

THE ROLES OF EMOTION, MORALITY, AND POLITICAL AFFILIATION IN  
PREDICTING RETALIATION OF WORKPLACE INCIVILITY BETWEEN  
DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS

A Thesis

by

AMANDA DANIELLE PESONEN

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

August 2011

Major Subject: Psychology

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Workplace Incivility between Democrats and Republicans

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## ABSTRACT

The Roles of Emotion, Morality, and Political Affiliation in Predicting Retaliation of  
Workplace Incivility between Democrats and Republicans.

(August 2011)

Amanda Danielle Pesonen, B. A., Stephen F. Austin State University

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The present study examines differences in political perspectives and moral identity as facilitators of retaliation of workplace incivility. It is proposed that following uncivil treatment, emotional appraisals of uncivil treatment will influence targets' retaliatory behavior; individuals who feel angry or demoralized after being treated uncivilly will be more likely to retaliate than individuals who do not negatively appraise incivility. In addition, political affiliation and moral identity are posited as moderators of the relationship between experiencing incivility and emotionally appraising the experience, as well as the relationship between emotional appraisal and retaliation.

This study utilized a sample of 355 participants who completed an online survey regarding their experiences with incivility three weeks before and one week after the 2008 U.S. presidential election. Results indicate that Democrats most frequently retaliated against Republicans at high levels of received incivility from Republicans, yet Republicans engaged in the most retaliatory incivility against Democrats at low levels of incivility from Democrats. Furthermore, internalization buffered the likelihood of

retaliation, while symbolization enhanced it. In three-way interactions predicting retaliatory incivility, low internalization and high symbolization Democrats most frequently retaliated against Republicans; unexpectedly, high symbolization Democrats also most frequently retaliated against Democrats. Predicting emotional appraisals from received incivility, symbolization enhanced relationships between incivility and appraisals. High internalization Republicans reported the greatest increase in anger when treated uncivilly by Democrats. Predicting retaliation from appraisals, Republicans retaliated against Democrats most frequently when angered or demoralized, but Democrats did not report retaliating against Republicans. Additionally, high symbolization Republicans reported retaliating against other Republicans when angered or demoralized.

Results were not completely aligned with past theory and research, but they generally indicate that morality plays a large role in the prediction of emotional appraisals and retaliation in response to uncivil treatment. Furthermore, morality seems to be a more important predictor of retaliation than social identity processes. Finally, it is clear that emotions relate to the receipt and retaliation of incivility, and future research should clarify these relationships. This study contributes to the literature by examining how social issues that are seemingly unrelated to the workplace can negatively affect interpersonal interactions at work.

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## INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

I believe that recent developments in psychological research and the world of politics—including responses to 9/11, the Bush presidency, the Iraq War, polarizing Supreme Court nominations, Hurricane Katrina, and ongoing controversies over scientific and environmental policies—provide ample grounds for revisiting the strong claims made by end-of-ideology theorists... even casual observers of today's headlines, newscasts, and late night talk shows cannot escape the feeling that ideology is everywhere. (Jost, 2006, p. 652)

Workplace violence and aggression are important issues for organizations. In 2008, there were 526 reported workplace homicides in the United States, accounting for 10% of all fatal work-related injuries (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008); moreover, of all non-fatal violent crimes reported by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2007), nearly 13% occurred while the victim was at work. While these numbers have decreased substantially since the number of annual workplace homicides peaked at 1,080 in 1994 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008), workplace violence has not been eradicated and continues to be a concern. Theoretical work by Andersson and Pearson (1999) proposes that acts of incivility (e.g., rude, discourteous behavior) could lie at the root of such violence, following a pattern in which lack of regard for others spirals into more high-impact expressions of aggression. As such, incivility research may offer important insights into the prediction and prevention of more high-impact forms of mistreatment. If

incivility does indeed lie at the root of these problems, the restoration of norms of respect in the workplace would likely further diminish the frequency of aggressive and violent outbursts in employment settings; thus, an examination of the possible factors associated with uncivil interactions, and how they might spiral into more extreme forms of aggression, is warranted. In the present study, I examine differences in political perspectives and moral regulation as facilitators of retaliation (a likely precursor to spirals) of workplace incivility.

During the 2008 presidential election, political interest was especially high and political opinions were notably salient. Viewing of election night television coverage increased by more than 10% in 2008 compared to 2004 (Steinberg, 2008), spending on political advertising increased 34% from 2004 (Seelye, 2008), and the 2008 election saw the highest voter turnout in 40 years (Thee-Brenan, 2008). Perhaps unsurprisingly, this interest spilled into the workplace; a study conducted by HR Focus Magazine during the presidential race (February, 2008) found that over 50% of employees surveyed reported that they expressed their political views at work, and 65% heard coworkers discuss politics during their workday. Additionally, 35% of supervisors discussed politics with subordinates, 9% of employees felt pressure to conform to their supervisors' opinions, and 6% of respondents had witnessed political arguments between employees at work.

The infiltration of political talk in the workplace may have negative consequences for employee relations in the form of uncivil interpersonal treatment. In a historical context in which individuals may have been especially identified with their political beliefs (e.g., the 2008 presidential election), these identities likely left members of both

political parties vulnerable to incivility from employees who did not share their political ideologies. Political discussions have the potential to become uncivil, degenerating into personal attacks, and ultimately fostering intolerance for those who hold different opinions (Johnson & Johnson, 2000). Indeed, in previous research, it was found that employees do treat each other uncivilly at work based on their political perspectives (Pesonen & Miner-Rubino, 2009). To expand on this research, I propose that targets of uncivil treatment from members of the opposite political party may retaliate with uncivil behavior.

Political affiliation is typically not studied in organizational contexts, but political psychology literature (e.g., Jost, 2006) suggests that it is an important variable to examine in all contexts - including the workplace - as it plays a role in shaping our perceptions of our social environments. For example, Jost et al. (2007) found that liberals and conservatives exhibited different cognitive and motivational styles that were apparent in non-political domains such as work settings. Political ideology has even been found to influence the physical appearance of one's workspace. Carney, Jost, Gosling, and Potter (2008) found that offices of conservatives were more conventional and less comfortable than those of liberals; further, in studying interaction styles, conservatives were found to typically be more orderly and reserved, while liberals were more expressive and drawn to novelty and diversity. Evidence also exists suggesting that political orientation may be shaped in part by neurological factors which correlate with cognitive control and self-regulation (Amodio, Jost, Master, & Yee, 2007).

These findings suggest that employees' political identities are likely salient in the

workplace whether through discussion, interactional styles, or office environments and that people frequently emit and receive social cues that allow for the determination of the political affiliations of peers. The general presence of political ideology in the workplace, coupled with the notable salience of political opinions during election season, provide an interesting context for studying interpersonal interactions between Democrats and Republicans in the workplace, as well as investigating psychological factors that contribute to the retaliation of workplace incivility.

The conceptual model of proposed relationships for the present study is displayed in Figure 1. In coming sections, I will discuss and integrate theories of incivility spirals, workplace retaliation, social identity and political ideology, moral identity, and emotional appraisal to build arguments regarding the theoretical processes by which incivility is retaliated as a function of identity. I will propose mediators (i.e., affective reactions of anger and demoralization) and moderators (i.e., political affiliation and moral identity) of the relationship between being a target of uncivil treatment prior to the presidential election and retaliating after the election. In general, I propose that following uncivil treatment, emotional appraisals of uncivil treatment will influence a target's retaliatory behavior; individuals who feel angry or demoralized after being treated rudely will be more likely to retaliate than individuals who do not negatively appraise the mistreatment. In addition, I will posit the roles of political affiliation and moral identity as moderators of the relationship between experiencing incivility and emotionally appraising the experience, as well as the relationship between the emotional appraisal and retaliation.

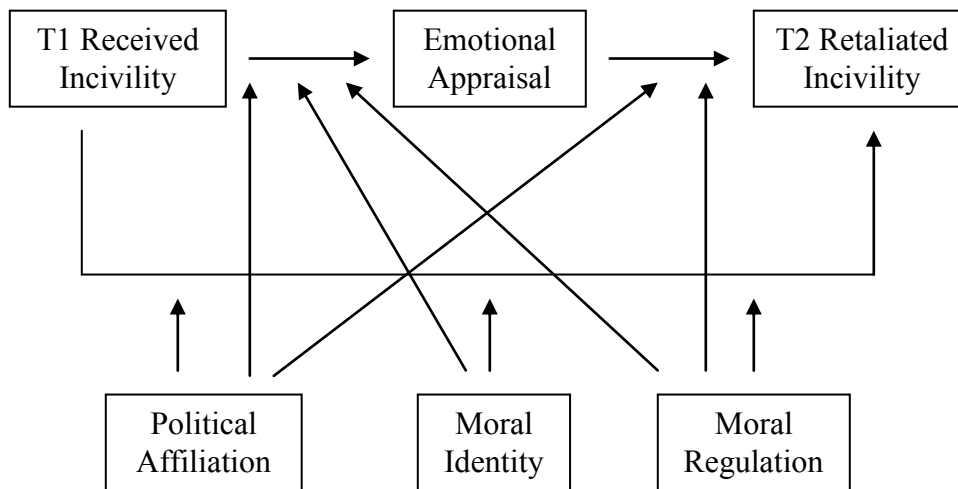


Figure 1. Conceptual model of proposed relationships.

### Workplace Incivility: Definition and Past Research

The study of workplace incivility has evolved relatively recently in the workplace mistreatment literature; the construct was first presented only a decade ago. In their seminal theoretical paper, Andersson and Pearson (1999) introduced and defined workplace incivility as “*low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others*” (p. 457, italics added). Pearson and Porath (2009) further clarify this definition by stating that incivility refers to “the exchange of seemingly inconsequential inconsiderate words and deeds” (p. 12). Examples of uncivil behavior in the workplace include taking credit for someone else’s work, spreading rumors about other employees, and speaking in a condescending tone to coworkers (Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2005). This list is far

from exhaustive, as there are innumerable ways to show disregard for others, both intentionally and as a simple oversight. Either way, research shows that incivility is common in the workplace. For example, Cortina and her colleagues found that 71% of a public sector employee sample, 75% of a university employee sample, and 79% of a law enforcement sample experienced personal incidences of incivility in recent years (Cortina, 2008; Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001).

While incivility research is still in its infancy and may be perceived as vulnerable to construct proliferation, a number of theoretical and empirical attempts have been made to distinguish incivility from other forms of deviant workplace behavior. Andersson and Pearson (1999) argued that incivility is distinct from workplace aggression (i.e., behavior that is clearly intended to harm, either psychologically or physically, Schat & Kelloway, 2005) and violence (i.e., physically harmful behaviors, Barling, Dupré, & Kelloway, 2009; Schat & Kelloway, 2005) in both intensity (low versus high) and intent to harm (ambiguous versus clear). In order to further understand workplace incivility as a construct that can be differentiated from other forms of antisocial and deviant workplace behavior, Pearson, Andersson, and Wegner (2001) conducted a series of workshops, focus groups, questionnaires, and interviews with people from a variety of occupations and geographic locations, as well as people considered to be subject matter experts of civility and incivility. Their qualitative data further reinforced the idea that a defining characteristic of incivility is that the motivation and intent is ambiguous; it may or may not be intended to harm, and the instigator, the target, or both may or may not perceive it as harmful. While the issue of

the distinctiveness of incivility as a construct is a valid concern, the further delineation of the ways in which incivility differs from related constructs is beyond the scope of this paper.

Incivility can have negative consequences for both individual targets and organizations. For example, Cortina et al. (2001) found that experiencing incivility was related to higher job dissatisfaction and greater psychological distress. In addition, Lim and Cortina (2005) and Lim, Cortina, and Magley (2008) found that experiencing incivility was predictive of decreases in occupational, psychological, and physical health. Caza and Cortina (2007) found that experiencing incivility was also related to feelings of depression, anxiety, and dissatisfaction with the organization. In terms of organizational outcomes, some common consequences of workplace incivility are targets' withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism and reduction of effort (Pearson et al., 2001), turnover intentions and in extreme cases, actual turnover (Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2000). For instance, Pearson et al. (2000) reported in a nationwide survey that of employees who identified themselves as targets of uncivil treatment, nearly half had considered leaving the organization, and 12% actually did quit their jobs as a result of uncivil encounters. The researchers point out that most of the respondents who left the organization did not directly cite incivility as the reason for leaving for fear of repercussion from the instigator, the appearance of hypersensitivity, or feelings of helplessness in affecting change through reporting complaints. These concerns are hallmarks of the problem of incivility: because of its low intensity, targets are unlikely to confront the problem through organizational outlets such as reporting to supervisors, and



instead may either withdraw from their work altogether or cope with the problem in other ways such as through interpersonal retaliation, as I discuss below.

### *Retaliatory Incivility*

The models to be examined in the present study are largely based on Andersson and Pearson's (1999) theoretical framework of incivility spirals. The authors proposed that experiencing incivility at work could ignite a pattern in which the target retaliates by behaving uncivilly toward the initial instigator. Andersson and Pearson (1999) theorized that when an individual is treated uncivilly, they experience a negative emotional response which may be reconciled through reciprocating incivility toward the instigator. They proposed that reciprocation of incivility may not even be intended to harm the initial aggressor, but instead to simply release the target's negative emotions; however, as more incivilities are traded, they argued, it becomes more likely that the individuals involved will interpret the behaviors as intentional, which will fuel the likelihood of retaliation. These propositions are based on the negative norm of reciprocity which suggests that, much like the social norm of repaying kindness with kindness, victims of mistreatment are likely to respond with mistreatment and may often utilize non-proportional aggressive acts to escalate the intensity of reciprocated behaviors (Helm, Bonoma, & Tedeschi, 1972). This process may occur between two individuals, or it may take place between groups of people, such as people of different political orientations.

Andersson and Pearson (1999) specifically theorized that perceived threats to identity are likely to lead to amplified aggression. Threats or challenges to identity are expected to lead to perceived loss of face, feelings of anger, and ultimately, a desire for

revenge. In acting upon loss of face and anger, one may seek revenge as a way of expressing and affirming the value of their challenged identity; stated another way, a feeling of disempowerment may motivate an individual to assert their power and restore their self-worth. For instance, in the context of political affiliation, if a Republican behaves uncivilly to a Democrat, the Democrat may interpret the behavior as threatening, causing them to feel angry and demoralized, and motivating them to reciprocate uncivil behavior to the Republican in order to salvage the self-worth that they attach to their identity as a member of their political party.

### *Retaliation*

Theory and research on organizational retaliatory behavior (ORB) may further inform the process by which incivility spirals arise. Retaliation can be distinguished from other forms of counterproductive work behaviors (CWB) in that employees who engage in CWB with no apparent provocation are considered *deviant*, while *retaliation* involves responding to another employees' perceived deviance (Folger & Skarlicki, 2005). By characterizing individuals who retaliate as responders to transgression, as opposed to aggressors themselves, retaliation may be thought of as a moral imperative - not as committing a wrong, but as righting a wrong that someone else committed.

Hershcovis et al. (2007) meta-analytically examined a number of predictors of interpersonal aggression (that is, aggression targeted toward an individual, as opposed to an organization) and found interpersonal conflict to be the strongest predictor of likelihood to aggress. Interpersonal conflict was conceptualized as a situational factor that resulted from the violation of respect for another individual that is perceived by the

target as an act of mistreatment. This study demonstrated that while there are a number of reasons an employee might act aggressively, one of the most common is that the employee is responding to being mistreated initially.

### **Social Identity, Political Affiliation, and Selective Incivility**

Using social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1987) as a framework, I propose that incivility may be retaliated as a function of employees' opposing political beliefs. SIT suggests that some employees may be targeted for workplace incivility because of their political perspectives, and furthermore, that targeted individuals may retaliate in turn based on political affiliation. Classic SIT proposes that the desire for high self-esteem motivates a social comparison of self with others. Individuals assign themselves and others as in-group members or out-group members of social groups using salient individual characteristics, such as political affiliation. As a result of this self-categorization process, individuals maximize in-group/out-group distinctions through stereotyping such that out-group members are perceived and treated more negatively, while in-group members are consistently given more favorable treatment.

Recent work on SIT suggests that the formation of in-group/out-group distinctions may be due to a need to manage uncertainty and ambiguity concerning one's identity (c.f., Hogg, 2000; Hornsby, 2008). Because our identities so strongly dictate how we ought to think, feel and act in any given situation, situational uncertainty relative to an identity will cause one to look to their in-group for guidance. For example, prior to the 2008 presidential election, it is likely that both Democrats and Republicans

experienced a state of uncertainty about the future of their political parties and the nation in general. Following the election, this uncertainty may have been especially acute for Republicans who had to reestablish their party platform. Democrats, led by a new and relatively inexperienced President, may have also experienced some post-election uncertainty. The experience of incivility introduces an additional element of uncertainty as well, due to its hallmark characteristic as being ambiguous in nature (Pearson et al., 2001). Indeed, experiencing incivility may leave the target feeling uncertain about the meaning of the interaction, why it occurred, and how they ought to react. Thus, the experience of incivility from political out-group members coupled with the uncertainty of the future of political in- and out-groups may have led Democrats and Republicans to distinguish themselves from political out-groups as a way of reaffirming who they are in terms of their political beliefs (cf., Baldassarri & Gelman, 2008, for a review of recent trends in political party polarization) and act as would be dictated by that identity.

Negative interactions between Democrats and Republicans may also be fueled by feelings of threat, as in-group and out-group membership becomes more salient when individuals feel that the status of their identity is threatened (e.g., Fischer, Haslam, & Smith, 2010; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). SIT posits that, as a result of feeling threatened, individuals will engage in behaviors that are meant to reestablish a positive self-concept, such as derogating out-group members, in an effort to gain perceived social power (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Along the same lines, Porath, Pearson, and Overbeck (2008) posited that uncivil treatment is a clear threat to social status, as it implies that the target is inferior to the

instigator. They further proposed that depending on the target's status relative to the instigator, this challenge may elicit an aggressive response. They found that aggression in response to incivility occurred most often when challenges came from a peer, as opposed to someone of a higher or lower social status. The authors proposed that, because peers have equal status, challenges from peers are interpreted by targets as illegitimate attempts at exerting power and social dominance. Thus, when incivility occurs between members of opposite political identities, it may be interpreted as a challenge to one's group status, accompanied by the implication that the instigator devalues the target's political viewpoint and considers it inferior to his or her own ideology. During the 2008 election season, Republicans and Democrats were essentially peers who were engaged in a power struggle in the political hierarchy. Thus, incivility from members of the opposite political party was likely interpreted as a status challenge that necessitated an aggressive response as a way to assert social dominance and power.

