crafted to appeal to these activists. On platforms that do not attract an audience of as many party activists, MCs should feel less pressure or incentive to craft their message to appeal to party activists through engaging in partisan surrogate representation.
Hypothesis 4: The more a communication platform draws an audience of party activists, the more that MCs will act as partisan surrogate representatives when communicating on the platform.

Finally, if I am correct that party activists generate a demand for partisan surrogate representation, and if I am correct that party activists respond favorably to MCs who engage in partisan surrogate representation, then I should observe these MCs acquiring support from beyond their geographic constituency. By definition, activists engage in political activities beyond simply voting. MCs rely on activists for key campaign resources, including volunteer hours and monetary support. While an activist might be unable to volunteer for an MC acting as a partisan surrogate representative, this activist could donate money to the MC’s campaign.

Hypothesis 5: The more MCs act as a partisan surrogate representative, the more their campaign resources will come from outside of their geographic constituency.

Data and Methods

Testing these hypotheses requires observing partisan surrogate representation. Although multiple ways may exist to do so, I will argue that the presence of MCs in specific national mass media outlets, and their usage of uncivil rhetoric when making appearances on these outlets, constitute two excellent ways of measuring partisan surrogate representation.

As I treat incivility in this dissertation, incivility involves conveying a lack of respect for the political opposition. Thus, incivility ought to resonate with party activists, who are significantly more likely than others in the mass public to possess animosity toward the opposing party (Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012). Incivility undermines the perception that the political opposition is trustworthy, has good intentions, and is worthy of respect. These sorts of negative views of the opposing party are prevalent among partisans in the American mass
public (Iyengar and Westwood 2015), and are especially pronounced among activists (Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012). Thus, I argue that expressions of incivility aimed at the opposing party can be understood as a form of partisan representation. Through expressions of incivility, MCs are expressing, amplifying, and legitimizing the attitudes that their copartisans – particularly the party activists – possess toward the other side.

Examining incivility in the national mass media, moreover, enables me to analyze communication by MCs that crosses state and district boundaries. In other words, examining congressional incivility in the national mass media enables me to analyze partisan surrogate representation. However, certain national mass media outlets are more conducive than others to observing partisan surrogate representation. To observe this form of representation, I need to focus on media outlets that cater to party activists. By appearing on outlets that cater to party activists, MCs indicate their desire to communicate with and grow their support among these activists.

Specifically, Fox News has established itself as the industry leader on the conservative and Republican side of what Sobieraj and Berry (2011; 2014) term the outrage industry, while MSNBC has done the same on the liberal and Democratic end of the spectrum. By this, Sobieraj and Berry (2011; 2014) mean that the people appearing on Fox News and MSNBC demonstrate a willingness, even eagerness, to abandon norms of civility in attacking the other side. In addition, Fox News and MSNBC attract relatively large audiences.42 This audience tends to be comprised of politically engaged citizens and activists who are drawn to the outlet that reflects their party identification (Iyengar and Hahn 2009; Levendusky 2013; Stroud

---

42 Fox News is typically among the most-watched cable channels, reaching an audience of between two to three million people during the prime time hours of 8:00-11:00 p.m. Eastern/Pacific and 7:00-10:00 p.m. Central/Mountain (Cassino 2016). MSNBC reaches a smaller audience, but its ratings have increased since its programming has become increasingly critical of Republicans (Sobieraj and Berry 2014).
Cable news has benefited MCs who wish to go public and communicate their message through the mass media. Prior to the emergence of cable news, MCs had a difficult time attracting television coverage due to the limited supply of television news and the tendency of network news to allocate this limited supply of airtime to the executive branch (Vinson 2017). Through offering around-the-clock news programming, cable news significantly increased the supply of television news programming. Consequently, MCs have ample opportunity to appear directly on cable news and opine on the issues of the day (Vinson 2017). In doing so, they can appeal to viewers beyond their geographic constituency.

This opportunity should especially be available to senators, in comparison to members of the U.S. House. Political media outlets have a clear incentive to seek out and cover the most powerful officials possible, since “powerful officials are best positioned to create news events, certify issues as newsworthy, and make news on their own terms” (Cook 1998, 5). Given the greater prestige of the Senate compared to the House, the greater policymaking influence of individual senators compared to individual members of the House, and the huge supply of airtime to fill on cable news, I will assume that any senator interested in appearing on cable news will be able to gain airtime. In other words, any senators who wish to serve as partisan surrogate representatives, through their presence on cable news and the content of their remarks, will have ample opportunity to do so.

To measure the extent to which senators serve as partisan surrogate representatives, I will first count the number of appearances that each senator made on the copartisan cable news network during the 111th Congress (January 3, 2009 to January 3, 2011), the 112th Congress (January 3, 2011 to January 3, 2013), and the 113th Congress (January 3, 2013 to January 3, 2015).
2015). When I refer to copartisan cable news networks, I am referring to Democratic senators appearing on MSNBC, and Republican senators appearing on Fox News. By the beginning of this time period, MSNBC and Fox News had firmly established themselves to party activists at the go-to cable news networks for Democratic activists and Republican activists, respectively (Sobieraj and Berry 2014).

For my analysis of appearances on copartisan cable news, my unit of analysis is an individual senator in a given Congress. Using transcript data from LexisNexis, I identified all instances in which a Democratic senator appeared on MSNBC during these three Congresses, and I identified all instances in which a Republican senator appeared on Fox News during these three Congresses. Thus, one of my two outcome variables for testing Hypotheses 1-3 is the count of copartisan cable news appearances made by a given senator during a given Congress.

I found that senators made a total of 3,747 appearances on copartisan cable news during the three Congresses under examination. I randomly sampled 400 of these appearances and read the transcript of each appearance. For these 400 appearances, I employed the outrage coding scheme from the previous two chapters to code the content of the senators’ remarks. As I have conducted my previous content analyses of outrage, I read each sentence spoken by a senator and asked if it contained a form of outrage.43 If it did, I selected the type of outrage that best matched the content of the sentence. If the sentence did not contain any outrage, I read to the next sentence. I repeated this process for each full interview in the sample. This enabled me to generate a second outcome variable that I can use to test Hypotheses 1-3: the count of sentences in a given interview containing some form of outrage. Thus, the unit of analysis for

43 These seven forms of outrage are misrepresentative exaggeration, ideologically extremizing language, emotional language, slippery slope, belittling, insulting language, and mockery/sarcasm.
this portion of my analysis will be each individual interview.

To sum up, then, I will measure partisan surrogate representation both through senators’ presence in the outrage industry, and their use of outrage as a rhetorical strategy. Senators signal their desire to act as partisan surrogate representatives through their presence on media outlets that attract an audience of party activists. Moreover, as I argued in Chapter 2, outrage rhetoric exhibits a lack of respect for the political opposition. When senators use outrage as a rhetorical tactic, they are reflecting the same lack of respect for the political opposition that has become so prevalent among party activists (Iyengar and Westwood 2015). Senators who use outrage rhetoric, in other words, are representing and legitimizing the views of their party’s activists.

To test Hypothesis 1, I use my familiar measure of ideological extremism – absolute Dw-Nominate scores – as my independent variable of interest. For this hypothesis to be supported in the first step of my analysis, senators with higher absolute Dw-Nominate scores would make more appearances on copartisan cable news than senators with lower absolute Dw-Nominate scores. For this hypothesis to gain support from the second step of my analysis, meanwhile, there will be a positive association between the count of outrage statements in the interview and the absolute Dw-Nominate score of the interviewee.

Moving to Hypothesis 2, I measure electoral security through using the vote share received by senators in their most recent general election. I make the assumption that a low vote share in an election is a sign of potential future vulnerability. If a senator barely scrapes by with a victory, potential challengers may take this as an indication that the senator lacks broad support in the state. This could therefore increase the likelihood of ambitious quality challengers jumping into the race the next time the senator is up for reelection. By contrast, if a
senator wins by an overwhelming margin, any future challenger faces the task of winning over a significant number of the senator’s previous supporters if this challenger hopes to prevail. Challengers may perceive this as a daunting task indeed. Thus, for Hypothesis 2 to receive support, senators with relatively low previous vote shares would make relatively few appearances on copartisan cable news. Senators with relatively high previous vote shares would make relatively more appearances on copartisan cable news. For the second step of my analysis, Hypothesis 2 will gain support if I identify a positive association between the count of outrage statements in an interview and the previous vote share of the interviewee.

