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Engaging with the News: Incivility, Disagreement, and Deliberation in Chilean News Comments

FROM

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Dedicated to the life and memory of

Marcos David Benadretti Daniels

The greatest man I ever knew

Chilean wine, so I hope one day you do get to visit, and the wine will be waiting. Thank you for being a part of my committee, it is really an honor.

Ingrid, I also want to thank you for being a part of my committee since the candidate process. I can't actually call upon specific actions, but I do remember wanting you on my committee so badly, and then you just stepped in, even though you were extremely busy directing the School. Thank you so much for your guidance, for trusting me to teach courses that are usually reserved to more experienced professors, and of course, for your comments that helped improve this dissertation. Thank you.

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If there is such a thing as the "stars aligning," it happened during my third year of the program. Again, I don't remember the day, but I recall another student saying "Do you know that new professor? I heard she also works on incivility, and stuff…" Next thing I know I was in Magdalena Saldaña's office trying to be as charming as possible. Click. She was the piece missing from the puzzle. Not only is she my colleague, she is also one of the most generous professionals I know: Magdalena shared with me everything I needed to complete my content analysis, and all those hours spent coding and discussing discrepancies led to a beautiful friendship. Thank you, Magdalena. Thank you so much for always being there for me, as a friend, as a former mentor, and now as a colleague. You ended up being a pivotal part of this dissertation. Thank you SO much.

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When I began writing this dissertation, I thought I was going to thank you all pretty much the way I'm doing it now, but life thought otherwise. This dissertation is dedicated to Marcos Benadretti, my "uncle Marcos," as I would call him often. Truth be told, he was as much as a father as a person can be. This dissertation, and basically, my life, is all thanks to my father Marcos, the best person I have ever known. I love you, and I know that wherever you are, you are proud of me.

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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

Democracy rests on the idea of citizen deliberation, or expressing and listening to a diverse set of voices in the public sphere (Papacharissi, 2002). However, the ideal of having a respectful and deliberative exchange of opinions in regards to politics and public affairs, especially in online environments, is far from reality. Aggressive expressions, insults, and different forms of uncivil discourse are often the norm in spaces such as the comments sections of news websites. Against the expectations of scholars and journalists who hoped that the internet would foster more and better deliberation (Conover & Searing, 2005; Stromer-Galley, 2017), the online world has proved to be also a source of vile and mean-spirited expressions. For example, vulgarity, insults, and other forms of incivilities are often present in comments that are visible for anyone with an internet connection (Hutchens, Cicchirillo, & Hmielowski, 2015). Such is the case of online news comment sections, which are virtual spaces for users to comment about the news article usually posted right after the story. Is there a way for news sites to have comment sections with more civil disagreement, deliberation, and as little incivility as possible?

To address these questions, we need to know about the antecedents and mechanisms by which online spaces produce incivility. However, we still have much to learn about these issues. The goal of this dissertation is to conduct original research on deliberation, disagreement, and incivility on user comments about news articles. There is extensive literature built upon observing and analyzing how these variables constitute a new way for humans to communicate in an online setting. However, most research focuses on either incivility online (Rowe, 2014), deliberation online (Kim, Wyatt, & Katz, 1999), or how incivility fosters (or not) deliberation (Oz, Zheng, & Chen, 2018). In this dissertation, I bring together incivility, disagreement, and deliberation, and both observe and explain how these key communicative functions coexist within highly polarized political topic and on very unmoderated forums. I consider this to be important because on the one hand, research has proved that incivility and deliberation can coexist in the

same forum (Chen, 2017), and on the other, disagreement can be seen as both as a necessity as well as a consequence of deliberation (Esterling, Fung, & Lee, 2015), so it makes sense analyzing both. Moreover, I redefine the way in which incivility should be measured online by incorporating humor as another way in which a user can engage in uncivil speech. Previous research by Sobieraj and Berry (2011) proved that mockery and sarcasm can be more common than insulting language or name-calling, and a different cultural background as the one presented in this dissertation, could also mean a considerable amount of humorous expressions as means of being uncivil. Finally, I incorporated the knowledge acquired in the content analysis (Study 1) and applied it into a population-based experiment by measuring how the union of (in)civility and (dis)agreement affects user's emotions and willingness to further participate in the discussion.

From a theoretical standpoint, this dissertation is built upon a basic tenet of a deliberative model of democracy (Gimmler, 2001)—that informal engagement between individuals, especially in terms of communication, is a vital trait of democratic citizenship. As already mentioned, the rise of the internet and the World Wide Web in the late nineties introduced new ways for people to communicate with each other. One of those changes, which is particularly important for this dissertation, is that the internet allowed strangers to exchange messages and multimedia (such as pictures and videos.) This was quickly seen as an opportunity for traditional news media: to allow citizens to comment on everyday news, a feature that had been limited to in-print letters to the editor (Reich, 2011).

These user-generated comments within news media were also seen as an opportunity to foster democracy itself, since dialogue, deliberation, egalitarianism, and liberty are key aspects of a healthy democracy (Papacharissi, 2002). Therefore, news comments and other user-generated content online could help transfer a public sphere into a digital one: a space were strangers could engage in meaningful discussion on various topics of local or international interest (Ksiazek, 2016).

Twenty years later, the popularity of news comments sections is evident, with over 90% of news websites offering this feature (Stroud, Scacco, Muddiman, & Curry, 2015). However, popularity does not mean quality, and although these spaces have increased engagement from users, they have also been criticized for the amount of incivility and hate speech that can be found in them (Chen, 2017).

To delve into the world of incivility in the current, ever-changing digital scenario, I first need to make common ground around such a diverse and polysemic term. As Papacharissi explains (2004), many people tend to confuse impoliteness for incivility, with the latter being more related to violations to democratic principles. Therefore, uncivil discourse is a wide concept that takes many different forms in the online world (Sobieraj & Berry, 2011), with authors describing specific acts of incivility, such as flaming (Hutchens et al., 2015) which focuses on nasty words or expressions that have a purpose of provoking a heated reaction or a "flame," and outrage (Sobieraj & Berry, 2011), which also considers heated arguments but puts the attention solely on the transmitter.

As will be later explained, this dissertation considers a wider dimension of incivility, as posited by Chen (2017). In her definition, "incivility must exhibit at least one of the three main attributes: insulting language or name-calling; profanity; and a larger category that encompasses stereotypes and homophobic, racist, sexist, and xenophobic terms that may at times dip into hate speech" (p. 6). From this definition, three main categories are extracted to operationalize incivility online: the presence of profanity (what is seen as obscene language on any given culture), insulting expressions that may or may not be obscene, and stereotyping (e.g. saying that feminists are always angry and complaining.) Additionally, this dissertation incorporates humorous expressions as a different form for people to engage in incivility. To this date, other research has had a limited understanding of the role of some forms of humor (mainly irony and sarcasm,) as being a common form of uncivil speech in online spaces (Anderson & Huntington, 2017). However, I incorporated humor as means of being uncivil as a new category to classify incivility online, acknowledging humorous comments other than sarcastic and ironic ones.

This follows a similar logic as Chen (2017) who identifies specific words or expressions as being uncivil (e.g., in the case of humor, a message containing written laughter towards another person.)

Along with incivility, this dissertation also defines and measures deliberation and disagreement in news comments.

Previous research has shown that these three variables (incivility, deliberation, and disagreement) can coexist in the same user comments section (Chen & Ng, 2017). However, most of the time, incivility is seen as a limitation rather than an opportunity for deliberative talk, with users withdrawing their opinions in the presence of uncivil speech (Lee, 2005). By deliberation I mean "a process whereby groups of people, often ordinary citizens, engage in reasoned opinion expression on a social or political issue in an attempt to identify solutions to a common problem and to evaluate those solutions" (Stromer-Galley, 2007, p. 3).

Disagreement, on the other hand, has referred to as a predictor for both incivility and deliberation. Disagreement is defined as the exchange of views that challenge one's own beliefs (Klofstad, Sokhey, & Mcclurg, 2018). As Chen and Lu (2017) argue, disagreement can create cognitive dissonance as people reconcile their views with opposing ideas. As a consequence, this process can contribute to more deliberative opinions. The authors found user comments containing both presence/absence of incivility, and presence/absence of disagreement, and distinguished both civil disagreement and uncivil disagreement comments. They found out that disagreement alone (in its civil form) can also have detrimental effects on people's emotions when being confronted to them (Chen & Lu, 2017). The idea that disagreement alone can have similar effects as uncivil comments is further develop on this research.

Study purposes

This dissertation has two main goals. First, I measured, described, and explained how three key variables (incivility, deliberation, and disagreement) are present in a different context than what most previous research describes. To this date, there is no substantial work done on this matter outside the Global North, other than a content analysis done by Saldaña (2018) who found an important presence of incivility on comments related to a natural hazard. After having this first understanding of how these key variables intertwine on a real news forum, I conducted an online experiment to examine the effects that both incivility and disagreement may have on readers: a rise of negative emotions, and more willingness to participate in the online discussion. In the case of negative emotions, they have been described as one of the most negative consequences of online incivility (Chen & Lu, 2017). Similarly, willingness to participate in the online discussion is seen as a possible positive outcome, because such attitudes would strengthen democracy (Stromer-Galley, 2017).

There are several specific contributions this dissertation hopes to make:

⇒ This dissertation analyzes incivility, disagreement, and deliberation together, while previous research usually focuses on one of the three. I find this to be relevant because regardless of whether deliberation is an antecedent or a consequence of disagreement, they are intrinsically connected (Esterling et al., 2015), while any of the two by themselves, or together as civil and uncivil disagreement, have proven to influence online discussions (Chen & Ng, 2017; Chen & Lu, 2017).

⇒ This dissertation brings a different understanding of how incivility could be measured by incorporating humorous expressions beyond sarcasm. There has been only a few studies considering some sort on humorous expression as being uncivil, such as sarcastic tweets related to a natural hazard (Anderson & Huntington, 2017). However, I posit that a broader understanding of humor should be considered when measuring incivility online, because from one end, the transmitter could write a message with an onomatopoeic laughter ("*hahaha*") or a

sarcastic remark, while from the other end, the reader could also consider a humorous comment as being uncivil, if he/she perceives that the topic being discussed is worth a more respectful tone.

$\Rightarrow$ Although conducting research in a specific country is not usually a goal by itself, using Chile as a case study for incivility, deliberation, and disagreement on online news comments provides an opportunity to enrich the literature on these topics for a few reasons. Two of the most popular news sites in the country (*Emol* and *La Tercera*) have unmoderated user comment sections, allowing all types of incivilities to take place (Rosenberg 2017). Moreover, both sites have straight-forward and easy ways for users to create an account and post a comment without the need to disclose their real identity, albeit coming out with some sort of "alias" is as easy as disclosing one's real identity. Therefore, this dissertation contributes further evidence on whether anonymity as measured in previous research facilitates more incivility or not. Finally, having local research done on something that has mainly been studied in the Global North can help provide valuable insights to Chilean media, which could lead to better spaces for online commenting on the news, as well as raising awareness concerning levels of incivility and only few instances of deliberation and civil disagreement.

Methodology

This dissertation uses a multimethod approach: a quantitative content analysis and a controlled survey experiment.

Since I want to both measure documented incivility, disagreement, and deliberation, as well as measure and explain how incivility and disagreement can affect users exposed to these expressions, I divided this dissertation into two parts: Study 1 is a content analysis of news comments from two popular Chilean outlets (Emol.com and LaTercera.com) concerning the presidential elections, a highly polarized political event. As Babbie (2008) suggests, deductive reasoning helped define and operationalize each one of the variables.

Results from the content analysis helped design and implement the online experiment: Study 2 uses a representative sample of Chileans divided into eight conditions (2 issues x 2 civil/uncivil x 2 agreement/disagreement) consisting of one news article (either about immigration or abortion) and a series of made-up user comments with presence or absence of either civil/uncivil expressions and agreement/disagreement expressions. A series of post-test questions measured how much the stimuli affected user's emotional response and willingness to further participate in the online discussion.

Dissertation outline

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to this research, highlighting the main contributions I expect to make with this dissertation.

Chapter 2 describes the main theoretical contributions that guide this dissertation. Over the past ten years, the work of Coe and colleagues (2014), Mutz (2015), Papacharissi (2002; 2004), and Chen (2017), among others, have greatly helped establish a comprehensive framework for incivility in a digital context. This dissertation integrates many aspects previously considered in the literature, with an added challenge to enrich the discussion with a different cultural background that could see different levels of incivility, deliberation, and disagreement among user comments, while also fostering an added degree of attitudinal or emotional outcome.

Chapter 3 describes the two methods that guide this dissertation: a content analysis of user comments about a polarized topic on the press and an online experiment with a population-based sample of Chilean adults. Additionally, I provide an insight of how the news media is built in Chile to the point of having just a few influential outlets, which helped me select the two media that were used in Study 1.

Chapter 4 presents the Study 1 (content analysis), outlining all main results. Similarly, Chapter 5 presents Study 2 (online experiment) with a detailed outline of results.

Finally, Chapter 6 closes with a discussion that brings together both studies, acknowledges the limitations of both, and provides recommendations for future research.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

CHAPTER 2

Deliberation, Disagreement, and Incivility on Online News Comments

This dissertation analyzes how incivility, disagreement, and deliberation relate to each other when people exchange news comments over issues that concern them. Therefore, I begin by explaining what online comments are, their importance for digital outlets, and how they have enabled a new way for citizens to interact with each other. I then move to discuss how this new way of public communication has not been the panacea expected by some deliberative theorists due to a lack of argumentation, disagreement, and abundant incivility. I close this chapter with the research questions and hypotheses that guide the dissertation.

Online User Comments

Since the dawn of the 21st century, online news comments have been a prime example of a form of communication that brings together people from literally anywhere into the same digital space with a common purpose. By the year 2011, 75% of the top newspapers in the United States offered commenting on stories (Santana, 2011). Moreover, commenting on online news is considered one of the most popular forms of public online participation (Ziegele, Springer, Jost, & Wright, 2017). For example, Stroud, Van Duyn and Peacock (2016) found that 55% of Americans have left an online comment and 78% have read the comments at some point.

Before I delve into how these comments are reflecting and contesting a troublesome relationship between citizens and the media, through abundant incivility and a lack of deliberation and civil disagreement, I will briefly summarize some key historical and technical aspects.

History, Evolution, and Technical Aspects

For the purpose of this dissertation, online news comments will be defined as a "specific type of interpersonal public online communication in which people are allowed to post comments below the content from professional communicators, such as journalists" (Ziegele et al., 2017, p. 317).

Although current news comments look similar to older blogs or the more contemporary Reddit forums, they are fairly different when it comes to the constitution of online public opinion and online political talk. News comment sections "belong" to their respective news sites and their audience, which means every user comment posted on a given article is visible to any person navigating the web. The reach of these discussions brings a unique opportunity for public debate, but also for opinion formation, because studies have found that there is a considerable amount of people who read user comments without ever writing a message themselves, which may lead to a different comprehension of the news story presented (Artime, 2016).

This forum-like platform allows two types of comments: an "original" comment, a message that could be about anything, but for most cases refers to what the news article is presenting; and a "replay/response comment," in which a user writes a message that acknowledges a previous comment. This option to answer back is crucial because it allows the formation of what could be a debate (Stiegler & De Jong, 2015), and the possibility for both deliberation and disagreement, where at least two users are vital in their occurrence (Stiegler & De Jong, 2015; Stromer-Galley et al., 2015). Moreover, the idea that news comments could foster deliberation among citizens is a long-lasting aspiration from both scholars and the media (Stromer-Galley, 2017).

The display of user comments on news sites also depends on moderation by the site, which usually takes into account its editorial guidelines. This may lead to news sections being completely unmoderated (e.g., for vulgar expressions), and others more focused on promoting a civil space for public debate (Muddiman & Stroud, 2017). Although this dissertation does not focus on how media moderate their comments, this action (or lack) of moderating comments will be discussed later because anonymity

depends partially on moderation by the media, which in turn could be reflected in a more heated and uncivil discussion (Muddiman & Stroud, 2017).

Finally, this dissertation focuses especially on how people engage with news articles through online comments because even though comment forums have seen many changes over the past several years, they still constitute a valuable source of information, especially when it comes to everyday citizens engaging with each other over issues that matter to them (Santana, 2011).

Engaging Virtues of News Comments

As previously discussed, the possibilities for users to engage in online discussions about various topics does not mean that those interactions are all positive. News comment sections are valuable spaces for the ways they can foster discussions between citizens, but are nonetheless a preferred space for incivility (Kwon & Cho, 2017). Moreover, comments are not only valued for their democratic potential. They are also a profitable revenue source for news outlets (DIGIDAY, 2017), especially when considering that some readers are also incorporating user comments as part of their routine when seeking information (Ksiazek, Peer, & Lessard, 2016).

In terms of ways to engage with comment sections, Ruiz and colleagues (2011) analyzed five nationwide newspapers with 15.000 news comments related to articles on their websites, and concluded that two distinct models for user participation were observable: "one where *community of debate* are formed based on mostly respectful discussion between diverse point of view and another of *homogenous communities*, in which expressing feelings about current events dominates the contributions and there is less of an argumentative debate" (p. 463). While the former group (e.g., UK's *The Guardian* and USA's *The New York Times*), is characterized for rich level of argumentation and tolerance towards a minority opinion, the latter group (e.g., Italia's *La Repubblica*, Spain's *El País*, and France's *Le Monde*), showcases a "coherent collective reproduction of the same positions" (p. 482). In both cases, the majority of the users commenting on these news sites adhere to the ideological principles of the specific outlet.

In the case of Chile, as will be revised in Chapter 3, the most popular digital outlets users can comment on are politically conservative news media. Because this is the first nationwide study on incivility, deliberation, and disagreement in Chile regarding a political issue, there was no way to predict a more specific result other than a few national articles calling out the amount of incivility on news comments and social media (La Tercera, 2019). Moreover, considering that the two media that were analyzed barely do any kind of moderation (Rosenberg, 2017), and following Ruiz and colleagues' classifications (2011), I expected to find a *homogeneous community*, with abundance of incivility and a lack of deliberation.

Even if local user comments have a high prevalence of uncivil expressions and a lack of deliberation, a detailed analysis could still show a valuable source of engagement in the form of disagreement, whether that disagreement is civil or uncivil.

Online Deliberation

Online news comments and other forms of online discourse, such as blog posts and social media news consumption, have also been researched for their deliberative characteristics and their capacity to foster political participation both online and offline (e.g., Gil de Zúñiga, Bachmann, Hsu, & Brundidge, 2013; Halpern & Gibbs, 2012; Rösner, Winter, & Krämer, 2016).

Studies on deliberation are as old as the birth of democratic countries. Deliberative democracy and its theory was first coined by Joseph M. Bessette in his 1980 work, *Deliberative Democracy: The Majority Principle in Republican Government*, in which deliberation is put front and center of a healthy democracy.

Many years later, deliberation is still considered a paramount aspect of a democratic society. As Dryzek (2002) observes, "the essence of democracy itself is now widely taken to be deliberation, as opposed to voting, interest aggregation, constitutional rights, or even self-government" (p. 1).

But what is deliberation? What does it mean to deliberate? By deliberation I mean, "a process whereby groups of people, often ordinary citizens, engage in reasoned opinion

expression on a social or political issue in an attempt to identify solutions to a common problem and to evaluate those solutions" (Stromer-Galley, 2007, p. 3). A similar definition can be found in Collins and Nerlich (2015): "Ideally, deliberation is based on respecting a diversity of opinions and alternatives in order to arrive at an informed solution and as such, it requires openness: a sense that all contributions can be considered equally" (p. 191). This latter approach incorporates the need of "respect" for deliberation to happen. Although a polite exchange of ideas could ease the deliberative process, this work stays with Stromer-Galley's definition, because deliberation can also happen in a slightly hostile environment. In fact, Aristotle's thoughts on deliberation were more focused on "truthfulness on one's motives" than being respectful (Nieuwenburg, 2004).

Political Deliberation in the Digital Sphere

This dissertation focuses on a specific type of deliberation: computer-mediated deliberation, which means that people can gather under a same topic while being connected from different locations. Moreover, I will specifically focus on deliberation over political issues. This is not a random choice. Many communication and political science scholars have neglected other areas, such as entertainment and sports, and focused solely on political affairs (e.g. Dahlberg, 2007). This can be partially explained by how deliberation over public and political affairs is expected to strengthen democracies (Stromer-Galley, 2017). Even before the internet and its many channels for communication were widely introduced, Barber (1984) argued that interactive technologies could help build a "strong democracy," bringing citizens together for discussion and deliberation on community and policy matters. Barber thought that this shift would enable publics to engage in the surveillance of their governments and to provide feedback to them.