### *Selective Incivility*

To expound on the social identity aspect of uncivil treatment, Cortina (2008) argued that workplace incivility is one way to maintain social group distinctions and perpetuate negative behavior toward out-group members in workplace contexts. She theorized that this specific type of incivility, termed *selective incivility*, is a form of interpersonal mistreatment that allows instigators to treat out-group members negatively, but in a way that is subtle and ambiguous, making the cause of the mistreatment appear unrelated to any particular characteristic of the target. The present study examines political affiliation as a salient characteristic that may facilitate uncivil interactions

between in-group and out-group members. Because low-impact workplace mistreatment is generally overlooked by management (Cortina, 2008; Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008), employees may find that engaging in selective incivility is one way to mistreat coworkers who hold dissimilar political perspectives while concealing their biases toward these out-group members; further, when targeted with incivility from an out-group member, retaliation may be perceived as the only available option, as other organizational outlets for reporting and repairing uncivil interactions are uncommon (Pearson et al., 2000). Additionally, the larger social context during the time frame surrounding a presidential election may make these negative interactions especially likely to occur, as feelings of threat from out-group members and feelings of uncertainty about the status of one's political affiliation become especially salient.

Relative to the present study, identity threat may be germane at two points in the incivility retaliation process: Initially, during an election when political group membership is particularly relevant, working and interacting with members of the opposite political ideology is likely to induce threat, as the salience of opposing political opinions can be challenging to one's beliefs and core values, and ultimately, one's sense of self. Thus, the presence of this challenge would motivate individuals to mistreat out-group members as a way of protecting their own status and self-esteem. Later, if an employee has been targeted with incivility by a member of the opposite political ideology, the feeling of threat that accompanies being a target will make the in-group/out-group distinction particularly salient, and as a result, out-group members who were the initial instigators may then become the most likely targets as a means for initial

targets to restore their self-esteem. Interestingly, empirical research has found that conservatives exhibit a higher need for order, structure, and closure, are more resistant to change, and tend to be more driven to manage uncertainty and threat, while liberals are more comfortable with ambiguity (Jost et al., 2007). Interpreted from a SIT perspective, these findings suggest that, when faced with ambiguous mistreatment, conservatives may be more likely than liberals to interpret incivility as a challenge to status, prompting them to feel especially threatened. Thus, conservatives may be more motivated than liberals to enhance in-group/out-group distinctions, possibly through mistreatment of out-group members.

Based on the above theory and research, I hypothesize the following:

*Hypothesis 1:* Greater received incivility from Republicans at Time 1 will predict greater retaliated incivility to Republicans at Time 2.

*Hypothesis 2:* Greater received incivility from Democrats at Time 1 will predict greater retaliated incivility to Democrats at Time 2.

*Hypothesis 3:* The relationship between T1 received incivility from Republicans and T2 retaliatory incivility to Republicans will be moderated by political affiliation such that the relationship will be stronger for Democrats.

*Hypothesis 4:* The relationship between T1 received incivility from Democrats and T2 retaliatory incivility to Democrats will be moderated by political affiliation such that the relationship will be stronger for Republicans.

*Hypothesis 5:* This above moderated relationship will be stronger for Republicans who were treated uncivilly by Democrats than for Democrats who were treated

uncivily by Republicans (because Republicans are more uncomfortable with ambiguity and threat than are Democrats).

### **Moral Identity and Political Affiliation**

Moral identity is another identity variable that has not yet been studied in relation to low-level mistreatment. Aquino and Reed (2002) defined *moral identity* as “a self conception organized around a set of moral traits” (p. 1424). They theorized that the adoption of a moral identity is based upon the comparison of the self to a social referent. Such a referent may be a membership group, a known or unknown individual, or a social construction of a prototypical “moral person,” so long as the individual interprets the world as the social referent would and considers traits associated with the social referent as essential to the individual’s self-concept. Further, moral identity has two dimensions: *internalization*, which represents an internal identification with moral traits, and *symbolization*, which represents a more external display of moral action.

Reed and Aquino (2003) proposed and tested the idea that individuals with a strong moral identity have a more expansive “circle of moral regard” than individuals whose moral identity is less self-important (p. 1271). They posited that a strong moral identity causes one to create fewer in-group/out-group boundaries, at times even extending their conception of in-group membership to all of humanity. They determined that individuals with a strong moral identity do show more positive regard for out-group members, and that strong moral identity predicted unfavorable reactions to revenge-seeking and favorable reactions to forgiveness of transgressors (specifically, terrorists). Thus, as applied to the relationship between being treated uncivily and retaliating with



incivility, I predict the following:

*Hypothesis 6:* The relationship between Time 1 received incivility from Republicans and Time 2 retaliated incivility to Republicans will be moderated by moral identity such that the relationship will be stronger for employees with a weaker moral identity.

*Hypothesis 7:* The relationship between Time 1 received incivility from Democrats and Time 2 retaliated incivility to Democrats will be moderated by moral identity such that the relationship will be stronger for employees with a weaker moral identity.

Folger and Skarlicki (2005) theorize, however, that individual conceptions of morality may differentially predict retaliatory behavior versus *moral suasion* (a condition of engaging in moral behavior that contradicts self-interested behavior, e.g., refraining from retaliation); they suggest that morality may motivate some individuals to act in a retaliatory nature, while morality may motivate others to abstain from retaliation. Moreover, political affiliation may influence whether an offended individual retaliates or refrains, as empirical evidence suggests that political beliefs are highly tied to morality (Youniss, 2009) and that individuals of different political ideologies engage in behaviors that they believe to be moral in different ways (Janoff-Bulman, Sheikh, & Hepp, 2009).

It has been empirically demonstrated that moral conviction is equally motivating for both liberals and conservatives (Skitka & Bauman, 2008) and that moral maturity is more strongly related to the magnitude of commitment to political causes, rather than the direction of the commitment on the political spectrum (Youniss, 2009). These findings

suggest that individuals who have a strong identification with a political ideology likely do so because of a strong sense of moral conviction; they adopt and support political beliefs as dictated by what they feel to be morally right and wrong. Thus, an individual's moral identity is conceptually related to their political affiliation, both of which influence behavior by guiding the person to behave in ways they feel to be morally appropriate. This body of research signifies that identification with a political party (e.g., Democrat versus Republican) would have no relationship with one's self-importance of moral identity; instead, individuals identify with one political group over another because a liberal conception of morality differs from a conservative conception of morality.

To expand on the possibility of differing underlying moral motivations, Janoff-Bulman et al. (2009) distinguished between two types of *moral regulation*: proscriptive morality and prescriptive morality. These forms of regulation are related to avoidance and approach such that proscriptive morality is concerned with preventing immoral behavior, while prescriptive regulation is associated with promoting positive moral behavior. Further, evidence suggests that individuals with a liberal political orientation tend to endorse policies that are related to prescriptive morality (for instance, ensuring equality to all individuals and supporting government welfare programs), and political conservatives endorse policies related to proscriptive morality (for example, anti-abortion and anti-gay marriage laws; Janoff-Bulman et al., 2009). As such, when faced with a moral dilemma, conservatives may believe that the morally correct thing to do is to punish someone who has wronged them; for example, when treated uncivilly,

conservatives may retaliate as a means of trying to correct the immoral behavior of the initial instigator. Liberals, on the other hand, may be more likely to resolve moral dilemmas by regulating their responses so as not to cause further harm; therefore, when faced with incivility, they may be more likely than conservatives to engage in moral suasion and abstain from retaliation.

Such effects have been documented at a national level. McCann (2009) found that state-level conservatism positively predicted longer prison sentences for rapists, suggesting that conservatism is related to motivation to punish transgressors. Furthermore, McCann (2008) demonstrated that threat level and liberalism versus conservatism predicted the number of death sentences administered in a given state. Threat level was determined by creating a composite score of variables such as state homicide rates and violent crime rates. It was found that in more conservative states, high threat predicted more death sentences than low threat; conversely, in more liberal states, high threat predicted fewer death sentences than low threat. These findings may be explained by a fundamental difference in the ways liberals and conservatives approach moral concerns; while conservative ideology aims to eradicate immorality by punishing it, liberal ideology is focused on discouraging immorality through promoting positive moral behavior.

In the present study, therefore, moral regulation will be conceptualized and measured as an interaction between political affiliation and moral identity; Republicans with a strong moral identity have a strong proscriptive moral regulation, and Democrats with a strong moral identity have a strong prescriptive moral regulation. I propose, then,

that moral regulation (the interaction between moral identity and political affiliation) may determine how an individual responds to uncivil treatment in the following ways:

*Hypothesis 8:* Moral regulation will moderate the relationship between Time 1 received incivility from Democrats and Time 2 retaliated incivility to Democrats such that the relationship will be strongest for employees with a strong proscriptive moral regulation.

*Hypothesis 9:* Conversely, moral regulation will moderate the relationship between Time 1 received incivility from Republicans and Time 2 retaliated incivility to Republicans such that the relationship will be strongest for Democrat employees with a weak prescriptive morality (as this relationship involves in-group/out-group processes as well as moral regulation processes).

### **Emotions and Appraisal**

By definition, *emotions* are reactions to specific stimuli or events characterized by an awareness of the pleasantness or unpleasantness of the event; this awareness triggers a cognitive appraisal, which arouses a readiness to act in response to the event and strongly predicts specific behaviors, particularly in the case of negative emotions (Frijda, 1993; Lord & Kanfer, 2002; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Cognitive theories of emotion (e.g., Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) suggest that following the experience of a potentially stressful situation, individuals engage in a process of primary and secondary appraisal. Primary appraisal involves the interpretation of the event as threatening or non-threatening, and depending on the interpretation of the situation, different emotional evaluations may manifest such as anger, anxiety, fear, or demoralization, among other

emotions. Secondary appraisal involves the assignment of responsibility for the incident and the evaluation of available coping mechanisms in reaction to the event (Lazarus, 1991). Note that in the face of mistreatment, it has been suggested that retaliation is, in fact, a coping strategy (cf., Hershcovis et al., 2007). Additionally, Folger and Skarlicki (2005) suggested that retaliation may sometimes be functional for an individual who has been targeted with mistreatment as a means of restoring psychological equity between themselves and the initial instigator. In a related vein, Judge, Scott, and Ilies (2006) empirically found that interpersonal injustice triggered hostile emotions, which then lead to engagement in deviant behaviors. The present study builds on these findings by investigating incivility as a trigger of negative emotional appraisals, which in turn lead to retaliatory uncivil behavior.

I expect that uncivil treatment will provoke two primary emotions: anger and demoralization. Anger is frequently tied to displays of aggression (Glomb, Steel, & Arvey, 2002), has been linked to experiencing mistreatment (Grandey, Tam, & Brauburger, 2002; Phillips & Smith, 2004), and predicts deviant behavior (e.g., Judge, Scott, & Ilies, 2006). Demoralization encompasses feelings of insult, embarrassment, and betrayal, and has been found to negatively correlate with self-esteem (Wright & Fitzgerald, 2007), suggesting that following an attack on one's self-esteem, an individual may experience feelings of demoralization. Cortina and Magley (2009) investigated the relationship between experiencing incivility and appraisal and concluded that incivility generally triggers "mildly negative appraisals" (p. 284), but that appraisals were more negative when the instigator was a person of power (e.g., a supervisor).

*Hypothesis 10:* Anger at Time 1 will mediate the relationship between being a target of incivility at Time 1 and retaliating at Time 2.

*Hypothesis 11:* Demoralization at Time 1 will mediate the relationship between being a target of incivility at Time 1 and retaliating at Time 2.

*Hypothesis 12:* The relationship between received incivility from Republicans at Time 1 and anger at Time 1 will be moderated by political affiliation such that the relationship will be stronger for Democrats than Republicans.

*Hypothesis 13:* The relationship between received incivility from Democrats at Time 1 and anger at Time 1 will be moderated by political affiliation such that the relationship will be stronger for Republicans than Democrats.

*Hypothesis 14:* The relationship between received incivility from Republicans at Time 1 and demoralization at Time 1 will be moderated by political affiliation such that the relationship will be stronger for Democrats than Republicans.

*Hypothesis 15:* The relationship between received incivility from Democrats at Time 1 and demoralization at Time 1 will be moderated by political affiliation such that the relationship will be stronger for Republicans than Democrats.

Moreover, research based on Tomkins's (1965) ideological scripts theory suggests that Democrats and Republicans may have different affective experiences in the face of value-laden or moral concerns. For instance, Carlson and Brincka (1987) demonstrated that emotions of anger, contempt, and excitement were more associated with Republican politicians, and emotions of distress, shame, and joy were more associated with Democratic politicians. The researchers proposed that this is due to different affective

bases for individuals holding normative versus humanistic ideologies (which are related to conservatism and liberalism, respectively; de St. Aubin, 1996). Based on the above theory and research, I made the following hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 16:* For Republicans, the relationship between Time 1 received incivility from Democrats and anger will be stronger than the relationship between Time 1 received incivility from Democrats and demoralization.

*Hypothesis 17:* For Democrats, the relationship between Time 1 received incivility from Republicans and demoralization will be stronger than the relationship between Time 1 received incivility from Republicans and anger.

Moral identity may also play a role in the relationship between experiencing incivility and negative emotions. Folger and Skarlicki (2005) discussed the concept of *deontic emotions*, which are defined as “the moral experience of another’s wrongdoing” (p. 101); individuals may express these emotions when self-interested actions and moral actions must compete with one another in response to a negative stimulus. For example, Folger and Skarlicki (2005) describe deontic anger as an emotional response to injustices that are based on abuses of the moral system, as well as to the feeling of being cornered by an opposing force. Because individuals with a strong moral identity are predicted to appraise uncivil behavior as especially negative, I expect that stronger moral identity will be related to stronger negative emotions as well. Thus, I predict the following:

*Hypothesis 18:* The relationship between Time 1 received incivility from Republicans and anger at Time 1 will be moderated by moral identity such that the relationship will be stronger for individuals with a stronger moral identity.

*Hypothesis 19:* The relationship between Time 1 received incivility from Democrats and anger at Time 1 will be moderated by moral identity such that the relationship will be stronger for individuals with a stronger moral identity.

*Hypothesis 20:* The relationship between Time 1 received incivility from Republicans and demoralization at Time 1 will be moderated by moral identity such that the relationship will be stronger for individuals with a stronger moral identity.

*Hypothesis 21:* The relationship between Time 1 received incivility from Democrats and demoralization at Time 1 will be moderated by moral identity such that the relationship will be stronger for individuals with a stronger moral identity.

Furthermore, I propose that moral identity will interact with political affiliation to predict emotional appraisals. Having a strong moral identity may cause a target to interpret incivility as an immoral action, and identifying with one political party may cause the target to view uncivil treatment as a coercive action by someone with opposing beliefs. Thus, due to the experience of deontic emotions among individuals with strong moral identities and to social identity processes involved in intergroup conflict between Democrats and Republicans, the strongest negative emotions ought to be experienced by individuals with a strong moral identity who are treated uncivilly by members of the opposite political group. Thus, the following hypotheses were made:

*Hypothesis 22:* The relationship between Time 1 received incivility from Republicans and anger at Time 1 will be moderated by the interaction between political affiliation and moral identity such that the relationship will be strongest



for Democrats with a strong moral identity.

*Hypothesis 23:* The relationship between Time 1 received incivility from Democrats and anger at Time 1 will be moderated by the interaction between political affiliation and moral identity such that the relationship will be strongest for Republicans with a strong moral identity.

*Hypothesis 24:* The relationship between Time 1 received incivility from Republicans and demoralization at Time 1 will be moderated by the interaction between political affiliation and moral identity such that the relationship will be strongest for Democrats with a strong moral identity.

*Hypothesis 25:* The relationship between T1 received incivility from Democrats and demoralization at Time 1 will be moderated by the interaction between political affiliation and moral identity such that the relationship will be strongest for Republicans with a strong moral identity.

In turn, moral regulation is expected to predict retaliatory behavior following the experience of anger and demoralization. I propose that employees with a strong proscriptive moral regulation will behave in a reactive manner, responding to an instigator's immoral actions by engaging in retaliatory behavior when angered or demoralized by the experience of incivility. Employees with a strong prescriptive moral regulation, however, will likely engage in moral suasion and temper the incivility spiral, even when experiencing negative emotions.

Based on the body of literature on moral identity, political affiliation, and emotional appraisal, I hypothesize the following:

*Hypothesis 26:* The relationship between anger at Time 1 and Time 2 retaliated incivility to Republicans will not be moderated by political affiliation; Democrats are not expected to retaliate against Republicans more frequently than Republicans.

*Hypothesis 27:* The relationship between anger at Time 1 and Time 2 retaliated incivility to Democrats will be moderated by political affiliation such that the relationship will be strongest for Republicans.

*Hypothesis 28:* The relationship between anger at Time 1 and retaliated incivility to Republicans at Time 2 will be moderated by moral regulation such that the relationship will be strongest for employees with a weak prescriptive moral regulation.

*Hypothesis 29:* The relationship between anger at Time 1 and retaliated incivility to Democrats at Time will be moderated by moral regulation such that the relationship will be strongest for employees with a strong proscriptive moral regulation.

*Hypothesis 30:* The relationship between demoralization at Time 1 and retaliated incivility to Republicans at Time 2 will not be moderated by political affiliation; Democrats are not expected to retaliate against Republicans more frequently than Republicans.

*Hypothesis 31:* The relationship between demoralization at Time 1 and retaliated incivility to Democrats at Time 2 will be moderated by political affiliation such that the relationship will be strongest for Republicans.

*Hypothesis 32:* The relationship between demoralization at Time 1 and retaliated incivility to Republicans at Time 2 will be moderated by moral regulation such that the relationship will be strongest for employees with a weak prescriptive moral regulation.