For Hypothesis 3, my independent variable of interest is a dichotomous variable that I created to indicate whether or not a given senator held a party leadership position. I define party leaders as the majority and minority leader, the majority and minority whips, the campaign committee chairs, and the policy committee chairs. As these positions are all elected by fellow senators (Sinclair 2006), one can conclude that these leaders are given particular responsibility by their colleagues to protect and promote the party brand – the key function of party leaders (Cox and McCubbins 1993; 2005).

In examining the counts of copartisan cable news interviews, I will estimate two different models – one to explain variation among senators in all copartisan cable news appearances, and another to explain variation among senators in prime time cable news appearances.\(^{44}\) This is an important distinction to make. The prime time cable news audience is larger than the audience at other points during the day.\(^{45}\) In addition, the prime time

\(^{44}\) I am using the conventional definition of prime time as 8:00-11:00 p.m. Eastern/Pacific and 7:00-10:00 p.m. Central/Mountain.

\(^{45}\) For instance, during 2017, Fox News averaged 2,421,000 viewers during prime time and 1,500,000 viewers across the full day of programming. MSNBC averaged 1,631,000 viewers during prime time and 889,000 viewers.
programming on Fox News and MSNBC is more opinionated than the other programming on these networks (Levendusky 2013). To be sure, I expect partisan surrogate representation to take place during all day parts on cable news. Fox News and MSNBC each possess well-established ideological and partisan reputations that stretch beyond any single program or day part, and opinion content on these networks goes well beyond the prime time hours.\textsuperscript{46} However, due to the larger audience and the greater emphasis on appealing to party activists during the prime time hours, MCs should be especially motivated to engage in partisan surrogate representation through prime time appearances. In sum, the model that explains variation in all copartisan cable news appearances by senators should represent a conservative test of my hypotheses, while the model that explains variation in prime time cable news appearances by senators should represent an easier, but more direct, test of my hypotheses.

To test Hypothesis 4, I examine variation in the content of interviews taking place at different time periods during the day. I expect that the more a particular platform attracts an audience of party activists, the more senators communicating on that platform will tend to act as partisan surrogate representatives. Moreover, I have operationalized partisan surrogate representation, in part, as the number of outrage statements made during a copartisan cable news interview. However, as I have discussed, not all of these cable news interviews should be treated equally. Since the prime time hours of cable news are especially aimed at party activists, I will use a dichotomous indicator in my analysis of outrage statements to indicate whether or not the interview took place during prime time. For Hypothesis 4 to receive

\textsuperscript{46} In fact, a 2013 study by the Pew Research Center coded 85% of MSNBC programming as opinion in nature, and 15% as news. This study coded 55% of Fox News programming as opinion and 45% as news. “State of the News Media (2013).”\textit{Pew Research Center}, 2013, http://www.pewresearch.org/topics/state-of-the-news-media/2013/.
support, an interview during prime time will contain more outrage statements by the interviewee than an interview during a different day part.

In my two sets of models that explain variation in appearances and outrage utterances on partisan media, I will include variables aside from the ones that I use to test my hypotheses. First, I will include a dichotomous measure indicating whether or not a senator is a Republican. This will account for any differences in the partisan media presence and outrage utterances of senators from different parties. I also include a dichotomous indicator that measures whether or not a senator was up for reelection during a given Congress. Senators may be less likely to engage in any form of surrogate representation when they face the immediate task of appealing to their voters back home. In my model of outrage utterances, I control for the total count of sentences uttered by the senator during the interview. Finally, I include fixed effects for two of the three Congresses included in my data.

Meanwhile, to test Hypothesis 5, I must measure the extent to which a senator’s campaign resources come from outside of his or her state. Here, I will use campaign funds and measure the percentage of a senator’s campaign funds that were donated from outside of the senator’s state. The analysis of out-of-district fundraising in the U.S. House by Gimpel, Lee, and Pearson-Merkowitz (2008) offers useful guidance for conducting an analysis of senators’ out-of-state fundraising. Gimpel, Lee, and Pearson-Merkowitz (2008) determined the percentage of a representative’s campaign funds that came from donors living outside of the representative’s district and sought to explain variation among MCs in out-of-district fundraising.

For each two-year election cycle, the Center for Responsive Politics tracks the amount of a senator’s campaign funds that are donated from people residing within the senator’s state
and outside the senator’s state. This enables me to use a dependent variable in my analysis that is essentially the Senate version of the House analysis performed by Gimpel, Lee, and Pearson-Merkowitz (2008). Since they used the percentage of a representative’s funds coming from out-of-district as their key dependent variable, I will use the percentage of a senator’s funds coming from out-of-state as the key dependent variable in this part of my analysis. For four election cycles – 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2016 – I identified the percentage of each incumbent senator’s campaign dollars raised during the cycle that was donated from outside of the senator’s state.

My goal in this step of my analysis is to see if a senator’s number of appearances on copartisan cable news helps predict the senator’s out-of-state fundraising, even after accounting for the key factors identified by Gimpel, Lee, and Pearson-Merkowitz (2008) that explained out-of-district fundraising. To be sure, given that Gimpel, Lee, and Pearson-Merkowitz (2008) analyzed the House while I am analyzing the Senate, there will necessarily be some differences between our analyses. First, Gimpel, Lee, and Pearson-Merkowitz (2008) hypothesized that access-seeking donors would donate to members from prestigious committees, but they found scant evidence to support this hypothesis. In addition, Senate committees lack the agenda-setting and policymaking power of House committees, as Senate rules do not prohibit nongermane amendments from being offered on the floor to bills reported from committee (Deering and Smith 1997). Thus, I will not account for committee membership in explaining out-of-state fundraising by senators.

In addition, not all of the incumbent senators in my data set were up for reelection in each electoral cycle I analyze. This does not mean I must exclude senators from my analysis if they are not up for reelection. Indeed, senators engage in constant fundraising throughout their
entire six-year term in office. This is partly due to the rising costs of congressional campaigns, and it is partly because a large campaign war chest built during the first four years of a senator’s term can help scare off strong challengers when the senator is up for reelection (Squire 1991; Sides et al. 2015). I will include a dummy variable for each senator indicating whether the senator was up for reelection in a given electoral cycle. I do not have any specific expectations about how out-of-state fundraising could change during the first four years versus the final two years of a senator’s term, but this dummy variable will account for the possibility that senators rely more on in-state or out-state donations when they are up for reelection. If senators announced their retirement during a Congress, I would exclude them from my analysis.

Gimpel, Lee, and Pearson-Merkowitz (2008) account for the availability of campaign resources in an MC’s district, as they expect MCs will rely more on out-of-district fundraising if there are fewer available campaign resources in the district. I will account for resource availability in the context of Senate elections through accounting for the population of each state and the prevalence of people within the so-called “donor class” in each state. For the years 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2016, I use the U.S. Census Bureau’s estimate of each state’s population, expressed in millions. I also consider the financial resources in each state. Following Gimpel, Lee, and Pearson-Merkowitz (2008), I define high income residents as those with a family income exceeding $150,000. For the four years in my analysis, I used data from the U.S. Census Bureau to identify the percentage of individuals in each state with a family income greater than $150,000. I expect that senators in states with higher income

47 I do not have clear expectations for the effect of population on out-of-state fundraising. Senators from smaller states might have cheaper campaigns and can thus rely more on in-state donors, but senators from larger states have a larger pool of potential in-state donors than senators from smaller states.
residents will have a greater ability than other senators to rely on donations from within their state. In such states, there are more financial resources available for senators to tap. Similarly, the more educated a state’s population is, the more of a donor class this state should contain. A more educated population could mean more white collar professionals who participate in politics at disproportionate rates. Thus, for each state, I use the U.S. Census Bureau’s estimate of the percentage of the adult population that has a bachelor’s degree or higher.