The importance of online public deliberation lies in what communication scholar Zizi Papacharissi describes as a tension between the "public" and the "private," where citizens share their private thoughts and experiences to be considered by others in a common "public sphere" (Papacharissi, 2002). This public space (on and off the internet,)

"connotes ideas of citizenship, commonality, and things not private, but accessible and observable by all" (p. 10). Papacharissi argues that more than a public sphere in "Habermasian" understanding, the internet brought a new public space for deliberation to happen among all citizens, which differs from the original concept of the public sphere, not only because of Papacharissi's observation on how the public and private agendas merged, but also because online tools for commenting allow anonymity, fake accounts, and therefore enable high levels of incivility (Kwon & Cho, 2017). Later in this chapter, I delve into the presence and consequences for incivility.

As for operationalizing deliberation in an online setting, there have been several proposals. Stromer-Galley (2007) developed a scheme for operationalizing political deliberation for both online and face-to-face contexts. These are: reasoned opinion expression, references to external sources when articulating opinions, expressions of disagreement and hence exposure to diverse perspectives, equal levels of participation from users during the deliberation, coherence with regard to the structure and topic of deliberation, and engagement among participants with each other (p. 4). The author also draws from Habermas's studies on public sphere, especially in his text, *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1984), where public expressions are seen as rational "if the claim provides evidence that can be defended against critique" (Stromer-Galley, 2007).

A more contemporary operationalization for analyzing political deliberation online can be found in Rowe (2015), which includes: topic (referring to the topic at hand), opinion (willing to express a position on a given topic), opinion direction (liberal or conservative), justification (explicit or not), sources (use of additional source), narrative (personal experience), alternative (provide a solution to a problem), question (asking additional question), and interactive (consideration of other users).

A third way to analyze public deliberation online can be found in Gina Masullo Chen's book, *Online Incivility and Public Debate: Nasty Talk* (2017). Here, she considers a broader way to approach deliberation that includes political talk but could also be applied to other relevant topics. Chen proposes a conceptual model where incivility without any trait of deliberation would be on one side of a spectrum, incivility that can be deliberative

is in the middle, and, on the other side would be comments with "rational arguments, asking legitimate questions, and providing evidence to support one's points anchor the high deliberative portion of the model" (Chen, 2017, p. 84).

For the purpose of this dissertation, the operationalization of deliberation will consider two aspects that align with Stromer-Galley's definition of deliberation, which puts special attention on citizens seeking common ground through asking for further information or seeking that information. Therefore, I measured deliberation by considering a comment that presents a legitimate question in order to obtain more information, and a user providing evidence, which is also consistent with Chen's way of measuring deliberation in her study.

Because I measured a very specific event (a presidential election), I considered citizens including factual information that either supported their candidate or contradicts another user's candidate, or citizens asking for information not presented in the article, just to name a few examples.

Online Incivility

To delve into the world of incivility in the current ever-so-changing digital scenario, we first need to make common ground around such a diverse and polysemic term. Like Herbst (2010) has already pointed out, incivility is in the eye of the beholder, so what strikes as uncivil for a person may very much be polite to another. Moreover, uncivil discourse is extensive and takes many different forms in the online world (Sobieraj & Berry, 2011).

Defining incivility

As stated before, scholars have studied incivility from a communication perspective in a number of ways, and politeness has been frequently contrasted to uncivil traits. Drawing from politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987), Papacharissi (2004) distinguishes between civility and politeness. Whereas civility is more focused on norms that promote the collective good, politeness suggests that uncivil disagreement comments

would threaten *face*, the socially constructed identity that indicates one has value as a *relational partner* (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003) or what can also be seen as "disrespect for the collective traditions of democracy" (Papacharissi, 2004, p.267).

Politeness theory draws from Goffman's definition of *face,* which he describes as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact…an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes" (Goffman, 1967, p. 5).

Politeness theory and its implications are still considered a relevant framework for online incivility. For example, Mutz (2015) describes uncivil discourse as "communication that violates the norms of politeness of a given culture" (p. 6), but unlike Papacharissi, Mutz centers this "violation of social norms" on any cultural background, which I also take into consideration for the way I understand online uncivil discourse. Mutz's definition also neglects any type of democratic values that could also be violated. It may come a time in a given culture, where democratic institutions are so vilified, that rude comments towards democratic institutions such as parliamentarians are not seen as being uncivil, although these messages—according to Papacharissi's definition—should be a warning sign of incivility.

Similar to Mutz, Sydnor (2019) adds that incivility manifests in the tone and style with which the speaker attacks someone's "face," or public self-image. This dissertation will consider this broader view of incivility that focuses on the tone of the message rather than its consequences.

Although incivility has been coined as the most accepted term to describe a series of attributes that violate social norms, many studies have distinguished similar forms of speech, such as flaming (Hutchens et al., 2015) and outrage (Sobieraj & Berry, 2011). Both of these terms diverge from incivility when taking into account the intention of the user writing a comment. In the case of outrage, Sobieraj and Berry (2011) describe a certain "theatrical" attribute from a person that is eager for another person's reaction. Flaming is also considered as being similar to outrage, in the sense that there is an intention to ignite a "flame" (Aiken & Waller, 2000). However, throughout this dissertation I stay

with incivility, which encompasses both flaming and outrage, as a more inclusive and complex concept that could incorporate other expressions. This fits closest to what can be seen in news comments without having the need to question whether there is an intention behind the incivility.

Finally, this dissertation is cautious in labeling incivility online as being either positive or negative, although I stand among those who worry about the detrimental effects that uncivil and hate speech in general can cause to both a person's emotions and democratic values. To this date, uncivil expressions in news comments have been found to produce mixed effects. For example, incivility in user comments can foster user participation through reading comments or willingness to post a comment (Sydnor, 2019). However, the literature has listed many more negative consequences related to the exposure to online incivility on news comments, from producing negative emotions on readers (Chen & Lu, 2017) to producing more dissatisfaction with the quality of the discussion (Rösner et al., 2016), just to name a few.

The second study of this dissertation includes this tension between what are expected to be positive and negative outcomes.

Measuring incivility

Since both civility and politeness have been studied throughout many decades, to operationalize incivility on a more contemporary setting has been a difficult task for scholars. For example, many online messages can contain swear words and at the same time attack another user's values, so having exhaustive and mutually exclusive categories has been difficult enough so as to have many different operationalizations. Usually swearing (vulgarity) is the only aspect of incivility that's easily identifiable for users and coders alike (e.g., Coe et al., 2014; Hutchens et al., 2015). As will be explained later, this dissertation included categories for uncivil speech that could be identifiable by most users sharing the same cultural background.

This dissertation considers Chen's (2017) operationalization for incivility. In her definition, "incivility must exhibit at least one of the three main attributes: insulting

language or name-calling; profanity; and a larger category that encompasses stereotypes, and homophobic, racist, sexist, and xenophobic terms that may at times dip into hate speech" (p. 6). These characteristics are divided into three main categories to operationalize incivility online: the presence of profanity (what is seen as obscene language on any given culture), insulting expressions that may or may not be obscene, and stereotyping (e.g. saying that feminists are always angry and complaining). Her definition and categories fit in to how incivility is being considered in this dissertation, with a clear possibility to measure it online.

This dissertation also measured humorous expressions to analyze whether they relate to Chen's categories (profanities, insults, and stereotypes), and whether humor could be used as a new measure for incivility. The idea that incivilities are beyond profanities and insults is something that only recently has appeared in other research, acknowledging that incivility also includes "less obvious aggressions, such as sarcasm and finger-pointing" (Sydnor, 2019, p. 49).

Predictors for incivility

Although fewer studies have analyzed the mechanism under which incivility is created in the online world, there are some predictors widely acknowledged by the literature: anonymous users and their gender (Jane, 2015), message characteristics such as the use of uppercase that could indicate a comment is more prone to being perceived as uncivil (Halpern & Gibbs, 2012), and finally, the topic being covered by the news article under which the comments are displayed (Coe et al., 2014).

Anonymity has been studied as a clear enabler of uncivil speech (Kwon & Cho, 2017). Being anonymous online means that a person is not identifiable through his/her nickname while using an online tool such as a news comment section. This would make the user feel more inhibited and careless for socially inappropriate expressions (Artime, 2016). However, anonymity is also described as having a positive outcome: that citizens are willing to express their true opinion without fear of retaliation (Papacharissi, 2004).

Being anonymous online usually includes the non-disclosure of gender. Even if a user writes under a male or female name, it is impossible to track whether that person is in fact male or female. Therefore, there have been few attempts to measure what percentage of uncivil comments belong to males or females. What previous literature has vastly reported regarding gender is that females are more attacked than males on news comments, especially regarding sexual violence allegations (Jane, 2015).

There are two levels of anonymity: self-anonymity, which indicates the sender's perceived anonymity to others, and other-anonymity, pertaining to the anonymity the receiver experiences during an interaction with unidentified source (Kwon & Cho, 2017). Many studies on incivility thus far have described anonymity as an enabler for incivility regardless of whether the author of the comment had the intent to disclose his/her persona. This dissertation follows that same reasoning, because the outcome—a message being perceived as more uncivil—would happen regardless of intention.

In regards to how the comments are written, there is an association between the use of uppercase letters, abundant exclamation points and the perception of incivility from readers. Sobieraj and Berry (2011) note that "the deliberative use of uppercase letters, multiple exclamation points, enlarged text, and so on" (p. 40) is the digital equivalence of shouting.

There is also a relationship between the content on news sections and levels of incivility from users commenting on them. Coe and colleagues (2014) analyzed 6,400 user comments from more than 300 news articles from the United States and found that sports, economics and politics had the highest number of uncivil comments from users. Although sports and other sections can have a high number of uncivil messages, research on incivility has focused on studying incivility in politics/public affairs (Chen, 2017; Sydnor, 2019), because it seems there is more at stake (Papacharissi, 2002).

Finally, disagreement has been noted as facilitating uncivil expressions online. As will be later explained, a public debate does not mean that such an exchange will result in fruitful deliberation. For example, Ceron and Memoli (2015) found in their study that users encountering higher levels of online disagreement translated into a higher "negative

effect of the consumption of news from that source due to the heightened risk of generating or incurring in flames" (p. 234). Similarly, Rossini and Maia (2020) studied informal political talk on news comments and social networks and found that "when participants express disagreement, their comments are over two times more likely to be uncivil than civil" (p. 14).

Since the comments from the content analysis conducted in Study 1 refer to a presidential election, I expect to find abundant uncivil expressions as means of attacking the other side (e.g., words in capital letters), while anonymous accounts should profit from the disinhibition effect I have discussed and should also be more uncivil. Moreover, I expect men to be more uncivil than females because this holds true for face-to-face interactions (Gladue, 1991), and an online space could just be a new platform to behave in such a manner.

Online Disagreement

A third aspect that is analyzed in this dissertation is the act of disagreement.

This dissertation defines disagreement as the exchange of views that challenge one's own beliefs (Klofstad et al., 2018). As Chen and Lu (2017) argue, disagreement can create cognitive dissonance as people reconcile their views with opposing ideas. As a consequence, this process can contribute to more deliberative opinions (p. 109). The authors divided disagreement into civil and uncivil and found out that disagreement alone (civil disagreement) can also have detrimental effects on people's emotions when being confronted to them (Chen & Lu, 2017). The second study of this dissertation seeks to explain whether the absence and presence of civility and agreement on user comments.

For disagreement to happen, a group of heterogeneous people need to come together under the same space (either face-to-face or digital). Just as Carpini, Cook and Jacobs (2004) conclude, hearing the other side has been considered as a necessary precondition for beneficial effects of deliberative discussion. However, being online makes it easier for users to manifest their disagreement mainly because of the anonymity and how it makes people feel more inhibited (Halpern & Gibbs, 2012).

Disagreement as a predictor for both incivility and deliberation is receiving attention from some scholars, because on the one hand, incivility is seen as detrimental for a respectful environment (Mutz, 2015), but on the other, more deliberation is desired for a prolific discussion among citizens (Stromer-Galley, 2017). However, according to studies on deliberative democracy—in which this dissertation is framed—deliberation is primarily considered a key aspect of a democratic society. As Guntman and Thomson note: "disagreement is endemic in political life" (2009, p. 7).

Esterling and colleagues (2015) have argued that "disagreement is at once a condition and a challenge for deliberation… Deliberative institutions cannot function without disagreement, and they also do not resolve disagreement by any rule or formula" (p. 529).

While much research follows the same previously explained logic of the internet bringing tools that facilitate both deliberation and disagreement, Stromer-Galley and colleagues (2015) compared both face-to-face interactions and online exchanges and concluded that contrary to previous findings, disagreement is more common in face-to-face communication, which could mean that non-verbal cues could play a vital role in fostering disagreement, or conversely, that the lack of these cues could hinder the act of disagreement.

When talking about disagreement, it is important to stress that not all virtual spaces are the same. For example, news comments sections are asynchronous, meaning that a user usually reacts to another user's previous comment at a different time. Therefore, disagreement among these spaces could be higher than those synchronous groups studied by Stromer-Galley and colleagues (2015), because users would not necessarily expect an immediate response or they would not expect a response at all.

Effects of Online Incivility and Disagreement

One of the reasons why incivility has been a focus of international concern among scholars from different disciplines is the presence of uncivil expressions, most of which are anonymous and unfiltered and foster a series of negative outcomes. Also, as Chen and colleagues (2019) explain: "Incivility is a focus because of the detrimental consequences it can cause, such as dehumanizing others and increasing polarization" (p.3).

Perceptions of incivility are not uniform among readers. Females are more prone than males to perceive a message being uncivil (Kenski, Coe, & Rains, 2017), just as they are more likely to be on the receiving end of an uncivil message (Jane, 2015). These are not outcomes that will be considered in this dissertation, albeit they help illustrate the broad spectrum of negative outcomes that incivility fosters.

Even though incivility has been studied as producing many other negative outcomes, including the increase of user's attitude polarizations (Anderson, Brossard, Scheufele, Xenos, & Ladwig, 2014) or the increase of aggressive cognitions and stereotypical attitudes among their readers (Hsueh, Yogeeswaran, & Malinen, 2015), there has been evidence from uncivil comments online fostering user participation (Borah, 2014), which could be seen as a positive effect under democratic theory values, especially in regards to political talk (Valenzuela, Kim, & Gil de Zúñiga, 2012).

Of the many effects that uncivil messages foster on users exposed to them, this dissertation focuses on two: negative emotions and user participation. As will be discussed later, the selection of these outcomes comes partially from previous literature acknowledging a tension between the two; nasty comments brings more nasty comments, which could not be desirable from a democratic perspective (Chen, 2017), but is sometimes normalized by news sites as a demonstration of free speech. Interviews conducted to news editor from the same outlets that were analyzed in this dissertation (Emol.com and LaTercera.com) mentioned this awareness of incivility being inherently bad by dumping the quality of the discussing, but at the same time fostering more participation in terms of likes and comments (Rosenberg, 2017).

When it comes to negative emotions arousing from uncivil content, Rösner, Winter, & Krämer (2016) found that the reception of even a slight extent of incivility (one uncivil comment among six comments) can already elicit hostile cognitions. To measure "hostile emotions," the authors used several items adapted from the State Hostility Scale (Anderson & Carnagey, 2004) that encompasses 35 adjectives, including "irritated" and "angry." This will also be tested in this dissertation (Study 2) and I expect to find incivility (with or without disagreement) to evoke negative emotions, considering the "in-your-face" dimension that incivility has.

Not only incivility can elicit specific emotions. Recent research show that two types of disagreement, civil and uncivil disagreement, can also evoke emotions. Chen and Lu (2017) conducted an experiment in which they manipulated user comments on an abortion issue to display both civil and uncivil disagreement among users. The authors conclude that both civil and uncivil disagreement comments can foster negative emotions, but only uncivil disagreement comments indirectly led to greater intention to participate politically, and that uncivil disagreement could lead to an escalation of aggressiveness that civil disagreement does not produce (p. 121).

Another study that accounted for different effects from both civil and uncivil disagreement comments proved that people perceived uncivil comments posted on news stories as having a greater effect on negative emotions than civil disagreement comments (Chen & Ng, 2017), which is consistent with the thought of uncivil comments as being easier at producing negative emotions in comparison with civil disagreement comments.

The negative emotions that are ignited by uncivil discourse have also been described as being towards an opposite partisan side, "suggesting that uncivil online discussion emphasizing antagonism between two partisan groups may erode individuals' expectation about reaching consensus through deliberation" (Hwang, Kim, & Huh, 2014, p. 624). Considering this point, a content analysis of comments about a presidential election like the one presented in Study 1 fits perfectly with having a dual partisan exchange. I expect that negative emotions would come easily for those who see their

political arguments being contested, which may lead to that person also engaging in an uncivil manner, similar to what Chen (2017) describes as the "defensive effect."

Can Humor be Uncivil?

Another rhetorical element that can be found on these online messages are humorous expressions. They can take many forms: from an easily recognizable irony (e.g. "you are so smart, no wonder you're a doctor") to a wide range of burlesque notations. Some platforms such as social networks, allow for a user to post a photo or even a GIF (short video), making it easier for users to express humor through online media (e.g. "memes") (Haynes, 2019).

From a reader's perspective, most types of humor are difficult to interpret since they are very context-dependent, both for the person writing the message and for the one reading it (Tsur & Rappoport, 2010). This might be the reason why sarcasm and other ill-types of humor is not usually measured when conceptualizing online incivility (Chen, 2017). However, there has been auspicious attempts of detecting and measuring sarcasm and irony on a social network site such as Twitter (Anderson & Huntington, 2017; Reyes, Rosso, & Veale, 2013).

From a lexical matter, there isn't much of a difference between irony and sarcasm. For example, *Oxford's Dictionary of English*, defines irony as "the use of words that say the opposite of what you really mean, often as a joke," while sarcasm is "a way of using words that are the opposite of what you really mean in order to be unpleasant to somebody or to make fun of them" (Oxford Dictionary, 2020). Therefore, the main difference is that sarcasm implies an added wish to cause harm, making it more appropriate to analyze among other forms of incivilities.

When it comes to Computer Mediated Communication (CMC), a widespread idea is that social interactions are worse online because these messages are more ambiguous than their face-to-face equivalents. This idea is supported by the highly influential Media Richness Theory (MRT, Daft & Lengel, 1986; Runions, Shapka, Dooley, & Modecki, 2013) which proposes that communication media become less "informationally rich" as

the number of social cues they can convey diminishes (e.g., from face to face to phone to online chat). Less informationally rich media are supposed to be less suited to transmitting equivocal (ambiguous and complex) messages. According to MRT, online media would be more prone to misunderstandings and eventually conflict because their messages are more ambiguous.

Following the MRT theory, irony and sarcasm would be considered as highly informative reach media, because of all the social cues being present at once. Therefore, face-to-face communication would allow for a more suited context for humor interpretation, since facial expressions and intonation accompany the sender's words (Wild et al., 2006). Most importantly, humor might be perceived as being more uncivil online because both the person writing the message, and the person reading it, are unknown to each other. This mutual anonymity would not be an important consideration when analyzing another form of text, such as a plain informative one, but confronting what might be a sarcastic or ironic remark would mean interpreting more cues or even personal motives, making it easier on the receiver's end to consider most of these expressions as being uncivil (Tsur & Rappoport, 2010). For example, Maynard & Greenwood (2014) created a hashtag tokenizer so they could detect the presence of sentiment and sarcasm on Twitter streams (via hashtags).

One of the few works that incorporates sarcasm as a measure of incivility can be found in Rowe (2015), who compared user news comments posted to both the Washington Post official page and their official Facebook account. Although the overall level of incivility was low (around 4% of the overall comments), the study concluded that incivility was more common on the website and that "the most common form of impoliteness amongst Website commenters was Sarcasm (10.2%)" (p. 130). To code sarcasm, the author incorporated the following code scheme: "Code '11' all comments containing 'sarcasm': You'll know it when you see it" (p. 138), which makes it apparent that sarcasm is a highly context-dependent variable. This dissertation uses a similar approach but includes other types of expressions that—without constituting sarcasm or irony—can also be perceived by the reader as being a mockery or other type of humor that

reads uncivil. I anticipate that when it comes to online communication, most types of humorous expressions are going to be perceived as uncivil by the reader of such messages.

There are a few studies, however, that move past the sarcasm/irony duality. Mutz and Reeves (2005) measured how a television audience experience recognize incivility through made-up political debates which included actions such as eye-rolling. Now going back to online incivility, mockery has also been measured as a category for incivility. In fact, Gervais (2015) includes mockery among character assassination and name-calling as a separate category from other types of incivilities. However, Sobieraj and Berry (2011) considers a broader way of understanding mockery, and defined it as "making fun of the behaviors, planned behaviors, policies, or views of a person, group of people, branch of government, political party, or other organization in such a way as to make the subject look bad or to rally others in criticism of the subject" (p. 29). The authors found in their study that mockery was the preferred form of outrage, surpassing more common measures such as name-calling and insulting language. To my knowledge, this is the closest attempt at considering negative humor as being more than sarcasm or irony. Although incivility is not the exact same as outrage, I also considered this broader form of mockery, which I refer to in this dissertation as "humor as means of being uncivil."