*Hypothesis 33:* The relationship between demoralization at Time 1 and retaliated incivility to Democrats at Time 2 will be moderated by moral regulation such that the relationship will be strongest for employees with a strong proscriptive moral regulation.

### **Contributions to Literature**

The present study will contribute to the literature in several ways. First, this study will lend empirical support to the theory that incivility may trigger a retaliatory process. By incorporating two time points, this study will begin to address limitations in previous cross-sectional incivility research to determine how uncivil interactions unfold over time. Additionally, it will examine the psychological and emotional processes that lead targets of incivility to retaliate, potentially escalating interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace.

In increasing our knowledge of the characteristics of instigators of incivility, this study will respond to a call for research on the interplay between situational factors and individual factors as antecedents to engaging in uncivil behavior, through examining provocation (i.e., being a target of incivility), moral identity, and political affiliation. Examining these identities will in turn enhance our understanding of interpersonal and intergroup relationships in organizations. Thus, it will help establish the extent to which

moral identity and political affiliation may affect interpersonal relationships in the workplace, and further, how these identities affect emotional appraisals of, and behavioral responses to, incivility.

While we know that political ideology is important in studying and predicting human behavior outside of the workplace (Jost, 2006), we know little about how political affiliation affects interpersonal relationships within a workplace context. Thus, the present study addresses the paucity of research on the role of this variable within the workplace. Furthermore, this study will incorporate moral identity as an additional predictor of emotional appraisals of uncivil treatment and instigation of incivility. While moral identity has been examined within the literature on intergroup conflict (e.g., Reed & Aquino, 2003), it has not yet been studied in relation to uncivil workplace behavior.

Finally, the present study will further increase our knowledge of how both social identity and national events can leave employees vulnerable to uncivil treatment, as well as provoke them to behave uncivilly. Such knowledge will broaden our view of how the larger societal context influences interpersonal relationships within organizations.

## METHOD

### **Participants and Procedure**

Participants for this study included a national sample of employees recruited from an online research participant database (studyresponse.com) which has been demonstrated to be a legitimate and valuable tool for data collection (cf., Judge, Ilies, & Scott, 2006; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006; Reynolds & Ceranic, 2007; Staples & Webster, 2007). Potential participants (N = 4,000) were sent an e-mail letter from the database administrator inviting them to participate in a two-phase online study framed as a “Workplace Relations Survey” one week before the U.S. presidential election held on November 4, 2008. Participants were given one week to complete the survey, and in return for completion, were entered into a drawing for gift cards.

Of those who were sent the e-mail invitation, 575 clicked on the link to the survey (15% response rate); of those who clicked on the link, 517 completed the entire survey for a final response rate of 13% (61% female) at Time 1. Although low, this response rate is similar to other studies examining workplace interactions in the organizational literature (Gettman & Gelfand, 2007; Ragins, Singh, & Cornwell, 2007). Moreover, research shows that internet studies tend to have lower response rates than paper-and-pencil surveys (Kraut et al., 2004; Paolo, Bonaminio, Gibson, Partridge, & Kallail, 2000) and that there are no significant differences between using web-based methods and other methods of data collection (Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, & John, 2004).

Eighty-one percent of the participants identified as White, European, or

European American, with other ethnicities reported as Black, African, or African American (7%), Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander (5%), Hispanic or Hispanic American (3%), Native American or Alaskan Native (1%), and Middle Eastern, Arab, or Arab American (1%). The mean age was 41.24 years ( $SD = 11.30$ ). In terms of highest level of education, 17% had an advanced degree, 30% had a Bachelor's degree, 36% reported having some college, 14% were high school graduates, and <1% reported some high school or less. The mean tenure at the participant's current job was 7.30 years ( $SD = 7.42$ ). Participants were from a variety of geographic locations within the U.S. and worked in various occupations and industries including education, retail, health care, legal services, and finance.

Three weeks after the presidential election, an invitation to participate in the second phase of the study was distributed to participants who completed the Time 1 survey. Four-hundred-thirteen participants completed the second survey, resulting in an 80% response rate for Time 2 (58% female, 76% White). In comparing participants who completed both phases of the survey with those only completed the Time 1 administration, an independent-samples t-test revealed that the only demographic variable on which participants systematically differed was education ( $t(506) = 2.05, p < .05$ ); participants who completed both phases of the survey reported having more formal education than those who only completed the first phase. The final sample of participants was selected based on responses to a one-item measure stating, "What is your political affiliation?" Participants were provided with the options *Democrat*, *Republican*, *Independent*, or *Other*. Only participants who selected *Democrat* ( $n = 205$ )

or *Republican* ( $n = 150$ ) were selected for the present study, making the final sample size 355.

### Measures

The survey included measures of individual well-being, identity, and workplace interactions. Most relevant to the present study were measures assessing workplace incivility to and from Democrats and Republicans, emotional appraisal, political affiliation, and moral identity.

#### *Workplace Incivility*

Experiences of workplace incivility instigated by and against Democrats and Republicans were assessed using four 11-item versions of the Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS; Caza & Cortina, 2007; Cortina et al., 2001). The four scales included identical items with the exception of the political group of the instigator or target. For example, at Time 1 participants were asked how often in the past 60 days a coworker they knew to be a Democrat (Republican) engaged in behaviors such as “put you down or been condescending to you,” “made insulting or disrespectful remarks to you” and “accused you of stupidity or incompetence” using a 0 (*never*) to 3 (*frequently*) response scale. At Time 2, participants were asked how frequently they had engaged in these uncivil behaviors toward employees they knew to be Democrats or Republicans since the presidential election. Thus, four eleven-item subscales were created, one to represent incivility from Democrats at Time 1, one to represent incivility from Republicans at Time 1, one to represent incivility to Democrats at Time 2, and one to represent incivility to Republicans at Time 2 (see Table 1 for scale reliabilities for all study

variables). Cortina et al. (2001) report that the WIS has high reliability ( $\alpha = .97$ ) and sound convergent validity as evidenced by a correlation of  $-.59$  with the Perceptions of Fair Interpersonal Treatment scale (Donovan, Drasgow, & Munson, 1998).

### *Moral Identity*

Moral identity was measured using Aquino and Reed's (2002) 9-item moral identity scale. Participants were instructed to visualize a person who possesses characteristics such as "caring," "friendly," and "honest" and to consider how this person would think and behave. Participants then responded to items on a 5-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Example items from this measure include "It would make me feel good to be a person who has these characteristics" and "Having these characteristics is not really important to me" (reverse scored). This measure has been shown to have convergent validity as demonstrated by full-scale correlations with scales measuring normlessness ( $r = -.23, p < .01$ ), religiosity ( $r = .26, p < .01$ ), sympathy ( $r = .35, p < .001$ ), and negative reciprocity ( $r = -.34, p < .001$ ). This measure has shown divergent validity as evidenced by nonsignificant correlations with measures of self-esteem, locus of control, and social anxiety (Aquino & Reed, 2009).

This scale has two dimensions which will be examined in exploratory analyses in the present study. A sample item assessing the first dimension, internalization, is "I strongly desire to have these characteristics." A sample item from the second dimension, symbolization, is "The types of things I do in my spare time clearly identify me as having these characteristics."



### *Emotional Appraisal*

Emotional appraisals were measured using the anger and demoralization subscales from the Primary Appraisal Scale (Wright & Fitzgerald, 2007). Participants were asked how often a number of adjectives described their feelings at work during the past 60 days and responded on a 5-point scale ranging from *not at all* to *extremely*. The anger subscale contained five items such as “angry” and “disgusted.” The demoralization subscale contained six items such as “offended” and “embarrassed.” Both the both the anger subscale ( $\alpha = .91$ ) and the demoralization subscale ( $\alpha = .93$ ) have been found to have good reliability (Wright & Fitzgerald, 2007). The Time 1 administration of the measure was used in the present study, as these adjectives were most temporally related to experiences of being a target of incivility.

### *Control Variables*

The 8-item Life Orientation Test (Scheier & Carver, 1985) was included to measure *negative affectivity* which could affect participants’ perceptions and responses such that they respond to items in the survey with a pessimistic slant (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). This measure has been found to have acceptable internal consistency ( $\alpha = .76$ ); additionally, it has demonstrated both convergent validity as evidenced by correlations with self-esteem ( $r = .48, p < .01$ ) and hopelessness ( $r = -.47, p < .01$ ) (note that items were keyed such that higher scores indicated less negative affectivity; Podsakoff et al., 2003). In the present study, participants responded on a 7-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* to items such as “I hardly ever expect things to go my way” and “I always look on the bright side of life” (reverse

scored). The Time 1 administration of this measure was used in the present study.

## RESULTS

### **Correlations and Confirmatory Factor Analyses**

Correlations between all study variables are presented in Table 1. Because of the high correlations between the incivility variables, factor analyses were conducted to provide evidence that participants did, in fact, differentially perceive incivility from Democrats and Republicans, as well as differentially instigate incivility toward Democrats and Republicans. A confirmatory factor analysis of all 22 T1 received incivility items was conducted. A one-factor model in which all 22 items loaded on the higher order common latent factor of received incivility ( $\chi^2(209) = 3832.04$ , CFI = .90, SRMR = .03) demonstrated significantly poorer fit than a two-factor model representing the incivility from Democrats and incivility from Republicans constructs ( $\chi^2(208) = 2550.32$ , CFI = .94, SRMR = .02,  $\Delta\chi^2 = 1281.72$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Regarding the T2 retaliated incivility scales, a two-factor model representing retaliated incivility to Democrats and retaliated incivility to Republicans ( $\chi^2(208) = 3962.35$ , CFI = .92, SRMR = .04) exhibited significantly better fit than a one-factor model ( $\chi^2(209) = 4018.38$ , CFI = .92, SRMR = .04,  $\Delta\chi^2 = 56.03$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

In addition, factor analyses were conducted to distinguish the anger and demoralization variables, thereby providing evidence that these constructs represent different emotional appraisals. In confirmatory factor analyses, the two-factor model with the six demoralization items loading on one factor and five anger items loading on the other factor ( $\chi^2(43) = 491.07$ , CFI = .90, SRMR = .08) displayed significantly better fit than a one-factor model ( $\chi^2(44) = 860.31$ , CFI = .82, SRMR = .08,  $\Delta\chi^2 = 369.24$ ,  $p <$

.001). However, one item (“annoyed”) did not load highly on the original demoralization subscale. A two-factor model with this item excluded ( $\chi^2(34) = 254.76$ , CFI = .95, SRMR = .05,  $\Delta\chi^2 = 236.31$ ,  $p < .001$ ) showed superior fit to the original two-factor model; thus, this item was excluded from the demoralization subscale.

### **Received Incivility Predicting Retaliatory Incivility**

The hypotheses proposed in the present study were tested in a moderated mediational framework using a number of analytic strategies. Hypotheses 1 through 9, which predicted direct and moderated effects between received incivility at Time 1 and retaliatory incivility at Time 2, were tested using hierarchical moderated regression. Two separate regression analyses were conducted using either Time 2 incivility to Republicans or Time 2 incivility to Democrats as the dependent variable. In all analyses, negative affectivity was entered as a covariate. In addition, when Time 2 retaliatory incivility to Republicans was the dependent variable, Time 1 incivility to Republicans was controlled; likewise, when Time 2 incivility to Democrats was the dependent variable, Time 1 incivility to Democrats was controlled. Time 1 received incivility, political affiliation, and moral identity were entered as predictors in Step 2 (after the covariates), the 2-way interactions were entered in Step 3, and the 3-way interaction were entered in Step 4. Although no specific hypotheses were made regarding the roles of the separate dimensions of moral identity (internalization and symbolization) exploratory analyses were conducted replacing moral identity with each of the dimensions in all analyses. Results of the analyses predicting T2 retaliatory incivility

**Table 1***Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Scale Reliabilities for All Study Variables*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. T1 Inciv from Reps	1.13	0.38	(.98)												
2. T1 Inciv from Dems	1.14	0.40	.91	(.97)											
3. T2 Inciv to Reps	1.15	0.46	.73	.69	(.97)										
4. T2 Inciv to Dems	1.16	0.47	.72	.70	.96	(.97)									
5. T1 Inciv to Reps <sup>a</sup>	1.11	0.37	.90	.82	.72	.71	(.97)								
6. T1 Inciv to Dems <sup>a</sup>	1.13	0.41	.85	.85	.68	.70	.94	(.96)							
7. T1 Anger	1.98	0.98	.32	.36	.33	.38	.32	.33	(.90)						
8. T1 Demoralization	1.70	0.84	.40	.42	.44	.48	.41	.41	.80	(.91)					
9. Pol Affiliation <sup>b</sup>	0.42	0.50	.03	.10	.05	.11	.06	.10	-.05	-.02	(--)				
10. Moral ID	3.94	0.58	-.30	-.28	-.29	-.30	-.31	-.31	-.20	-.28	.01	(.79)			
11. Internalization	4.39	0.73	-.41	-.37	-.48	-.48	-.46	-.46	-.29	-.42	.00	.79	(.86)		
12. Symbolization	3.38	0.81	.02	.06	.06	.03	.02	.01	-.00	.02	.00	.73	.16	(.80)	
13. Neg Affectivity <sup>a</sup>	3.23	1.20	.12	.15	.12	.13	.13	.16	.32	.30	.02	-.29	-.30	-.14	(.91)

*Note.* Correlations of .12 and above are significant at the  $p < .05$  level or higher. <sup>a</sup>Control variables. <sup>b</sup>0 = Democrat, 1 = Republican. Scale reliabilities (alphas) are along the diagonal.

to Republicans are presented in Table 2, and results of the analyses predicting T2 retaliatory incivility to Democrats are presented in Table 3.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that the more employees were treated uncivilly by Republicans at Time 1, the more they would treat Republicans uncivilly at Time 2. To test the proposition that incivility is an escalating process, a dependent samples t-test was conducted to test the mean of T1 received incivility from Republicans against the mean of T2 retaliatory incivility to Republicans. This analysis was nonsignificant; T1 received incivility ( $M = 1.12$ ,  $SD = .38$ ) was not significantly lower than T2 retaliated incivility ( $M = 1.15$ ,  $SD = .46$ ),  $t(254) = -1.40$ ,  $p > .05$ . However, in regression analysis, T1 incivility from Republicans was a significant predictor of T2 retaliatory incivility to Republicans, controlling for the effect of T1 incivility to Republicans. This indicates that T1 incivility from Republicans accounted for a significant portion of the variance in T2 retaliatory incivility to Republicans after accounting for T1 incivility to Republicans.

A similar pattern emerged when testing Hypothesis 2, which predicted that the more employees were treated uncivilly by Democrats at Time 1, the more they would treat Democrats uncivilly at Time 2. Again, a dependent samples t-test comparing the mean of T1 received incivility from Democrats to the mean of T2 retaliatory incivility to Democrats was nonsignificant; T1 received incivility ( $M = 1.14$ ,  $SD = .40$ ) was not significantly lower than T2 retaliated incivility ( $M = 1.16$ ,  $SD = .47$ ),  $t(254) = -.98$ ,  $p > .05$ . However, in the regression analysis, T1 incivility from Democrats was a significant predictor of T2 retaliatory incivility to Democrats, controlling for the effect of T1 incivility to Democrats. This indicates that T1 incivility from Democrats accounted for a

**Table 2**

*Hierarchical Moderated Regression of Received Incivility from Republicans, Political Affiliation, and Moral Identity Predicting Retaliated Incivility to Republicans*

Predictor	Retaliated Incivility to Republicans			
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
	<i>B</i> ( $\beta$ )	<i>B</i> ( $\beta$ )	<i>B</i> ( $\beta$ )	<i>B</i> ( $\beta$ )
Constant	.14	.39	-.17	-.20
Negative Affectivity	.01 (.02)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)
T1 Retaliated Incivility	.88 (.71)	.55 (.45)	.66 (.54)	.75 (.61)
Political Affiliation <sup>a</sup>		.02 (.02)	.01 (.01)	-.03 (-.03)
T1 Incivility from Republicans		.30 (.27)	.36 (.32)	.33 (.30)
Moral Identity		-.06 (-.07)	.04 (.04)	.03 (.04)
Internalization <sup>b</sup>		-.12 (-.20)	-.07 (-.11)	-.08 (-.13)
Symbolization <sup>b</sup>		.03 (.05)	.07 (.12)	.03 (.05)
Moral ID X Affiliation			-.21 (-.19)	-.20 (-.19)
Internalization X Affiliation <sup>b</sup>			-.22 (-.24)	-.20 (-.21)
Symbolization X Affiliation <sup>b</sup>			-.09 (-.11)	-.07 (-.09)
Moral ID X Incivility			-.18 (-.13)	-.04 (-.03)
Internalization X Incivility <sup>b</sup>			-.38 (-.41)	-.57 (-.62)
Symbolization X Incivility <sup>b</sup>			.03 (.03)	.42 (.38)
Affiliation X Incivility			-.56 (-.33)	-.78 (-.46)
Affiliation X Incivility X Moral ID				-.41 (-.20)
Affiliation X Incivility X Internalization <sup>b</sup>				.54 (.44)
Affiliation X Incivility X Symbolization <sup>b</sup>				-1.30 (-.64)
Total $R^2$	.72	.73	.77	.77
$\Delta R^2$	.51	.02	.05	.01
$\Delta F$	131.95	3.29	10.58	5.97

Note. Betas of +/- .13 or higher are significant at the .05 level or better. <sup>a</sup>0 = Democrat, 1 = Republican.

<sup>b</sup>Separate analyses were conducted for internalization and symbolization. Only direct effects and interactions involving these variables are reported here.