Gimpel, Lee, and Pearson-Merkowitz (2008) expect that access-seeking donors will be more likely to donate to the majority party than the minority party, and to party leaders as opposed to non-leaders. This is due to the greater policymaking power of majority party MCs and party leaders, compared to other MCs. I therefore include a dichotomous indicator for membership in the majority party, and I include a dichotomous indicator for status as a party leader (using the same definition of party leadership that I used for the analysis of partisan media appearances and outrage utterances).

More experienced senators may have gained more opportunities than other senators to develop connections with donors nationwide. Thus, I account for the years served in office by each senator prior to each electoral cycle I examine. I also include the same measure of electoral vulnerability – previous vote share – that I used in my analysis of partisan media appearances. Gimpel, Lee, and Pearson-Merkowitz (2008) found that the competitiveness of an election had a positive and significant association with out-of-district fundraising. More electorally vulnerable senators need the most campaign resources, which could push them to turn outside of their state for these resources.

Gimpel, Lee, and Pearson-Merkowitz (2008) anticipated that members of underrepresented groups would donate to MCs from their group to express solidarity. Thus, I
include dichotomous indicators for female and racial minority senators. Lastly, as Gimpel, Lee and Pearson-Merkowitz (2008) do, I will include fixed effects for each of the four electoral cycles in my analysis, except for one. This will account for any differences in out-of-state fundraising observed across the four different electoral cycles in my analysis.

All told, I am using a wide range of indicators that Gimpel, Lee, and Pearson-Merkowitz (2008) expected and found to be predictors of out-of-district fundraising for MCs. Through translating this analysis to the Senate, I ought to explain quite a bit of variation in the out-of-state fundraising by senators. My key question: even accounting for a host of factors that would seemingly explain out-of-state fundraising, will my measure of partisan surrogate representation – appearances on copartisan media – still emerge as a significant predictor of out-of-state fundraising? If so, Hypothesis 5 will receive support from my analysis. Such a finding would indicate that activists from outside of a senator’s state respond to a senator’s activities as a partisan surrogate representative through rewarding this senator with campaign resources.

**Results: Appearances in Uncivil Media**

I begin my analysis with an inspection of the copartisan cable news appearances by the senators in my analysis. During each two-year Congress in my data, most senators made at least one appearance on their copartisan cable news channel. At the same time, Figures 1 and 2 reveal considerable variation in the cable news visibility of senators.
Table 14: Descriptive Statistics for Analysis of Cable News Appearances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St. Dev.</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prime Time Appearances</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Appearances</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>12.70</td>
<td>19.08</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abs. Dw-Nominate</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Vote Share</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>59.74</td>
<td>9.09</td>
<td>39.70</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party Leader</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up for Reelection</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112th Congress Dummy</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113th Congress Dummy</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 12: Histogram displaying the distribution of prime time copartisan cable news appearances by each senator during each Congress in my analysis.
Figure 13: Histogram displaying the distribution of copartisan cable news appearances by each senator during each Congress in my analysis.

Figure 12 displays the distribution of prime time copartisan cable news appearances by senators. As can be observed, 0 is the modal outcome. More specifically, this was the observed outcome for 103 of the 295 units in my data set (34.92%). Meanwhile, 53 of the 295 observations (17.97%) are greater than or equal to 10 appearances. Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) made 73 prime time appearances on the Fox News Channel during the 113th Congress (January 2013 to January 2015), which amounts to approximately one prime time interview every 10 days.

---

48 There are fewer than 300 units because I exclude senators who served for less than one year.
Figure 13 depicts the distribution of all copartisan cable news appearances (prime time or daytime) by senators. The modal outcome is again 0 copartisan cable news appearances by senators during a Congress, as this accounts for 57 of the 295 (19.32%) observations in the data set. Meanwhile, 57 observations fell above the 20-appearance mark. Once again, Rand Paul accounted for the maximum observed count of copartisan cable news appearances. During the 113th Congress (January 2013 to January 2015), Paul appeared on the Fox News Channel 119 times, or approximately once every six days.

Paul is also ideologically extreme. Paul’s absolute Dw-Nominate score (0.874) is the second-highest in my data set, as Paul trails only Senator Mike Lee (R-UT) in ideological extremism as measured by absolute Dw-Nominate scores. My next step involves determining if the example of Paul can be generalized across the entire data set, in terms of his high levels of cable news visibility and his ideologically extreme positions.

The results presented in Table 15 indicate that the example of Paul does indeed reflect relationships between ideology and cable news visibility that exist in the full data set. In both columns of Table 15, I find that a senator’s absolute Dw-Nominate score is positively associated with the count of copartisan cable news interviews for the senator. More ideologically extreme senators, as measured by their absolute Dw-Nominate score, do more copartisan cable news interviews than their more moderate colleagues.

This association is displayed in Figures 14 and 15. Holding constant the other variables in the model at their means and modes, a senator with the minimum observed value of absolute Dw-Nominate (0.03) is predicted to do 0.85 prime time interviews and 2.50 total interviews. Meanwhile, a senator with the median observed value of absolute Dw-Nominate (0.37) is predicted to do 4.25 prime time interviews and 10.64 total interviews. Finally, a senator with the
maximum observed value of absolute Dw-Nominate (0.92) is predicted to do 58.80 prime time interviews and 112.80 total interviews.

Table 15: Explaining Appearances by MCs on Copartisan Cable News

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable: Count of Interviews</th>
<th>Prime Time</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abs. Dw-Nominate</td>
<td>5.07**</td>
<td>4.07**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.20)</td>
<td>(0.81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prev. Vote Share</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>-0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party Leader</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.26)</td>
<td>(0.24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.38)</td>
<td>(0.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up for Reelection</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.13)</td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112th Congress</td>
<td>-0.47**</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.12)</td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113th Congress</td>
<td>-0.52**</td>
<td>-0.28*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.18)</td>
<td>(0.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.86)</td>
<td>(0.72)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Observations | 295 | 295 |
| Log Likelihood | -730.74 | -988.97 |

Note: Estimates are from two negative binomial models. Dependent variable in column 1 is count of prime time appearances by a senator on copartisan cable news during a two-year Congress. Dependent variable in column 2 is count of all appearances by a senator on copartisan cable news during a two-year Congress. Standard errors clustered by MC in parentheses. *p < .05; **p < .01
Figure 14: Plot displaying the relationship between the absolute Dw-Nominate score of a senator and the predicted count of copartisan prime time cable news appearances by a senator during a Congress. All other variables in the model reported in column 1 of Table 15 are held constant at their means or modes. The shaded area indicates a 95% confidence interval surrounding the predicted counts.
On balance, then, the results support Hypothesis 1. I hypothesized that ideologically extreme MCs would act as surrogate representatives of party activists residing around the country. I have sought to observe this process and test Hypothesis 1 through examining the association between MCs’ ideology and their presence on media outlets that attract an audience of party activists. My findings are consistent with my expectations.

Figure 15: Plot displaying the relationship between the absolute Dw-Nominate score of a senator and the predicted count of all copartisan cable news appearances by a senator during a Congress. All other variables in the model reported in column 2 of Table 15 are held constant at their means or modes. The shaded area indicates a 95% confidence interval surrounding the predicted counts.
The results presented in Table 15 also enable me to assess Hypotheses 2 and 3. For Hypothesis 2 to receive support, I would need to find evidence that senators with higher vote shares in their previous election made more appearances on copartisan cable news than senators with lower vote shares in their previous election. Table 15 shows that this is not so. Finally, for Hypothesis 3 to receive support from the results presented in Table 15, I would need to find evidence that party leaders conducted significantly more copartisan cable news interviews than other senators. Table 15 provides no such evidence.

**Results: Outrage Utterances in Interviews**

Turning to the content of cable news interviews, I begin my analysis with an inspection of the types of outrage I observed in the interviews contained in my sample. In the 400 interviews that I read, I coded 963 sentences spoken by senators as containing outrage. As was the case with campaign websites and floor speeches, misrepresentative exaggeration was the most common type of outrage I observed. However, I found in my analysis of campaign websites and floor speeches that misrepresentative exaggeration outpaced the other forms of outrage by a rather considerable margin. This is not the case for cable news interviews, as the emotional language and insulting language forms of outrage each rival misrepresentative exaggeration for the most prevalent form of outrage I observed.

