Research article

Managing Civility in News and Information Organizations

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Abstract:

Purpose: Explore media managers' perspectives on covering issues of conflict, as well as analyze news coverage of issues related to civility in the Black Lives Matter conflict.

Methodology: Summary translations were conducted on panel discussions of civility in media to identify issues of importance to media managers. A computational content analysis of newspaper articles on conflict was conducted to identify key words and phrases used in actual coverage.

Findings/Contribution: Media managers are concerned with bias in news reporting and covering differing viewpoints especially in stories of conflict. Four themes emerged: Values, Practices, Sectors, Story Topics and Legal Considerations. In Black Lives Matter coverage, reporting themes related to violence prevailed leaving open more in-depth coverage of issues related to values, sectors and legal concerns.

Keywords: Civility; Social Media; Journalism; News; Conflict.

1. Introduction

"Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that," (King, 1957). This quote from Martin Luthor King is just as important today as it was in the 50s and 60s. As newsrooms grapple with racial justice and other societal issues, discussion on the importance of civility is key in order to benefit society and inspire understanding and harmony. However, Coleman (2011) indicates America is currently experiencing "intractable conflict" where differences in ideas become more and more charged creating anxiety in society. Opposing segments of communities are growing increasingly certain of the rightness of their views and increasingly contrary to what seems unreasonable, malicious, extreme or crazy. How do media managers who are caught in the middle cope especially as incivility in social media dominates news and public affairs?

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd died after being arrested by police outside a shop in Minneapolis Minnesota. His killing and the protests that followed generated more media coverage than any protests during the previous 50 years (Guaglione, 2020). This research addressed how media managers' perceptions of covering conflict in their communities squared with coverage of civil unrest in the Black Lives Matter Movement following Floyd's death.

2. Literature Review

Economists and early sociologists assumed that human beings were operating in a rational world and that in free markets, rational behavior would prevail. However, Kahneman (2011) has challenged such assumptions and found that humans are subject to biases and illusions. They are influenced by events of which they have no control or influence; therefore, economists have adjusted their models to account for these systematic human inconsistencies. Journalists strive to be effective conduits and objective seekers of truth. In this search to for truth, according to Haidt (2012), they are being forced to enrich approaches and find new ways to listen and learn, as well as help audiences do the same. According to Thaler (2015), an enriched approach acknowledges the existence and relevance of humans. According to Mutz (2007, however, one issue affecting the flow of information is that uncivil discourse is emotionally arousing.

Hall Jamieson (2017) indicates viewing uncivil behavior promotes viewer interest while negatively impacting political trust. This nature and impact of online incivility has prompted efforts to minimize both the behavior and its harmful effects (Gervais, 2015; Santana, 2015; Stroud et al., 2015). Brooks and Greer (2007) found that while uncivil messages are often seen by the public as less fair, informative and important, they are no more likely to lead to detrimental effects in the public. In addition, Thorson, Bragra and Ekdale (2010) found when a news article was embedded in an uncivil blog post, the article's perceived credibility increased. Borah (2013) also found that incivility increased perceptions of credibility of a news article, but decreased political trust. In a study of online comments, Coe, Kenski and Rains (2014) found that uncivil commenters were slightly more likely to include statistics as evidence; uncivil comments were also more likely to receive more reactions from readers in the form of thumbs-down ratings. Depending on one's point of view, negative reactions to online posts could be considered harmful, but for others, the mere fact that people are responding at all could be considered beneficial to public discourse as a sign of increased participation.

Boyd (2006) asserted, on the other hand, that civility is meant to broaden one's thinking especially as we connect more often through technology and separate more face-to-face communicate behind a screen. Coleman (2011) added that the brain behaves differently in charged interactions where it is impossible to feel curious, for example, while also feeling threatened. As people feel an involuntary need to defend their side and attack the other, new information and investigative reporting or documented evidence will emerge. Coleman says we often think we understand these conflicts and can choose how to react to them; however, we are often mistaken. Once drawn in, conflict takes control and complexity collapses. In this regard, Cortina (2019) found legal issues of civility becoming increasingly important and necessary in protecting one's freedom of speech.

Rightness of views have become even more prevalent where websites have the availability to allow comments. However, as websites add more voices enrich freedom of speech, they may also decrease credibility. Prochazka, Weber and Schweiger (2018) found in news stories, comment sections downplay objective reporting and create a loss of interest from other users. In their study, participants read random website articles and were allowed to leave a comment. However, as the participant was scrolling through the comments, coming across negative comments were found to drive them to discredit the article entirely. They suggest if incivility is allowed to run rampant, it is not only damaging for those involved but also reflects badly on the platform itself. Users are often dissuaded or afraid to engage with content due to fear of backlash from other commenters.

Coe, Kenski and Rains (2014) also studied comment sections of the Arizona Daily Star which requires users to log in to "join the discussion." They found that more than one in five comments on the platform could be considered uncivil and featured predominantly name calling. They also found, however, that those who commented more frequently were actually more civil than infrequent commenters. Furthermore, both groups used equal amounts of evidence in their claims. Eberwen (2019) analyzed whether or not online comments through various media outlets were more harmful

due to the ability to "troll" in the comments section. The study looked at what drives individuals to partake in "trolling" and disruptive comments on news and journalism articles. Findings indicated some of the comments were simply name calling, or spiteful remarks unrelated to the article itself. While such comments were at times intended to get a thought across regarding relevant subject matter, more often this form of web-based media criticism was almost completely unique and void of reason. The study ultimately determined that the common understanding of a "troll" must be adapted to fit current standards and definitions of the term.