**Table 3**

*Hierarchical Moderated Regression of Received Incivility from Democrats, Political Affiliation, and Moral Identity Predicting Retaliated Incivility to Democrats*

Predictor	Retaliated Incivility to Democrats			
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
	<i>B</i> ( $\beta$ )	<i>B</i> ( $\beta$ )	<i>B</i> ( $\beta$ )	<i>B</i> ( $\beta$ )
Constant	.24	.60	-.21	-.21
Negative Affectivity	.01 (.02)	-.00 (-.01)	-.01 (-.01)	-.01 (-.01)
T1 Retaliated Incivility	.80 (.69)	.53 (.46)	.47 (.41)	.47 (.41)
Political Affiliation <sup>a</sup>		.04 (.04)	.04 (.05)	.03 (.03)
T1 Incivility from Democrats		.26 (.23)	.63 (.57)	.66 (.60)
Moral Identity		-.09 (-.11)	.03 (.04)	.03 (.03)
Internalization <sup>b</sup>		-.14 (-.21)	-.04 (-.06)	-.04 (-.07)
Symbolization <sup>b</sup>		.01 (.01)	.06 (.10)	.04 (.08)
Moral ID X Affiliation			-.26 (-.23)	-.24 (-.21)
Internalization X Affiliation <sup>b</sup>			-.27 (-.29)	-.28 (-.30)
Symbolization X Affiliation <sup>b</sup>			-.11 (-.14)	-.08 (-.09)
Moral ID X Incivility			-.04 (-.02)	.08 (.05)
Internalization X Incivility <sup>b</sup>			-.09 (-.08)	-.24 (-.24)
Symbolization X Incivility <sup>b</sup>			-.01 (-.01)	.29 (.26)
Affiliation X Incivility			-.68 (-.44)	-.74 (-.47)
Affiliation X Incivility X Moral ID				-.22 (-.11)
Affiliation X Incivility X Internalization <sup>b</sup>				.23 (.17)
Affiliation X Incivility X Symbolization <sup>b</sup>				-.70 (-.40)
Total $R^2$	.70	.72	.78	.78
$\Delta R^2$	.49	.02	.10	.00
$\Delta F$	118.90	4.08	20.21	2.36

Note. Betas of +/- .11 or higher are significant at the .05 level or better. <sup>a</sup>0 = Democrat, 1 = Republican.

<sup>b</sup>Separate analyses were conducted for internalization and symbolization. Only direct effects and interactions involving these variables are reported here.

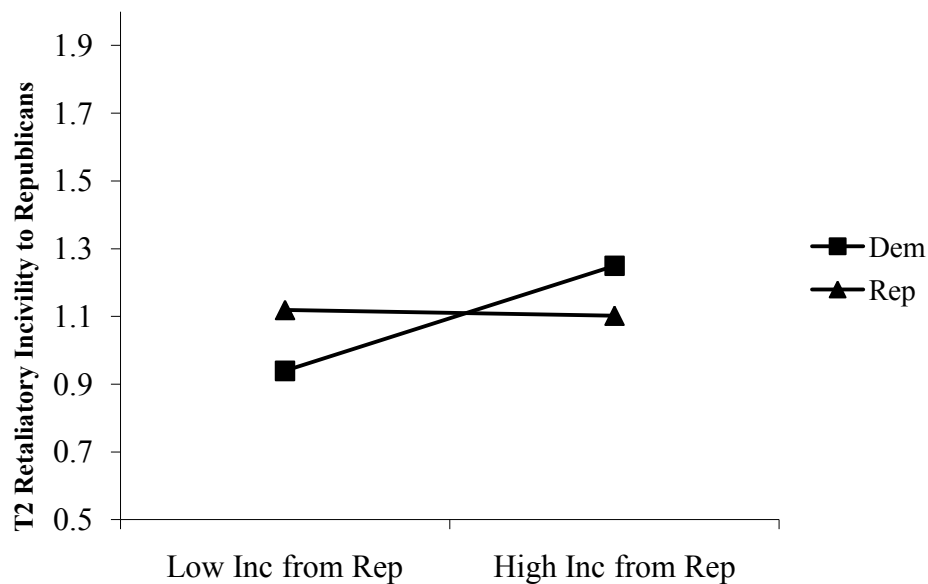


significant portion of the variance in T2 retaliatory incivility to Democrats after accounting for T1 incivility to Democrats.

These analyses were supplemented with dependent samples t-tests comparing the mean of T1 received incivility to the mean of T2 retaliatory incivility, with the data file separated by political affiliation. Received incivility from Democrats was compared to retaliated incivility to Democrats. For Democrats, T1 received incivility from Democrats ( $M = 1.11, SD = .40$ ) was not significantly different from T2 retaliated incivility to Democrats ( $M = 1.12, SD = .45$ ),  $t(143) = .27, p > .05$ . Similarly, for Republicans, the difference between T1 received incivility from Democrats ( $M = 1.17, SD = .41$ ) and T2 retaliated incivility to Democrats ( $M = 1.22, SD = .49$ ) was not significant,  $t(110) = .96, p > .05$ . Next, received incivility from Republicans was compared to retaliated incivility to Republicans. For Democrats, T1 received incivility from Republicans ( $M = 1.13, SD = .43$ ) was not significantly different from T2 retaliated incivility to Republicans ( $M = 1.13, SD = .46$ ),  $t(143) = .23, p > .05$ . However, for Republicans, the difference between T1 received incivility from Republicans ( $M = 1.10, SD = .30$ ) and T2 retaliated incivility to Republicans ( $M = 1.17, SD = .46$ ) was significant,  $t(110) = 2.09, p < .05$ . These analyses suggest that the proposed escalation effect was only present for Republicans retaliating against Republicans.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that the relationship between T1 received incivility from Republicans and T2 retaliatory incivility to Republicans would be moderated by political affiliation such that Democrats would be more likely than Republicans who were treated uncivilly by Republicans at T1 to report treating Republicans uncivilly at T2. As shown

in Table 2, this hypothesis was supported. Examining the slopes for Democrats and Republicans, the slope for Democrats increases significantly from low to high T1 incivility from Republicans ( $b = .35$ ,  $SE = .10$ ,  $\beta = .32$ ,  $t = 3.68$ ,  $p < .001$ ), but the slope for Republicans shows no increase ( $b = -.04$ ,  $SE = .46$ ,  $\beta = -.04$ ,  $t = -.09$ ,  $p > .05$ ). This interaction is depicted in Figure 2.



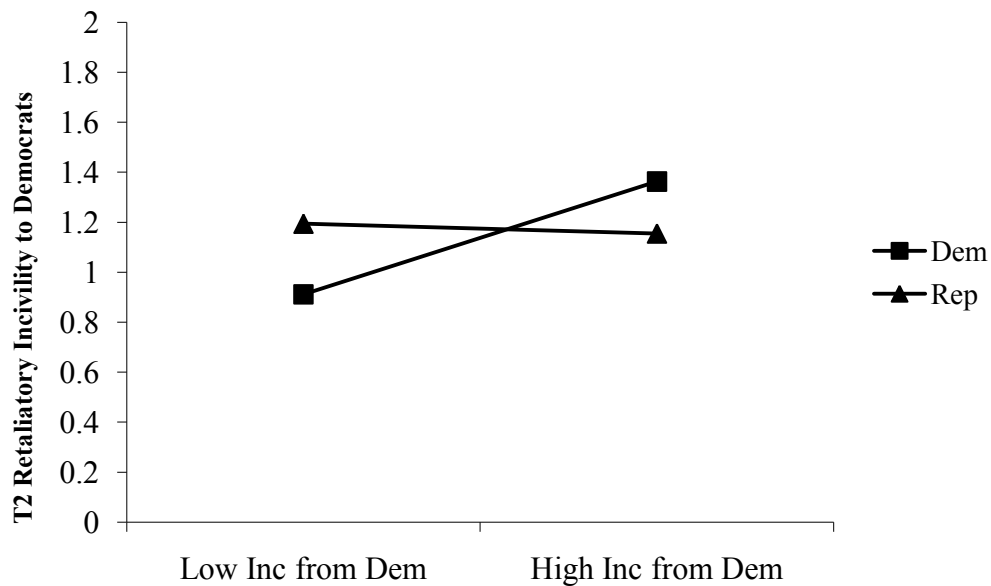
*Figure 2.* Received incivility from Republicans at Time 1 predicting retaliated incivility to Republicans at Time 2 as moderated by political affiliation.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that the relationship between T1 received incivility from Democrats and T2 retaliatory incivility to Democrats would be moderated by political affiliation such that Republicans would be more likely than Democrats who were treated uncivilly by Democrats at T1 to report treating Democrats uncivilly at T2. This

hypothesis was not supported. As presented in Table 3, the interaction between T1 incivility from Democrats and political affiliation was significant. However, in examining the simple slopes, the slope from Democrats increased significantly from low to high incivility from Democrats ( $b = .81, SE = .09, \beta = .71, t = 8.78, p < .001$ ) while the slope for Republicans was nonsignificant ( $b = -.28, SE = .15, \beta = -.27, t = -1.87, p > .05$ ).

Given this apparently counterintuitive result, a follow-up analysis was conducted to compare the means of T2 retaliatory incivility to Democrats for Republicans versus Democrats at low and high levels of T1 received incivility from Democrats. Conditional variables were created representing low and high T1 incivility from Democrats at one standard deviation below and above the mean. An independent samples t-test revealed that at low levels of T1 incivility from Democrats, Republicans ( $M = 1.13, SD = .43$ ) instigated significantly more T2 incivility to Democrats than did Democrats ( $M = 1.03, SD = .16$ ),  $t(106.26) = -2.13, p < .05$ . At high levels of T1 incivility from Democrats, however, there were no mean differences between incivility from Republicans ( $M = 1.55, SD = .59$ ) and Democrats ( $M = 1.69, SD = 1.01$ ),  $t(27.94) = .51, p > .05$ . Thus, while Democrats became significantly more uncivil at T2 as received incivility at T1 increased, Republicans were more retaliatory than Democrats at low levels of received incivility and retaliated about as much as Democrats at high levels of received incivility. This interaction is depicted in Figure 3. By comparison, when investigating mean differences on T2 incivility to Republicans, although at low levels of received incivility, Republicans ( $M = 1.10, SD = .39$ ) reported slightly more retaliated incivility than

Democrats ( $M = 1.03$ ,  $SD = .15$ ), this difference was not statistically significant,  $t(116.30) = -1.61$ ,  $p > .05$ .



*Figure 3.* Received incivility from Democrats at Time 1 predicting retaliated incivility to Democrats at Time 2 as moderated by political affiliation.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that the moderated relationship between received incivility and retaliatory incivility would be stronger for Republicans who were treated uncivilly by Democrats than for Democrats who were treated uncivilly by Republicans. However, as evidenced by the previously described analyses, this hypothesis was not supported because the relationship between received and retaliatory incivility was significant for Democrats, but not for Republicans.

Hypothesis 6 predicted that the relationship between T1 received incivility from

Republicans and T2 retaliatory incivility to Republicans would be moderated by moral identity such that individuals with a weak moral identity who were treated uncivilly by Republicans at T1 would be more likely than employees with a strong moral identity to report treating Republicans uncivilly at T2. As shown in Table 2, this hypothesis was not supported when moral identity was entered as the moderator. However, there was a significant interaction between T1 incivility from Republicans and internalization (a dimension of moral identity). Simple slope analyses revealed that employees with high internalization were not more likely to retaliate ( $b = -.15, SE = .12, \beta = -.13, t = 1.28, p > .05$ ); however, employees with low internalization did report engaging in more retaliatory behavior ( $b = .65, SE = .13, \beta = .53, t = 4.88, p < .001$ ; see Figure 4); these results support Hypothesis 6.

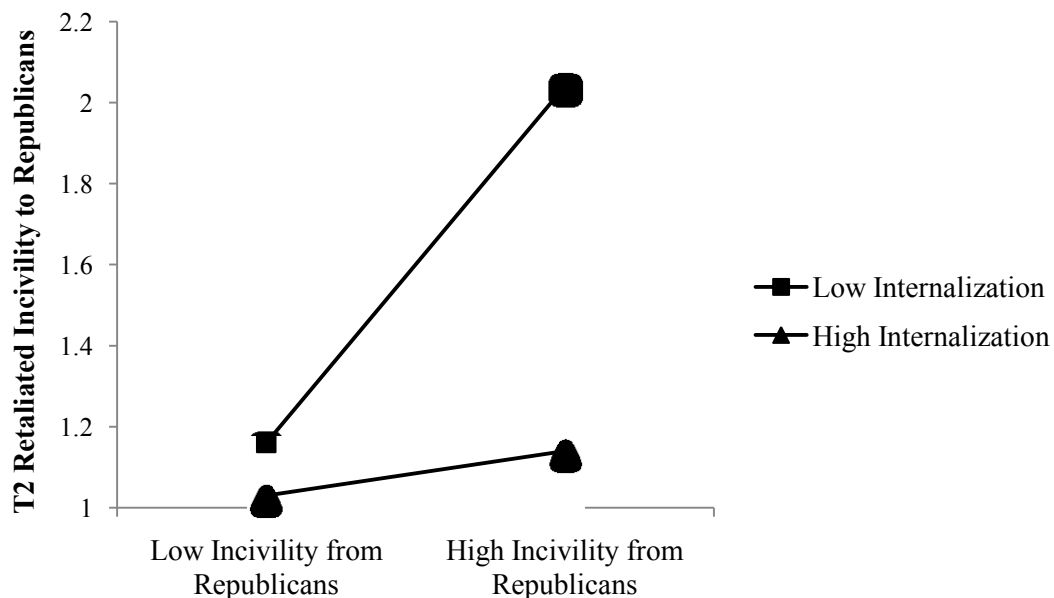
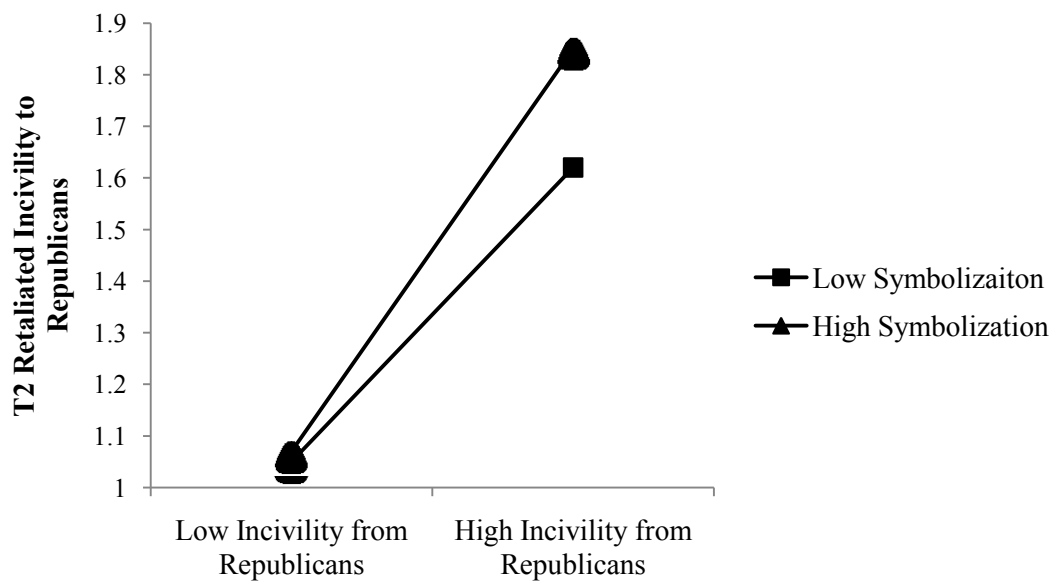


Figure 4. Received incivility from Republicans at Time 1 predicting retaliated incivility to Republicans at Time 2 as moderated by internalization.

Likewise, there was a significant interaction between T1 incivility from Republicans and symbolization (a dimension of moral identity). Simple slope analyses revealed that employees with low symbolization report more retaliatory incivility to Republicans ( $b = .36, SE = .12, \beta = .29, t = 3.03, p < .01$ ). Contrary to prediction, however, the relationship between T1 received incivility from Republicans and T2 retaliatory incivility to Republicans was even stronger for employees with high symbolization ( $b = .40, SE = .12, \beta = .33, t = 3.44, p < .001$ ; see Figure 5).



*Figure 5.* Received incivility from Republicans at Time 1 predicting retaliated incivility to Republicans at Time 2 as moderated by symbolization.

A similar pattern of relationships emerged when testing Hypothesis 7, which stated that the relationship between T1 received incivility from Democrats and T2

retaliatory incivility to Democrats would be moderated by moral identity such that individuals with a weak moral identity who were treated uncivilly by Democrats at T1 would be more likely than individuals with a strong moral identity to report treating Democrats uncivilly at T2. Again, as shown in Table 3, moral identity did not moderate the relationship between received incivility and retaliated incivility. There was a significant interaction between T1 incivility from Democrats and internalization. Simple slope analyses revealed that employees with high internalization were not more likely to retaliate ( $b = .07, SE = .11, \beta = .06, t = .83, p > .05$ ); however, employees with low internalization did report engaging in more retaliatory behavior ( $b = .48, SE = .13, \beta = .41, t = 3.75, p < .001$ ; see Figure 6); these results support Hypothesis 7.

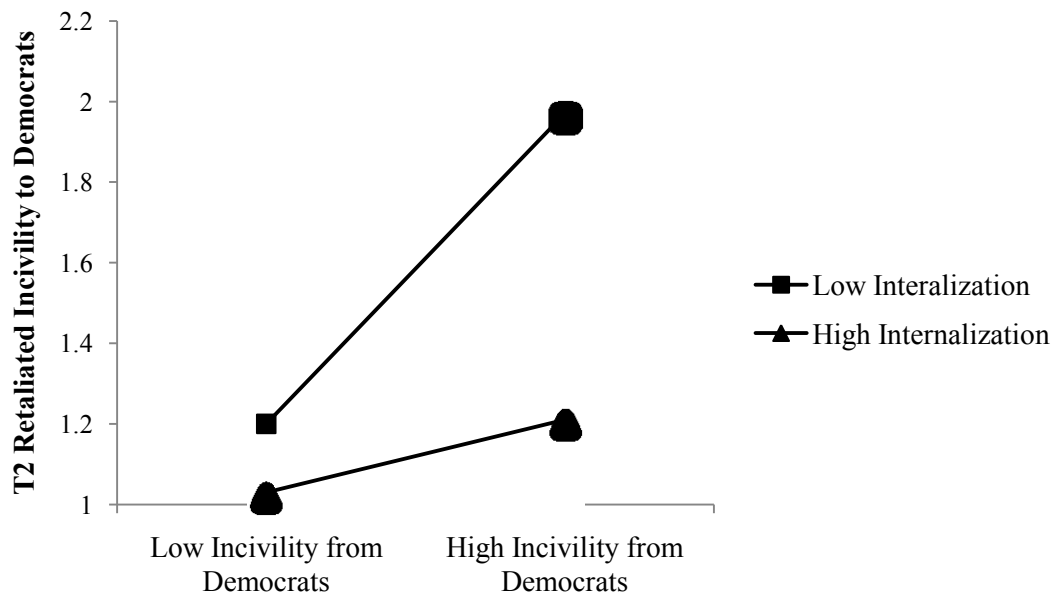


Figure 6. Received incivility from Democrats at Time 1 predicting retaliated incivility to Democrats at Time 2 as moderated by internalization.