The emotional language form of outrage involves expressions of negative affect. In an interview with Sean Hannity on the Obama administration’s immigration policies, for instance, Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) said “I am angry, I am outraged by this administration.” The insulting language form of outrage, meanwhile, includes rhetoric that disparages or denigrates a subject. Again, Cruz provides an example, through calling House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) a “total liar” in an interview with Greta Van Susteren. Mutz (2015) has referred to cable news as
a form of angry, “in your face” media, and my descriptive results for outrage types reflect this characterization. Compared to their rhetoric during floor speeches and on campaign websites, I found that MCs appearing on cable news were more willing to use forms of outrage that involved explicit expressions of emotion and attacks against their opponents’ character.

Table 16: Counts and Percentages of Outrage Types in Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Misrepresentive Exaggeration</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>20.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Language</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>19.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insulting Language</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>17.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideologically Extremizing Language</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>14.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slippery Slope</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>13.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belittling</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>12.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mockery/Sarcasm</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this part of my analysis, the outcome of interest is the count of sentences containing outrage spoken by the senators in each interview. The distribution of this variable is displayed in Figure 5. The modal outcome is 0 utterances of outrage statements, as 100 of the 400 interviews (25.00%) did not contain any outrage statements. A similar number of interviews, 108 (27.00%), contained at least four outrage statements. The remaining 192 interviews in the sample (48.00%) contained between one and three outrage statements. The maximum observed count of outrage statements was 12. Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) uttered 12 outrage statements in two of the sampled interviews, and both of these interviews were prime time interviews during 2014.
Two key features of these interviews are that an ideologically extreme senator was being interviewed, and the interview took place during the prime time hours. To test Hypotheses 1 and 5, I need to see if these features of the Cruz interviews are generalizable. I also have the opportunity to test Hypotheses 2 and 3 through examining how previous vote share and party leadership positions are associated with the usage of outrage rhetoric in copartisan cable news interviews.

49 In the 113th Congress (January 3, 2013, to January 3, 2015), Cruz ranked as the third-most ideologically extreme senator, as measured by his absolute Dw-Nominate score. Only Rand Paul and Mike Lee had higher absolute Dw-Nominate scores.
The results of my analysis are displayed in Table 18. Just as my analysis of appearances on copartisan cable news supported Hypothesis 1, so does my analysis of outrage rhetoric used by senators during these appearances. For Hypothesis 1 to gain support in this part of my analysis, I would need to find a positive, statistically significant association between an interviewee’s absolute Dw-Nominate score and the count of outrage statements uttered by the interviewee during an interview. This is precisely what I find. Controlling for the effects of the other variables in the model, I find that more ideologically extreme interviewees utter more outrage statements than less ideologically extreme interviewees.
Figure 17 presents a visual depiction of the association between the absolute Dw-Nominate score of the senator being interviewed and the predicted count of outrage statements uttered by the senator during an interview. Holding all other variables in the model constant at their means and modes, I find that an interviewee with the lowest observed absolute Dw-Nominate score (0.06) is predicted to utter 0.82 outrage statements during an interview. Meanwhile, an interviewee with the median observed absolute Dw-Nominate score (0.51) is
predicted to utter 1.85 during an interview, and an interviewee with the maximum observed absolute Dw-Nominate score (0.92) is predicted to utter 3.89 outrage statements. Thus, moving from the minimum to maximum observed absolute Dw-Nominate score results in the predicted count of outrage statements uttered during an interview increasing by 3.07 statements.

While Hypothesis 1 gains support from the results presented in Table 18, Hypothesis 2 does not. Had Hypothesis 2 gained support from the results in Table 18, I would have found a positive, statistically significant association between the previous vote share of the interviewee

Figure 17: Plot displaying the relationship between the absolute Dw-Nominate score of the senator being interviewed on copartisan cable news and the predicted count of outrage statements uttered by the senator during the interview. All other variables in the model reported in Table 18 are held constant at their means or modes. The shaded area indicates a 95% confidence interval surrounding the predicted counts.
and the count of outrage statements uttered by the interviewee. As Table 18 displays, however, there is no significant association between the previous vote share of the interviewee and the count of outrage statements uttered by the interviewee.

The results presented in Table 18 indicate support for Hypothesis 3. The coefficient on the party leader variable is positive and statistically significant, indicating that interviewees with party leadership positions utter significantly more outrage statements during interviews than do interviewees who are not party leaders. Holding the other variables in the model constant at their means and modes, I find that party leader interviewees utter an expected 2.40 outrage statements during a given interview. Interviewees who are not party leaders utter an expected 1.74 outrage statements. This amounts to a difference of 0.66 outrage statement utterances between party leader interviewees and non-party leader interviewees.

Finally, the results demonstrate support for Hypothesis 4. As noted, for this hypothesis to receive support, senators interviewed on prime time programs would utter more outrage statements than senators interviewed during other times. This is precisely the outcome indicated by the results in Table 5. The coefficient for the dichotomous prime time indicator is positive and statistically significant. Holding the other variables in the model constant at their means and modes, senators who are interviewed during prime time utter an expected 2.74 outrage statements during a given interview. Interviews at other times contain an expected 1.39 outrage statements uttered by the senator being interviewed.

**Results: Out-of-State Fundraising**

To this point, my empirical tests have focused on the suppliers of partisan surrogate representation. I now turn to the demand side of the equation and examine how campaign donors react to the supply of partisan surrogate representation. Fortunately, I find significant variation in
my outcome of interest for this part of my analysis – the percentage of a senator’s campaign funds in a two-year election cycle that come from donors outside of the senator’s state. Figure 18 displays the distribution of this variable. The mean (54.16) and median (53.79) are quite similar, and a visual inspection of the distribution does not indicate that the data are significantly skewed in either direction.

Figure 18: Histogram displaying the distribution of the percentage of senators’ campaign funds raised during an election cycle that were donated from outside of the senator’s state.
My objective is to determine if a senator’s count of copartisan cable news appearances is associated with the percentage of the senator’s campaign funds that come from out-of-state. In doing so, I will assess Hypothesis 5. For this hypothesis to gain support, senators who appear more than other senators on copartisan cable news would draw a relatively high percentage of their campaign funds from outside of their state.
Table 20: Explaining Out-of-State Fundraising by Senators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dependent variable:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percent Out-State Funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Cable Appearances</td>
<td>0.23**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daytime Appearances</td>
<td>0.27*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime Time Appearances</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prev. Vote Share</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up for Re-election</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Office</td>
<td>0.35*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party Leader</td>
<td>3.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority Party</td>
<td>5.73**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abs. Dw-Nominate</td>
<td>-6.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(7.65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Minority</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6.29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Population</td>
<td>-1.57**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent High Income</td>
<td>-0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>1.05*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Dummy</td>
<td>-8.51**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 Dummy</td>
<td>-6.45**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 Dummy</td>
<td>-4.32**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>39.38**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(11.90)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations: 362
R²: 0.42
F Statistic: 12.14** (df = 15; 133)   11.91** (df = 16; 133)

Note: Estimates are from two ordinary least squares models. Dependent variable is percentage of a senator’s campaign funds raised during a campaign cycle that were donated from outside of the senator’s state. Standard errors clustered by MC in parentheses. *p < .05; **p < .01
Column 1 of Table 20 indicates support for Hypothesis 5. Here, I do not distinguish between the time of day that the interview took place – I am simply interested in the effect of any copartisan cable news appearance on the percentage of a senator’s campaign funds that come from out-of-state. The coefficient for the cable appearance variable is positive and significant, consistent with Hypothesis 5. Controlling for the effects of the other variables in the model, each additional copartisan cable news appearance is associated with an increase in 0.23 percentage points for the percentage of a senator’s campaign funds that come from out-of-state.