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Most studies conducted so far on incivility, deliberation, and disagreement on news user comments come from the United States, Europe, and Asia. I start by asking how much incivility will be present in a Chilean sample, and which type of incivility is more prominent:

RQ1: (a) How much incivility and (b) which type of incivility (profanities, insults, stereotypes, humor) is more prominent in news comments regarding 2017's Chilean presidential elections?

Previous literature suggests a few predictors for a comment to be uncivil: that males tend to be more uncivil than females, that many uncivil comments come from an

anonymous user, and that deliberative use of uppercase words is associated to a comment being perceived as uncivil. Therefore:

H1: (a) Being male, (b) being anonymous, and (c) using uppercase words, increases the likelihood for a comment to be uncivil.

Deliberation has been acknowledged as an ideal form of public exchange in an online setting, especially when citizens are commenting upon key issues facing their social life. Similar to incivility levels on news comments in Chile, deliberation has not being studied so far on a local level, so I ask whether this new setting will yield similar results as other studies describing low levels of deliberation.

RQ2: (a) How much deliberation and (b) which type of deliberation (legitimate question, evidence) is more prominent in news comments regarding the 2017 Chilean presidential election?

Another key variable in this dissertation is disagreement. A vital characteristic of a healthy public conversation is being able to disagree with another person on a civil manner (civil disagreement). Unfortunately, previous literature suggests that users usually write an answer to an uncivil message in an uncivil manner (uncivil disagreement).

RQ3: How much disagreement towards another user is present in news comments regarding the 2017 Chilean presidential election?
H2: Among people who disagree with another user, there is more incivility compared to comments that don't contain disagreement.

Previous literature suggests deliberation is not a common feature on comments from users who are disagreeing with each other.

H3: Deliberation is more likely to happen when people don't disagree with each other.
Although there has been a lot of research done on incivility within news comments, and even on different types of such uncivil messages, little work has been done in regards of humorous messages being perceived as uncivil by the readers. A highly context-dependent

variable, such as sarcasm or mockery, varies between countries and even smaller local settings. However, acknowledging this issue and attempting to measure it can help expand our understanding of different types and layers of uncivil speech online.

RQ4: Is humor related to different types of incivility?

Likewise, I ask whether this special type of incivility (humor as means of being uncivil), could be related to a higher or lower prevalence for deliberation:

RQ5: Is there any relationship between deliberation and humor?

Finally, both uncivil comments and uncivil disagreement comments have been studied for their propensity to foster different outcomes. In the realm of emotions, some scholars have acknowledged a link between the exposure to incivility and the increase of specific negative emotions such as anger and discomfort. However, incivility has also been found to produce a "positive" effect in the sense that it can foster further engagement through the online tool, such as a user posting a response or liking/disliking the comment.

H4: Uncivil disagreement comments will produce greater negative emotions compared to a) civil disagreement comments, just b) uncivil comments, and c) civil comments.

H5: Participants who read a) uncivil comments, b) uncivil disagreement comments, and c) civil disagreement comments will become more engaged, compared to participants who read civil agreement comments.

METHODS

CHAPTER 3

This dissertation tests and asks different hypotheses and questions related to (1) the presence of incivility, deliberation and disagreement among news comments; and (2) different emotional and attitudinal outcomes when users read comments with presence or absence of incivility, deliberation, and disagreement. I conducted two studies: a content analysis of user comments on articles related to a presidential election and a controlled experiment embedded in an online survey. I conducted the content analysis to address the first set of questions and hypotheses, whereas the experiment enabled addressing the second set of questions and hypotheses.

One of the main advantages of using two or more methods to analyze the same phenomenon is to "strengthen the validity of inquiry results" (Greene et al., 1989, p. 256). Similarly, Abowitz and Toole (2010) note that "a mixed method approach, utilizing two or more data collection methods whose validity and reliability problems counterbalance each other, enables us to triangulate in on the 'true' result" (p. 10).

For the first part of this dissertation (Study 1), I sought to both quantify and establish relationships between key variables: incivility, deliberation, and disagreement. To do so, I chose a content analysis method because of its ability to measure manifest content. Riffe, Lacy and Fico (2005) described it as "the systematic assignment of communication content to categories according to rules, and the analysis of relationships involving those categories using statistical methods" (p. 3).

Content analysis seemed the best way to assess the goals of the first study of this dissertation. At the moment of conducting this study, no other academic work had been done in Chile regarding measuring and establishing connections between incivility, deliberation and disagreement within political news comments. Only one similar work had been conducted, analyzing incivility and deliberation in Chilean news comments in relationship to a natural disaster (Saldaña, 2018). Therefore, to move forward into other

inquiries such as content effects (Study 2), a content analysis served the purpose of establishing a diagnosis for incivility on news comments in Chile.

There are two types of content analysis: computer content analysis (CATA), and manual content analysis (Neuendorf, 2016). Since the content that was analyzed was extremely context-dependent, a manual content analysis seemed the best choice. By choosing manual coding, I was better able to represent the complexity of the measured variables.

For Study 2, I sought to establish the causal-effect relationships between incivility and disagreement on news comments on users' emotions and willingness to discuss. Experiments are the gold standard for establishing causal-effects relationships. By enabling random assignment of the experimental treatment, they help establish unbiased causal inferences. Thus, I conducted an experiment embedded in an online survey. According to Mutz (2011), survey experiments, especially when they are population-based, combine the internal validity of lab experiments with the external validity of surveys. One of the main limitations to conducting a population-based survey is its cost. However, this dissertation received support from the Millennium Institute for Foundational Research on Data (IMFD), which allowed the administration of the experiment on a Chilean population-based sample. While the sample is based on an opt-in sample, it is sufficiently diverse and matches population parameters along key demographic variables.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Because the online panel survey involved collecting data from human subjects, the design for Study 2 was submitted to the IRB of Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. The IRB approved that part of the dissertation before data collection for both the pilot and the final experiment.

In the case of Study 1 (content analysis of news comments), an IRB submission was not required since all user comments were in the public domain, and no user

identification was needed, except for separating anonymous vs. non anonymous users, and gender.

Study 1: Measuring Incivility, Disagreement and Deliberation on News Comments

Case Study and Sampling

For the content analysis, I focused on the day of the runoff of the 2017 presidential election in Chile between the center-right candidate, Sebastián Piñera, and the center-left candidate, Alejandro Guillier. I chose this setting as the case for study for several reasons. First, prior research suggests that incivility is prominent on political issues and national affairs (Coe, Kenski & Rains, 2014). Second, this type of context presents a clearly polarized scenario for the audience to engage into heated debate, which also increases the likelihood for both incivility and disagreement (Hwang, Kim & Kim, 2016). Finally, deliberation over political issues has been further analyzed for its ideal on promoting a healthy democracy, since it's "a discursive system where citizens share information about public affairs, talk politics, form opinions, and participate in political processes" (Kim, Wyatt & Katz, 1999, p. 361).

I content analyzed news comments posted in two Chilean news outlets, *Emol* (www.emol.com) and *La Tercera* (www.latercera.com.) These are the main web sites (in terms of readership) of Chile's biggest news conglomerates, El Mercurio S.A.P. and Consorcio Periodístico S.A. (Copesa), respectively. Both are among the top five most visited news sites in Chile, too (Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 2020). Moreover, both sites were deemed appropriate for this study because they do not moderate their users' comments sections, and thus presented an ideal setting for witnessing abundant, unfiltered discussion over debate news.

For the sampling process, on the same day of the runoff election (December 17, 2017), a total of 84 news articles from *Emol* and *La Tercera* were downloaded with all of

their respective user comments using a Python script.[1] These articles represent every news article published in both media during election day (24-hour period) that specifically referred to the election or its candidates. The total number of comments was 4,670, and they constituted the total amount of user comments that were posted in those articles. Each user comment, whether it is a stand-alone comment (not replying to another user) or a comment that is written in response to a previous one, is considered a sample unit.

Intercoder Reliability and Trainings

Three coders were chosen and trained with a codebook containing an exhaustive operationalization for every variable of interest, with examples for each of them. All coders were undergraduate Chilean students, which was especially important since many Chilean slangs are considered uncivil and needed to be identified. Coders were blind to study purposes to prevent biased coding that would question the validity of the analysis (Neuendorf, 2016). The original codebook (Appendix 1.1) was developed in Spanish, to incorporate real examples to be considered by the coders. I later created an English version (Appendix 1.2).

Reliability tests were conducted over 10% of the final sample, chosen from articles published in the days prior to the election. Intercoder reliability was estimated using the ReCal3 software (Freelon, 2013). Krippendorff's alphas (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007) ranged from 0.58 to 1 for each variable. All specific values are described below. Each student coded around 1,550 comments after the training.

Although one of the measures for incivility did not achieve a satisfactory intercoder reliability (*stereotype* with an alpha of 0.58), it was still included because the percentage of agreement was high (98%), which means that the overall presence of stereotypes within the sample was so low (154 comments) that just a few discrepancies between coders meant for a low Krippendorff's alpha.

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[1] Python 3 was used. The script was based upon Beautiful Soup library, which pulls data from HTML and XML files. More information can be found on this website: https://www.crummy.com/software/BeautifulSoup/bs4/doc/

A special mention needs to be made regarding the humor variable. When the training began, the codebook included dictionary definitions for irony and sarcasm because previous literature used to measure either one of the two concepts as a straight-forward way of being uncivil through humor (e.g., Anderson & Huntington, 2017). Therefore, only these two dimensions (irony and sarcasm) were going to be considered in the operationalization for humor. However, reliability levels were low, and coders identified many comments that didn't fit these dictionary definitions but were considered uncivil. For example, many comments belonged to users laughing at another person's previous statement. In that case, there's no irony or sarcasm involved, but there's a clear intention of mockery, which falls under the theorization of incivility presented in this dissertation. Furthermore, when all comments that used humor as means of being uncivil were coded within the humor variable, reliability increased to acceptable statistical levels. Therefore, this broader understanding of the humor variable was incorporated into the study.

Measures

The codebook used for this content analysis considered categories derived from the literature for incivility and deliberation, while incorporating the presence of disagreement among users, user identification (gender and anonymity), and humor as means for being uncivil.

a. *Outlet Identification (Emol, La Tercera): Code whether the comment was published in Emol or La Tercera* (Percentage Agreement = 100%, Krippendorff's alpha = 1.0).

b. *Gender Identification (Male, Female, Undetermined):* Comments were coded to account for the gender identification of its author: whether the author signed with a male or a female name. If no assumption could be made regarding gender identification, then the user was labeled as having an undetermined ID. Coders were told not to further search a user's information, and also consider the intention to be recognized as either female or male (e.g., "Wonder Woman" would be coded

as female, while "Superman" would be coded as male) (Percentage Agreement = 92.6%, Krippendorff's alpha = .70).

c. *Anonymous User:* If the written name of the comment's author didn't have a name-last name format (e.g., like just having a first name, or repeating twice a last name), or used a nickname, then the user was marked as "anonymous" (Percentage Agreement = 98%, Krippendorff's alpha = .83).

d. *Uppercase Use:* If the comment presented words in uppercase that are not usually written in such a form (like "USA"), then the comment was marked as having uppercase (Percentage Agreement = 96%, Krippendorff's alpha = .84).

e. *Profanity / Vulgar Language (With Intention):* If the comment includes profanity, such as swear words, that are directed towards another person or group of people, related to either the topic being discussed in the news article, or the content of another user comment, then the comment was marked as having "profanity with intention" (Percentage Agreement = 99%, Krippendorff's alpha = .77).

f. *Profanity / Vulgar Language (Without Intention):* If the comment includes profanity, such as swear words, that are not directed towards another person or group of people, and can be recognized as part of the user's speech instead of being directed at someone, then the comment was coded as "profanity without intention" (Percentage Agreement = 99.3%, Krippendorff's alpha = .92).

g. *Insult / Nickname*: If the comment included an insult that is not a profanity (e.g., "imbecile" or "stupid") that was directed to a person or group of people, or gave an offensive nickname to another user or a person or group of people, then the comment was coded as "insult/nickname" (Percentage Agreement = 81%, Krippendorff's alpha = .63).

h. *Stereotypes*: If the comment included the use of a stereotype (e.g. "women are weaker than men"), then the comment was marked as "stereotype." Literature on incivility describes the use of stereotypes specially directed towards a minority group (G. M. Chen, 2017b). However, considering the nature of this sample, the use of political stereotypes was also considered, such as labeling all communists

as being lazy, or right-wing politicians as being thieves (Percentage Agreement = 98%, Krippendorff's alpha = .58).

i. *Humor (Irony, Sarcasm, Derision):* If the comments included a word, phrase or expression that in consideration with the local culture could be considered as humor with an underlying intention of being uncivil, then the comment was marked as "humor." The codebook presented in Appendix 1.1 and 1.2 include several examples of humorous words or expressions as means of being uncivil (Percentage Agreement = 88.7%, Krippendorff's alpha = .66).

j. *Legitimate Question:* If the comment included a non-rhetoric question with the user having an intention to be provided with further information, then the comment was marked as a "legitimate question" (Percentage Agreement = 98%, Krippendorff's alpha = .76).

k. *Evidence:* If the comment included evidence, such as citing a study, providing a link with further information or giving numerical data, then the comment was marked "evidence" (Percentage Agreement = 97.3%, Krippendorff's alpha = .76).

l. *Disagreement with Another User:* If the comment manifested an explicit or implicit disagreement with a previous user comment, then the comment was coded as "disagreement with another user" (Percentage Agreement = 89%, Krippendorff's alpha = .74).

Data Analysis

Before conducting analyses and answering the research questions, three new variables were created by incorporating different indicators derived from previous studies: Incivility 1 (without *Humor*), Incivility 2 (with *Humor*), and Deliberation. In the case of incivility, *Profanity* (with intention to cause harm), *Insults* and *Stereotypes* were computed into a dichotomous variable labeled Incivility 1 (Incivility *1* = 31.1%; No Incivility *1* = 68.9%). This new variable will help answer RQ4, which asks if there is an association between a more common operationalization for incivility, and *Humor* as a separate variable. Then, a second dichotomous variable for Incivility was created, but this time

adding Humor to the previous categories (*Incivility 2 = 52.3%*; *No Incivility 2 = 47.7%*). This variable helped to answer H1, H2 and RQ5.

Similarly, a variable for Deliberation was created by summing *Legitimate Question* and *Evidence* and then computing it into a single dichotomous variable named Deliberation (*Deliberation = 6.5%*; *No Deliberation = 93.5%*).

Research questions 1, 2 and 3 asked about the amount of incivility, deliberation and disagreement between users on news comments related to a political debate, respectively. To answer these, descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) were calculated.

As stated before, research question 4 inquired whether there was an association between humor and most common types of incivilities such as profanity, insults and stereotypes. A series of chi-square tests were conducted to assess a relationship between the previously mentioned categories, on the one hand, and humor on the other.

Research question 5 asked if there was a relationship between the occurrence of humor and deliberation. Again, a chi-square test was used to assess whether such relationship exists.

Hypothesis 1 anticipated that within news comments related to a political issue, (a) being male, (b) being anonymous and (c) using uppercase words would increase the likelihood for a comment to be uncivil. To test whether these predictors held true under this hypothesis, a logistic regression was conducted.

Finally, hypotheses 2 and 3 anticipated outcomes under the presence of disagreement between users. In the case of H2, I expected to find more incivility among users who disagree with each other, while H3 stated that there will be less deliberation under this same setting. To test both hypotheses, two chi-square tests were conducted to assess a relationship between disagreement among users, and incivility (H2) or deliberation (H3).

The Chilean Media Ecosystem

This brief section explains the selection of media for Study 1 (Emol.com and LaTercera.com.) Reviewing every media outlet in Chile goes beyond the scope of this dissertation. Instead, I focus on the two main media companies in the country.

The two companies that own the main daily nationwide newspapers in Chile are "El Mercurio SAP" and "Copesa SA." El Mercurio SAP was founded in 1900 and runs three nation-wide daily newspapers: *El Mercurio*, *La Segunda*, and *Las Últimas Noticias*. The conglomerate was founded and is still controlled by the Edwards family, which has always been linked to the more conservative right-wing segment of the country (Monckeberg, 2011). The main competitors would come 50 years later, as the Pino-Cañas family founded *La Tercera* (which at the time was called *La Tercera de la Hora*.) Now the company is controlled by businessman Álvaro Saieh, and also includes *La Cuarta* and *La Hora*, albeit *La Tercera* still remains its most popular newspaper.

Both *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera* newspapers have been for many years a referral for political discussion (Navia & Osorio, 2015). However, up until 1973, political communication and analyses were more common in left and centrist print media, and only a few belonged to the right wing (including *El Mercurio*) (Tironi & Sunkel, 1993). It was during Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship —from 1973 until 1990— that both *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera* started building themselves a better reputation nationwide (Gronemeyer & Porath, 2015).

During the years of the center-left Concertación coalition governments (1990-2010), the two companies' respective flagship media (*El Mercurio* for "El Mercurio SAP" and *La Tercera* for "Copesa SA"), soared in terms of readership and advertising revenues (Del Valle, 2004). This transformation was possible as Chile adopted a more market-oriented economic model with the Pinochet dictatorship, which was deepened by the Concertación administrations. As Tironi and Sunckel (1993) explain, the process of financially opening the country favored the big media conglomerates located in Santiago, while diminishing regional and small media. It was during this time that Copesa included into *La Tercera* a weekly magazine with valuable coverage on political and social issues,

called *Qué Pasa*, while *El Mercurio* had an extensive section of reportages every Sunday, with interviews and analyses that would mark the following week's political agenda.

By the beginning of the 21st century, both outlets went online. In the case of *La Tercera*, the website, LaTercera.com, published news taken from the print version, plus other current events. *El Mercurio* saw several changes on its way to becoming a digital influence. In 1995, EMOL (short for "*El Mercurio* Online"), was released in 1995 as a source of financial content. However, the website started to incorporate news from *El Mercurio*, *La Segunda*, and *Las Últimas Noticias*, while also incorporating its own reporting. Eventually, Elmercurio.com became a page to see the paper's print version online, while Emol.com is to this day one of the most visited news sites in the country (Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 2020), and no longer includes the same articles that appear in the print version of *El Mercurio*.

This digital transformation is important for this dissertation, because interactivity between users and the web became a highly used tool for both sites. Both websites have allowed for many years for users to comment under each article. Semi-structured interviews that I conducted with the editors of both websites in 2017 were a good insight on how this interactive feature was being used, and whether or not there were concerns on the quality of the discussion, since many incivilities, including profanities and insults, were easily recognizable in both sites. While Emol.com has an automatized filter for swear words and other inappropriate expressions, LaTercera.com does not engage in any type of moderation, claiming freedom of speech and positive web traffic (Rosenberg, 2017). Emol ended up switching its own commenting tool to Facebook's plugin tool for user comments, thus subscribing to Facebook moderation rules. However, the design for user commenting in Study 2 was inspired by the original comment tool that Emol had and that for many years was a preferred place for nasty public discussion.

In conclusion, *El Mercurio* (through its web site EMOL) and *La Tercera* were selected among other national media because of two main reasons: their current influence, which is built upon their history, and the possibility to witness and extract unfiltered user comments from their main websites.

Study 2: Exploring the effects of incivility and disagreement among news comments readers

The second part of this dissertation focuses on analyzing how the absence and presence of both incivility and disagreement within news comments trigger different effects on those who read them. To answer the hypotheses and research questions, an experiment was designed and implemented through a population-based survey.

Stimuli

The experimental stimuli were news comments designed to show absence or presence of the two main independent variables: incivility and disagreement. A 2 (issue) x 2 (incivility) x 2 (disagreement) design was implemented so a total of eight conditions were tested.

The experiment used controversial issues because prior literature suggested that polarization among moral and controversial issues sparks greater levels of incivility and disagreement among users (Suhay, Bello-Pardo, & Maurer, 2018). To improve the generalizability of the results, two issues, immigration and abortion, were chosen instead of one. That way, results are not contingent upon the particularities of a single controversial topic. Table 1 shows all eight conditions, four for each issue.

Table 1 – Experimental Conditions

Issue: Immigration	
Condition 1	No incivility / no disagreement (control)
Condition 2	No incivility / disagreement
Condition 3	Incivility / No disagreement
Condition 4	Incivility / disagreement
Issue: Abortion	
Condition 5	No incivility / no disagreement (control)
Condition 6	No incivility / disagreement
Condition 7	Incivility / no disagreement
Condition 8	Incivility / disagreement

Construction of the stimuli was done with Photoshop software, emulating the design of real user comments that allow for a reply option, and also putting a "like" or a "dislike" below each comment. *Emol's* design of comments was particularly emulated because it was the first Chilean news site to introduce its own comments tool and is widely popular, whereas *La Tercera's* comments sections had started using the Facebook plug-in, which could induce participants into thinking they were reading Facebook comments.