There was also a significant interaction between T1 incivility from Democrats and symbolization on retaliation. Simple slope analyses revealed that employees with low symbolization reported more retaliatory incivility to Democrats ( $b = .23$ ,  $SE = .12$ ,  $\beta = .20$ ,  $t = 2.00$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Contrary to expectations, the relationship between T1 received incivility from Republicans and T2 retaliatory incivility to Republicans was slightly stronger for employees with high symbolization ( $b = .23$ ,  $SE = .11$ ,  $\beta = .20$ ,  $t = 2.14$ ,  $p < .05$ ; see Figure 7).

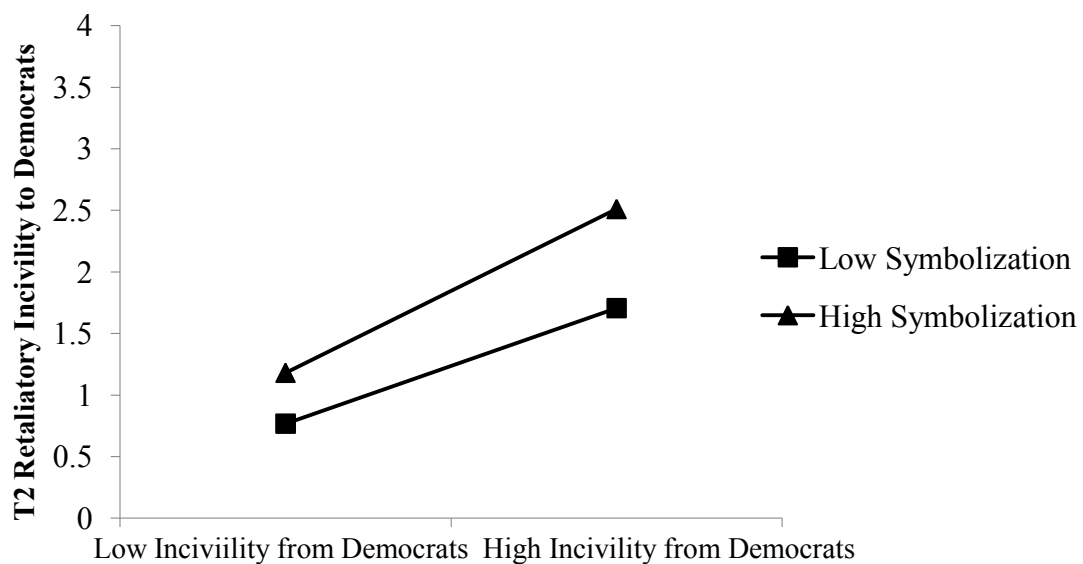
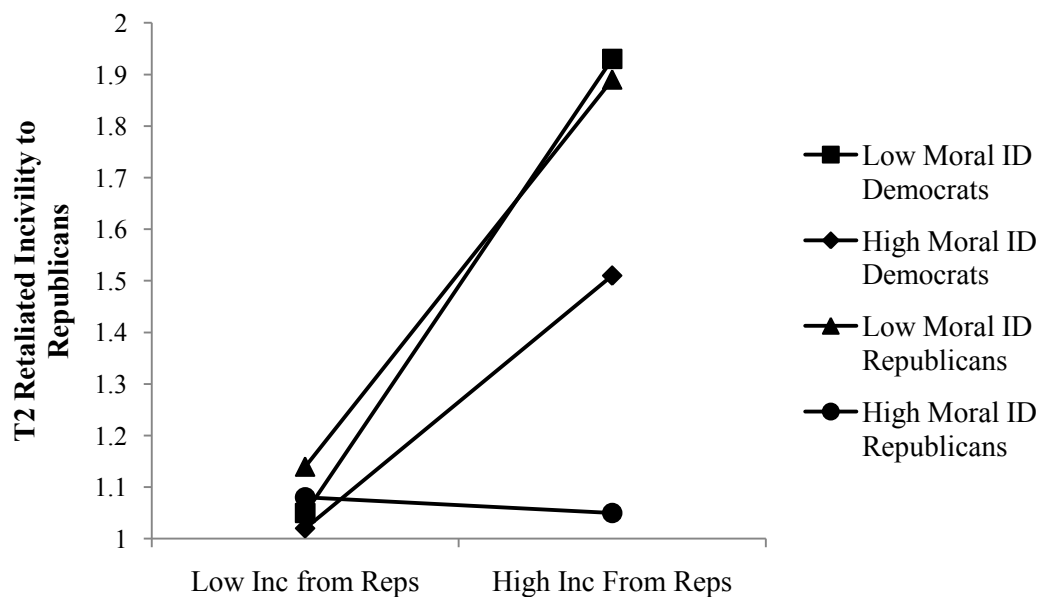


Figure 7. Received incivility from Democrats at Time 1 predicting retaliated incivility to Democrats at Time 2 as moderated by symbolization.

Hypothesis 8 predicted a three-way interaction between moral identity, political affiliation, and T1 received incivility from Republicans on T2 retaliatory incivility to



Republicans such that Democrats with a *weak* moral identity with high levels of T1 incivility from Republicans would be most likely to retaliate toward Republicans at Time 2. As shown in Table 2, this interaction was significant; see Figure 8 for the graphic depiction of this interaction. Supporting Hypothesis 8, simple slope analyses revealed that the group who engaged in the most retaliatory behavior with high levels of incivility from Republicans at T1 was low moral identity Democrats ( $b = .45, SE = .12, \beta = .42, t = 3.85, p < .001$ ). This relationship was also significant for high moral identity Democrats, though the effect was not as strong ( $b = .29, SE = .10, \beta = .28, t = 2.83, p < .01$ ). The moderated relationship was nonsignificant for both low moral identity Republicans ( $b = .62, SE = .69, \beta = .40, t = .91, p > .05$ ) and high moral identity Republicans ( $b = .12, SE = .82, \beta = .08, t = .15, p > .05$ ).



*Figure 8.* Received incivility from Republicans at Time 1 predicting retaliated incivility to Republicans at Time 2 as moderated by moral identity and political affiliation.

A similar pattern of relationships was found when moral identity was replaced with internalization in the model. The only significant relationship was found for low internalization Democrats ( $b = .75, SE = .13, \beta = .69, t = 5.86, p < .001$ ). Neither high internalization Democrats ( $b = .08, SE = .11, \beta = .08, t = .76, p > .05$ ), nor low internalization Republicans ( $b = .52, SE = .63, \beta = .34, t = .83, p > .05$ ), nor high internalization Republicans ( $b = .31, SE = .73, \beta = .20, t = .42, p > .05$ ) reported engaging in more retaliatory incivility following high T1 received incivility from Republicans (see Figure 9).

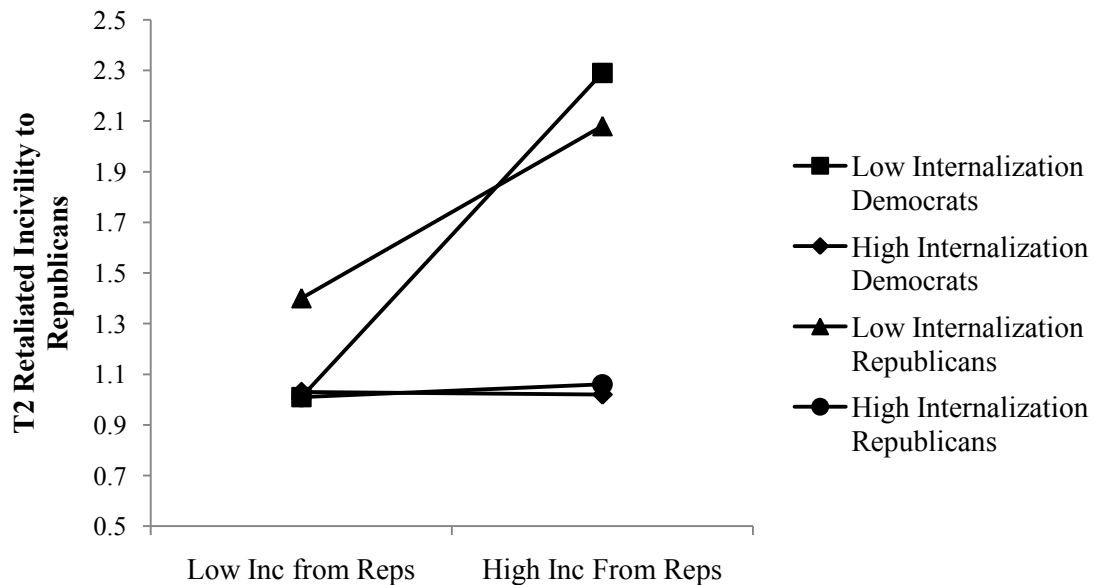


Figure 9. Received incivility from Republicans at Time 1 predicting retaliated incivility to Republicans at Time 2 as moderated by internalization and political affiliation.

An unexpected significant relationship was again found when testing the

interaction between political affiliation, symbolization, and T1 received incivility from Republicans. The strongest relationship was found for high symbolization Democrats ( $b = .39, SE = .10, \beta = .36, t = 3.90, p < .001$ ) with a weaker significant relationship for low symbolization Democrats ( $b = .31, SE = .11, \beta = .28, t = 2.91, p < .01$ ). Significant relationships were not found for either low symbolization Republicans ( $b = 1.03, SE = .68, \beta = .66, t = 1.50, p > .05$ ) or high symbolization Republicans ( $b = .25, SE = .88, \beta = .16, t = .28, p > .05$ ; see Figure 10).

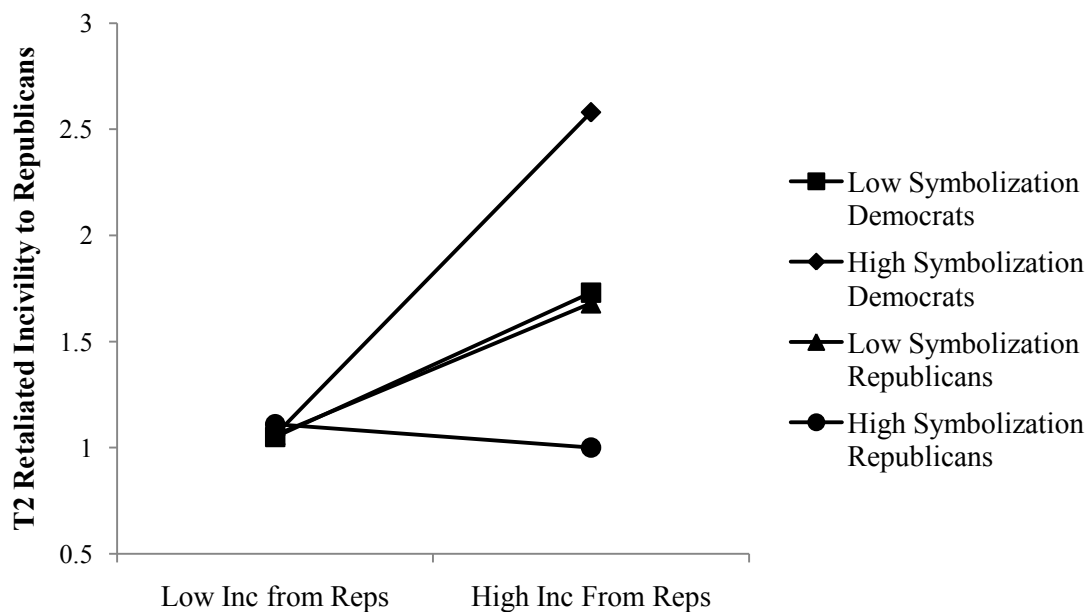


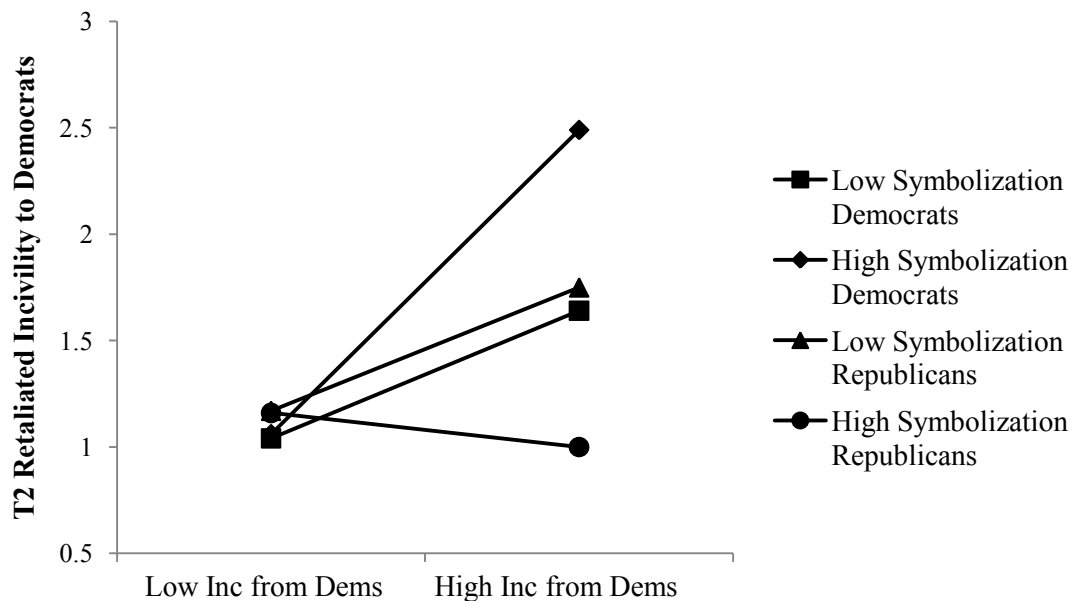
Figure 10. Received incivility from Republicans at Time 1 predicting retaliated incivility to Republicans at Time 2 as moderated by symbolization and political affiliation.

Hypothesis 9 predicted that moral identity and political affiliation would moderate the relationship between T1 received incivility from Democrats and T2

retaliatory incivility to Democrats such that Republican employees with a *strong* moral identity who were treated uncivilly by Democrats at Time 1 would be most likely to retaliate towards Democrats at Time 2. As shown in Table 3, this relationship was nonsignificant. The three-way interaction between political affiliation, internalization, and T1 received incivility from Democrats was also nonsignificant. The interaction between political affiliation, symbolization, and T1 received incivility from Democrats was significant; as displayed in Figure 11, this relationship was not of the expected nature. The strongest relationship was found for high symbolization Democrats ( $b = .92$ ,  $SE = .11$ ,  $\beta = .82$ ,  $t = 8.26$ ,  $p < .001$ ), followed closely by low symbolization Democrats ( $b = .80$ ,  $SE = .12$ ,  $\beta = .71$ ,  $t = 6.56$ ,  $p > .001$ ). The relationship was nonsignificant for both low symbolization Republicans ( $b = -.02$ ,  $SE = .22$ ,  $\beta = -.02$ ,  $t = -.10$ ,  $p > .05$ ) and high symbolization Republicans ( $b = -.27$ ,  $SE = .18$ ,  $\beta = -.23$ ,  $t = -1.55$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

### **Mediation Analyses**

Hypothesis 10 stated that T1 anger would mediate the relationship between being a target of incivility at T1 and retaliating at T2. To establish this relationship, two simple mediation analyses were conducted with T1 anger regressed on T1 received incivility from either Republicans or Democrats in the first analysis and T2 retaliated incivility to either Republicans or Democrats regressed on T1 anger in the second analysis; a Sobel test was then conducted to determine the magnitude of the indirect relationship between received and retaliated incivility through anger. An indirect effect describes a relationship between an independent variable ( $X$ ) and a dependent variable ( $Y$ ), accounting for the presence of a mediating variable ( $M$ ) (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Thus,



*Figure 11.* Received incivility from Democrats at Time 1 predicting retaliated incivility to Democrats at Time 2 as moderated by symbolization and political affiliation.

$M$  serves to explain the relationship between  $X$  and  $Y$ , and when applied to psychological research,  $M$  typically represents the psychological process that intervenes between the occurrence of  $X$  and the occurrence of  $Y$ . Relationships between variables are said to be fully mediated when a significant relationship between  $X$  and  $Y$  becomes nonsignificant when controlling for the effect of  $X$  on  $M$  and the effect of  $M$  on  $Y$ ; relationships are said to be partially mediated when the introduction of  $M$  into the model does not cause the  $X$ - $Y$  relationship to become insignificant, but does significantly weaken the relationship.

A significant indirect effect was found with T1 received incivility from Republicans as the independent variable and T2 retaliated incivility to Republicans as the dependent variable (Sobel  $t = 2.27, p < .05$ ). Likewise, a significant indirect effect

was also found with T1 received incivility from Democrats as the independent variable and T2 retaliated incivility to Democrats as the dependent variable (Sobel  $t = 3.45, p < .001$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 10 was supported.

Similarly, Hypothesis 11 stated that T1 demoralization would mediate the relationship between being a target of incivility at T1 and retaliating at T2. Using the same procedure as described for Hypothesis 10, a significant indirect effect was found with T1 received incivility from Republicans as the independent variable and T2 retaliated incivility to Republicans as the dependent variable (Sobel  $t = 3.58, p < .001$ ). A significant indirect effect was also found with T1 received incivility from Democrats as the independent variable and T2 retaliated incivility to Democrats as the dependent variable (Sobel  $t = 4.25, p < .001$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 11 was supported.