This association is visualized in Figure 19. Holding the other variables in the model constant at their means or modes, I find that a senator who makes no copartisan cable news appearances is expected to draw 51.22% of his or her campaign funds from outside of his or her state. A senator who makes the median number of copartisan cable news appearances during a Congress (5) is expected to draw 52.40% of his or her campaign funds from outside of his or her state. Even more striking are the results for senators who make significant numbers of copartisan cable appearances during a Congress. As an example, a senator at the 75th percentile of copartisan cable appearances (14) is expected to draw 54.53% of his or her campaign funds from outside of his or her state, and a senator at the 90th percentile of copartisan cable appearances (35) is expected to draw 59.50% of his or her campaign funds from outside of his or her state. Finally, the senator with the maximum observed count of copartisan cable news appearances during a Congress (119) is expected to draw 79.36% of his or her campaign funds from outside of his or her state.
The story become more muddled when examining the second column of results presented in Table 7. In this column, I estimate separate coefficients for prime time appearances and other cable news appearances (which I refer to as daytime appearances). While the prime time appearance coefficient is in the hypothesized direction, this coefficient is not significantly different from 0 at conventional levels of statistical significance. However, the daytime appearance coefficient is statistically significant. Each daytime copartisan cable news appearance by an MC is associated with an increase of 0.27 percentage points in the percent of his or her

Figure 19: Plot displaying the relationship between the count of copartisan cable news appearances by a senator during a Congress and the percentage of a senator’s campaign funds coming from outside of his or her state. All other variables in the model reported in Table 7 are held constant at their means or modes. The vertical bars indicate 95% confidence intervals surrounding the predicted percentage of out-of-state campaign funds.
campaign funds coming from out-of-state. This finding is counterintuitive. Prime time cable news programs attract larger audiences than other programming on cable news, and the more pronounced partisan and ideological nature of prime time programming relative to daytime programming ought to appeal to party activists. Moreover, I found that senators employ more outrage rhetoric during their prime time appearances than during their daytime appearances – another factor that, as I have argued, ought to appeal to party activists. For these reasons, the insignificant effect of prime time appearances on out-of-state fundraising, and the significant effect of daytime appearances, emerge as surprising results.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

On balance, my hypotheses received varying levels of support from my analysis. In the first place, I consistently found evidence that ideologically extreme MCs engage in partisan surrogate representation. Previous research has found that ideological extremism helps MCs raise more money from individual donors (Johnson 2010), and my findings help demonstrate why. Through engaging in partisan surrogate representation, ideologically extreme MCs build a base of supporters that extends beyond their geographic constituency. These MCs are aided by a contemporary media environment that offers them a platform they can use to reach party activists nationwide.

My findings provide insight into how ideologically extreme MCs have disproportionate influence over the political discourse. In the first place, ideologically extreme MCs have an outsized presence on cable news, which has become an increasingly important venue for MCs to communicate with the public (Vinson 2017). In addition, I found that ideologically extreme MCs were more likely than other MCs to violate norms of civility when appearing on these platforms. Negative and norm-violating behavior stands out to people more than positive and norm-
adhering behavior (Fiske 1980). Thus, ideologically extreme MCs influence the political discourse both through their significant presence on communication platforms, and through their tendency to communicate more memorable messages.

I found mixed evidence for my theoretical expectations surrounding party leaders. In terms of their presence on copartisan cable news, senators holding party leadership positions did not engage in any more partisan surrogate representation than other senators. However, party leaders did demonstrate a greater tendency than non-leaders to violate norms of civility when they did appear on copartisan cable news.

This may be perceived as a somewhat alarming finding, given that congressional leaders appear to be undermining institutional comity in the interviews I examined.\footnote{I verified that majority party leaders and minority party leaders did not differ in their use of uncivil rhetoric on cable news interviews. Both types of leaders were equally likely to use uncivil rhetoric.} At the same time, I did find that majority party leaders were significantly less likely than other MCs to violate norms of civility in congressional floor speeches. These party leaders, then, appear to respond to different incentives that vary by communication platform. When communicating to other MCs through floor speeches, majority party leaders appear careful to maintain a sense of civility. The opposite appears true when majority party leaders communicate to an audience of party activists on cable news. Of course, such an approach is problematic because other MCs are likely attentive to the messages conveyed by party leaders through the media. Thus, any efforts by majority party leaders to maintain civility on the floor of Congress seem inadequate at best, given the willingness of these leaders to violate norms of civility on platforms that have a much larger audience. Minority party leaders do not help matters in maintaining civility, as they contribute to incivility in floor speeches as well as cable news interviews.
This chapter speaks to the national strategies employed by senators, by which I refer to the approach senators take when spreading their message nationwide. Working under the assumption that senators are progressively ambitious and seek to expand their political power (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 1987; Fenno 1973), this chapter has identified how ideologically extreme senators can pursue these objectives. Indeed, ideologically extreme senators can use modes of modern communication, such as cable news, to take their message nationwide and seek the loyalty of party activists. In other words, they can use the approach of Bernie Sanders – employing these communication modes to steadily build a national following of dedicated party activists. This could prepare ideologically extreme senators for a run at the presidency, or for attempts to exert greater power within the Senate. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, then, Sanders did not come out of nowhere. Rather, through engaging in partisan surrogate representation, Sanders had been employing a national strategy long before he jumped into the 2016 presidential race.
CHAPTER 5: ASSESSING INCIVILITY IN CONGRESS

Several key insights have emerged from this study of incivility in Congress – insights that clarify when and why incivility occurs, and insights that also open the way for future research on this subject. Although this study does not provide the definitive answer on whether Congress is experiencing a crisis of incivility, I nevertheless can use the insights from this study to offer ideas on factors that may improve or detract from the level of civility in the contemporary Congress.

Directions for Future Research

I do not intend for this dissertation to be the last word on incivility in Congress. First, I would like to continue applying the outrage coding scheme to floor speeches in Congress. Previous scholarship – and the conventional wisdom – indicate that incivility in Congress declined from the 1930s through the 1970s, and has increased ever since (Dodd and Schraufnagel 2013; Hamilton 2004; 2016; Mann and Ornstein 2006; 2013; Uslaner 1991; 1996). The advantage of my approach is that I let the words of MCs speak for themselves. That is, I do not assess incivility based on secondary sources or the conventional wisdom – I assess incivility based on the presence or absence of uncivil utterances by MCs.

Thus, I believe that my approach toward measuring incivility is uniquely well-suited to assessing whether or not the good old days in Congress were, in fact, the good old days. Did MCs giving floor speeches during the 1930s through the 1970s use less outrage rhetoric than MCs giving floor speeches since this time period? This question reaches beyond the scope of my
dissertation, but it nonetheless represents a compelling application of the outrage coding scheme – an application that can put the conventional wisdom to the test.

I am also eager to collect and code campaign websites for the 2018 midterm elections. I am not merely interested in replicating my 2016 analysis, although I certainly plan on doing so. More interestingly, I desire to assess if and how the partisan nature of incivility changes depending on the political context. I found in Chapter 2 that Republicans were significantly more uncivil than Democrats in their campaign communication, as measured on campaign websites during the 2016 election cycle. This could be a consequence of Republican candidates adopting the style of the conservative outrage industry (Sobieraj and Berry 2014). Indeed, as Sobieraj and Berry (2014) find in their analysis of conservative and liberal media, conservative programs (such as the opinion shows on Fox News) engage in more frequent usage of outrage than liberal programs (such as the opinion shows on MSNBC). When aiming to mobilize the party faithful in a campaign context, Republicans MCs might be giving their supporters the style of communication that these supporters know and consume. Moreover, in comparison to their Democratic counterparts, Republican MCs may feel more vulnerable to an intra-party electoral challenge. This may lead them to place extra emphasis on solidifying their support among the primary constituency.

Alternatively, Republican MCs had a clear target for their outrage in 2016: President Obama. Anecdotally, I observed that a significant portion of Republican incivility was directed at Obama. This makes sense because Obama, as the nation’s most prominent political figure for eight years, was the chief Republican boogeyman throughout this entire eight-year stretch. Now, with President Donald Trump in office, the Democrats have a central target for outrage of their
own. This would lead me to expect that Democrats will use more outrage than Republicans in their campaign rhetoric during the 2018 election.