Figure 1 – Stimuli example

Condition 4: Incivility / Disagreement (Issue: Immigration)

All eight conditions (four for each issue), displayed the same structure of user comments, so that participants would not receive an uneven display of the stimuli. The number of comments and the structure of the overall flow of comments was decided in consideration of previous experiments with news comments, such as the one conducted by Chen and Lu (2017). Moreover, I conducted a manipulation check to assess the efficiency of the stimuli.

The final stimuli for each condition consisted of four comments displayed in the following way: first, a user commenting on the issue without having a reaction; then, a second comment from another user that could reinforce or complement the first comment. Finally, two comments reacting to the previous comment: the third one reacting to the second comment, and a final fourth comment reacting to the third. This structure would allow a correct manipulation of the two main dependent variables: incivility and disagreement. For disagreement to happen, there needs to be at least a second person

manifesting it (Chen & Lu, 2017). Similarly, incivility is often manifested as a reaction to another person's idea (Ceron & Memoli, 2016).

The stimuli for the eight conditions can be found in Appendix 2. A pilot test with a manipulation check was then conducted to test, among other things, the efficacy of the stimuli.

Pilot Testing and Manipulation Check

A pilot test on a convenience sample of undergrads was conducted to check the internal validity of the experimental stimuli. Students were randomly assigned to one of the eight conditions.

After completing the experiment, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare perceived levels of incivility, on the one hand, and disagreement, on the other. There was a significant difference in the scores for incivility ($M = 8.7$, $SD = 2.3$) and no incivility ($M = 3.6$, $SD = 2.5$) conditions, $t(191) = -2.38$, $p < 0.01$. Likewise, there was a significant difference in the scores for disagreement ($M = 6.2$, $SD = 3.2$) and no disagreement ($M = 5.1$, $SD = 3.6$) conditions, $t(191) = -7.15$, $p < 0.01$. These results suggest that both experimental stimuli worked as expected: participants ranked uncivil comments as being significantly more uncivil than non-uncivil comments, and the same happened with comments that were manipulated to show disagreement among users. A detailed description on the Pilot Test can be found in Appendix 3.

Online Experiment and Procedure

The questionnaire (see Appendix 4.1 and 4.2) was uploaded into the Qualtrics platform, and Dynata, a professional polling company formerly known as SSI, was hired to recruit the respondents. To ensure a better representation of the Chilean population, the following sampling quotas were set: 55% women, 50% aged 18-35, 30% with graduate education or higher, and 60% living in the Metropolitan Region.

Participants were first told that the purpose of the survey was to understand online news consumption and user engagement with them. Then, a pretest questionnaire

measured demographic, psychological and news media use variables. Next, participants were randomly assigned into one of the eight conditions described in the pilot test. Then, participants read a short text that introduced "a short news story with user comments." After reading one news story (related either to abortion or immigration in Chile), they read four comments about the news, with either the presence or absence of incivility and disagreement. Finally, participants answered a series of post-test questions that included the outcome variables. A final message explained the real purpose of the study. Completion time was approximately 15 minutes.

Data collection lasted three weeks, after which a total of 487 responses were collected. After excluding incomplete responses, 413 entries were selected for analysis and uploaded into SPSS software. The final sample came close to every established quota: 51.6% of the participants are men, 49.2% are up to 35 years old, 52.8% come from the Metropolitan Region of Chile, and 40% have at least an undergraduate college degree.

The survey had a sample size of N=413 and a cooperation rate of 77.6 percent (American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR), 2016; CR3)

Measures

a. *Perception of incivility and disagreement*. I used items adjusted from Chen and Ng (2017). Participants were asked to rank on a scale (range: 1 = *strongly disagree*; 10 = *strongly agree*) how much they agree with these two statements: the user comments about the news article were disrespectful ($M = 5.24$; $SD = 3.13$); the user comments about the news article expressed disagreement between them ($M = 5.77$; $SD = 3.17$).

b. *Emotions*. We used five items from the State Hostility Scale (Anderson & Carnagey, 2004) and randomly combined them with positive emotions on a single list, following the steps of Valenzuela (2020). Respondents were asked how much they felt each emotion after reading the news story with the user comments: (a) anger, (b) fear, (c) hope, (d) shame, (e) irritability, (f) enthusiasm, (g) discomfort, (h) joy, (i) bitterness, (j) pride, (k) anxiety, (l) rage. All of these emotions were

measured with a 5-point scale (ranging from 1 = *nothing*; 5 = *quite a lot*). Since H1 anticipates the arousal of negative emotions after reading uncivil comments, items, (a), (b), (e), (g), (i) and (k) were combined into a single scale and labeled "Negative Emotions" (Cronbach's α = .87; *M* = 2.48; *SD* = 1.06).

The following three measures were inspired by literature but original to this study:

c. *Engagement.* Participants were asked to rank on a 5-point scale (range: 1 = *very unlikely*; 5 = *very likely*), how likely would they consider performing the following tasks after reading the news article with the user comments: (a) read more user comments about the article, (b) mark a comment with a "like" or a "dislike," (c) write a comment in response to another user's comment, and (d) share with another person your personal impressions about the comment. All four items were combined into a single scale labeled "Engagement" (Cronbach's α = .83; *M* = 3.32; *SD* = 1.03).

d. *Perception of humor as incivility.* Participants were asked whether they agreed or not with the following statement: "I usually perceive comments that include mockery or that laugh at something or someone to be more inappropriate and uncivil" (range: 1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly agree*) (*M* = 3.79; *SD* = 1.26).

e. *Liking an uncivil comment.* Finally, respondents were asked whether they agreed with the following statement: "When a comment I just read coincides with my own point of view about the topic, I mark it with a 'like' even if it's written in an aggressive manner" (range: 1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly agree*) (*M* = 2.75; *SD* = 1.22).

Data Analysis

The first hypothesis predicted that exposure to uncivil disagreement in user comments would cause a higher arousal of negative emotions, compared to the other three conditions. To answer this, a Negative Emotions scale was created (as previously specified) to use as the dependent variable. Since I am comparing one condition with the other three, with different people in each condition, a between-subjects factorial ANOVA

with planned contrasts was performed to assess for the difference of variance between the groups that read uncivil disagreement comments, just uncivil comments, civil disagreement, and civil agreement comments.

Finally, H2 predicts that uncivil disagreement comments will foster more user engagement compared to civil disagreement comments, just uncivil comments, and civil comments. An Engagement scale was created after adding up traditional forms of user engagement in user comments, such as writing another comment or liking/disliking a previous user comment. Another between-subjects factorial ANOVA with planned contrasts was performed to assess for the difference of variance between the groups that read uncivil disagreement comments, just uncivil comments, just disagreement comments, and civil agreement comments.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

CHAPTER 4

This chapter focuses on the results of the content analysis conducted with a one-day sample of 4,670 news comments related to a Chilean presidential election, with the intention to: (1) measure the amount of incivility, deliberation, and disagreement within news comments over a political issue, and (2) observe whether these variables relate to each other in the same way previous literature has suggested. Moreover, since only one similar analysis has been done in Chile in a different topic (Saldaña, 2018), local context could bring different findings and contribute to the ongoing literature on hateful speech in online spaces.

Because news comments about politics are usually hosts for increased incivility (Coe et al., 2014), the comments that were analyzed came from the second and definitive round between two candidates for the presidency of Chile on December 17, 2017. In total, 4,670 news comments were downloaded from two of Chile's main news sites: Emol (acronym for El Mercurio Online), and LaTercera.com. Three independent coders were trained until they achieved satisfactory intercoder reliability levels.

More details on the design are found in the Methods section (Chapter 3).

Results

Incivility

This dissertation started by asking the amount of incivility and the types of incivilities that are present in Chilean news comments (RQ1). As explained in the Methods section, this content analysis considered the more common forms of incivilities described in the literature (Chen, 2017; Coe et al., 2014), while at the same time acknowledging the abundance of humorous expressions that could also be considered uncivil.

If we consider how previous studies have measured incivility (as having one of three attributes: profanity, insults, and/or stereotypes), then 31.1% of all comments

analyzed had at least one indicator of incivility. However, when humor (mainly in the form of sarcasm/irony/mockery) was added to the other three attributes, the level of incivility in the comments was 40.9%, which means that at least four of every 10 comments were coded as having uncivil traits, surpassing the average number of uncivil comments found in similar studies done in the Global North.

When it comes to analyzing each specific measure for incivility within the sample, descriptive statistics show that out of the 4,670 comments, 4.6% (216) were marked as "vulgarity/profanity with intention," 1.1% (52) as having "vulgarity/profanity without intention," and 3.4% (158) as including stereotypes. However, two attributes for incivility were more prominent: 25.4% (1,185) of comments had "insults/nicknames," while 30.8% (1,439) of comments had a form of humor, typically irony or sarcasm. The amount of humor found is impressive, even displacing more traditional categories for incivility found in the literature (e.g. Chen, 2017a; Coe, Kenski, & Rains, 2014). As discussed in Chapter 6, these results could mean that a substantial number of users use humor as a means of being uncivil. On the one hand, anonymity allows for users to express themselves more freely, without much consideration for social norms. On the other hand, a reader might find even the slightest form of humor as being uncivil, because humor is extremely context-dependent and the message is usually coming from an unknown person. Figure 2 shows the different categories and amounts of incivility using Chen's (2007) operationalization, plus adding the humor dimension.

Figure 2 – Amount of Incivility
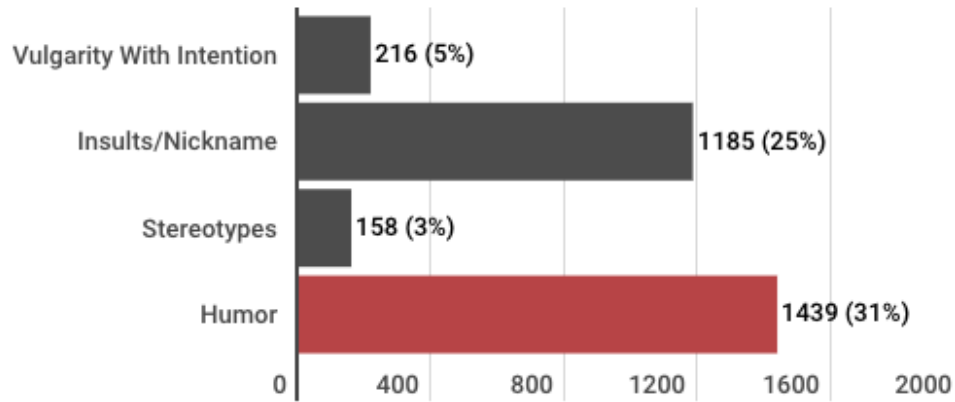
User Identification

Basic demographic information was also coded and analyzed to account for gender and whether or not anonymous users (e.g. "Wonder Woman") were prevalent in the sample. Previous literature suggested that (a) there is an important presence of anonymous accounts in online news discussions (Halpern & Gibbs, 2013) and (b) males tend to participate more and are more prone of being uncivil than females (Hutchens et al., 2015). Indeed, 81.2% (3,793) of users on the sample were male, while 9.3% (433) were female, and 9.5% (444) were undetermined (meaning that a clear identification of gender couldn't be made). Therefore, if we consider that some undetermined users could also be male, the overall percentage of male users engaging in incivility could be even larger. Finally, anonymous users (mainly accounts without a name-last name format) were just 12.8% (600). This is an interesting finding because previous literature suggests that there's a high prevalence of anonymous users both in general and on news sites (Hutchens et al., 2015), and also that anonymous users are more prone to incivility than non-anonymous users (Hardaker, 2010). Possible interpretations are discussed in Chapter 6.

Figure 3 – Gender Identification   **Figure 4** – Anonymous Identification
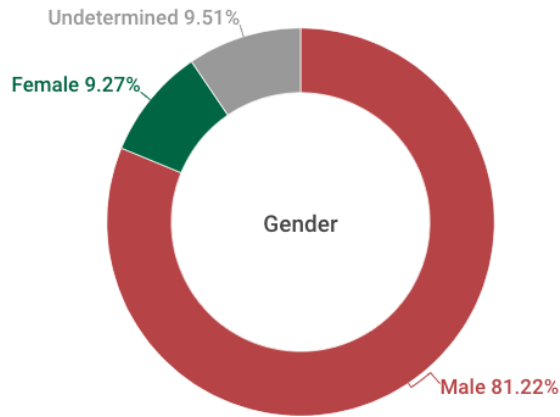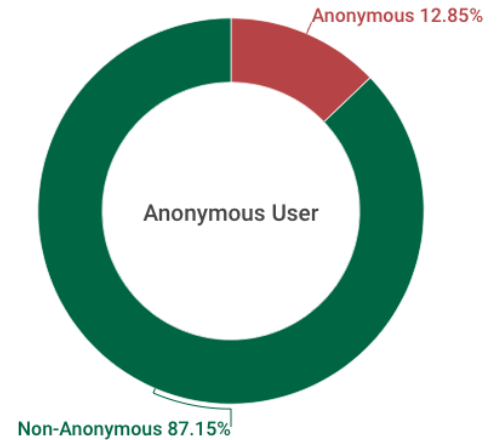
Deliberation

As previously reviewed, deliberation has been studied hand-in-hand with incivility within this context of news comments, so RQ2 asked for the amount of deliberation and the type of deliberation that is more prominent in Chilean news comments. Again, descriptive statistics were calculated and 6.3% (295) of the comments had at least one measure of deliberation, either through the use of a "legitimate question" or through the use of "evidence." When analyzed separately, just 3% (138) of the comments had a "legitimate question," and 3.8% (177) included "evidence," This result is consistent with previous studies finding small amounts of deliberation within news comments (Rowe, 2015).

Disagreement

Not all news comments have uncivil or deliberative traits. Previous literature has also accounted for users disagreeing with each other, with or without aggression or deliberation (Chen & Lu, 2017), so RQ3 asked for the amount of disagreement between users on news comments.

Since disagreement between users only occurs in some messages, comments that were not answering or mentioning another user were coded as "non-answer," while

comments that were replaying or mentioning another user were coded as "answer." Considering the 4,670 comments from the sample, 47.4% (2,213) belonged to users engaging with each other, with 27.3% (1,277) belonging to users disagreeing with a previous comment. The graph in figure 5 depicts these proportions.

Figure 5 – Graph showing the percentage of people within the sample that answer back at another user, and among those, the ones who show disagreement.
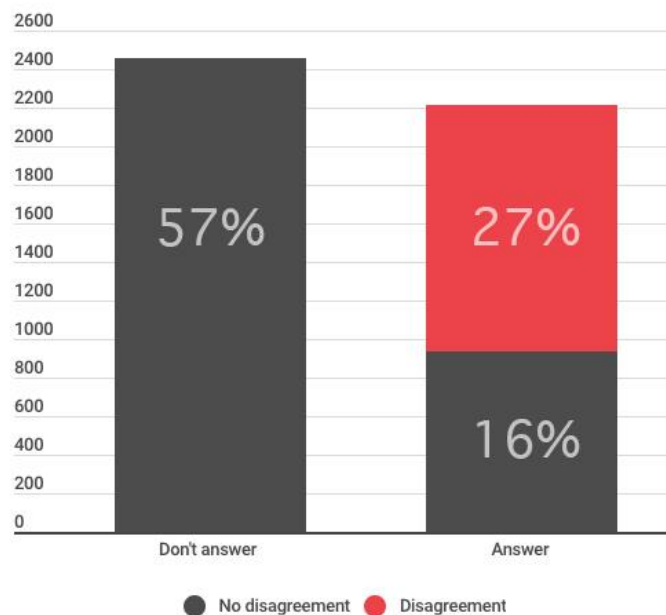
Humor as another dimension of incivility

Accounting for the importance of humor as a way of being uncivil is also an important part of this dissertation, therefore, RQ4 asked whether humor is related to different types of incivility.

To answer this, a chi-square test was conducted between "incivility" (profanity/insults/stereotypes), which had been previously recoded as a dichotomous variable, and "humor."

The results of the chi-square test showed no association between "humor" and most traditional forms of incivility [$\chi 2$ (1)= 0.17, p=.897]. This means that "humor" acts independently from most common forms of incivility. In this sample, a user who would use "humor" as means of being uncivil would just stick with this discursive strategy, without incorporating other forms of incivility.

Incivility (with humor) and deliberation

Similarly, RQ5 asked if there is a relationship between "incivility with humor" and "deliberation." To answer this, a chi-square test was conducted to compare both groups. The "deliberation" variable was also converted into dichotomous to account for the presence or absence of any of the two deliberation measurements: "evidence" and "legitimate question."

The results of the chi-square test showed a statistically significant association between "incivility with humor" and "deliberation" [$\chi 2$ (1)= 67.763, p<.001]. As stated before, the overall percentage of "deliberation" is small (6.8%). However, it appears that deliberation is more frequent on the group that doesn't engage in incivility (215 comments) compared to the ones that are uncivil (90 comments). This is consistent with previous literature suggesting that while deliberation can cohabit with incivility on a news forum, they usually do not coincide: a user that wants to deliberate would hardly do so in an aggressive manner (Chen, 2017).

Table 2. Chi-square results between Deliberation and Incivility (with Humor) in percentages (standardized residuals).

	No Incivility	Incivility
No Deliberation	46.1 (-1.5)	53.9 (1.5)
Deliberation	70.5 (5.8)	29.5 (-5.5)

Predictors for uncivil comments

Literature from previous studies, most of them conducted in the Global North, anticipate higher chances of finding uncivil speech under certain conditions: male users tend to be more uncivil (Kenski et al., 2017), anonymous users also tend to be more uncivil (Hutchens et al., 2015), and the use of uppercase words is also linked to incivility (Vargo & Hopp, 2017). Therefore, H1 anticipates that (a) being male, (b) being anonymous, and (c) using uppercase words, increases the likelihood for a comment to be uncivil. To test this hypothesis, a logistic regression was conducted.

Results from the logistic regression are shown on Table 3. As for the gender of the person who's commenting as a predictor for incivility, females are less likely to engage in incivility compared to males. Conversely, males are more likely to engage in incivility, so H1a was supported. In terms of anonymous users, there was no relationship between anonymity and the likelihood to post an uncivil comment, so H1b was not supported. The fact that anonymous users don't seem to be more uncivil in this sample, which is the opposite to what previous literature suggests, may have multiple explanations, starting with the operationalization of the variable: even if a person uses a name-last name ID, it doesn't really mean that it is his/her real name, so anonymity may still play an important role on uncivil speech.

Additionally, a comment containing uppercase words does increase the likelihood for the comment to be uncivil, so H1c was supported.

Table 3. Logistic regression analyses predicting Incivility 1 (N=4,670) without humor and Incivility 2 with humor (N=4,670)

	Incivility 1			*Incivility 2*		
	OR	**95% C.I.**		**OR**	**95% C.I.**	
		Lower	Upper		Lower	Upper
User Identification						
Gender: female (1=male)	.69**	.55	.87	.63***	.52	.77
Gender: undetermined (1=male)	1.10	.84	1.44	1.21	.94	1.55
Anonymous user (dummy)	.98	.77	1.24	1.02	.81	1.27
Content						
Uppercase use (dummy)	1.48***	1.27	1.74	1.17*	1.00	1.37
Humor (dummy)	1.00	.87	1.14			
Nagelkerke R-square	.011			.009		
Chi-square	34.96***			30.22***		
Df	5			4		

Notes. N for Incivility 1 (without humor) = 4,670. N for Incivility 2 (with humor) = 4,670. Cell entries correspond to Exp(B) coefficients

† $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Incivility within disagreement

Finally, two hypotheses seek to account for the relationship between disagreement and either incivility or deliberation. Previous literature (Hwang et al., 2016) found an increase of incivility amid comments from users that are disagreeing with each other, so H2 stated that among people who disagree with each other there is a greater likelihood for uncivil speech, compared to those who don't. To test this hypothesis, a chi-square test was conducted and results show that there is a statistically significant association between "incivility" and "disagreement with other user" [$\chi 2$ (1)= 180.695, p<.001], meaning that

there is more incivility in the group of users that disagree with another commenter. Therefore, H2 was supported.

Table 4. Chi-square results between Incivility (with Humor) and Disagreement with Another User in percentages (standardized residuals).

	No Incivility	Incivility
No Disagreement	53.8 (5.1)	46.2 (-4.9)
Disagreement	31.7 (-8.3)	68.3 (7.9)

Deliberation within disagreement

H3 stated that deliberation is more likely to happen when people don't disagree with each other. Another chi-square test was conducted between the variables "deliberation" and "disagreement with other user" to see whether there is an association between the two. Results show no relationship between the groups [$\chi2$ (1)= .724, p=.395], so H3 was not supported. Deliberation is not more likely to happen among users who disagree with each other.