### **Moderated Mediation Analyses**

The remainder of the hypotheses involve examining each of the individual paths in the mediation model at various levels of moral identity, moral regulation, and political affiliation; thus, two moderated mediation models were tested in a series of regression analyses. As described by Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes (2007), moderated mediation is established by testing for *conditional indirect effects*. An indirect effect becomes conditional when the nature of any of the  $X$ - $M$ - $Y$  relationships (described above) is changed due to the influence of a moderator variable (Preacher et al., 2007). Unlike mediators, moderators are not part of a causal chain of relationships, but are exogenous variables which alter (e.g., strengthen, weaken, or change the direction of) the relationship between independent and dependent variables, depending on the level (e.g.,

low versus high) of the moderator (Baron & Kenny, 1986). When a moderator is introduced into a mediational model, the moderator allows the specification of conditions under which a mediating variable will function, as well as how mediated relationships will change under different conditions.

Four separate moderated mediational models were tested in the present study. In Model 1 and Model 3,  $X$  was T1 received incivility from Republicans,  $Y$  was T2 retaliated incivility to Republicans, and T1 anger (Model 1) and T1 demoralization (Model 3) served as mediators. Additionally, political affiliation and moral identity, as well as their interactions, were included as moderators between the  $X$  to  $M$  paths as well as the  $M$  to  $Y$  paths. In Models 2 and 4,  $X$  was T1 received incivility from Democrats, and  $Y$  was T2 retaliated incivility to Democrats, with T1 anger (Model 2) and T1 demoralization (Model 4) serving as mediators. See Figure 1 for the theoretical depiction of the proposed moderated mediational relationships. Additionally, the results of these analyses are presented in Tables 4 and 5.

#### *Predicting Emotional Appraisals from Received Incivility*

Hypothesis 12 predicted that the relationship between T1 received incivility from Republicans and T1 anger would be moderated by political affiliation such that Democrats who were treated uncivilly by Republicans would experience more anger than Republicans. As seen in Table 4, the interaction between received incivility and political affiliation was not significant, failing to support this hypothesis. Hypothesis 13 stated that the relationship between T1 received incivility from Democrats and T1 anger would be moderated by political affiliation such that Republicans who were treated

uncivilly by Democrats would experience more anger than Democrats. This hypothesis was also not supported, as evidenced by the nonsignificant interaction between T1 received incivility from Democrats and political affiliation (see Table 5).

Hypothesis 14 predicted that the relationship between T1 received incivility from Republicans and T1 demoralization would be moderated by political affiliation such that Democrats who were treated uncivilly by Republicans would experience more demoralization than Republicans. As shown in Table 4, there was not a significant interaction between received incivility and political affiliation, failing to support this hypothesis. Hypothesis 15 stated that the relationship between T1 received incivility from Democrats and T1 demoralization at would be moderated by political affiliation such that Republicans who were treated uncivilly by Democrats would experience more demoralization than Democrats. This interaction was also nonsignificant, failing to support Hypothesis 15 (see Table 5).

Hypothesis 16 predicted that for Republicans, the relationship between T1 received incivility from Democrats and anger would be stronger than the relationship between T1 received incivility from Democrats and demoralization. Hypothesis 17 stated that for Democrats, the relationship between T1 received incivility from Republicans and demoralization would be stronger than the relationship between T1 incivility from Republicans and anger. These hypotheses were tested using MPlus structural equation modeling (SEM) software, as they required the simultaneous examination of the dependent variables. A multiple group analysis between Republicans and Democrats was conducted; incivility from Republicans and incivility from Democrats were entered as



**Table 4**

*Moderated Mediation of Received Incivility from Republicans Predicting Retaliated Incivility to Republicans as Mediated by Emotional Appraisal*

Predictor	Anger as Mediator		Demoralization as Mediator	
	Step 1: Anger	Step 2: Retaliation	Step 1: Demoralization	Step 2: Retaliation
	<i>B</i> (SE)	<i>B</i> (SE)	<i>B</i> (SE)	<i>B</i> (SE)
Constant	1.03 (.59)	-.18 (.24)	.75 (.50)	-.22 (.23)
Negative Affectivity	.23 (.04)***	-.01 (.02)	.15 (.04)***	-.01 (.02)
T1 Retaliated Incivility	--	.73 (.13)***	--	.71 (.13)***
Political Affil <sup>a</sup>	-.07 (.10)	-.02 (.04)	.00 (.09)	-.03 (.04)
T1 Incivility from Republicans	.80 (.16)***	.32 (.11)**	.79 (.14)***	.29 (.10)**
Moral Identity	-.17 (.13)	.03 (.05)	-.14 (.11)	.04 (.05)
Internal	-.17 (.10)	-.07 (.04)*	-.23 (.08)**	-.06 (.04)
Symbol	-.00 (.08)	.03 (.02)	.07 (.07)	.02 (.02)
Moral ID X Affil	.12 (.18)	-.20 (.07)**	-.13 (.15)	-.17 (.07)*
Internal X Affil	.01 (.15)	-.20 (.06)***	-.19 (.13)	-.20 (.06)**
Symbol X Affil	.07 (.12)	-.08 (.03)**	-.09 (.10)	-.04 (.02)*
Moral ID X Incivility	.27 (.23)	-.04 (.10)	.29 (.20)	-.09 (.10)
Internal X Incivility	-.11 (.19)	-.56 (.10)***	-.14 (.16)	-.57 (.10)***
Symbol X Incivility	.26 (.14)	.49 (.04)***	.30 (.12)*	.46 (.03)***
Affil X Incivility	-.02 (.33)	-.80 (.14)***	.08 (.28)	-.82 (.14)***
Affil X Incivility X Moral ID	.25 (.41)	-.45 (.17)**	-.04 (.35)	-.40 (.17)*
Affil X Incivility X Internal	.63 (.41)	.50 (.17)**	.52 (.35)	.49 (.17)**
Affil X Incivility X Symbol	-.02 (.26)	-1.45 (.06)***	-.28 (.22)	-1.61 (.06)***
Emotion		.03 (.03)		.05 (.03)**
Emotion X Affil		.04 (.04)		.06 (.05)
Emotion X Moral ID		-.03 (.06)		.01 (.04)
Emotion X Internal		-.03 (.04)		.00 (.03)
Emotion X Symbol		-.11 (.02)***		-.08 (.01)***
Emotion X Affil X Moral ID		.05 (.07)		.00 (.07)
Emotion X Affil X Internal		.06 (.05)		.04 (.06)
Emotion X Affil X Symbol		.18 (.03)***		.30 (.03)***

Note. \*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001. <sup>a</sup>0 = Democrat, 1 = Republican.

**Table 5**  
*Moderated Mediation of Received Incivility from Democrats Predicting Retaliated Incivility to Democrats as Mediated by Emotional Appraisal*

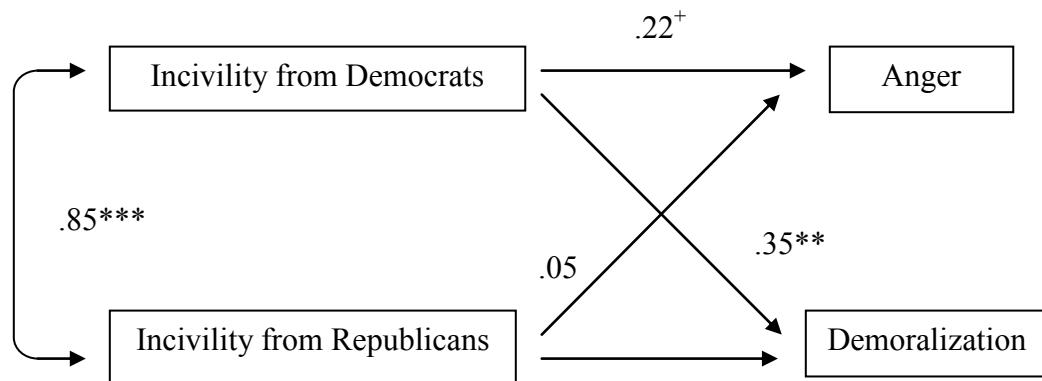
Predictor	Anger as Mediator		Demoralization as Mediator	
	Step 1: Anger <i>B</i> (SE)	Step 2: Retaliation <i>B</i> (SE)	Step 1: Demoralization <i>B</i> (SE)	Step 2: Retaliation <i>B</i> (SE)
Constant	.99 (.57)	-.16 (.23)	.55 (.49)	-.21 (.22)
Negative Affectivity	.22 (.04)***	-.03 (.02)	.13 (.04)***	-.02 (.02)
T1 Retaliated Incivility	--	.43 (.10)***	--	.43 (.10)***
Political Affil <sup>a</sup>	-.15 (.10)	.04 (.04)	-.10 (.08)	.03 (.04)
T1 Incivility from Democrats	.88 (.17)***	.66 (.10)***	.98 (.15)***	.61 (.10)***
Moral Identity				
Internal	-.16 (.10)	-.04 (.04)	-.19 (.08)*	-.03 (.04)
Symbol	-.02 (.08)	.04 (.03)	.06 (.07)	.04 (.03)
Moral ID X Affil	.02(.17)	-.20 (.07)**	-.22 (.15)*	-.16 (.07)*
Internal X Affil	-.07 (.15)	-.24 (.06)***	-.28 (.12)*	-.24 (.06)***
Symbol X Affil	.05 (.12)	-.08 (.04)	-.09 (.10)	-.07 (.04)
Moral ID X Incivility				
Internal X Incivility	-.20 (.25)	-.25 (.12)*	-.06 (.21)	-.22 (.12)
Symbol X Incivility	.31 (.16)*	.32 (.06)***	.32 (.14)*	.27 (.06)***
Affil X Incivility	-.03 (.25)	-.84 (.10)***	-.35 (.21)	-.80 (.10)***
Affil X Incivility X Moral ID				
Affil X Incivility X Internal	.69 (.32)*	.17 (.12)	.15 (.27)	.19 (.12)
Affil X Incivility X Symbol	-.01 (.24)	-.80 (.09)***	-.38 (.21)	-.64 (.09)***
Emotion		.03 (.03)		.07 (.03)*
Emotion X Affil		.12 (.04)**		.11 (.05)*
Emotion X Moral ID		-.02 (.05)		.00 (.04)
Emotion X Internal		-.01 (.04)		-.02 (.03)
Emotion X Symbol		-.06 (.04)		-.00 (.03)
Emotion X Affil X Moral ID		-.03 (.07)		-.08 (.06)
Emotion X Affil X Internal		-.02 (.05)		.02 (.06)
Emotion X Affil X Symbol		.07 (.04)		-.04 (.04)

Note. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ . <sup>a</sup>0 = Democrat, 1 = Republican.

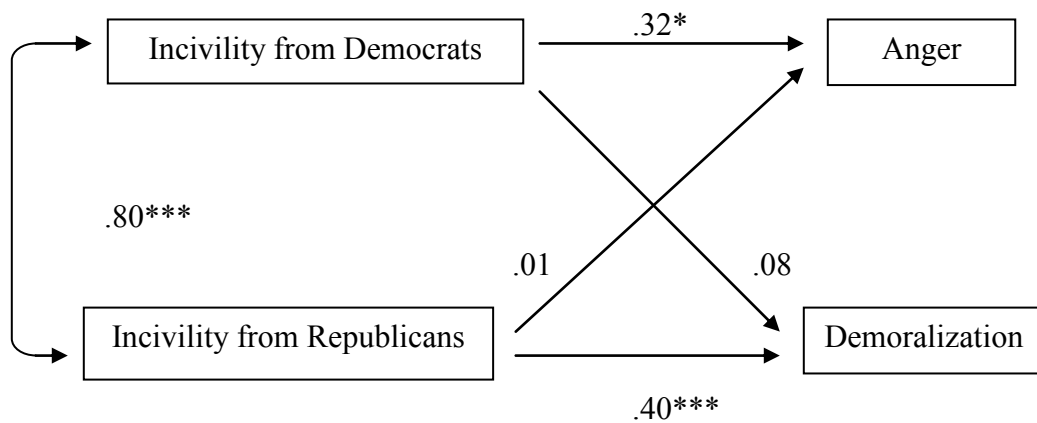
exogenous variables, and anger and demoralization were entered as endogenous variables being predicted by both incivility variables. As expected, for Republicans, the path from incivility from Democrats to anger ( $b = .32, SE = .13, p < .05$ ) was significant and stronger than the path from incivility from Democrats and demoralization ( $b = .08, SE = .12, p > .05$ ). However, the strongest relationship for Republicans was incivility from Republicans predicting demoralization ( $b = .40, SE = .12, p < .001$ ). For Democrats, the only significant path was between incivility from Democrats and demoralization ( $b = .35, SE = .12, p < .01$ ); therefore, while there was a stronger effect on demoralization than on anger as expected, this result does not support Hypothesis 17. This path model is presented in Figure 12.

Hypothesis 18 stated that the relationship between T1 received incivility from Republicans and T1 anger would be moderated by moral identity such that high moral identity employees who were treated uncivilly by Republicans would experience more anger than low moral identity employees. As shown in Table 4, each of the interactions between moral identity, internalization, and symbolization and received incivility were nonsignificant, failing to support this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 19 predicted that the relationship between T1 received incivility from Democrats and T1 anger would be moderated by moral identity such that high moral identity employees who are treated uncivilly by Democrats will experience more anger than low moral identity employees. As shown in Table 5, there was not a significant interaction between either moral identity and received incivility or internalization and received incivility from Democrats. However, there was a significant interaction



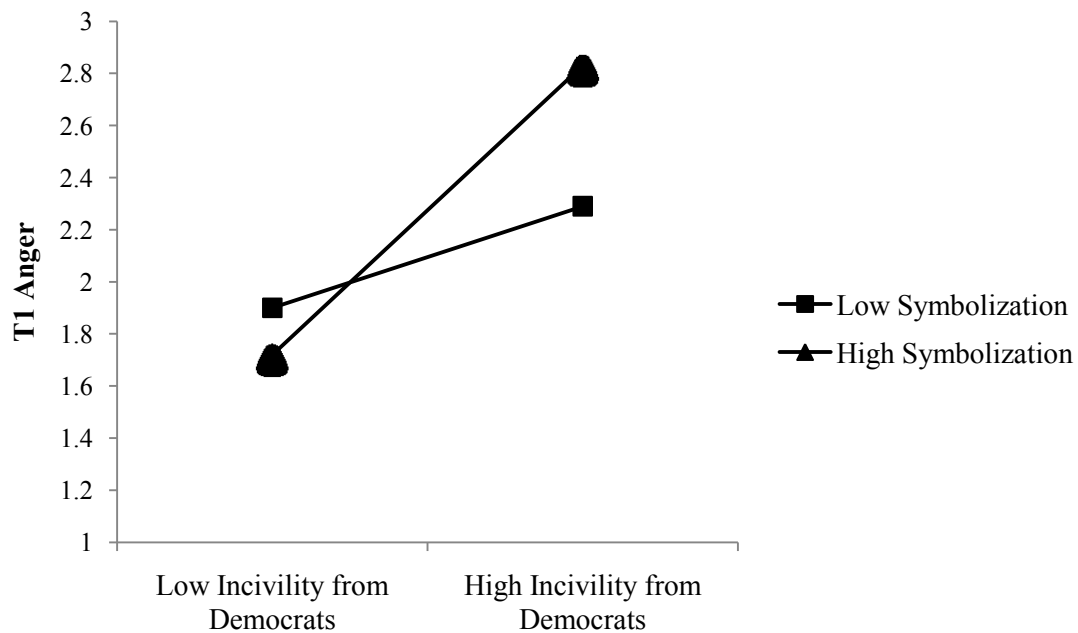
### Democrats



### Republicans

Figure 12. Multiple group analysis of received incivility from Democrats and Republicans at Time 1 predicting anger and demoralization at Time 1. <sup>+</sup> $p = .08$ , \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

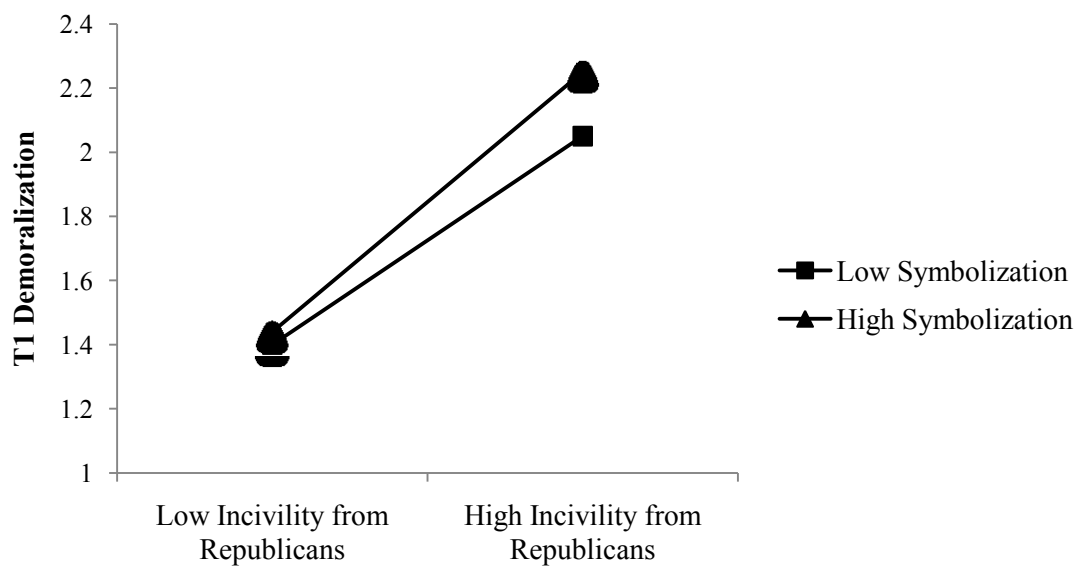
between symbolization and received incivility. Examining the simple slopes, high symbolization employees ( $b = .91, SE = .13, \beta = .40, t = 7.10, p < .001$ ) experienced greater increases in anger with greater incivility from Democrats than did low symbolization employees ( $b = .41, SE = .17, \beta = .18, t = 2.40, p < .05$ ; see Figure 13).



*Figure 13.* Received incivility from Democrats at Time 1 predicting anger at Time 1 as moderated by symbolization.