Pursuing this avenue of research suggests another topic for inquiry: the targets of outrage. While all of the outrage I observed was targeted, in some manner, at the political opponents of MCs, I did not specifically track who these targets were. Under what conditions is the president relatively likely to be a target of outrage from the opposing party? Who, specifically, do members of the president’s party pick as targets of their outrage? The outrage framework can help address these questions in future research.

In expanding the study of incivility, social media is an ideal source of communication to examine. Recent work by the Pew Research Center has begun to shed light on the use of social media in Congress. Ideologically extreme MCs have significantly more followers on social media than ideologically moderate MCs. Furthermore, in comparison to moderates, ideologically extreme MCs are more likely to share links to national news stories on social media. These findings are consistent with my own findings in Chapter 4, as I found that ideologically extreme senators were more likely than moderate senators to pursue a national strategy through using the approach of partisan surrogate representation. The Pew findings suggest that ideologically extreme MCs use social media to engage in partisan surrogate representation, through drawing a nationwide audience to their social media feeds and using these feeds to comment on national rather than local news.

---


Naturally, then, I am interested in applying the outrage coding scheme to social media content. Just as cable news has given MCs new ways of going public and spreading their message, so has social media (Vinson 2017). If ideologically extreme MCs use social media to act as partisan surrogate representatives – both through the quantity and content of their communication – then this would help underscore how ideologically extreme MCs exert disproportionate influence over the political discourse.

**Implications for Understanding Incivility**

I began my dissertation by observing that the public, scholars, and notable MCs are concerned about the perceived prevalence of incivility in the contemporary Congress. On the campaign trail, though, the costs of reducing incivility likely exceed the benefits. I found that incivility was driven by intra- and inter-party competition. Reducing incivility in the realm of congressional elections would involve reducing the level of electoral competition MCs face from within their own party and from the other party. This seems problematic from the standpoint of democratic accountability, to say the least. One might conclude that while competitive elections are desirable on the whole, they do come with some unsavory side effects – notably, a greater level of incivility on the campaign trail.

In Chapter 3, I argue that I hardly uncovered a widespread crisis of uncivil behavior on the congressional floor. As I found, the majority of MCs in my data set did not utter a single outrage statement in a one-minute speech during a given Congress. A small number of MCs were responsible for the lion’s share of the incivility that I observed. Such MCs tended to be ideologically extreme, and they were more likely to be members of the minority party than the majority party.
Based on my theory, appeasing ideologically extreme MCs with greater policy concessions is one method of reducing incivility on the House floor, but this could be an undesirable solution to the problem of incivility. Indeed, with 60 votes now the standard hurdle to policymaking in the Senate, producing more ideologically extreme policies in the House hardly seems like a productive way to make policies with broad enough appeal to pass both chambers and ultimately become law.

Incivility might also be reduced in the House through giving increased policymaking power to minority party MCs. However, this scenario seems unlikely, to put it mildly, given the ideological composition of the parties in the House. Internally, each party is quite ideologically cohesive. The two parties are also more ideologically divided than they have been in over a century (Theriault 2008). When these conditions are met, MCs become increasingly willing to grant power to party leaders (Aldrich 1995; Rohde 1991). A leader-dominated Congress hardly seems conducive to the empowerment of the minority party, given that majority party leaders act as agents of the party caucus to exert control over the agenda (Cox and McCubbins 1993; 2005).

Perhaps the most likely approach to incivility within the House is the “just live with it” approach. By this, I mean that a handful of ideologically extreme and minority party MCs will continue to account for a disproportionate amount of the incivility in the House. Meanwhile, most MCs will remain relatively civil to one another, either through maintaining civility when making floor speeches or through avoiding opportunities to speak. To be sure, additional formal or informal sanctions could be applied to the uncivil MCs, which could reduce levels of incivility within the House chamber. In doing so, the costs of incivility could be increased. However, this would not directly influence the incivility that is most visible to the public – the incivility that
takes place on the campaign trail, and the incivility that MCs communicate through the mass media.

Prior to the emergence of cable news and social media, senators like Bernie Sanders, Mike Lee, Ted Cruz, and Rand Paul may have struggled to gain a national following. Senators such as these may have been dismissed as eccentric, ideologically extreme cranks by mainstream news outlets, causing them to be denied coverage in newspapers and the network newscasts. Such coverage would likely be devoted instead to the presidency, or to the people perceived to have the most power and influence on Capitol Hill – the party leaders and the committee chairs (Cook 1998; Vinson 2017).

Now, however, these “cranks” have direct lines to a national base of party activists through new modes of communication. Moreover, as I found, they can use incivility as a rhetorical strategy to amplify and legitimize the negative views that party activists possess toward the other side. This likely gives the activists a feeling of satisfaction, to see elected officials echo the activists’ own views of the other party.

Thus, Chapter 4 speaks to the significant effect of cable news on American politics. Due to their disproportionate influence in the American political system, party activists and the nature of their media diet are important subjects of scholarly inquiry. As I found, on cable news, party activists and certain political elites have a rally point, a place where the activists and elites can meet each other’s needs. The activists have their negative views of the opposition validated by political elites – elites who have an incentive, in certain cases, to communicate and take advantage of the disdain that activists feel toward the opposition. The elites get rewarded with support from the activists – support that can help them pursue their goal of greater political influence.
This speaks to the broader lesson of my dissertation: incivility is a strategic political behavior that certain MCs use in certain situations to pursue their goals. The goal of reducing incivility, then, can only be achieved by understanding the incentives that lead MCs to perceive that incivility is a beneficial activity.

I ultimately believe that Uslaner (1996) makes a crucial insight when he argues that the decline of comity in Congress reflects the decline of comity in the broader public. As noted, I cannot speak to whether incivility is on the rise or decline. However, given the strategic nature of incivility, MCs would not engage in incivility if important segments of the public did not respond favorably to it. In other words, if the audience for campaign communications, floor speeches, and media interviews found uncivil rhetoric to be utterly distasteful, then MCs would have no incentive to use such rhetoric.

As a representative institution, Congress reflects who America is as a nation. Moreover, the scholarly literature indicates that incivility has maintained a consistent presence in American culture and politics throughout history (Herbst 2010). Congress has thus always been at least somewhat uncivil, and eliminating incivility from Congress is unrealistic. Some MCs will inevitably face electoral competition, experience frustration with the policymaking process, and possess a desire to gain the backing of activists. Incivility will likely be observed when these circumstances are present – not because the MCs are overly emotional or somehow irrational, but because incivility serves their needs.
APPENDIX 1: EXPLANATION OF OUTRAGE TYPES

Note: quotations in my explanations of the categories are drawn from the outrage codebook developed by Sobieraj and Berry (2014).53

Insulting language: “Impeach Obama’s lying EPA chief”

Explanation: This category captures language that disparages or denigrates, “that is used to make the subject look foolish/inept, hypocritical, deceitful, or dangerous.” I judged the use of the word “lying” to clearly mean that the author intended to disparage the EPA chief as deceitful.

Emotional language: “As a constitutional conservative, I feel outraged at the President’s lawlessness.”

Explanation: As this category encompasses expressions of negative affect, stating that “I feel outraged” causes this statement to fit the emotional language category.

Misrepresentative exaggeration: “Rather than protecting the vision of our Founding Fathers, President Obama has trampled on the Constitution and done everything in his power to turn our system of government into a dictatorship.”

Explanation: Sobieraj and Berry’s codebook states that this category “is intended to measure whether the author or speaker engages in very dramatic negative exaggeration in reference to the behaviors, planned behaviors, policies, or views of a person, group of people (e.g., immigrants, journalists, Democrats), branch of the government, political party, or other organization, such that it significantly misrepresents or obscures the truth.” The usage of the words “trampled” and “dictatorship” fits the “very dramatic negative exaggeration” criteria, in my judgment.

53 This codebook can be accessed at http://as.tufts.edu/politicalscience/sites/all/themes/asbase/assets/documents/berry/codebookOutrageIndustry.pdf.
Mockery/sarcasm: “Moreover, Obama’s teleprompter continued to lie about the dangers of the ‘Arab Spring,’ especially in Egypt, to Israel’s (and America’s) security.”