Summary of findings

Overall, the results from this content analysis served two purposes. On the one hand, the findings coincide with similar studies done in the Global North: incivility is a frequent phenomenon on online news comments, and its presence is far more prominent than deliberation among users, which is wished upon a healthy democratic society. On the other hand, however, these findings also showcase peculiarities that can very well be explained within the local Chilean context while at the same time expanding the literature on incivility with special consideration of humorous expressions and their coexistence with deliberation and disagreement among users.

Having incorporated a broader concept of humor than what was usually analyzed in previous studies (see Chapter 2), this dissertation seeks to acknowledge how most types of humorous expressions are being perceived as uncivil, and therefore can be analyzed by future studies on online incivility. This could be especially useful when we consider that the use of "memes" or "funny GIFs" have proliferated in the last couple of years (Sanfilippo, Fichman, & Yang, 2018). "Memes or GIFs are context-dependent like most types of incivilities because they allow one the capacity to laugh at someone (e.g., a politician) and with someone (audience)."

While these findings are not generalizable to other news topics or local cultures, an exhaustive case study such as the one presented here helps diagnose the prevalence and types of uncivil speech and their relationship with deliberation and disagreement among news comments in a South American setting.

The main findings can be summarized as follows:

When considering a more typical categorization for incivility, its frequency is similar to other international studies, with almost one in every five comments having either profanity, insults, or stereotypes (Chen, 2017). However, when adding a broader dimension of humor as a means for being uncivil, with special attention paid to local context and sensibility (human coders), incivility levels rose to a whopping 40%, with "humor" being the preferred form of incivility when commenting on a presidential election.

Consistent with similar studies (e.g., Coe et al., 2014; Rowe, 2015), deliberation is not as frequent as scholars and democrats would like, with less than 7% of all comments including either "evidence" or a "legitimate question." However, strong emotions over a very polarized subject such as a presidential election and little-to-no-moderation on both web sites could be reasons that incivility dampens deliberation from other users. Anonymity is not high (12.8%) which means that most users at least identify themselves with a name-last name ID. To know for certain whether people who engage in incivility have created a profile with a false name is beyond the scope of this dissertation. However,

the amount of incivility seems to be partially explained by the lack of retaliation against users who engage in uncivil discourse. As Chilean news editors have admitted, the worst thing that could happen to an "uncivil" user is having their account suspended, which would only take an additional email to create a new account in less than five minutes (Rosenberg, 2017).

Finally, at least in this sample, users have a hard time manifesting disagreement without traits of incivility (H1). More studies with different settings could help in establishing whether this is a pattern across issues, or if it's something that occurs mainly on highly polarized topics.

ONLINE SURVEY EXPERIMENT

CHAPTER 5

This chapter focuses on the effects of incivility and disagreement in news comments on users' negative emotions and their willingness to engage in further conversations with other users about news messages. To do so, I designed and fielded an online survey experiment on a diverse sample of 413 adult users in Chile using an opt-in panel administered by a professional polling company. Details of the procedure can be found in the Methods section (Chapter 3).

Randomization and Covariate Distribution

Before testing the hypotheses, it was important to check whether randomization of participants for each condition was successful. Hence, I estimated a multinomial regression in which experimental group was the dependent variable and participants' characteristics, including their age, gender, educational level, political affiliation, general political interest, and attention to immigration, moral, and political news articles, were the independent variables. These covariates were all asked during the pretest and were chosen in the analysis because prior research has found they may influence incivility and discussion disagreement — e.g., male respondents are more prone to online incivility than female respondents (Alonzo & Aiken, 2004) — or may alter treatment effects (e.g., attention to immigration and abortion news). The results of the multinomial regression found no statistically significant relationship (Pseudo $R^2 = .157$, $p = .279$). This means that randomization was successful and that a balanced distribution of covariates across experimental groups was attained. For further details, see Appendix 5, Table 7.

Results

The experiment tested whether user comments about controversial issues (with or without incivility/disagreement) cause negative emotions or foster engagement (e.g., sharing or commenting) from users that are exposed to them. The existing literature

acknowledges a link between uncivil disagreement comments and negative emotions (Chen & Lu, 2017) as well as uncivil comments from like-minded people with user participation (e.g. putting a like/dislike, replaying) (Gervais, 2015). However, there is still little research done with consideration of more than one controversial issue and between those with different cultural background.

Recall that in each treatment, participants first read a news article over a controversial topic (either about immigration or abortion in Chile) and then read four comments that were created to resemble real user comments about the news article. Comments varied across conditions by including or excluding uncivil expressions and disagreement between commenters. Subsequently, participants were asked about how the comments made them feel and how likely they were to engage with the comments. Details on the design of the experiment are found in the Methods section, Chapter 3.

Tables 5 and 6 display the means and standard deviations for the two dependent variables (negative emotions and engagement) across issues and conditions.

Table 5. Estimated Means and Standard Deviations of Negative Emotions for Each Condition

	Negative Emotions		
	M	*SD*	*N*
Issue: Immigration			
No Incivility / No Disagreement	2.15	0.94	51
No Incivility / Disagreement	2.36	0.94	54
Incivility / No Disagreement	2.73	1.10	50
Incivility / Disagreement	2.82	1.09	48
Issue: Abortion			
No Incivility / No Disagreement	1.96	1.10	53
No Incivility / Disagreement	2.32	0.92	50
Incivility / No Disagreement	2.99	0.96	53
Incivility / Disagreement	2.54	1.04	54

Note: Negative emotions is a 5-point scale combining the intensity of specific negative emotions (anger, fear, irritability, discomfort, bitterness, and anxiety) (range: 1 = *not at all*, 5 = *a lot*)

Table 6. Estimated Means and Standard Deviations of Engagement for Each Condition

	Engagement		
	M	SD	N
Issue: Immigration			
No Incivility / No Disagreement	3.49	1.04	51
No Incivility / Disagreement	3.31	1.09	54
Incivility / No Disagreement	3.22	0.95	50
Incivility / Disagreement	3.14	0.98	48
Issue: Abortion			
No Incivility / No Disagreement	3.49	0.93	53
No Incivility / Disagreement	3.14	1.17	50
Incivility / No Disagreement	3.33	1.04	53
Incivility / Disagreement	3.42	1.05	54

Note: Engagement is a 5-point scale measuring the likelihood for participants to engage in different actions related to news comments (range: 1 = *very unlikely*, 5 = *very likely*)

H4 predicted that uncivil comments expressing disagreement produce greater negative emotions when compared to uncivil comments that do not include disagreement, just express disagreement, or neither. I conducted a two-way, between-subjects ANOVA to examine the effects of incivility and disagreement on negative emotions, with type of issue included as a covariate. While the main effect of incivility on negative emotions was significant, $F(1, 408) = 32.69$, $p < .001$, the main effect of disagreement on negative emotions was not, $F(1, 408) = 0.19$, $p = .661$. These main effects, however, were qualified by a significant interaction between incivility and disagreement on negative emotions, $F(1, 408) = 5.68$, $p < .05$. As illustrated in Figure 6, in the absence of incivility, reading comments that contained disagreement produced more negative emotions than reading comments without disagreement ($p < .05$). This differential impact of disagreement,

however, disappeared when users read uncivil comments ($p = .17$). At the same time, reading uncivil comments always produced more negative emotions than reading civil comments, whether at high ($p < .05$) or low ($p < .001$) levels of disagreement. Taken together, these results provide partial support for H4.

Figure 6. Main Effects for Incivility and Disagreement on Negative Emotions

Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Issue_I = .49
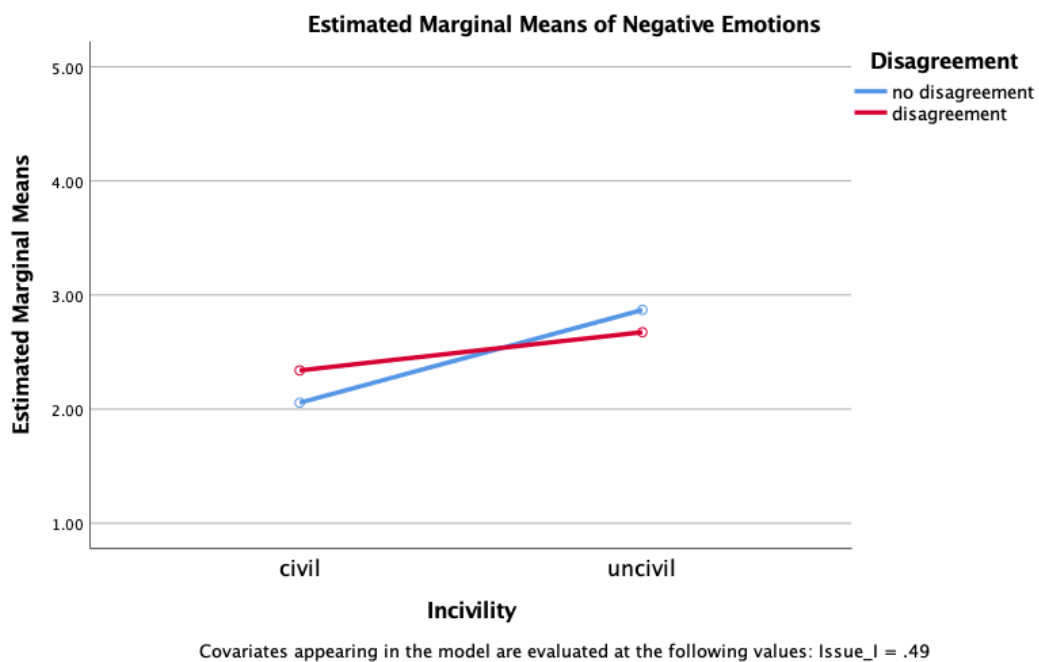
H5 predicted that uncivil disagreement comments will foster more user engagement compared to civil disagreement comments, uncivil comments, and civil comments. Again, I conducted a two-way, between-subjects ANOVA to examine the effects of incivility and disagreement on engagement, with issue type included as a covariate. The results showed no statistically significant main effects for incivility, $F(1, 408) = 0.56, p = .454$, or disagreement, $F(1, 408) = 1.46, p = .228$. The interaction between

disagreement and incivility was not significant either, $F(1, 408) = 1.75$, $p = .187$. Hence, H5 is not supported.[2]

Summary of findings

There has been a growing body of work exploring how political discussion across platforms elicits different emotional outcomes (Mutz, 2006; Valenzuela & Bachmann, 2015). Uncivil expressions, such as using swear words and manifesting disagreement with another user, are common forms of speech found on comments discussing political news (Chen & Ng, 2016). However, there is still scarce literature describing how both incivility and disagreement may affect user participation (e.g., replying with another comment, giving a "like" to a comment, etc.)

The current experiment tackles both issues using a diverse adult sample collected in Chile—a population that might respond differently than other samples collected in the global North. I hypothesized that uncivil disagreement expressions among user comments would produce greater negative emotions than civil or agreeable comments (H4). This hypothesis was supported, as the two groups exposed to uncivil disagreement comments—both for the abortion issue and the immigration issue—reported greater negative emotions than the two groups that did not read any uncivil message. The only exception was the group that read uncivil comments without disagreement, which reported greater negative emotions.

The interaction between incivility and disagreement was positive and statistically significant. That is, those who read only uncivil comments (i.e. without disagreement) scored highest in the scale of negative emotions. This suggests that incivility alone has the ability to foster negative emotions. Moreover, this experiment showed that uncivil disagreement (as opposed to civil disagreement) fosters negative emotions, too. This is

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[2] A post-hoc analysis was made to see whether there is an indirect effect between uncivil disagreement comments and engagement through negative emotions. A regression between negative emotions and engagement was conducted. Results showed no significant relationship between negative emotions and engagement, so and indirect effect between uncivil disagreement comments and user engagement through negative emotions could not be established.

consistent with previous findings suggesting that a small expression of incivility is enough to spark negative emotions (Rösner, Winter & Krämer, 2016) and that uncivil disagreement in particular is also a predictor of greater negative emotions (Chen & Lu, 2017), albeit these results also shed light on the fact that disagreement by itself is not enough to produce negative emotions in readers.

The second hypothesis predicted that users reading uncivil disagreement comments will report a higher willingness to participate or engage with news comments. There was no relationship between being exposed to uncivil disagreement comments and willingness to participate in the discussion. There could be several reasons for this. First, exposure to uncivil disagreement comments and online participation could be highly moderated by social trust (Luhmann, 1979), meaning that individuals low on social trust would put low trust in others and be less motivated to further participate in the discussion (Matthes, 2012). Second, online participation has been operationalized in various forms, from clicking on a link if there's willingness to further participate in the discussion (Borah, 2014) or making a pair of posts as a response (Gervais, 2015). My operationalization for online participation came from the most common interactions with a Chilean news comments platform, which includes writing a response, putting a like/dislike on a post, and putting a flag on a comment. Future research should incorporate post hoc analyzes for each specific form of participation.

DISCUSSION

CHAPTER 6

Interpretation and implications

This dissertation focuses on a several determinants of online public opinion; the first one being incivility. Study 1 asked for the amount and types of uncivil expressions found in online news websites in Chile during the 2017 presidential election (RQ1). Similar to previous research, I found there is a surprising presence of uncivil expressions on news comments about a political topic. The case chosen—a presidential election—is the type of hard news that has been found to elicit more incivility (Coe et al., 2014). Moreover, articles that include a politician are also substantially related to higher levels of incivility in users' comments (Mutz, 2015). Thus, it could be argued that the presence of political figures and political events in news articles elicits higher levels of incivility. That is, the conflictive nature of politics and public affairs is fertile ground for incivility among users.

Similarities notwithstanding, my findings differ from prior research on two aspects. I measured incivility following Chen's (2017) approach, which includes the use of profanities, insults, and stereotypes. A first notable difference between this dissertation and her results is that the overall presence for incivility is higher in this sample (31.1% versus 17.8% in Chen's study). This gap is even bigger when including the amount of comments that had humor (40.9% of the total of comments.) However, it does not come as a complete surprise considering that Sobieraj and Berry (2011) also found in their study that mockery was a preferred form of outrage.

If I consider the three categories that were used to measure both samples, insults is in fact a preferred form of incivility, in comparison to stereotypes and profanities; albeit humor ended up being the most common form of incivility in my sample (30.8%.). Cultural differences can help partially explain why this dimension is so relevant, which is why Chapter 3 presents a brief summary of how the national media culture—highly concentrated and conservative—could be related to more uncivil debates in online spaces.

Other than differences in culture, a lack of moderation by both media can also be attributed to more incivility. Interviews with editors from both Emol.com and LaTercera.com proved that there were no measures being taken as far as editing out the "ugly" (Rosenberg, 2017). This particular case study could have played a role in the above-average level of incivility; not just because a presidential election offers a perfect venue for confronting ideas and insults, but because these two candidates in particular represented highly unpopular spheres: Sebastián Piñera as a successful and somewhat unethical businessman, and Alejandro Guillier, a famous TV host turned politician. Both business unions and media are among the most rejected segments of Chilean society (Cadem, 2020).

Continuing with incivility, H1 anticipated that (a) being male, (b) being anonymous, and (c) using uppercase words increases the likelihood for a comment to be uncivil. In terms of gender, I found that consistent with previous findings, most users are male (81.2% vs 9.3% female). In her study, Chen (2017) also found that males were more present than females on average (38.1% vs 15.2%). There are not many studies separating males than females, because as Jane (2015) explains, gender disclosure is part of anonymity, which means that recognizing gender by coding what could be made-up names is not reliable. This could explain the big gap between the percentage of males I found in my study compared to Chen's study: Chileans could be used to commenting under a name-last name ID, albeit that name does not guarantee the veracity of such information. However, the fact that males could be more uncivil than females is something that previous literature has supported (Aiken & Waller, 2000).

More interestingly, I measured the level of anonymity within the comments and found that just 12.8% did not have a name-last name ID and therefore were coded as anonymous. However, contrary to what previous studies suggest, anonymous accounts were not significantly more uncivil than non-anonymous accounts. In her study, Chen found different levels of anonymity depending on the source, with Fox News (92.9%), NBC News (88.5%) and *The New York Times* (78.7%) all having a majority of anonymous comments in comparison to *USA Today* (4.3%) and Huffington Post (2.2%). Similarly,

Halpern and Gibbs (2013) found more anonymous users in one platform (YouTube) compared to Facebook.

Although anonymity has been described as an enabler for uncivil comments, the difference between these levels of user disclosure depend on how anonymity is measured, and how the media asks for users to log in. In the case of this study, both sites (*Emol* and *LaTercera.com,*) asked for users to register with a name-last name ID. One possible reason could be a "normalization" effect, whereby users feel that their behavior is just common ground and do not see their incivility as being a real problem. Chen and Ng (2017) had already found a third-person effect on users being exposed to uncivil comments. The authors found that users downgraded uncivil comments but thought of others as being more easily influenced by them. If every user felt that way, then a "normalization" of incivility would take place in that environment, and user anonymity would not hinder this uncivil behavior since even a name-last name user (e.g. Pedro López) could be as anonymous as any other person.

Finally, H1 stated that the use of uppercase also increased the likelihood for those comments to be uncivil. This part of the hypothesis was supported, which builds more evidence on this formal aspect of the message: it is not just the words, it is also how they are written.

Deliberation and disagreement were also measured with the content analysis. In the case of deliberation, descriptive statistics showed that the two measures for deliberation, asking a legitimate question and posting evidence, were low (3% and 3.8% respectively), with the overall presence of deliberation of 6.3%, which constitutes 295 out of the 4,670 comments of the sample. This is consistent with previous literature suggesting that deliberation, unfortunately, is low in online discussions over political topics (Chen, 2014; Halpern & Gibbs, 2013).

The way I measured deliberation took into consideration previous studies, most noticeably that of Chen (2017) who also measured deliberation through evidence and legitimate questions from users. However, she found that deliberation was more common

in her sample than what I have found in this dissertation, with 8.8% for evidence and 19.6% for legitimate questions. This difference could be explained by the fact that this dissertation content analyzed one topic, while Chen averaged scores from three topics, with little deliberation from a same-sex marriage story compared to comments under articles about the Confederacy and Super Tuesday. Although incivility and deliberation can cohabite on the same forum, Hwang, Kim, and Huh (2014) found that the presence of incivility reduces the likelihood for deliberation through perceived polarization of the users, so a presidential election like the one analyzed in this dissertation could have fostered a more heated space of users not willing to deliberate.

Another aspect that I already considered relevant for deliberation and incivility online is the distinction between a *community of debate* and a *homogeneous community* (Ruiz et al., 2011). The former describes a heterogeneous group of people debating, while the latter focuses on the same type of people engaging with each other, with a lot of incivility and little deliberation. As I expected, these findings suggest a *homogeneous community* with a presence of incivility that is four times bigger than deliberation. This type of community could be partially explained by the type of media that I analyzed. As discussed in Chapter 3, both Emol.com and LaTercera.com have a similar profile and appeal to a specific segment of the population.

In the case of disagreement, 27.3% (1,277) of comments expressed disagreement with another user, regardless whether they were civil or uncivil. This finding is revealing, because it means that at least in this sample, the majority of comments expressing disagreement did not lead to deliberation among users, a quality that is usually desired among people who engage in disagreement (Esterling et al., 2015).

The fact that disagreement is present almost four times more often than deliberative comments could also be attributed to the topic being discussed, in which two opposing groups would engage in a type of disagreement that would not be a condition for political deliberation. As Esterling, Fung and Lee observe: "Individuals are not well-suited to cope with the disagreement that necessarily accompanies democratic

deliberation" (2005, p. 543). Moreover, the fact that this type of forum is asynchronous means that users might not expect a response at all, so these types of comments might be hindering deliberation in exchange of disagreement.

Another inquiry I had regarding disagreement was whether comments expressing disagreement were also more uncivil (H2), which was supported [$\chi 2$ (1)= 180.695, p<.001]. Recent studies demonstrate that disagreement and incivility are a likely match (Rossini & Maia, 2020), becoming what other authors have referred to as uncivil disagreement (Chen & Lu, 2017). This goes to show that under sensible topics civility goes off the wagon (Papacharissi, 2002). Moreover, these results validate how incivility was measured, because other than saying "I disagree," users are not usually disagreeing with specific words, whereas incivility came from specific expressions.

H3 stated that deliberation is more likely to happen when people don't disagree with each other. This was a hard association to anticipate, since literature does not agree whether disagreement is a consequence of deliberation, an antecedent, or both. For example, Stromer-Galley and Muhlberger (2009) analyze agreement and disagreement as specific communication acts that are a part of deliberation. Similarly, disagreement can be seen as challenge for deliberation, because disagreement-averse people would report greater satisfaction with homogeneous echo chambers, which contradicts the ideal of hearing and arguing with "the other side" (Esterling et al., 2015). This is why I expected that the kind of disagreement that would be manifested over a polarized topic would not yield much deliberation.