Hypothesis 20 predicted that the relationship between T1 received incivility from Republicans and T1 demoralization would be moderated by moral identity such that high moral identity employees who were treated uncivilly by Republicans would experience more demoralization than low moral identity employees. As presented in Table 4, there was not a significant interaction between moral identity or internalization and received

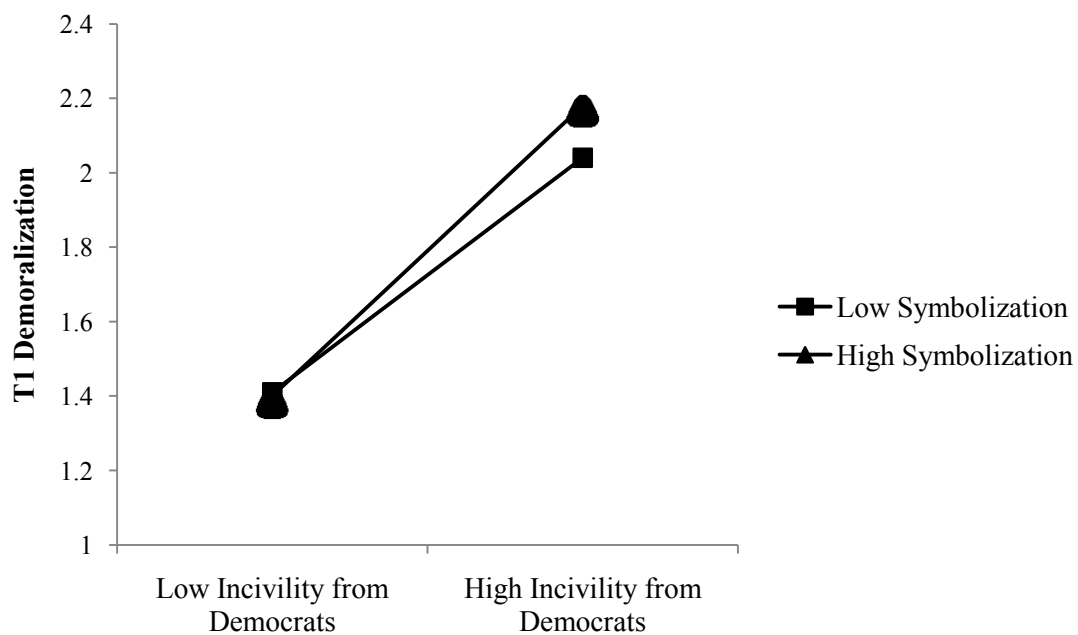
incivility. There was, however, a significant interaction between symbolization and incivility from Republicans on demoralization. As predicted, high symbolization employees had a stronger relationship between received incivility and demoralization ( $b = .93$ ,  $SE = .12$ ,  $\beta = .45$ ,  $t = 8.08$ ,  $p < .001$ ) than low symbolization employees ( $b = .56$ ,  $SE = .15$ ,  $\beta = .27$ ,  $t = 3.84$ ,  $p < .001$ ; see Figure 14).



*Figure 14.* Received incivility from Republicans at Time 1 predicting demoralization at Time 1 as moderated by symbolization.

Hypothesis 21 predicted that the relationship between T1 received incivility from Democrats and T1 demoralization would be moderated by moral identity such that high moral identity employees who were treated uncivilly by Democrats would experience more demoralization than low moral identity employees. Similar to the results for the previous hypothesis, there was not a significant interaction between moral identity and

received incivility or internalization and incivility (see Table 5). However, symbolization did significantly moderate the relationship between received incivility from Democrats and demoralization. There was again a stronger relationship for high symbolization employees ( $b = .89, SE = .11, \beta = .45, t = 8.08, p < .001$ ) than for low symbolization employees ( $b = .62, SE = .15, \beta = .31, t = 4.23, p < .001$ ; see Figure 15).



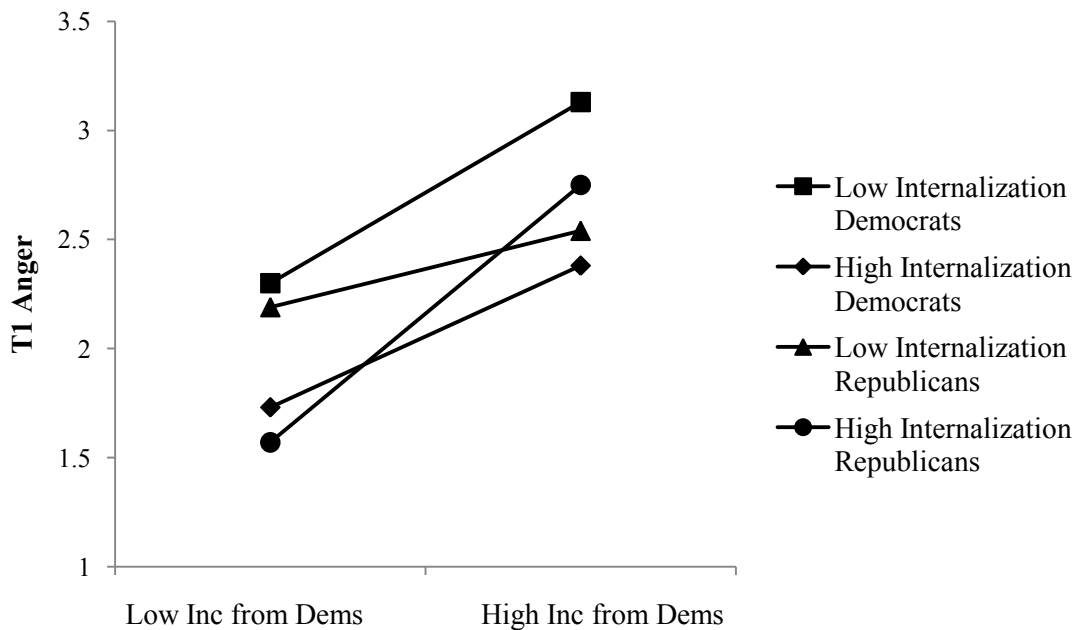
*Figure 15.* Received incivility from Democrats at Time 1 predicting demoralization at Time 1 as moderated by symbolization.

Hypothesis 22 stated that the relationship between T1 received incivility from Republicans and T1 anger would be moderated by the interaction between political affiliation and moral identity such that Democrats with a strong moral identity would experience the most anger. As shown in Table 4, received incivility and political

affiliation did not significant interact with either moral identity, internalization, or symbolization, failing to support this hypothesis. Similarly, Hypothesis 23 stated that the relationship between T1 received incivility from Democrats and T1 anger would be moderated by the interaction between political affiliation and moral identity such that Republicans with a strong moral identity would experience the most anger. As shown in Table 5, this hypothesis was not supported for moral identity or symbolization, but there was a significant three-way interaction between received incivility, political affiliation, and internalization. As predicted, high internalization Republicans reported the greatest increase in anger with higher levels of incivility from Democrats ( $b = 1.25$ ,  $SE = .28$ ,  $\beta = .59$ ,  $t = 4.39$ ,  $p < .001$ ) on anger. Significant increases in anger were also experienced by low internalization Republicans ( $b = .54$ ,  $SE = .17$ ,  $\beta = .26$ ,  $t = 3.13$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and low internalization Democrats ( $b = .73$ ,  $SE = .17$ ,  $\beta = .29$ ,  $t = 5.14$ ,  $p < .001$ ), but not by high internalization Democrats ( $b = .47$ ,  $SE = .44$ ,  $\beta = .19$ ,  $t = 1.07$ ,  $p > .05$ ; see Figure 16).

Hypothesis 24 stated that the relationship between T1 received incivility from Republicans and T1 demoralization would be moderated by the interaction between political affiliation and moral identity such that Democrats with a strong moral identity would experience the most demoralization. As shown in Table 4, there were no significant interactions between received incivility and either moral identity, internalization, or symbolization, failing to support Hypothesis 24. Similarly, Hypothesis 25 predicted that the relationship between T1 received incivility from Democrats and T1





*Figure 16.* Received incivility from Democrats at Time 1 predicting anger at Time 1 as moderated by political affiliation and internalization.

demoralization would be moderated by the interaction between political affiliation and moral identity such that Republicans with a strong moral identity will experience the most demoralization. Again, this hypothesis was not supported when examining moral identity, internalization, or symbolization (see Table 5).

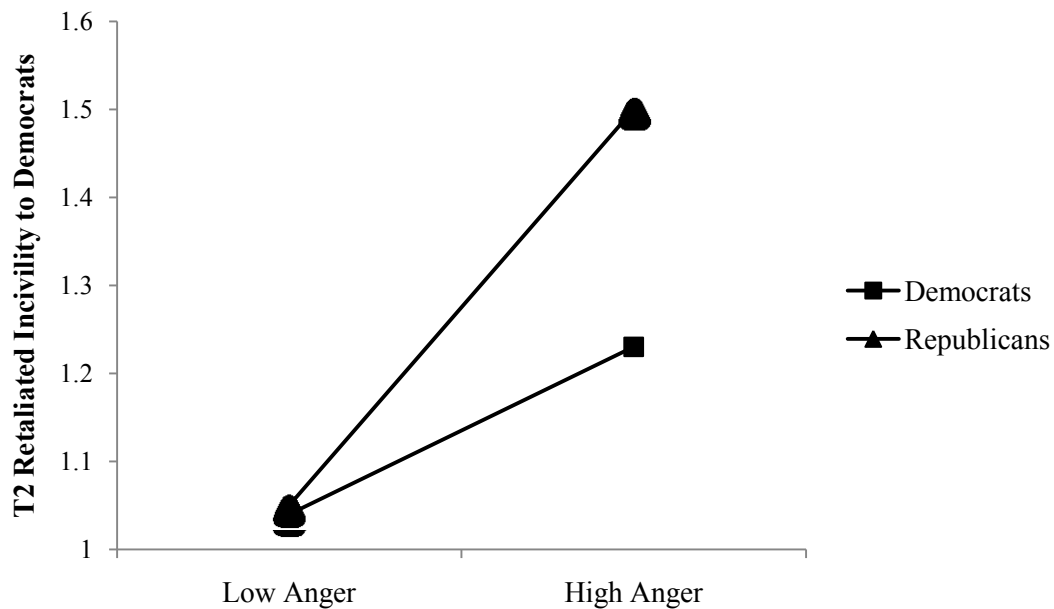
#### *Predicting Retaliated Incivility from Emotional Appraisals*

The remaining analyses examined the relationships between T1 emotional appraisals (anger and demoralization) and T2 retaliatory incivility. Hypothesis 26 predicted that the relationship between T1 anger and T2 retaliated incivility to Republicans would not be moderated by political affiliation; Democrats who experienced high levels of anger were not expected to retaliate against Republicans more

frequently than Republicans with high levels of anger. As shown in Table 4, there was not a significant interaction between anger and political affiliation; however, there was not a direct effect of anger on retaliation, so it may be concluded that this hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis 27 stated that the relationship between T1 anger and retaliated incivility to Democrats would be moderated by political affiliation such that Republicans who experienced high levels of anger would most frequently retaliate against Democrats at T2. There was a significant interaction between anger and political affiliation (see Table 5). Supporting this hypothesis, the relationship between anger and retaliatory incivility to Democrats was significant for Republicans ( $b = .14$ ,  $SE = .04$ ,  $\beta = .26$ ,  $t = 3.15$ ,  $p < .01$ ) but not for Democrats ( $b = .05$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $\beta = .09$ ,  $t = 1.61$ ,  $p > .05$ ; see Figure 17).

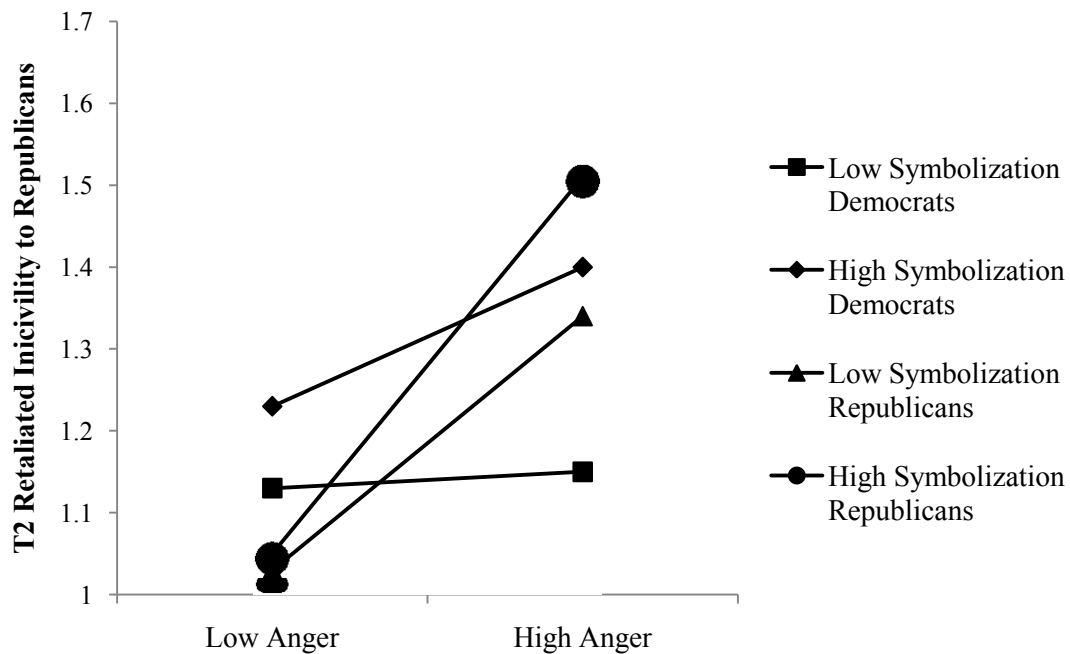
Hypothesis 28 predicted that the relationship between T1 anger and T2 retaliated incivility to Republicans would be moderated by the interaction between political affiliation and moral identity such that Democrats with a weak moral identity who experienced high levels of anger would most frequently retaliate against Republicans. As shown in Table 4, anger and political affiliation did not significantly interact with moral identity or internalization. However, there was a significant interaction between anger, political affiliation, and symbolization. The predicted slope (low symbolization Democrats) was nonsignificant ( $b = .03$ ,  $SE = .04$ ,  $\beta = .06$ ,  $t = .66$ ,  $p > .05$ ). However,



*Figure 17.* Anger at Time 1 predicting retaliated incivility to Democrats at Time 2 as moderated by political affiliation.

the relationship between anger and T2 retaliated incivility was significantly stronger for high symbolization Republicans ( $b = .15, SE = .06, \beta = .30, t = 2.76, p < .01$ ). The slopes were nonsignificant for low symbolization Republicans ( $b = .07, SE = .05, \beta = .15, t = 1.48, p > .05$ ) and high symbolization Democrats ( $b = .02, SE = .04, \beta = .05, t = .61, p > .05$ ; see Figure 18).

Hypothesis 29 stated that the relationship between T1 anger and T2 retaliatory incivility to Democrats would be moderated by the interaction between political



*Figure 18.* Anger at Time 1 predicting retaliated incivility to Republicans at Time 2 as moderated by political affiliation and symbolization (moral regulation).

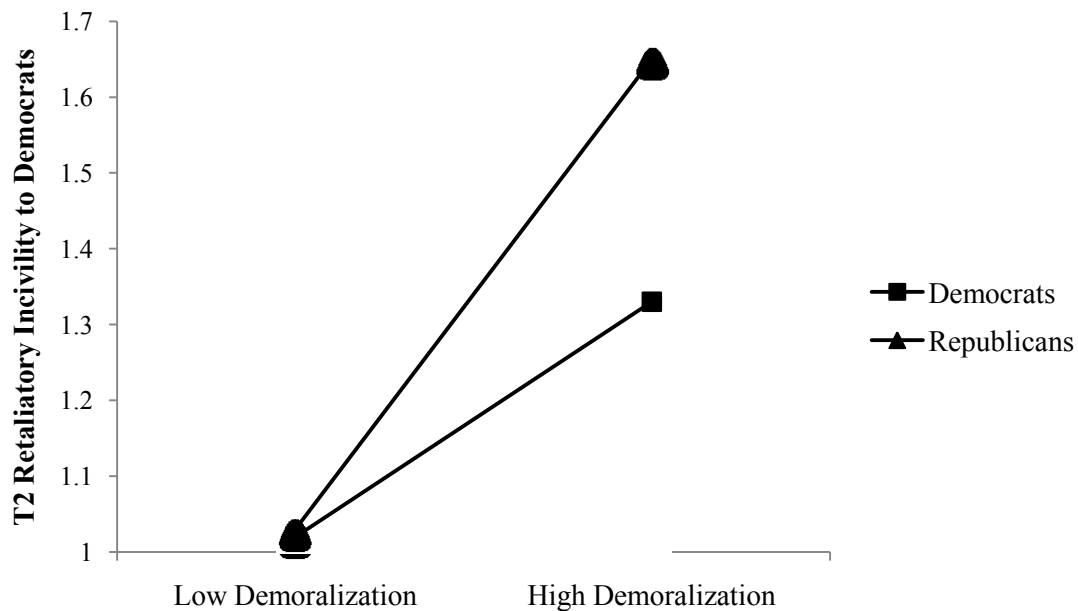
affiliation and moral identity such that Republicans with a strong moral identity who experienced high levels of anger would most frequently retaliate against Democrats. As shown in Table 5, this hypothesis was not supported, as anger and political affiliation did not significantly interact with moral identity, internalization, or symbolization.

Hypothesis 30 predicted that the relationship between T1 demoralization and T2 retaliated incivility to Republicans would not be moderated by political affiliation; Democrats who experienced demoralization were not expected to retaliate against Republicans more frequently than Republicans who were demoralized. As shown in Table 4, the interaction between demoralization and political affiliation was

nonsignificant as expected; in addition, because the direct effect of demoralization on retaliated incivility was significant in this model, it may be concluded that this hypothesis was supported.

Hypothesis 31 predicted that the relationship between T1 demoralization and T2 retaliated incivility to Democrats would be moderated by political affiliation such that Republicans who experienced high levels of demoralization would most frequently retaliate against Democrats. As shown in Table 5, the interaction between demoralization and political affiliation was significant. As expected, the relationship between T1 demoralization and T2 retaliated incivility to Democrats was stronger for Republicans ( $b = .17$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $\beta = .29$ ,  $t = 3.35$ ,  $p < .001$ ) than Democrats ( $b = .11$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $\beta = .22$ ,  $t = 4.64$ ,  $p < .001$ ; see Figure 19).