Explanation: According to Sobieraj and Berry’s codebook, “This variable is intended to measure whether the author or speaker makes fun of the behaviors, planned behaviors, policies, or views of a person, group of people (e.g., immigrants, journalists, Democrats), branch of the government, political party or other organization to make the subject look bad or to rally others in criticism of the subject. Affectionate, light-hearted teasing should be weeded out. Instead, look for humor that is used to make the subject look foolish/inept, hypocritical, deceitful, or dangerous.” This statement attempts humor through stating that Obama’s teleprompter made dishonest statements, rather than Obama himself. In doing so, Obama is made to look foolish, like an empty suit who is scripted and has no views of his own.

Ideologically Extremizing Language: “Representative Paul Gosar is the model Member of Congress when it comes to making a difference in the fight to defund President Obama’s radical agenda.”

Explanation: This type of outrage captures the usage of ideological labels to critically describe one’s political opponents. I judged the use of the word “radical” to fit this outrage type.

Slippery slope: “President Obama is on record as advocating a universal, single payer, socialized medicine system. But as a shrewd politician, he knew that could not pass, so he and the Democrats in Congress contrived to pass a measure that puts us on the road to their ultimate goal of a socialist America.”

Explanation: This variable captures arguments that make “dire forecasts about the future.” Such arguments claim that some relatively small action will lead to some relatively
larger negative outcome. Passing a law that leads to a “socialist America” is therefore an example of a slippery slope.

**Belittling:** “President Obama is so scared he will alienate his liberal base that he has overseen the most restrictive and ineffective rules of engagement in the modern world.”

Explanation: According to Sobieraj and Berry’s codebook, “This variable is intended to measure whether the author or speaker demeans a person, group of people (e.g., immigrants, journalists, Democrats), branch of the government, political party or other organization (or their behaviors, planned behaviors, policies, or views). Belittling generally attempts to deflate or undercut a person’s status. For example, the speaker/author may suggest that an adult is childlike/immature, suggest someone fairly accomplished is of low class status, or imply that a man is in some way feminine. This may be done in the context of mockery or exaggeration.” I deemed this to be an example of belittling because the statement suggests that Obama, holding the most powerful political position in the world, was irrationally fearful and acting out of fear. Thus, the statement works to diminish Obama’s status and power.
APPENDIX 2: CODING RELIABILITY

In order to check the reliability of my coding, I recruited two research assistants to read and view a selection of the material that I coded. There is no scholarly consensus on the best intercoder reliability measure, so I simply used the most common and simplest – percent agreement, which is the percentage of identical coding decisions out of all the coding decisions made by two coders (Cho 2008).

For the material in Chapter 2, I randomly selected 200 sentences from campaign websites that I did not code as containing outrage, and I randomly selected 50 sentences that I did code as containing outrage. I did not inform the coder in advance that 20% of the sentences were previously coded as containing outrage – I simply trained the coder on the outrage coding scheme and asked the coder to code each of the 250 sentences as containing outrage or not containing outrage. Of the 200 sentences that I originally coded as not containing outrage, the coder agreed on 198 of the sentences (and thus coded these 198 sentences as not containing any outrage). For the 50 sentences I coded as containing outrage, the coder agreed on 47 sentences (and thus coded these 47 sentences as containing outrage). This means that our coding decisions were identical for 98% of the randomly selected sentences.

I then had this same coder view 50 of the advertisements in my sample of 200 advertisements. In the case of these advertisements, I compared and contrasted the statements that I coded as containing outrage with those coded by the coder as containing outrage. I coded 58 statements in the advertisements as containing outrage. The coder agreed on 53 of these statements (and thus coded these 53 statements as containing outrage). The coder coded two additional statements as containing outrage that I did not code as such. All told, then, our coding
decisions were identical for 88.3% of the statements that at least one of us coded as containing outrage.

For the material in Chapter 3, I randomly selected 200 sentences from one-minute speeches that I did not code as containing outrage, and I randomly selected 50 sentences that I did code as containing outrage. As was the case before, I did not inform the coder in advance that 20% of the sentences were previously coded as containing outrage – I trained the coder on the outrage coding scheme and asked the coder to code each of the 250 sentences as containing outrage or not containing outrage. Of the 200 sentences that I originally coded as not containing outrage, the coder agreed on 198 of the sentences (and thus coded these 198 sentences as not containing any outrage). For the 50 sentences I coded as containing outrage, the coder agreed on 45 sentences (and thus coded these 45 sentences as containing outrage). This means that our coding decisions were identical for 97.2% of the randomly selected sentences.

For the material in Chapter 4, I randomly selected 200 sentences from media interviews that I did not code as containing outrage, and I randomly selected 50 sentences that I did code as containing outrage. Yet again, I did not inform the coder in advance that 20% of the sentences were previously coded as containing outrage – I trained the coder on the outrage coding scheme and asked the coder to code each of the 250 sentences as containing outrage or not containing outrage. Of the 200 sentences that I originally coded as not containing outrage, the coder agreed on 197 of the sentences (and thus coded these 197 sentences as not containing any outrage). For the 50 sentences I coded as containing outrage, the coder agreed on 45 sentences (and thus coded these 45 sentences as containing outrage). This means that our coding decisions were identical for 96.8% of the randomly selected sentences.
APPENDIX 3: SUPPLEMENTAL ANALYSIS FOR CHAPTER 2

Differences Between MCs With and Without Campaign Websites

As noted in Chapter 2, not all incumbent MCs seeking reelection operated an active campaign website. Specifically, of the 388 MCs up for reelection in the 2016 general election, 13 did not have campaign websites. Here is a comparison of the descriptive statistics for the MCs that maintained and lacked campaign websites:

Table 21: Descriptive Statistics for MCs With Campaign Website

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St. Dev.</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Vote</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>84.42</td>
<td>17.79</td>
<td>32.20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Uncontested</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Competitiveness</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Ideology</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abs. Dw-Nominate</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top-Two Primary</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 22: Descriptive Statistics for MCs Without Campaign Website

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St. Dev.</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Vote</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>89.55</td>
<td>12.07</td>
<td>62.60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Uncontested</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Competitiveness</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Ideology</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abs. Dw-Nominate</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top-Two Primary</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be observed, the MCs without campaign websites faced less intra-party and less
inter-party competition, on average, than did the MCs with campaign websites. The MCs without
campaign websites were also more ideologically extreme and came from more ideologically
extreme districts than did the MCs with campaign websites.

I am not too concerned about the possibility that my results and conclusions are
influenced by MCs lacking campaign websites, as few of the MCs lacked a campaign website
(indeed, just 3.35% of all MCs seeking reelection in the 2016 general election did not have a
campaign website). Of course, these MCs did not appeal to their constituents with outrage
rhetoric of any sort that I was able to observe. In the event that these MCs did have campaign
websites, my results suggest that they would be relatively lacking in outrage rhetoric, given the
relatively secure intra-party status of these MCs in comparison to the full range of MCs.

Analysis of Outliers

As can be seen in the distribution of outrage statements on campaign websites, the
distribution has a positive skew (see Figure 1 on page 31). This raises the question of the extent
to which extreme amounts of outrage statements are driving my results reported in Chapter 2. To
address this question, I calculated Cook’s distance for each observation. As Gerring (2006)
explains, “Cook’s distance for a given case provides a summary of the overall difference that the
decision to include that case makes for the parameter estimates” (113).

I found five cases with Cook’s distance that stood out from the pack. Each of these five
cases had a Cook’s distance exceeding 0.06, while the remaining 375 observations had a Cook’s
distance of less than 0.03. Now, I turn to the question of how much my parameter estimates
change when I omit these five cases from my regression model. In Table 23, I compare the
results of the original model reported in Chapter 2 with the results that I obtain when omitting
the five suspect cases. The original model is presented in the first column of results, while the model that omits the five suspect cases is presented in the second column of results.