I conducted a chi-square test between the variables "deliberation" and "disagreement with other user" to see whether there was an association between the two. Results showed no relationship between the groups [$\chi 2$ (1)= .724, p=.395], so H3 was not supported. Deliberation was not more likely to happen among users who disagreed with each other. This means that at least in this sample, deliberation is not a consequence of disagreement. The particular topic of a presidential election might be a reason as to why users are more prone to disagreement in both their civil and uncivil form, but not a reason

to go the extra step of asking questions or using evidence, which was the way deliberation was measured.

When discussing incivility, this dissertation also took an interest in humor, which is not usually considered as a measure of uncivil speech (e.g. Chen & Ng, 2017; Coe, Kenski, & Rains, 2014). Humor can take many forms, and either irony or sarcasm are usually the types of expressions that have been described as forms of incivility (Anderson & Huntington, 2017; Reyes et al., 2013). However, there is scarce literature on other types of humor being perceived as uncivil by a reader, so RQ4 asks whether humor is related to more common forms of incivility such as profanity, insults, and stereotypes. The analysis showed no association between humor and the more traditional forms of incivility, $[\chi^2 (1)= 0.17, p=.897]$, which means that a user who engages in humor may not think they are being uncivil, albeit the effect on the reader is similar as being exposed to profanity or common insults. This is similar to what Gervais (2015) describes as mockery, although his approach is centered more on character assassination and other type of personal attacks, whereas I measured humor to include any type of humorous expression that would ridicule either a person or an person's argument. It makes sense then that many comments had two categories for incivility, with most of them having humor as one of the two. This means that this use of humor as a way of being uncivil is common, and that it usually involves another expression of incivility within the same comment.

Following the same logic of the previous research question, RQ5 asks whether incivility (with humor) is associated with deliberation among user comments. In this case, there was a significant association between humor and deliberation, $[\chi^2 (1)= 67.763, p<.001]$. Even though deliberation is not common, when it does happen it usually does not include any type of incivility, including humor. This is consistent with previous studies suggesting that incivility hinders deliberation (Chen, 2017). The idea that deliberation and incivility cohabit in an online forum but at the same time don't intertwine is troublesome.

It seems that at least in this sample, users who want to deliberate could be more aware of writing more polite expressions.

The second study of this dissertation delved into two very common effects for the exposure to incivility and disagreement: negative emotions and participation.

In the realm of emotions, previous studies suggested that incivility and disagreement, both by themselves as well as being part of the same expression (uncivil disagreement) foster negative emotions, such as anger and discomfort (Chen & Ng, 2017; Rösner, Winter, & Krämer, 2016). In fact, after analyzing the results from the experiment, there was a significant association between participants who read uncivil disagreement comments and their negative emotions. But that was also the case for the group that read uncivil comments without disagreement (uncivil agreement), meaning that incivility alone fostered negative emotions among users ($F(1, 408) = 32.7$, p = .000). However, the interaction between incivility and disagreement had a significant effect on negative emotions, $F(1, 408) = 5.68$, p = .018, so users in the uncivil disagreement group had in fact a bigger increase on their negative emotions in comparison to the other three groups. In other words, these findings suggest that incivility by itself produces negative emotions to readers, but when it's combined with disagreement, the effect on readers' negative emotions is even bigger.

The aforementioned results are similar to previous findings, albeit not completely concordant. Rösner and colleagues (2016) had found that even the slightest presence of incivility can elicit hostile emotions. On the other hand, Chen and Lu (2017) demonstrated that disagreement alone (either civil or uncivil) caused negative emotions and aggressive intentions from users exposed to a polarized subject. However, results from Study 2 showed that incivility alone was more crucial than disagreement in provoking negative emotions. In fact, for the abortion issue, users exposed to uncivil agreement comments had an even bigger increase in their negative emotions ($M = 2.99$; $SD = .96$) compared to the uncivil disagreement group ($M = 2.54$; $SD = 1.04$).

Finally, the last hypothesis on this dissertation predicted that users exposed to uncivil disagreement comments would be more engaged in comparison to the other three groups. Engagement was measured as the willingness from a user to further participate in the online discussion, by either commenting, putting a like/dislike or putting a flag on a comment. Results showed no association between the exposure to uncivil disagreement and these forms of online engagement. Previous literature had found that incivility causes more online participation (Borah, 2014), with the same being true for a specific form of incivility such as swearing (Kwon & Cho, 2017). However, the fact that uncivil disagreement comment did not produce online engagement could be partially explained by the fact that incivility over a polarized political issue could discourage engagement, similar to what Muddiman and colleagues (2020) found regarding online news engagement. Other explanations for such a result is that Election Day and the incivility that arises from it might produce a "normalization," whereby users expect higher levels of incivility and disagreement and therefore would not "bother" to engage the way they would engage if that same incivility came from a different issue (Hmielowski, Hutchens, & Cicchirillo, 2014).

Limitations

As most research, the two studies in this dissertation were not conducted without limitations.

Study 1

The first part of the dissertation focused in content-analyzing 4,670 news comments from two popular Chilean news outlets. Like any content analysis, internal reliability, meaning the consistency of results across items in a test, was assessed throughout the coding process: a detailed codebook (Appendix A for Spanish and Appendix B for English) was written with a detailed definition of each variable. Three undergraduate students were trained until achieving satisfactory reliability scores. A few variables, however, had a lower Krippendorff's alpha than recommended: .58 for

"stereotypes" and .67 for "humor." In the case of the "stereotype" variable, the percentage of agreement between the three coders was 98%, which means that only a few discrepancies were made, and since there were not many "stereotypes" in the sample (a total of 154), the alpha adjusted accordingly. Humor was incorporated into the analysis since Krippendorff's alpha came close to .70 (.66) with an 88% of agreement between coders, which was seen as good enough considering how context-dependent the variable is.

Another aspect of the study that should be discussed is the sample selection. Although Election Day in most countries is seen as a pivotal moment for online political talk, while also being a polarizing topic that could spark many uncivil expressions, a decision was made to only use the user comments posted onto two Chilean digital outlets on that very same day (24-hour period.) Therefore, external reliability is compromised in favor of an in-depth case study of how incivility, deliberation and disagreement were present on users commenting on the event. However, since to this date there is scarce literature on local online discussion, this study in nonetheless a contribution on how a polarized topic generated a highly uncivil environment.

Finally, the results from this study are also constrained from the outlets that were selected: Emol.com and LaTercera.com. Although there are other digital outlets in Chile, both Emol.com and LaTercera.com represent two very popular examples for national media. As explained in Chapter 3, these two outlets also represent two very influential media conglomerates that help shape public opinion in the country (Gronemeyer & Porath, 2015). However, both of these media represent the same conservative views, therefore, a similar study that incorporates media with different sensitivities could yield different results. The fact that one of the candidates (businessman Sebastián Piñera) was closer to the ideology of both Emol.com and LaTercera.com (and to their audience) could mean that uncivil expressions were more common towards the figure of Alejandro Guillier, the other candidate. However, it is out of the scope of this dissertation to describe which actors sparked the most heated reactions from users, and instead it focuses on the amount of these three key variables (incivility, deliberation, and disagreement) and how they intertwine.

Study 2

In the case of Study 2, which involves a population-based experiment, there are a few limitations worth mentioning. In terms of validity, as in most experiments, internal validity, that is, the degree of confidence that the causal relationship being tested is trustworthy and not influenced by other factors or variables. When the experimental stimuli is done correctly, internal validity is therefore assumed. Moreover, a successful pilot test helped in making this claim (see Appendix 3).

Previous literature on experimental design describes a "trade-off" between internal and external validity, or the extent to which an experiment can be generalizable. This trade-off implies that too much concern on internal validity would come at the expense of external validity, and vice versa (Jimenez-Buedo & Miller, 2010).

Since internal validity is already established, I would focus on the generalization of the experiment as a more likely limitation. When assessing external validity, Mutz (2011) points out: "Researchers should take into account four major considerations in evaluating the likely degree of generalizability of a population-based experiment: setting, participants, measures, and treatment" (p. 141). I will refer to each one of them.

The setting of the web experiment is probably the least troublesome front, since a survey format is equally as real as any other online content, and the online interface is the same for people connecting from different cities, or even countries. For participants, a panel provided by Dynata Company was used to establish basic population quotas for gender, age, and educational level. The quotas serve the purpose of having outcomes that can be generalized to the Chilean population. The measures that were used were all adjusted from the previous studies. Similarly, the treatment (user comments) were designed as close to the real interface of one of the outlets (Emol). Moreover, the pilot test helped assess the validity of both the measures and the treatment.

Directions for Future Research

In terms of measuring the amount of incivility, deliberation, and disagreement on users commenting on news articles, there is already plenty of international evidence on

the prevalence of uncivil expressions and the lack of deliberation (e.g., Coe et al., 2014; Rowe, 2014, 2015). Future research could advance on the concept of humor as a means of being uncivil by providing different examples derived from different settings. Study 1 already showed a high prevalence of humorous expressions (30.8% of all comments analyzed).

Comparative analyzes should also be considered. To this date, most studies on incivility and deliberation on online settings have been done with very specific national samples. However, there are many aspects that vary between countries; their news media system, internet accessibility, and psychological characteristics from users reading and commenting on the news, just to name a few. Therefore, comparative analyzes could help bring together a more global understanding on issues that still affect many societies.

In terms of the role that emotions play when facing incivility and disagreement in user comments, there is still work to be done. Even though findings from Study 2 of this dissertation are in line with previous research conducted by Chen and Ng (2017), more recent studies suggest that sometimes online incivility induces enthusiasm (Kosmidis & Theocharis, 2019). Future work could focus on determining under which circumstances incivility fosters positive or negative emotions, and how that can affect public talk.

There is also a whole new dimension that could be studied related to incivility, deliberation, and disagreement: the extent to which different news platforms and different political parties are affecting the online discussion. There is some evidence from the United States that measured different media and different settings (Mutz & Reeves, 2005; Stromer-Galley et al., 2015), but to this date there is no substantial work that integrates both dimensions: platforms and political setting as predictors on the one hand, and evaluation of user comments on the other.

Another direction for future research is to keep a closer look at local editors and journalists and how they nurture (or don't) a civilized discussion in their online spaces. As I conducted interviews with editors from both Emol.com and LaTercera.com, I realized that there is also a profit that the media takes from all the uncivil engagement from their users (Rosenberg, 2017). A more qualitative approach could be valuable as to better

understand how exactly these online spaces and their content favor the media, and what other forms of online engagement with the news can be achieved with their readers.

Readers should also be considered in more research regarding deliberation, disagreement, and incivility. By readers I mean users who only read comments without ever writing one themselves, which depending on the media outlet could be a considerable number of users (Artime, 2016). Again, a more qualitative approach, as having focus groups or interviews with these readers could yield valuable information on how news comments are considered by these readers as a source of public opinion.

Finally, future studies should move towards answering other types of questions regarding civility, deliberation, and disagreement when discussing public affairs online. In the last twenty years, researchers have explained how incivility operates in an online setting (e.g., Aiken & Waller, 2000), which topics elicit more incivility (Coe et al., 2014), and which type of user is more prone to engage in heated conversations (Jane, 2015). However, little work has been done in terms of identifying psychological aspects that induce, for example, more deliberation and civil agreement in favor of incivility or uncivil disagreement. That would require a more interdisciplinary approach, and would benefit from qualitative data, including in-depth interviews or focus groups among users who engage on online public talk.

Advancing on How Online Incivility, Disagreement and Deliberation are Understood

To conclude this dissertation, I would like to highlight and discuss the main conclusions of both studies presented.

Starting with a broader approach about how this dissertation was designed and executed, I studied three variables that previous literature use to relate separately: incivility, disagreement, and deliberation (e.g., Rösner, Winter, & Krämer, 2016). I see this as a contribution because, as already discussed, there is no agreement on whether deliberation is an antecedent, a consequence of disagreement, or both. After analyzing the

data of the content analysis, disagreement does not lead to deliberation, at least in the particular case of Study 1. Moreover, we do know that incivility and deliberation are compatible on online news comments, so it makes sense to analyze all three variables within comments and see how they are shaping public opinion, because differences between studies are common, from the way the variables are measured to how they influence public talk.

The way to measure incivility is also something that this dissertation focuses on. Previous studies have measured incivility in many different ways, with name-calling, insults, and stereotypes being some of the most common indicators (Chen, 2017; Coe et al., 2014). However, I saw an opportunity to improve upon the validity of the construct, because from both previous literature and personal observation, I saw many comments using different types of humor as means of being uncivil. Indeed, if I would have considered just insults, stereotypes and profanities, 3 out of 10 comments would have been uncivil, albeit including humor meant that 4 out of 10 comments are considered uncivil, which is above the average presented in previous studies such as the ones done by Coe and colleagues (2014) and Chen (2017).

I see an important contribution on doing these two studies in Chile, for different reasons. Studying online deliberation, disagreement, and incivility in a different country with a different culture puts to the test the external validity of previous research conducted mainly in the Global North. In Chile, as this dissertation proved, the use of humor and mockery is common when discussing political issues. Moreover, local media, journalists, political scientists and communication scholars can benefit from this dissertation, since incivility in news comments and social media has been discussed in the press (La Tercera, 2019), but scientific research on the topic is still scarce.

I would also like to discuss how incivility is being considered in this dissertation in light of the results. Previous studies have somewhat agreed that incivility, in any shape or form, is detrimental according to democratic principles (Muddiman et al., 2020). I agree, incivility can produce many different negative outcomes, like fostering negative emotions such as anger and anxiety. However, I would be cautious on moderating all

uncivil expressions. As Chen and colleagues argue: "When platforms take it upon themselves to decide what is uncivil, they are imposing a particular definition of what counts and what doesn't. And inevitably, these definitions may force a particular worldview" (2019, p. 3).

I believe in free speech. I also believe in respecting other people's opinions and integrity. This dissertation does not solve the mostly negative outcomes related to uncivil speech, albeit local media could work harder in fostering vibrant spaces for discussion, while encouraging more argumentative exchanges between users.

Finally, this dissertation could also contribute to educating the public about the antecedents, identification, and consequences of incivility, while fostering civil disagreement and deliberation. Scholars could benefit from having a footstep in terms of measuring and explaining key consequences of local incivility. I hope this dissertation can help that new knowledge contribute to further understanding and improving the ways in which citizens engage about issues that are important to them.

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Appendix 1.1

CODEBOOK (ORIGINAL SPANISH VERSION)

Instrumento para evaluar la incivilidad, el desacuerdo y la deliberación de comentarios de usuarios respecto a noticias en portales de internet – Sección Comentarios

Libro de códigos

Autor: Andrés Rosenberg

INSTRUCCIONES GENERALES

Debe completarse una ficha por cada comentario de usuario. Cada uno de estos comentarios será tratado como una unidad única, independiente de si es un mensaje respecto a la noticia, o un comentario/respuesta a lo escrito anteriormente por otro usuario.

1. IDENTIFICACIÓN DEL ARCHIVO Copiar directamente de la base de datos original de Excel, tal cual está.
2. MEDIO Indicar de qué medio son los comentarios de la noticia, codificando: 1. Emol 2. La Tercera
3. TIPO DE COMENTARIO 1. **Individual**: referido a un comentario que puede o no ser sobre el tópico de la noticia, pero que no es respuesta a otro usuario. Puede ser

un comentario aislado o un comentario que genera respuestas respecto a su contenido.

2. **Primera Respuesta**: referido a un comentario escrito en respuesta directa de un comentario Inicial. En Emol estos comentarios se identifican con una flecha curva azul.

3. **Respuesta Posterior**: referidos a un comentario que se escribe ya sea en respuesta o en complemento de una Primera Respuesta. En Emol cada uno de estos comentarios se identifican con una doble flecha curva gris.

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4. IDENTIFICACIÓN DEL USUARIO: GÉNERO

Se identifica respecto al nombre del usuario (no se revisa el perfil). Si el nombre de usuario no permite identificar el género (por ejemplo: usa un pseudónimo), entonces se codifica como Indeterminado

1. **Hombre**
2. **Mujer**
3. **Indeterminado**

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5. IDENTIFICACIÓN DEL USUARIO: ANÓNIMO

Si el nombre de usuario no corresponde al formato nombre-apellido (por ejemplo, solo el nombre (Mario A), o solo el apellido, o repite el nombre (ej: fran fran), o escribe nombres de superhéroes o personajes de ficción como Superman45 o William Wallace, codificar 1. De lo contrario, 0.

---

6. LIKES/DISLIKES

1. **Likes**: Número de likes (pulgares hacia arriba)
2. **Dislikes**: Número de dislikes (pulgares hacia abajo)

7. USO DE MAYÚSCULAS

Si el comentario o parte del comentario está escrito con mayúsculas, codificar

1. De lo contrario, 0 (se excluyen las siglas que de por sí se escriben con mayúscula, como FBI, NASA, UDI, etc.).

8. **GROSERÍA/LENGUAJE VULGAR CON INTENCIÓN**

Si el comentario contiene grosería y/o lenguaje vulgar que tiene un claro objetivo de insultar a otra persona, independiente si es hacia otro comentarista u otra persona (o grupo de personas, como un partido político), codificar 1. De lo contrario, 0. No se cuenta el número de grosería, sino presencia/ausencia de éstas. Ejemplos:

"A tu hermana le meten varios goles por semana"

"Esa Bachelet es una yeta de mierda"

9. **GROSERÍA/LENGUAJE VULGAR SIN INTENCIÓN**

Si el comentario contiene grosería y/o lenguaje vulgar que está presente pero que no tiene como un fin claro el de insultar a otra persona (o grupo de personas), codificar 1. De lo contrario, 0. No se cuenta el número de grosería, sino presencia/ausencia de éstas. Ejemplos:

"¿Qué mierda esta situación?"

10. **INSULTO/SOBRENOMBRE**

Si el comentario incluye sobrenombres o frases ofensivas que no son groserías,   codificar 1. De lo contrario, 0. Ejemplo:

"Ahí se nota tu falta de cerebro"

"Y qué dijo Chanchelet?"

"Eres un imbécil"

11. **ESTEREOTIPO**

Si el comentario incluye frases o estereotipos que denigran a un grupo (como mujeres, inmigrantes, minorías raciales, minorías sexuales), codificar 1. De lo contrario, 0. Ejemplo:

"A tu mujer hay que agrandarle la cocina para que esté contenta"

"Cuidado que es mapuche – no te vaya a quemar la casa"

"No esperaba menos de una comunista en todo caso. Lo raro sería que propusiera trabajar más"

12. SARCAMO

Si el comentario incluye palabras o expresiones que se entiendan como sarcásticas, o sea, que se note que existe un rasgo burlesco en el mensaje, codificar 1. De lo contrario, 0. Ejemplo:

"Te quedan 3 años de un gobierno Pelolais, aguanta Zurdito que pasan volando jejeje"

"Reconoce Mayol que te ordenaron colocar el A.n.o para salvar al primo de P.i.r.a.ñ.a"

13. PLANTEA PREGUNTA LEGÍTIMA

Si el comentario plantea preguntas que no son retóricas ("¿Por qué eres tan ridículo") sino que invitan a la deliberación ("¿me puedes explicar qué significa este número?" "¿tienes más información?" "¿Te parece correcto que el ministro dijera xx?", codificar 1. De lo contrario, 0.

14. PROVEE EVIDENCIA

Si el comentario provee evidencia (principalmente numérica/estadística, o cita estudios, o entrega links con más información), codificar 1. De lo contrario, 0.

15. DESACUERDO CON EL TÓPICO DE LA NOTICIA

Si el comentario expresa un desacuerdo respecto al tema de la noticia, codificar 1. De lo contrario, 0. No es necesario que esté escrita la palabra "desacuerdo" para marcarlo como tal. No importa si el comentario es agresivo o no, o si está escrito a modo de pregunta o de afirmación. Ejemplo:

"Antes de multar a los ciclistas deberían hacer más ciclovías"

16. DESACUERDO CON OTRO USUARIO

Si el comentario expresa un desacuerdo explícito o implícito respecto a la opinión de otro usuario al cual se le contesta, codificar 1. De lo contrario, 0. No es necesario que esté escrita la palabra "desacuerdo" para marcarlo como tal. No importa si el comentario es agresivo o no, o si está escrito a modo de pregunta o de afirmación. Ejemplos:

"Creo que estás equivocado"

"¿Cómo no te das cuenta que esa ley es como el forro?"