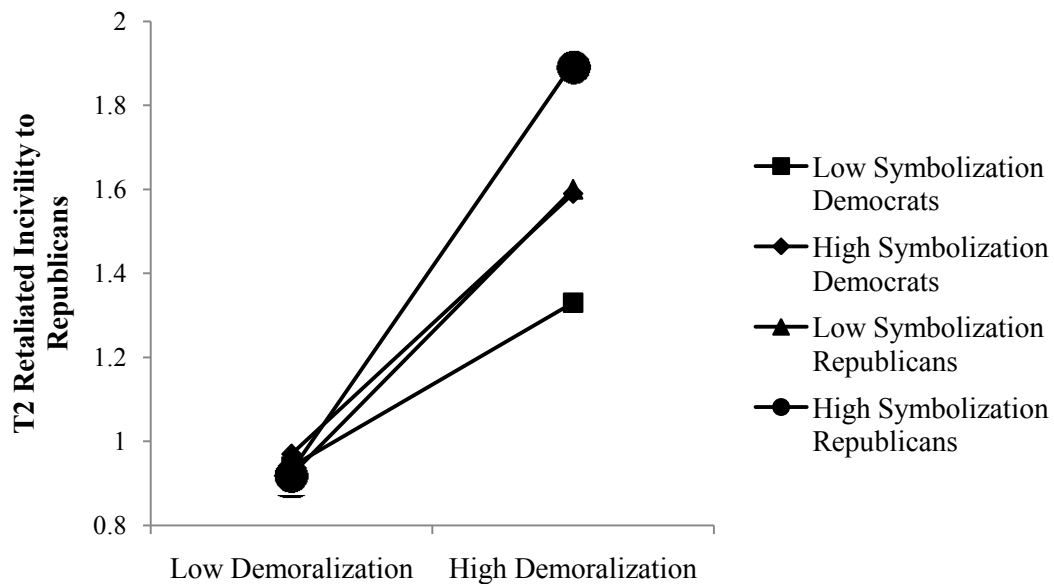
Hypothesis 32 stated that the relationship between T1 demoralization and T2 retaliated incivility to Republicans would be moderated by the interaction between political affiliation and moral identity such that Democrats with a weak moral identity who experienced high levels of demoralization would most frequently retaliate against Republicans. As shown in Table 4, there was not a significant interaction between demoralization, political affiliation, and moral identity or internalization. However, a significant relationship was found when examining symbolization as a moderator. Contrary to prediction, the strongest relationship was for high symbolization Republicans ( $b = .36$ ,  $SE = .08$ ,  $\beta = .59$ ,  $t = 4.71$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The slopes for low



*Figure 19.* Demoralization at Time 1 predicting retaliated incivility to Democrats at Time 2 as moderated by political affiliation.

symbolization Republicans ( $b = .14$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $\beta = .23$ ,  $t = 2.53$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and low symbolization Democrats ( $b = .10$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $\beta = .18$ ,  $t = 2.10$ ,  $p < .05$ ) were also significant, while the slope for high symbolization Democrats ( $b = .07$ ,  $SE = .04$ ,  $\beta = .12$ ,  $t = 1.69$ ,  $p > .05$ ) was not (see Figure 20).

Hypothesis 33 stated that the relationship between T1 demoralization and T2 retaliated incivility to Democrats would be moderated by the interaction between political affiliation and moral identity such that Republicans with a strong moral identity who experienced high levels of demoralization would most frequently retaliate against Democrats. As shown in Table 5, this hypothesis was not supported, as there were no



*Figure 20.* Demoralization at Time 1 predicting retaliated incivility to Republicans at Time 2 as moderated by political affiliation and symbolization (moral regulation).

significant interactions between demoralization, political affiliation, and either moral identity, internalization, or symbolization.

In general, hypotheses regarding direct and moderated effects between received and retaliated incivility were supported. Democrats most frequently retaliated against Republicans at high levels of received incivility from Republicans, yet Republicans engaged in the most retaliatory incivility against Democrats at low levels of received incivility from Democrats. Furthermore, internalization buffered the likelihood of retaliation, while symbolization enhanced it. In three-way interactions predicting retaliatory incivility, low internalization and high symbolization Democrats most frequently retaliated against Republicans; unexpectedly, high symbolization Democrats

also most frequently retaliated against Democrats. Predicting emotional appraisals from received incivility, the match or mismatch between the political affiliation of the target and instigator did not have an effect. However, symbolization enhanced relationships between received incivility and appraisals. Furthermore, high internalization Republicans reported the greatest increase in anger when treated uncivilly by Democrats. Finally, when predicting retaliated incivility from emotional appraisals, Republicans retaliated against Democrats most frequently when angered or demoralized, but Democrats did not report retaliating against Republicans. Additionally, high symbolization Republicans reported retaliating against other Republicans when angered or demoralized, but they did not report retaliating against Democrats.



## SUMMARY

The purpose of the present study was to examine relationships among political affiliation, moral identity, emotional appraisals, and receipt and retaliation of workplace incivility. Data for this study were collected one week before and three weeks after the 2008 presidential election, when the importance of these variables was assumed to be especially salient. Overall, support was found for a number of hypothesized relationships, but several contradictory findings emerged as well. These contradictory findings, however, may prompt us to reconsider the roles of morality and social identity processes in forming emotional appraisals and engaging in retaliatory mistreatment.

Hypotheses 1 and 2, that greater received incivility at T1 would prompt greater retaliated incivility at T2, was not supported by *t*-test analyses, suggesting that retaliation was not an escalating process in this study. However, in regression analyses, T1 received incivility was predictive of T2 retaliated incivility, even when controlling for T1 instigated incivility. These results suggest that receipt of incivility is related to retaliation, and that this is a process that unfolds over time.

Hypothesis 3, that Democrats would most frequently retaliate against Republicans, was supported. Hypothesis 4, that Republicans would most frequently retaliate against Democrats, was contradicted; results indicate that the relationship between receipt and retaliation of incivility was stronger for Democrats than for Republicans. However, follow-up analyses suggest that at low levels of received incivility from Democrats, Republicans engage in more retaliatory behavior, while at high levels of incivility from Democrats, there is little difference between the frequency

of retaliated incivility from Democrats and Republicans. These results may be interpreted to indicate that Republicans have a lower threshold for receipt of incivility that will prompt them to retaliate, while Democrats only retaliate as frequently as Republicans when they are faced with high levels of incivility from Democrats. These findings failed to support Hypothesis 5, which predicted that Republicans would retaliate against Democrats more frequently than Democrats would retaliate against Republicans. This hypothesis was based on findings suggesting that conservatives are less comfortable with ambiguity and threat than liberals (Jost et al., 2007); however, it appears that such discomfort (which was not measured in this study) may not motivate conservatives to behave uncivilly to out-group members.

Tests of Hypotheses 6 and 7 revealed interesting results regarding the roles of internalization and symbolization in the prediction of retaliatory incivility. While the moral identity composite variable did not moderate the relationships between received incivility and retaliated incivility, internalization and symbolization both moderated the relationships, but they had opposite effects. For internalization, results supported the hypotheses made for moral identity, which stated that low moral identity employees would retaliate more frequently than high moral identity employees. For symbolization, results were contradictory, as high symbolization employees retaliated more frequently than low symbolization employees. Similar results were found by Skarlicki, van Jaarsveld, and Walker (2008) in which the two dimensions of moral identity were examined as moderators of the relationship between interpersonal injustice from customers and customer-directed sabotage. The researchers found that this relationship

was stronger for employees with high symbolization, but it was weaker for employees with high internalization. Taken together, Skarlicki et al. (2008) and the present study suggest that symbolization facilitates retaliatory behavior, while internalization inhibits retaliation.

Hypothesis 8 predicted that employees with a low prescriptive moral regulation (i.e., Democrats with low moral identity) would engage in the most retaliatory incivility against Republicans; this hypothesis was supported when examining moral identity as well as internalization as moderators. This relationship was also significant when symbolization was entered in the model, but again, it was *high* symbolization Democrats who engaged in the most retaliation. Hypothesis 9 predicted that employees with high proscriptive morality (i.e., high moral identity Republicans) would most frequently retaliate against Democrats. This relationship was nonsignificant when moral identity and internalization were entered as moderators, but symbolization did play a significant role. However, contradicting expectations based on SIT (Tajfel, 1981; Turner, 1987) and selective incivility (Cortina, 2008), the group who most frequently retaliated against Democrats was high symbolization Democrats. While explanations for this contradictory finding are speculative, a history effect may have influenced this relationship. Because T2 data were collected after the presidential election, Republicans may have abstained from retaliation because loss of the election removed the motivation to act in a retaliatory manner.

Tests of Hypotheses 10 and 11 suggest that anger and demoralization act as mediators between received incivility and retaliation, yet a number of complicated

relationships emerged when testing the moderated paths in the model. On the whole, Hypotheses 12-15, which predicted that political affiliation would moderate the paths between received incivility and emotional appraisals (anger and demoralization) were not supported in regression analyses. Thus, while received incivility was related to anger and demoralization, the match or mismatch between the political affiliation of the instigator and recipient of incivility did not alter the appraisal.

Based on ideological scripts theory (Tomkins, 1965), which suggests that conservatives and liberals have different affective bases, I predicted that Republicans would respond with more anger to incivility from out-group members, while Democrats would respond with more demoralization to incivility from out-group members. Path models indicated that for Republicans, anger was the stronger response to incivility from Democrats, but there was an even stronger relationship between incivility from Republicans (in-group members) and demoralization. For Democrats, incivility from Republicans was unrelated to both anger and demoralization. However, incivility from Democrats (in-group members) was significantly related to demoralization. While this model only partially supports Hypotheses 16 and 17, it does reveal the interesting finding that demoralization seems to be a response to incivility from in-group members.

Hypothesis 18 and 19 predicted that the relationship between received incivility and anger would be moderated by moral identity such that the relationship would be stronger for high moral identity employees. Received incivility from Republicans did not interact with moral identity or either of its dimensions to predict anger, but received incivility from Democrats did interact with symbolization to predict anger; as expected,

high symbolization employees felt angrier when treated uncivilly. Hypotheses 20 and 21 predicted the relationship between received incivility and demoralization would likewise be moderated by moral identity. Symbolization interacted with received incivility from both Democrats and Republicans to predict demoralization such that high symbolization employees felt most demoralized when treated uncivilly. Although symbolization did not significantly influence the relationship between received incivility from Republicans and anger, the trend among these analyses suggests that high symbolization employees appraise mistreatment especially negatively.

In concordance with Cortina and Magley's (2009) assertion that a characteristic of incivility is its relation to mild appraisals, received incivility from both Republicans and Democrats had stronger correlations with demoralization (an arguably milder emotion) than anger. However, while the interaction between symbolization and received incivility fairly consistently predicted anger and demoralization, only one three-way interaction significantly triggered an emotional appraisal; high internalization Republicans experienced the greatest increase in anger with increased incivility from Democrats, supporting Hypothesis 23 (and failing to support Hypothesis 22). This aligns with Cortina and Magley's finding that appraisals become more severe when uncivil treatment comes from someone with power. At the time when this survey was conducted, Republicans likely perceived Democrats to be socially powerful – or at least, adversarial and threatening – and thus responded particularly negatively when treated rudely by Democrats. It is interesting to note that it was internalization that functioned as the moral identity component in this interaction, not symbolization (which was

otherwise the dimension that seemed to most strongly influence appraisals). While differential findings based on the two dimensions of moral identity are speculative, future research could examine whether internalization makes one more sensitive to in-group/out-group process or to power differentials, thus motivating more negative responses to mistreatment from powerful others and/or out-group members. In addition, while the construct of moral regulation was invoked to theorize about the prediction of retaliation, not appraisal, it may be interesting to devote further study to moral regulation in relation to emotional appraisal; based on these results, individuals with a high proscriptive moral regulation may appraise incivility especially negatively.

Hypothesis 26 predicted that the relationship between anger and T2 retaliatory incivility to Republicans would not be moderated by political affiliation, as Democrats were not expected to engage in more retaliatory behavior than Republicans. While the interaction between anger and political affiliation was nonsignificant as expected, anger did not directly predict retaliation in this model, implying that the interaction was nonsignificant because anger did not motivate retaliation in general, not because Democrats engage in less retaliatory behavior as hypothesized. Hypothesis 27 predicted that the relationship between anger and retaliated incivility to Democrats would be strongest for Republicans, and this relationship was supported.

Hypothesis 28 predicted that anger would interact with moral regulation to predict retaliated incivility to Republicans such that employees with low prescriptive morality (i.e., low moral identity Democrats) would most frequently retaliate. While this was not supported by the analyses, it was found that high proscriptive morality

employees engaged in the most retaliatory behavior against Republicans. Thus, it appears that moral regulation played a stronger role than social identity processes in this relationship. As this relationship was not found when predicting retaliated incivility from received incivility, it may be surmised that retaliation based on proscriptive morality has an emotional component; when this emotional component is not accounted for, proscriptive morality may be unrelated to retaliation. Contrary to expectations, Hypothesis 29 was not supported, as anger did not interact with moral regulation to predict retaliated incivility to Democrats, again discounting the role of social identity processes in these relationships.

Hypotheses 30 and 31 were supported; demoralization was predictive of retaliated incivility to both Republicans and Democrats, but only the relationship between demoralization and incivility to Democrats was moderated by political affiliation such that the relationship was stronger for Republicans. Mirroring the results for anger and moral regulation as predictors of retaliated incivility, the only high proscriptive moral regulation was related to retaliation following demoralization, and again, this relationship only predicted incivility to Republicans, not Democrats. A possible history effect may again explain Republicans' reluctance to retaliate against Democrats.

Note that while there were a number of interesting relationships among the variables examined in this study, no clear evidence was found for moderated mediation for neither Democrats or Republicans, nor employees at varying levels of moral identity, nor employees with varying moral regulations. Thus, while these variables appear to be

related, the moderated mediation models proposed in the present study do not adequately explain the existing relationships. Future research should be conducted to more precisely determine the interrelationships among received and retaliatory incivility, political affiliation, moral identity and regulation, and emotional appraisal. For instance, the model that displayed the most evidence for moderated mediation is that in which high internalization Republicans experienced the greatest increase in anger with high received incivility from Democrats (Figure 16), and in turn, Republicans with high levels of anger most frequently retaliated against Democrats (Figure 17). Examination of a more parsimonious model may help to confirm that these relationships indeed comprise a moderated mediation model.

As previously noted, consideration of the historical context of the present study is critical to interpreting these findings. The presidential election and subsequent exchange in power from Republicans to Democrats provided a naturally occurring manipulation between the Time 1 and Time 2 administrations of the survey. This manipulation likely serves to explain the unexpected finding that high symbolization Republicans most frequently retaliated against other Republicans, not against Democrats as expected. Republicans may have felt helpless against Democrats following the election, and their in-group retaliation may be interpreted as an expression of blame for loss of political power. Furthermore, recognizing that Republicans in general did more frequently retaliate against Democrats, but that it was only high symbolization Republicans who retaliated against in-group members, this study suggests that moral identity – and particularly symbolization – may have made Republicans more sensitive to the loss of



power, and therefore more motivated to assign blame to and retaliate against in-group members. Thus, the present study offers insight into social identity processes involving exchange of power between groups.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

A number of limitations to the present study should be acknowledged. One of the primary limitations is the use of single-source self-report data, which could give rise to common method bias. Two approaches were utilized to address this issue: negative affectivity was controlled for in all analyses, and data were collected at two points in time (Podsakoff, et al., 2003). However, analyses that examined the relationship between received incivility and emotional appraisals relied solely on cross-sectional data, limiting the ability to conclude that received incivility was causally related to emotional appraisals. Analyses of the effects of received incivility and emotional appraisals on retaliated incivility were conducted using data collected at two time points, allowing for more confident conclusions about the casual relationship between received incivility, emotional appraisals, and retaliated incivility. Additionally, although this study contributes to the literature on incivility spirals by examining retaliatory incivility, measurements at more time points are required to adequately test spiraling processes.

Another limitation regards measurement in this study; this study would have benefitted from the use of a measure of social desirability to control for probable under-reporting of instigation of incivility. I argue that estimates of retaliated incivility are likely biased downward and therefore conservative, but more accurate estimates may be obtained by controlling for participants' unwillingness to report engaging in negative

behaviors. Additionally, while future research may benefit from investigating the construct validity of the measure of moral regulation utilized in the present study, there is not yet clear evidence that moral regulation can indeed be represented by the interaction between moral identity and political affiliation. A final concern related to measurement is the measurement of appraisal of incivility. While the incivility and appraisal measures were administered within the same time frame, future research should directly measure emotional appraisals in relation to received incivility.

Another limitation involves this study's exclusive focus on Democrats and Republicans, while failing to recognize members of other political parties. While this dichotomization of political ideologies simplified the examination of in-group/out-group processes, stronger relationships may have been found if a continuous measure, such as a liberalism-conservatism scale, had been used to represent political beliefs. This may be a fruitful direction for future research.

Finally, another concern is that these results may not generalize to different social identities. Although political affiliation is intuitively interesting to study in the context of incivility processes, this is an identity variable that may be revealed or concealed at the employee's discretion, making it rather different from identities such as gender or ethnicity; similar studies investigating these demographic variables in place of political affiliation may produce different results.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, while results were not all aligned with past theory and research, some conclusions can be reached based on this study. First, it appears that morality plays a

large role in the prediction of both emotional appraisals and retaliation in response to uncivil treatment; in particular, symbolization and proscriptive moral regulation seem to have strong predictive power in these relationships. Furthermore, morality seems to be a more important predictor of retaliation than social identity processes. Finally, while results regarding the mediating roles of anger and demoralization were at times inconsistent or unexpected, it is rather clear that these emotions relate to the receipt and retaliation of incivility, and future research should clarify these relationships. This study also contributes to the literature by examining how social issues that are seemingly unrelated to the workplace can negatively affect interpersonal interactions at work. I recommend that further research be conducted with the perspective that the larger social context exerts an influence on organizations.

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