Table 23: Analysis of Outliers (Campaign Websites)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dependent variable: Outrage Statements</th>
<th>All Obs. (1)</th>
<th>Omit 5 Obs. (2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Vote</td>
<td>-0.03**</td>
<td>(0.003)</td>
<td>-0.03**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Uncontested</td>
<td>0.47**</td>
<td>(0.15)</td>
<td>0.33*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Competitiveness</td>
<td>-0.22**</td>
<td>(0.08)</td>
<td>-0.21**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Ideology</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>(0.30)</td>
<td>0.59*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abs. Dw-Nominate</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>(0.39)</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>-0.74**</td>
<td>(0.12)</td>
<td>-0.82**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>(0.14)</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website Pages</td>
<td>0.07**</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>0.04**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top-Two Primary</td>
<td>-0.66**</td>
<td>(0.16)</td>
<td>-0.55**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.81**</td>
<td>(0.51)</td>
<td>3.05**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>370</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LogLikelihood</td>
<td>-770.98</td>
<td>-740.91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Estimates are from two negative binomial models. Dependent variable is the total count of outrage statements appearing on a given campaign website. *p < .05; **p < .01

I am most interested in comparing the results that are relevant for testing my hypotheses. This directs my attention to the coefficients for primary vote, whether or not the general election was uncontested, the competitiveness of the general election, and the absolute Dw-Nominate score. The coefficients for primary vote and general election competitiveness do not change in a
substantive manner. The coefficient for absolute Dw-Nominate score is not statistically significant in either model. However, the coefficient for whether or not the general election was uncontested deserves a closer look. The first model predicts that MCs who did not face any major party opposition in the 2016 election used 3.74 outrage statements on their campaign websites, while MCs who did face a major party opponent used 2.33 outrage statements on their campaign websites. The second model, meanwhile, predicts that MCs who did not face any major party opposition in the 2016 election used 3.14 outrage statements on their campaign websites, while MCs who did face a major party opponent used 2.24 outrage statements on their campaign websites. Both coefficients for uncontested general elections are statistically significant, but omitting the five apparent outliers somewhat dampens support for my conclusion that MCs will direct more outrage to their primary constituency when they lack a competitor from the other major party.

For my two analyses of campaign advertisements, I again calculated Cook’s distance for each observation. I detected one potential outlier for my first analysis, which used the individual advertisement as the unit of analysis. However, reestimating the model with this observation omitted did not result in any statistical or substantive changes to the coefficients relevant for testing my hypotheses. The same is true for my second analysis of campaign advertisements, which used the individual MC as the unit of analysis. I detected one potential outlier for this analysis, but omitting this unit and reestimating the model did not result in any statistical or substantive changes to the coefficients relevant for testing my hypotheses.
APPENDIX 4: SUPPLEMENTAL ANALYSIS FOR CHAPTER 3

Analysis of Outliers

For each of the two models I report in this chapter, I estimated Cook’s distance for each observation. I identified eight potential outliers in my speech-level analysis. Unsurprisingly, given that the data set contains 7,155 observations, removing only eight of these observations and reestimating the model did not produce any statistical or substantive changes to my results.

The results for my MC-level analysis demand a closer look. I identified 20 potential outliers out of 884 units. I reestimated my MC-level models and present the results in Table 24. The first column of results reproduces the original model presented in Chapter 3. The second column of results presents the results obtained when I estimate the model while omitting the 20 potential outliers.

The coefficient for the years served variable is the only variable that is statistically significant in the original model and not in the second model. Still, some changes between the models are worth noting. In the first column of results, I find that minority party MCs are predicted to utter 2.27 outrage statements per Congress, while majority party MCs are predicted to utter 1.02 outrage statements per Congress (holding constant the other variables in the model at their means and modes). In the second column, I find that minority party MCs are predicted to utter 2.18 outrage statements per Congress, while majority party MCs are predicted to utter 0.88 outrage statements per Congress.
In the first column of results, I found that the MC with the lowest absolute Dw-Nominate score (0) is predicted to utter 0.67 outrage statements during a Congress, while the MC with the maximum observed absolute Dw-Nominate score (1.42) is predicted to utter 6.96 outrage statements during a Congress. When excluding the potential outliers and reestimating the model, the effect size diminishes somewhat. Indeed, the results in the second column indicate that the MC with the lowest absolute Dw-Nominate score is predicted to utter 0.71 outrage statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable: Outrage Statements by MC</th>
<th>All Obs.</th>
<th>Omit 20 Obs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majority Party</td>
<td>-0.79**</td>
<td>-0.91**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.12)</td>
<td>(0.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abs. Dw-Nominate</td>
<td>1.64**</td>
<td>1.32**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.36)</td>
<td>(0.43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LES</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority Leader</td>
<td>-2.22**</td>
<td>-2.67*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.51)</td>
<td>(1.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority Leader</td>
<td>1.13**</td>
<td>1.34**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.25)</td>
<td>(0.38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Office</td>
<td>-0.02*</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110th Congress</td>
<td>0.36**</td>
<td>0.53**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
<td>(0.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speeches Given</td>
<td>0.10**</td>
<td>0.10**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.78**</td>
<td>-0.77**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.24)</td>
<td>(0.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>884</td>
<td>864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log Likelihood</td>
<td>-1,533.15</td>
<td>-1,408.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Estimates are from two negative binomial models. Dependent variable is the count of outrage statements uttered by an MC in the MC’s one-minute speeches during a Congress. Standard errors clustered by MC in parentheses. *p < .05; **p < .01
during a Congress, while the MC with the maximum observed Dw-Nominate score is predicted
to utter 4.62 outrage statements during a Congress. These results from the second column of Table 24 are visualized in Figure 20.

Figure 20: Plot displaying the relationship between the count of outrage statements an MC makes in all of his or her one-minute speeches during a Congress, and the absolute Dw-Nominate score of the MC. All other variables in the model reported in the second column of results in Table 24 are held constant at their means or modes. The shaded area indicates a 95% confidence interval surrounding the predicted counts.

Finally, the first column of results in Table 24 produces a predicted count of 0.18 outrage statements for majority party leaders and committee chairs during a Congress, compared to a predicted count of 1.68 outrage statements for other MCs (holding constant the other variables in the model at their means and modes). The second column of results produces a predicted count of 0.10 outrage statements for majority party leaders and committee chairs
during a Congress, compared to a predicted count of 1.44 for other MCs.

The first column of results in Table 24 produces a predicted count of 4.35 outrage statements during a Congress for minority party and committee leaders. Other MCs are predicted to utter 1.40 outrage statements during a Congress. The second column of results produces a predicted count of 4.90 outrage statements during a Congress for minority party and committee leaders, while other MCs are predicted to utter 1.30 outrage statements during a Congress.

In sum, accounting for potential outliers causes modest changes in the effect sizes for my quantities of interest. However, my interpretations of the hypotheses from Chapter 3 remain the same. I still find evidence that minority party and committee leaders use more outrage statements than other MCs, while majority party and committee leaders use fewer outrage statements than other MCs. I still find a positive association between absolute Dw-Nominate scores and outrage statements uttered during a Congress. I still find that minority party MCs use more outrage statements than majority party MCs. Lastly, I still find no significant association between an MC’s LES and the amount of outrage statements uttered by the MC during a Congress.
APPENDIX 5: SUPPLEMENTAL ANALYSIS FOR CHAPTER 4

Analysis of Outliers

In Chapter 4, I estimated one model to explain all appearances on copartisan cable news, and I estimated a separate model to explain prime time appearances on copartisan cable news. For these two models, I estimated Cook’s distance for each observation. I identified one potential outlier for my analysis of all copartisan cable news appearances. When reestimating the model while excluding this outlier, all coefficients retain the sign and significance from the original model. The same is true for my analysis of prime time appearances. I identified two potential outliers for this analysis, reestimated the model while excluding these two outliers, and found that all coefficients retained the sign and significance from the original model. In each case, when I reestimate the model, the coefficient for absolute Dw-Nominate scores actually increases slightly (though not in a substantively significant manner).

For my model of outrage utterances during interviews, I estimated Cook’s distance for each observation. I identified one potential outlier, reestimated the model while excluding this outlier, and once again found no statistical or substantive difference between the reestimated model and the original model.

My estimation of Cook’s distance for my model of out-of-state fundraising did not identify any potential outliers.
REFERENCES