"Ustedes está diciendo puras estupideces"

Appendix 1.2

CODEBOOK (TRANSLATED ENGLISH VERSION)

Instrument to Evaluate Incivility, Disagreement and Deliberation on Online News Comments

Codebook

Author: Andrés Rosenberg

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

The following codebook must be completed for each comment. Each comment is going to be treated as one unit of analysis, regardless if the comment refers directly to the news topic, or if it's an answer to another user's previous comment.

1. **NEWS SITE**   Write down the news site from which the comment is taken: a. Emol   b. La Tercera
2. **SPAM**   Code 1 if the comment has nothing to do with the news article, or its protagonists, or another users comment, or if it's advertisement.   If the comment is coded as SPAM (1), then no further coding has to be done for that single comment.

3. ANSWER

a. Code YES whenever the comment is written as a reply of another users comment

b. Code NO if the comment does not mention another user or is not written as a reply of a previous comment.

4. COMMENTERS GENDER

The user or commenters gender will be assigned only considering the user's nickname, without further checking the user's profile. If the user or commenter uses a pseudonymous, then code Undetermined, unless the nickname itself reflects a male or female inclination (e.g: Superman or Superwoman, Mr. Bean, etc.)

1. Male
2. Female
3. Undetermined

5. ANNONYMUS USER

If the user's nickname does not match the name - last name format (e.g. only a name like Mario, or only a last name like Pizarro), or repeats a name or uses a pseudonymous such of a superhero, code 1, if not, code 0.

6. LIKES/DISLIKES

1. Likes: number of likes or thumbs up of the comment
2. Dislikes: number of dislikes or thumbs down of the comment

7. UPPERCASE USE

If the comment, of any part of it is written with uppercase letters, code 1. If not, code 0 (acronyms such as FBI will not be counted as uppercase use.)

8. SWEAR WORDS/VULGARITY WITH INTENTION

If the comment contains rudeness and/or vulgarity with a clear intention of insulting another person (or group of people, like a political party), code 1. If not, code 0. It doesn't matter how many times it is present, or how strong the vulgar expression is, only consider the presence/absence of the variable.

Examples:

"Your sister gets scored several times a week"

"That Bachelet is a fucking piece of shit"

9. SWEAR WORDS/VULGARITY WITHOUT INTENTION

If the comment contains rudeness and/or vulgarity with no clear intention of insulting another person (or group of people, like a political party), code 1. If not, code 0. It doesn't matter how many times it is present, or how strong the vulgar expression is, only consider the presence/absence of the variable.

Examples:

"What a shity situation!"

"We are living like arses and they (referring to politicians) keep on increasing their salaries"

10. INSULT/NICKNAME

If the comment includes an insulting nickname or other insulting expressions with no vulgarity in them, code 1. If not, code 0.

Examples:

"Your lack of brain is showing with that comment"

"That Crooked (Hillary) Clinton is delusional"

11. STEREOTYPING

If the comment contains stereotyping as means of denigrating a group of people (like women, immigrants, LGTB community, etc.), code 1. If not, code

0.

Examples:

"Your wife needs a bigger kitchen to be happy"

"I didn't expect anything more from a communist. Proposing a heavier workload? That would've been shocking!"

12. HUMOR

If the comment contains words of phrases with humor (more typically, in the forms of sarcasm[3] or irony[4]), code 1. If not, code 0.

Comments with any type of laughter onomatopoeia will be included as humorous and coded 1 (e.g. hahahaha, jajaja)

Example:

"Right, because politicians are known to tell the truth! lol"

13. LEGITIMATE QUESTION

If the comment contains any question that is not rhetoric (e.g. "Am I that bored?") but instead invites another person to deliberate (e.g. "Can you further explain this?"), code 1. If not, code 0.

14. PROVIDES EVIDENCE

If the comment provides evidence, mainly in the form of numbers/statistics, like citing a report, or gives a link for further information, code 1. If not, code 0.

15. DISAGREEMENT WITH THE NEW'S TOPIC

If the comment expresses a disagreement regarding the news topic, code 1. If

---

[3] According to Oxford's English Dictionary, irony is defined as "the expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or empathic effect."

[4] According to Oxford's English Dictionary, sarcasm is defined as "the use of irony to mock or convey contempt."

not, code 0. It's not necessary for the word "disagreement" to be written, and it does not matter whether the comment is poorly written or with any form of incivility.

Example:

"Before you fine the cyclist, might as well build new cycle paths"

16. DISAGREEMENT WITH ANOTHER USER

If the comment expresses an explicit disagreement towards another user, code 1. If not, code 0. It's not necessary for the word "disagreement" to be written, and it does not matter whether the comment is poorly written or with any form of incivility.

Examples:

"I think you are wrong"

"How can't u realize that the bill is utterly pointless!!??"

Appendix 2

NEWS ARTICLES AND STIMULI

Nacional

El ingreso ilegal de inmigrantes a Chile alcanza una cifra récord en 2019

SANTIAGO. - **Las entradas ilegales de inmigrantes a Chile, en alza constante desde el 2015, alcanzaron una cifra récord en lo que va del 2019, con 4.225 casos en el primer semestre**, según datos de organismos gubernamentales que recoge este jueves el diario El Mercurio.

La cifra equivale al 70 % del total de ingresos ilegales detectados el año pasado, que sumaron 6.130, precisa la información, obtenida por el periódico mediante la Ley de Transparencia.

Los venezolanos, con 1.536, encabezan las entradas ilegales a Chile en 2019, seguidos de cubanos (928), dominicanos (831), bolivianos (442), y colombianos (230), mientras los inmigrantes de otras nacionalidades sumaron 288 casos, de acuerdo con registros de la Jefatura Nacional de Migraciones y Policía Internacional.

Hasta este año, los venezolanos nunca habían figurado entre los primeros cinco lugares de ingresos ilegales a Chile, según los datos, que son anteriores al pasado 22 de junio, cuando entraron en vigor nuevos requisitos para la admisión de ciudadanos de ese país a Chile, como es el caso de la llamada visa consular.

Desde entonces, centenares de venezolanos fueron retenidos en las fronteras con Perú y Bolivia y trasladados a ciudades de esos países para que tramitaran el citado documento en los consulados chilenos.

Según dijeron a El Mercurio expertos y dirigentes sociales, **las nuevas exigencias provocarán un aumento de la inmigración ilegal en los próximos meses**.

Desde la semana pasada el Gobierno flexibilizó el ingreso de venezolanos, permitiendo la entrada de quienes tienen familiares directos en el país, lo que permitió hasta ahora de unas 140 personas.

Según datos oficiales, al pasado 31 de diciembre los inmigrantes sumaban en Chile 1.251.225 personas, de los que unos 288.000 son venezolanos, 223.923 peruanos, 179.338 son haitianos y 146.582 colombianos, como las comunidades más numerosas.

News Section: Chile (English version)

The illegal entry of immigrants to Chile reaches a record number in 2019

SANTIAGO. - **The illegal entry of immigrants to Chile, which has been on the rise since 2015, has reached a record number so far in 2019, with 4,225 cases in the first semester**, according to data from government agencies collected this Thursday by the newspaper El Mercurio.

The figure is equivalent to 70% of the total illegal income detected last year, which totaled 6,130, the information said, obtained by the newspaper through the Transparency Law.

Venezuelans, with 1,536, led illegal entries into Chile in 2019, followed by Cubans (928), Dominicans (831), Bolivians (442), and Colombians (230), while immigrants of other nationalities totaled 288 cases, according to records of the National Headquarters of Migrations and International Police.

Until this year, Venezuelans had never been among the top five nations of citizens immigrating to Chile, according to the data, which predated June 22, when new requirements came into force for the admission of citizens of that country to Chile, as is the case with the so-called consular visa.

Since then, hundreds of Venezuelans have been detained on the borders with Peru and Bolivia and transferred to cities in those countries to process the aforementioned document at the Chilean consulates.

According to experts and social leaders who spoke to El Mercurio, the new demands will cause an increase in illegal immigration in the coming months.

Since last week, the Government has made the entry of Venezuelans more flexible, allowing those with direct family members to enter the country, which has allowed up to 140 people so far.

According to official data, as of December 31 immigrants in Chile totaled 1,251,225 people, of whom the biggest communities are: 288,000 are Venezuelans, 223,923 Peruvians, 179,338 are Haitians and 146,582 Colombians.

No incivilidad – No desacuerdo

Jonathan
La Florida

Al gobierno le falta poner mano dura. Esto se esta descontrolando!

Responder   Denunciar

Pablo Ramírez

Hay que ayudarlos. Están escapando de la miseria

Responder   Denunciar

> **Hector Carrasco**
> (Pablo Ramírez)   Absolutamente, aunque no se me ocurre como
>
> Responder   Denunciar

> **Enrique Vidal**
> (Hector Carrasco)   Partiendo por no faltarles el respeto
>
> Responder   Denunciar

No incivilidad – Sí desacuerdo

Jonathan
La Florida

Al gobierno le falta poner mano dura. Esto se esta descontrolando!

Responder Denunciar

Pablo Ramírez

Hay que ayudarlos. Están escapando de la miseria

Responder Denunciar

Hector Carrasco

(Pablo Ramírez) Ayudarlos? Si en Chile ya hay demasiados problemas propios!

Responder Denunciar

Enrique Vidal

(Hector Carrasco) Pero con lo básico. Nadie debería verse sin familia ni hogar

Responder Denunciar

Sí incivilidad – No desacuerdo

Jonathan
La Florida

Por la C T M en Chile ya tenemos demasaidos problemas!

Responder Denunciar

Pablo Ramírez

Y los comunistas amantes de Maduro en el aeropuerto recibiendolos jajajjaaa

Responder Denunciar

Hector Carrasco

(Pablo Ramírez) Que se vayan todos a la chucha!

Responder Denunciar

Enrique Vidal

(Hector Carrasco) y la chanchelet que les abrió la puerta y despues se fue volando

Responder Denunciar

Sí incivilidad – Sí desacuerdo

Jonathan
La Florida

POR LA C T M SI EN CHILE YA TENEMOS DEMASIADOS PROBLEMAS!!

Responder Denunciar

Pablo Ramírez

Y los comunistas amantes de Maduro en el aeropuerto recibiendolos jajajjaaa

Responder Denunciar

> **Hector Carrasco**
>
> (Pablo Ramírez) Y tú eres weón o te haces? Están escapando de la miseria
>
> Responder Denunciar
>
>> **Enrique Vidal**
>>
>> (Hector Carrasco) entonces mételos en tu casa po comunachito. estarías en filita pidiendo el bono marzo jajajaa

Nacional

Desempleo en el Gran Santiago sube hasta 8,4% en junio y toca su mayor nivel desde marzo de 2016

Desde un punto de vista histórico, la tasa se ubica por sobre el promedio de los últimos 10 años (7,7%), según los datos del Centro de Microdatos de la U. de Chile.

SANTIAGO.- **La tasa de desempleo en el Gran Santiago subió hasta un 8,4% en el mes de junio**, registrando una subida de 0,8 puntos porcentuales respecto a la medición de marzo de este año y de 1,4 puntos en doce meses. Así lo reveló este jueves la Encuesta de Ocupación y Desocupación en el Gran Santiago que realiza el Centro de Microdatos de la Universidad de Chile.

Según el análisis, el 8,4% de junio es el porcentaje más alto desde el registro de marzo de 2016, cuando la tasa alcanzó un 9,4%. Tras dicha fecha, el único registro sobre 8% fue el de diciembre de 2017 que tocó un 8,2%.

De acuerdo al estudio, el aumento de la tasa en doce meses se debe fundamentalmente a un aumento del empleo total de 0,26% y a una subida en la fuerza de trabajo de 1,83%.

Cabe destacar que desde un punto de vista histórico, **la tasa se ubica por sobre el promedio de los últimos 10 años (7,7%).**

Frente al alza de junio, el director del Centro de Microdatos, Fabián Duarte, tildó la subida de "desafortunada" y explicó que "lo que uno sospecha es que esto se debe a cómo ha crecido la economía".

Lo anterior, porque "no ha crecido como se esperaba", dijo el economista. Además, "a eso se suman las expectativas de la gente, de los organismos internacionales. Todo eso impacta en la búsqueda o en la creación de empleo".

Los sectores que presentan mayores niveles de cesantía son Construcción, Comercio y Transporte. Por otra parte, el tiempo de desocupación avanzó de 3,9 a 5 meses y la proporción de hogares con al menos un desocupado pasó de 10 a 11,7%.

No incivilidad – No desacuerdo

Jonathan
La Florida

Podría haber sido peor...

Responder   Denunciar

Pablo Ramírez

Y donde quedó el crecimiento que prometió Piñera!?

Responder   Denunciar

> **Hector Carrasco**
>
> (Pablo Ramírez) Se lo llevaron los más ricos del país, como siempre
>
> Responder   Denunciar

> **Enrique Vidal**
>
> (Hector Carrasco) Aparte que los inmigrantes hacen que aumenten los cesantes...
>
> Responder   Denunciar

No incivilidad – Sí desacuerdo

Jonathan
La Florida

De mal en peor este gobierno

Responder   Denunciar

Pablo Ramírez

Y se supone que estos son los tiempos mejores que nos prometieron?

Responder   Denunciar

> **Hector Carrasco**
>
> (Pablo Ramírez) Estimado, toda la región esta mal
>
> Responder   Denunciar

> **Enrique Vidal**
>
> (Hector Carrasco) Siemrpe culpan a problemas internacionales y nunca se hacen cargo
>
> Responder   Denunciar

Sí incivilidad – No desacuerdo

Jonathan
La Florida

A la chucha los tiempos mejores jajajajj

Responder Denunciar

Pablo Ramírez

con todos los inmigrantes trabajando en rapi y uber sin contrato qué querían!?

Responder Denunciar

> **Hector Carrasco**
>
> (Pablo Ramírez) Que se vayan todos a la mierda. la pega primero al chileno
>
> Responder Denunciar

> **Enrique Vidal**
>
> (Hector Carrasco) Los malditos inmigrantes ilegales y los weones flojos cobrando bonos
>
> Responder Denunciar

Sí incivilidad – Sí desacuerdo

Jonathan
La Florida

Con Bachelet habia menos cesantía y no decian nada los fachitos

Responder Denunciar

Pablo Ramírez

Como en todo el mundo nomás

Responder Denunciar

> **Hector Carrasco**
>
> (Pablo Ramírez) Eres weón o te haces? Anda a pasearte a Alemania o Australia y vuelve a decir eso

> **Enrique Vidal**
>
> (Hector Carrasco) SI NO TE GUSTA ANDATE CON TU PAPI MADURIN A VER COMO TE VA!

Thousands of women occupied La Alameda avenue in the March for free abortion

The initiative, organized by the "Coordinadora Feministas en Lucha," coincided with the International Day of Afro-Latin, Afro-Caribbean and Diaspora Women.

Hundreds of women, many of them young immigrants, marched this Thursday through the main streets of the city of Santiago under the slogan **"Free abortion will be anti-racist or it will not be."**

The initiative, organized by the Coordination Feminists in Struggle, which coincided with the International Day of Afro-Latin, Afro-Caribbean and Diaspora Women, was held until it reached the Palacio de La Moneda.

In a statement, the organizers indicated that based on the recognition and respect for the struggles of Afro-descendant women in Chile "today, the anti-racist struggle together with that of free abortion manifests itself against the racist, xenophobic and misogynistic policies that the Chilean State and particularly this right-wing and neoliberal government have installed in this country. "

They point out that regarding the discussion that may be generated in the political field about this demand, the spokesperson for the Coordination Feminists in Struggle, Verónica Ávila, indicated that they do not expect anything from this Government, and that what really interests them is being able to install the debate in society, and bring it to all women.

With banners, where you could read "My body, my decision", "Freedom to abort", "Do not kill us" and "No more, we are more", the hundreds of young people, many of them immigrants, came to the headquarters of the Executive.

In Valparaíso, the spokesperson for En Lucha in the port city, **Gema Ortega, explained to Cooperativa that "for us, as a feminist coordinator, the goal has always been free abortion, without causals**, guaranteed for all women regardless of their condition In addition, we want to mend in part the invisibility that exists on the International Day of Afro-Latin, Afro-Caribbean and Diaspora Women. "

The marches in Santiago and Valparaíso culminated in minor incidents.

In parallel, this Thursday, the website of the Network of Health Professionals for the Right to Decide was launched, which brings together more than 200 health workers who are not conscientious objectors to the termination of pregnancy.

No incivilidad – No desacuerdo

Jonathan
La Florida

Bien! Vamos chicas!

Responder Denunciar

Maria Paz

3 causales no es suficiente 💪

Responder Denunciar

> **Victoria**
>
> (Maria Paz) De acuerdo. las mujeres tenemos derecho a decidir sobre nuestros cuerpos
>
> Responder Denunciar

> **Enrique Vidal**
>
> (Victoria) Aparte que ya no habrían riesgosos abortos ilegales
>
> Responder Denunciar

No incivilidad – Sí desacuerdo

Jonathan
La Florida

Y no bastaron las 3 causales?

Responder   Denunciar

Maria Paz

Excelente! Vamos compañeras!!

Responder   Denunciar

> **Luis Rodriguez**
> (Maria Paz) Pero en verdad no bastaron las 3 causales!?
>
> Responder   Denunciar
>
> > **Maria Paz**
> > (Luis Rodriguez) No, no es lo mismo. tengo derecho a decidir sobre mi cuerpo y que un médico no me niegue atencion

Sí incivilidad – No desacuerdo

Jonathan
La Florida

Asesinas de mierda

Responder   Denunciar

Maria Paz

Y no les basta con las 3 causales a estas chanas!??

Responder   Denunciar

> **Luis Rodriguez**
> (Maria Paz) Parece que quieren 10 causales y poder cortar a guaguitas de 5 meses
>
> Responder   Denunciar
>
> > **Maria Paz**
> > (Luis Rodriguez) Y eso que estamos en un gobierno de derecha jajajj

Sí incivilidad – Sí desacuerdo

Jonathan
La Florida

No le bastaron las 3 causales a estas tontitas?

Responder Denunciar

Maria Paz

Excelente! Vamos compañeras!!

Responder Denunciar

Luis Rodriguez

(Maria Paz) Asesinas de mierda, eso es lo que son

Responder Denunciar

Maria Paz

(Luis Rodriguez) Oiga machito acéfalo, no se agite, que el cuerpo es mío

Appendix 3
PILOT TEST AND MANIPULATION CHECK

After designing the news comments (stimuli), for each of the eight conditions, and completing the survey using Qualtrics, a pilot test on a convenience sample of undergrads was conducted to check the internal validity of the experimental stimuli. Students were randomly assigned to one of the eight conditions. In total, 193 participants completed the survey. 101 participants were assigned to the Immigration Issue and the other 92 to the Abortion issue. Within those issues, participants were assigned to one of the four possible conditions, so that each person read only one of the two news articles, with four user comments with presence/absence of incivility and disagreement (Appendix 2).

To assess the effectiveness of the stimuli, two questions served as manipulation check. Right after each participant read the news article along with the four user comments, they were asked to mark on a scale from 1 to 10, how much they agree with the two following statements: "the user comments about the news article were disrespectful"; "the user comments about the news article showed disagreement with each other." Tables 8 and 9 show the results of two independents-samples *t*-test for these two statements.

Table 8

Independent sample *t*-test result for the groups exposed to presence/absence of Incivility
and Disagreement (*N* = 193)

	Perceived levels of Incivility and Disagreement				
	M	SD	SE	*t*	*N*
Incivility	8.71	2.38	.24		99
No Incivility	3.60	2.55	.26		94
				-14.35***	193
Disagreement	7.28	2.96	.30		96
No Disagreement	4.15	3.11	.31		97
				-7.15***	193

Note: *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Analyses show whether participants read comments with or without Incivility, and with or without
Disagreement, regardless if the comments were related to immigration or abortion

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare perceived levels of
incivility, on the one hand, and disagreement, on the other. There was a significant
difference in the scores for incivility (*M* = 8.7, *SD* = 2.3) and no incivility (*M* = 3.6, *SD* =
2.5) conditions; *t*(191) = -2.38, p < 0.01. Likewise, there was a significant difference in
the scores for disagreement (*M* = 6.2, *SD* = 3.2) and no disagreement (*M* = 5.1, *SD* = 3.6)
conditions; *t*(191) = -7.15, p < 0.01. These results suggest that both experimental stimuli
worked: participants ranked uncivil comments as being significantly more uncivil than
non-uncivil comments, and the same happened with comments that were manipulated to
show disagreement among users.

Table 9

Independent sample *t*-test result for the groups exposed to Incivility or Disagreement among user comments, but separated into the issue they read: immigration or abortion (*N* = 193)

	M	SD	SE	*t*	*N*
"The user comments about the news article were disrespectful" (Incivility)					
Issue: Immigration	6.79	3.16	.31		101
Issue: Abortion	5.59	3.85	.40		92
				-2.38*	193
"The user comments about the news article showed disagreement with each other " (Disagreement)					
Issue: Immigration	6.23	3.22	.32		101
Issue: Abortion	5.14	3.53	.36		92
				-2.233*	193

Note: *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Analysis show whether participants read comments with or without Incivility, and with and without disagreement, but separated by issue (immigration or abortion)

A second analysis was conducted to also compare perceived levels of incivility and disagreement but separated among users that were exposed to the immigration news story, or the abortion news story. Results from the independent-samples t-test proved a statistically significant difference for both groups, when exposed to incivility and disagreement. In the case of the participants that read uncivil comments, there was a

significant difference in the scores for Issue: Immigration ($M = 6.8$, $SD = 3.2$) and Issue: Abortion ($M = 5.6$, $SD = 3.9$) conditions; $t(191) = -14.35$, p $= 0.03$. Finally, in the case of the participants exposed to disagreement between users, there was also a significant difference in the scores for Issue: Immigration ($M = 6.2$, $SD = 3.2$) and Issue: Abortion ($M = 5.1$, $SD = 3.5$) conditions; $t(191) = -14.35$, p $= 0.02$. These results suggest that the stimuli work with independence of the issue.

Appendix 4.1

QUESTIONNAIRE (ORIGINAL SPANISH VERSION)

La Facultad de Comunicaciones de la Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, con apoyo del Instituto Milenio Fundamento de los Datos, está realizando una encuesta sobre las noticias de internet y la participación de los usuarios. La encuesta no debería tomarle más de 15 minutos. Su participación es voluntaria y toda información que nos entregue será anónima y confidencial. Para cualquier pregunta, por favor contactarse con el investigador a cargo, Andrés Rosenberg, al mail aarosenb@uc.cl o al teléfono +56223542481

(Botón de estar de acuerdo. Si no está de acuerdo, puedo cerrar el ordenador)

BLOQUE 1 PRETEST - DEMOGRÁFICAS

En primer lugar, necesitamos algunos datos suyos. Indique si usted es:

- Hombre
- Mujer

¿Qué edad tiene? (ingresar solo números)

¿Cuál es su actividad principal?

- Soy dueño/a de casa
- Estudio
- Trabajo a tiempo completo
- Trabajo media jornada o menos
- Estoy jubilado
- Tengo otra fuente de ingreso (seguro de cesantía, mesada, rentas, transferencias del Estado, etc.)

¿Cuál es su máximo nivel educacional?

- Básica incompleta o menos
- Básica completa
- Media incompleta
- Técnica incompleta
- Técnica completa
- Universitaria incompleta
- Universitaria completa o más

¿Qué está usando para completar la encuesta?

- Computador (fijo o portátil)
- Tablet o iPad
- Celular (touch, smartphone) → Ud. Está completando esta encuesta por celular. Sin embargo, se recomienda que emplee un computador o un tablet, de modo de poder leer y completar correctamente la encuesta. Gracias.

Las siguientes preguntas se refieren al uso de medios de comunicación. En una semana normal, es decir, de lunes a domingo, ¿con qué frecuencia mira, lee o escucha noticias en los siguientes medios?

	Todos los días	4-6 veces por semana	2-3 veces por semana	Una vez por semana	Menos de una vez por semana	No tengo / No aplica
Canales de TV						
Radio						
Diarios impresos						
Diarios online						
Facebook						
Twitter						

En general, ¿cuánta atención le presta a los siguientes temas en las noticias?

	Mucha	Bastante	Más o menos	Un poco	Nada
Ciencia y tecnología					

Cultura y espectáculo					
Salud					
Inmigración					
Pobreza y desigualdad					
Política					
Deporte					
Temas valóricos (ej: Iglesia, aborto, matrimonio mismo sexo)					
Economía					

¿Cuán probable es que comparta y/o escriba un comentario respecto a los siguientes temas?

	Muy probable	Bastante probable	Más o menos probable	Poco probable	Nada probable
Ciencia y tecnología					
Cultura y espectáculo					
Salud					
Inmigración					

Pobreza y desigualdad					
Política					
Deporte					
Temas valóricos (ej: Iglesia, aborto, matrimonio mismo sexo)					
Economía					

¿Con qué frecuencia realiza las siguientes actividades en torno a las noticias?

	Todos los días	4-6 veces por semana	2-3 veces por semana	Una vez por semana	Menos de una vez por semana	No tengo / No aplica
Conversar de noticias con familiares y/o amigos						
Conversar de noticias con compañeros de estudio y/o trabajo						
Leer noticias compartidas por otras personas en						

Facebook					
Leer noticias compartidas por otras personas en Twitter					
Compartir noticias con otras personas en Facebook					
Compartir noticias con otras personas en Twitter					

¿Ha posteado alguna vez un comentario en internet respecto a una noticia que leyó?

- **Sí**
- **No**

(De responder que no, continúa en la siguiente pregunta)

¿Con qué frecuencia ha escrito un comentario respecto a los siguientes temas?

	Muy frecuentemente	Frecuentemente	Más o menos frecuente	Poco frecuente	Nada frecuente
Ciencia y tecnología					
Cultura y espectáculo					
Salud					
Inmigración					

Pobreza y desigualdad				
Política				
Deporte				
Temas valóricos (ej: Iglesia, aborto, matrimonio mismo sexo)				
Economía				

BLOQUE 2 - COVARIANTES

Ahora bien, ¿cuán interesado/a está usted en la política en general?

- Nada de interesado
- Poco interesado
- Algo interesado
- Bastante interesado
- Muy interesado

Tradicionalmente en Chile la gente define las posiciones políticas como más cercanas a la izquierda, al centro o a la derecha. Usando la siguiente escala, ¿dónde se ubicaría usted?

Izquierda					Centro					Derecha
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Respecto a las siguientes afirmaciones, ¿cuán de acuerdo o en desacuerdo está usted con cada una de ellas?

	Totalmente en desacuerdo 1	En desacuerdo 2	Ni acuerdo ni en desacuerdo 3	De acuerdo 4	Totalmente de acuerdo 5
"Me gusta saber exactamente que es lo bueno y lo malo acerca de todas las cosas"					
"A menudo prefiero permanecer neutral en asuntos complejos"					
"Presto mucha atención a si las cosas son buenas o malas"					
"Sólo me formo opiniones fuertes cuando tengo que hacerlo"					
"Me gusta decidir si las cosas nuevas son realmente buenas o malas"					

"Soy bastante indiferente a muchos temas importantes"				

Respecto a las siguientes afirmaciones, ¿cuán de acuerdo o en desacuerdo está usted con cada una de ellas?

	Totalmente en desacuerdo 1	En desacuerdo 2	Ni acuerdo ni en desacuerdo 3	De acuerdo 4	Totalmente de acuerdo 5
"Las personas del mismo sexo deberían tener el derecho a casarse"					
"Hay que facilitar la llegada de más trabajadores migrantes a Chile"					
"Es mejor un sistema de pensiones de reparto que uno de capitalización individual"					
"La mujer debería tener el derecho a abortar libremente hasta los 3 meses de					

gestación"					
"Para reducir los delitos hay que aumentar los castigos a los menores de edad que delinquen"					

BLOQUE 3 - MANIPULACIÓN

A continuación, le mostraremos una breve noticia publicada recientemente en un diario nacional. Debajo de la noticia hay comentarios de usuarios. Le pedimos que lea la noticia y los comentarios con atención para luego conocer su opinión sobre sus contenidos.

[VER ARCHIVO DE NOTICIAS Y COMENTARIOS]

BLOQUE 4 – POSTTEST

Respecto al contenido de la noticia y de los comentarios de usuario que leyó, ¿qué tan de acuerdo está con las siguientes afirmaciones?

	Muy en desacuerdo				Ni en desacuerdo ni de acuerdo					Muy de acuerdo
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
"Los comentarios de los usuarios sobre la noticia eran										

irrespetuosos"										
"Los comentarios de los usuarios sobre la noticia manifestaban desacuerdo entre ellos"										

¿Qué sintió al leer los comentarios de usuarios? Describa la intensidad con la que sintió cada una de las siguientes emociones

	Nada	Un poco	Más o menos	Bastante	Mucho
Enojo					
Miedo					
Esperanza					
Vergüenza					
Irritabilidad					
Entusiasmo					
Incomodidad					
Alegría					
Amargura					
Orgullo					
Ansiedad					
Rabia					

¿Cómo evalúa la noticia que leyó en cada uno de los siguientes aspectos?

	Muy bien	Bien	Regular	Mal	Muy mal
Está bien escrita					
Es creíble					
Está equilibrada					
Es relevante para mí					
Es relevante para los demás					
Es útil para mí					
Es útil para los demás					

Luego de leer los comentarios de usuarios sobre la noticia ¿Qué tan de acuerdo está con las siguientes afirmaciones?

	Muy en desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo	De acuerdo	Muy de acuerdo
Me sentí más abierto a los argumentos de ambos lados del asunto que se discutía					
Sentí que mis opiniones sobre el asunto que se discutía se					

intensificaron					
Tuve un mejor entendimiento del asunto que se discutía					
Me sentí más confiado en mi propia opinión					

Luego de leer la noticia con los comentarios de usuarios, ¿qué tan probable es que usted realice las siguientes acciones?

	Muy improbable	Improbable	Ni probable ni improbable	Probable	Muy probable
Leer más comentarios de usuarios sobre la noticia					
Poner un "me gusta" o "me disgusta" a algún comentario					
Escribir un comentario o una respuesta a otro usuario					
Compartir con otra persona tus impresiones personales respecto a los comentarios					

Por último, ¿qué tan de acuerdo estás con las siguientes afirmaciones?

	Muy en desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo	De acuerdo	Muy de acuerdo
Los comentarios que incluyen burlas o que se ríen de algo o alguien las suelo percibir como más inapropiadas o inciviles					
Me molesta cuando leo obscenidades o insultos en comentarios de noticias					
Cuando el comentario que leo coincide con mi opinión, le pongo "like" aunque esté escrito de manera agresiva					
No se deberían permitir comentarios que insulten o se burlen de otra persona o grupo de personas					
Por lo general puedo distinguir entre un comentario que tiene humor "blanco" o inocuo a uno que tiene sarcasmo o burla					

Los comentarios de usuarios ayudan a comprender mejor la noticia					
Los comentarios de usuarios son una buena forma de enterarse lo que opina la gente sobre diversos temas					
Me parece más grave usar un garabato contra alguien que escribirle un mensaje burlesco					

[COMENTARIO FINAL]

Muchas gracias por participar en este estudio.

Como fue informado en el consentimiento informado al inicio de la encuesta, el propósito de esta investigación es entender de mejor forma cómo las personas se relacionan con las noticias en internet a través de los comentarios de usuarios. A menudo, estos espacios se prestan para expresiones altamente agresivas, que dificultan un diálogo saludable entre personas que quieran comentar respecto a temas importantes.

Su participación fue completamente confidencial. Todas sus respuestas serán analizadas de manera agregada.

Si tiene cualquier otra inquietud respecto a la encuesta, puede contactar en cualquier momento al investigador responsable, Andrés Rosenberg Benadretti, a su correo electrónico aarosenb@uc.cl

Si le gustaría leer más acerca de la importancia de los comentarios de usuarios y los altos niveles de incivilidad presentes en ellos, le recomiendo la siguiente bibliografía:

Chen, G. M. (2017). *Online incivility and public debate: Nasty talk*. Springer.

Coe, K., Kenski, K., & Rains, S. A. (2014). Online and uncivil? Patterns and determinants of incivility in newspaper website comments. *Journal of Communication*, *64*(4), 658-679.

Appendix 4.2

QUESTIONNAIRE (TRANSLATED ENGLISH VERSION)

The School of Journalism of Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, with support from the Millennial Institute Foundational Research on Data, is conducting a survey about online news and user engagement. This survey should not take you more than 15 minutes to respond. Your participation is completely optional, and all the information provided will be treated anonymously.
If you have any questions, please reach out to Andrés Rosenberg, researcher on charge of the survey, to his mail aarosenb@uc.cl or office number +56223542481

("I Agree" button. If you don't agree, you can close this tab)

BLOCK 1 PRETEST – DEMOGRAPHICS

First of all, we need a few details from you.

Are you,

- Man
- Woman

What is your age? (only enter numbers)

What is your principal activity?

- I am a house-keeper
- I study
- I work at a full-time job
- I work at a part-time job or less
- I am retired
- I have another source of income (unemployment insurance, allowance, rent, State deposits, etc.)

What is your highest educational level?

- Incomplete elementary school or less
- Complete elementary school

- Incomplete highschool
- Incomplete technical
- Complete technical
- Incomplete undergraduate
- Complete graduate or more

What device are you using to complete this survey?

- Computer (laptop or desktop)
- Tablet or iPad
- Cellphone (touch, smartphone) → You are completing this survey with a cellphone. However, it is recommended to use a computer or tablet to properly see and complete the survey. Thank you.

The following questions are related to the use of news sources. In a normal week, meaning from Monday to Sunday, how frequently do you watch, read or listen to news on the following media sources?

	Every day	4-6 times a week	2-3 times a week	Once a week	Less than once a week	I don't have / Does not apply
TV						
Radio						
Printed press						
Online press						
Facebook						
Twitter						

In general, how much attention do you pay to the following news topics?

	All the time	A lot	More or less	A little	Nothing
Science and Technology					
Culture and entertainment					
Health					
Immigration					
Poverty and inequality					
Politics					
Sports					
Moral issues (ex: Church, abortion, same sex marriage)					
Economics					

How likely would you share and/or write a comment regarding the following topics?

	Very likely	Likely	More or less likely	Little likely	Nothing likely
Science and Technology					
Culture and entertainment					
Health					

Immigration					
Poverty and inequality					
Politics					
Sports					
Moral issues (ex: Church, abortion, same sex marriage)					
Economics					

How frequently do you complete the following actions regarding news?

	Every day	4-6 times a week	2-3 times a week	Once a week	Less than once a week	I don't have / Does not apply
Talk about the news with family or friends						
Talk about the news with work or study partners						
Read news that other people shared on Facebook						

Read news that other people shared on Twitter					
Share news with other people on Facebook					
Share news with other people on Twitter					

Have you ever written a comment regarding an online news article?

- Yes
- No

(If "no", user skips the following question)

How frequently have you written a comment regarding a news article about the following topics?

	Very frequently	Frequently	More or less frequently	Not so frequently	Not at all frequently
Science and Technology					
Culture and entertainment					

Health					
Immigration					
Poverty and inequality					
Politics					
Sports					
Moral issues (ex: Church, abortion, same sex marriage)					
Economics					

BLOCK 2 - COVARIANTS

How interested are you in politics in general?

- Not at all interested
- Little interested
- Some interested
- Very interested
- Highly interested

In Chile, people usually describe their political inclinations as being closer to the left, to the center, or to the right. Using the following scale, where would you put yourself?

Left					Center					Right
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Regarding the following statements, how much do you agree or disagree with each of them?

	Totally disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree nor disagree 3	Agree 4	Totally agree 5
"I like to know exactly what is good and bad about all things"					
"I often prefer to remain neutral in complex matters"					
"I pay close attention to whether things are good or bad"					
"I only form strong opinions when I have to"					
"I like to decide if new things are good or bad"					
"I am quite indifferent to many important issues"					

Regarding the following statements, how much do you agree or disagree with each of them?

	Totally disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree nor disagree 3	Agree 4	Totally agree 5
"Same-sex people should have the right to get married"					
"The arrival of more migrant workers in Chile must be facilitated"					
"A distribution pension system is better than an individual funded one"					
"Women should have the right to freely abort until 3 months of gestation"					
"To reduce crime, the punishment of minors who commit crimes must be increased"					

BLOCK 3 - MANIPULATION

Next, we will show you a short news article that was published in a national newspaper. Underneath the article there are some user comments. We ask you to carefully read the articles and the comments bellow.

[SEE FILE WITH NEWS ARTICLES AND COMMENTS]

BLOCK 4 – POSTTEST

Regarding the content of the news article and the user comments you just read, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Highly disagree					Neither agree nor disagree					Highly agree
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
"The user comments about the news article were disrespectful"											
"The user comments about the news article expressed disagreement between them"											

What did you feel after reading the user comments? Describe the intensity with which you felt each of the following emotions:

	Nothing	A little	More or less	A lot	Quite a lot
Anger					
Fear					
Hope					
Shame					
Irritability					
Enthusiasm					
Discomfort					
Joy					
Bitterness					
Pride					
Anxiety					
Rage					

How do you evaluate the news article regarding each of the following aspect?

	Very good	Good	Regular	Bad	Very bad
It is well written					
It is believable					
It is balanced					

It is relevant for me					
It is relevant for other people					
It is useful for me					
It is useful for other people					

After Reading the user commets about the news article, how much do you agree with the following statements?

	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Highly agree
I felt more open to the arguments on both sides of the discussion					
I felt that my opinions about the matter being discussed intensified					
I had a better understanding regarding the topic being discussed					
I felt more confident in my own opinión about the matter being discussed					

After reading the article with the user comments below, how likely would you consider
performing the following tasks?

	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Neither unlikely nor likely	Likely	Very likely
Read more user comments about the article					
Mark a comment with a "like" or a "dislike"					
Write a comment in response to another user's comment					
Share with another person your personal impressions about the comments					

Finally, how much do you agree with the following statements?

	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Highly agree
I usually perceive Comments that include mockery or that laugh at something or someone to be more inappropriate and uncivil					

I get upset when I read vulgarity or insults in user comments					
When a comment I just read coincides with my own point of view about the topic, I mark it with a "like" even if it's written in an aggressive manner					
Comments that include insults or mockery statements directed at someone should not be allowed in comment sections					
I can usually distinguish between a comment that uses "naive" or "White" humor, from another that is burlesque or sarcastic					
User comments help the reader better understand the news article					
User comments are a good way to find out about various topics					
I find more serious to use vulgarity at someone tan to write a burlesque message					

[FINAL COMMENT]

Thank you very much for participating in this study.

As reported in the informed consent at the beginning of the survey, the purpose of this research is to better understand how people relate to news on the internet through user comments. These spaces often lend themselves to highly aggressive expressions, which hinder a healthy dialogue between people who want to comment on important issues.

Your participation was completely confidential.

If you have any other concerns regarding the survey, you can contact at any time investigator in charge of the study, Andrés Rosenberg Benadretti, at his email aarosenb@uc.cl

If you would like to read more about the importance of user comments and the high levels of uncivility present in them, I recommend the following bibliography:

Chen, G. M. (2017). *Online incivility and public debate: Nasty talk*. Springer.

Coe, K., Kenski, K., & Rains, S. A. (2014). Online and uncivil? Patterns and determinants of incivility in newspaper website comments. *Journal of Communication*, *64*(4), 658-679.

Appendix 5

Table 7

Multinomial Regression Results Estimating Experimental Group from Participants'
Characteristics and Evaluations of Gender, Age, Educational Level, Attention to News
Issues, Political Interest, Political Affiliation and Engagement Through Commenting

| | Issue: Immigration | | | | | |
| | Condition 2 | | Condition 3 | | Condition 4 | |
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
Gender	.37	.41	.35	.41	-.13	.42
Age	-.02	.02	-.01	.02	-.02	.02
Educational level	.28*[5]	.12	.04	.12	.13	.12
Interest in immigration	-.44*	.19	-.02	.22	-.22	.21
Interest in politics	-.06	.07	.09	.18	.36	.19
Interest in moral issues	.16	.17	-.03	.15	-.04	.15
Posting a comment	.80	.51	.03	.54	.84	.51
Political interest	-.05	.19	-.18	.17	-.15	.17
Political inclination	.07	.08	.10	.08	.11	.09

[5] Less than 10% of the coefficients are statistically significant (6,3%), which could be attributive to chance. Additionally, another between-subjects ANOVA was conducted to answer H1 and H2 with Age, Educational Level, Interest in Immigration and Interest in Abortion as covariates and there was no substantial difference between the F values, which proves that randomization between conditions was successfully achieved.

| | Issue: Abortion | | | | | | | |
| | Condition 5 | | Condition 6 | | Condition 7 | | Condition 8 | |
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
Gender	.32	.412	.42	.41	.34	.41	.34	.40
Age	-.04**	.02	-.003	.01	-.01	.02	-.01	.01
Educational level	.36**	.13	.08	.12	.24	.13	.18	.12
Interest in abortion	-.39	.21	-.20	.21	-.47	.19*	-.08	.21
Interest in politics	.19	.20	.02	.16	.15	.18	.02	.16
Interest in moral issues	.20	.18	-.002	.17	.20	.18	-.08	.14
Posting a comment	.68	.53	.29	.53	-.05	.56	.33	.52
Political interest	.03	.23	-.04	.21	-.18	.17	-.15	.17
Political inclination	.07	.09	.07	.08	.01	.09	.06	.08

Note * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.