Santana (2015) analyzed the comment sections from the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Arizona Republic*, and the Houston Chronicle which are all papers from areas near the border of Mexico. The comment sections for these papers allowed for anonymous commenting. He found that more than half of the comments on stories about immigration were uncivil primarily containing racist language. Kim and Hwang (2018) also looked at the negative effects of news credibility in regards to uncivil comments left by various users. They found that those who attacked other users, or articles, did so because articles were against their own personal ideology or opinion. Intergroup comments were used to determine if an individual's comments swayed due to being a part of a group comment section instead of a stand-alone comment. They found that "hostile media effect" is at a higher capacity in those intergroup comment sections due to the manipulation of incivility within them.

Anderson, et al. (2016), found negative comments affect people's perception of social media posts and perceptions of both liberal and conservative political candidates. Incivility in online comments increased perceptions of bias in posts. All social media platforms in this study allowed user comments to be posted publicly, regardless of content. Sydnor (2017) found that participants were more likely to notice hostility, incivility, and criticism in an audio-visual environment rather than text-based conditions. Perhaps one reason that media is blamed for the increase of incivility is its easily accessible and recognized content in audio-visual materials.

Anderson et al. (2018) found that the higher the level of uncivil comments in a section were, the more biased that publication would be percieved. They also studied the impact political ideology had on incivility and found that liberals and moderates were less impacted by incivility while conservatives were more impacted. Their findings provided understanding of the importance of knowing the audience when going to publication. Sydnor (2017) indicated that readers place themselves in increasingly homogeneous online communication networks in order to see more like-minded incivility and less disagreeable incivility. There's a risk in surrounding yourself with only like-minded individuals who hold the same sentiments and morals as you. He also found that it gives an excuse for individuals to use uncivil, critical language. While each platform has different privacy and interactivity settings, most "let certain users cut incivility out of their media diet while others seek it out, rereading particularly vitriolic exchanges or scrolling through the comments sections".

Lattimore (2020) indicates newsrooms and other media have also influenced understanding of race in America. Stories influence the brain and can inspire empathy, foster a sense of belonging, and prompt action, whether for good or for ill. Examples of movies impacting culture include "The Autobiography of Malcolm X," "Birth of a Nation," "Beloved," "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and "Black Panther." Lattimore says an understanding of how journalism functions in the same way is crucial for delivering information people need to make choices and hold powerful people and institutions accountable. Lattimore questions the protagonist of news stories. For example, coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic is framed around the impact on the president's chances for reelection. Stories about Black Lives Matter center on polling to assess people's feelings about the movement. Coverage that centers powerful institutions as the story's protagonists assigns any group outside that institution another role. As a result, minority populations have often been cast in smaller roles.

According to Brown and Paul (2016) research indicates malicious ideas, ideologies and narratives can be replaced with mutual respect, safety, sharing, finding common ground, and by

making incremental progress. For news to diminish negative messages it must provide positive, viable alternatives. Opportunities include challenging misinformation and dissuading violence. Messaging includes discrediting hostile discourse. Promoting "anti-bias," and "anti-defamation" serve to cancel audiences' negative ideas, and promote the alternative message of longer-term peace. Their research indicates that words and where they come from matter.

Ersoy and Miller (2020) suggest a journalism strategy for analyzing content. They identified dichotomous categories on a continuum of positive and negative themes as follows:

Securitization: conflicts are discussed in terms of threats, dangers, and occupations. Police force, army personnel and elites get the limelight. Conspiracies, issue of national sovereignty, independence, and patriotism are related with the conflict. The system, culture and social values are securitized and feared to be lost if enemy prevails.

Otherization: media takes sides in conflicts, one party is treated as 'other or alien to our culture, and not belonging to 'us' and hence dangerous if it prevails. Biasness prevails in media discourse and the whole conflict story is told from one perspective only.

Humanization: conflicts are humanized, individual sufferings are highlighted, and trials and tribulation of common people get maximum coverage. Plight of women and children and other vulnerable groups is discussed.

We'ness: conflicting parties are treated in unison; 'us versus them' notions are avoided. Contributions of the aggrieved parties for national cause are counted. Responsibility for law and order situation is equally shared. Negative attributes are avoided.

Incompatibility: when parties involved cannot agree. Politicization is covered when victims belonging to political groups are considered worthy based on presumed political affiliations. Concerns of the aggrieved party are shared and violence is explained from a broad range.

Compatibility: commonalities and sameness in the standpoints of conflicting parties are explored and urged to promote dialogue and bring the antagonists closer. History, culture and other interests that forge unity are highlighted. Conflicts are contextualized and mistakes of both sides are exposed for rapprochement.

De-politicization focuses on the non-political aspects of conflicts; affiliations like politics, ethnicity, religiosity or other considerations are avoided. The social, cultural and economic costs of conflicts are highlighted. Political shenanigans are exposed in non-political and less sensational tones; The artificial barriers among conflicting groups produced by politicians are scrutinized. Examples of different ethnic and sectarian groups having political affiliations that live peacefully are highlighted.

Lynch (2013) found the analysis of manifest media content highlighted information on reporting which: 1) explored backgrounds and contexts of conflict formation; 2) presented causes and options on every side to portray conflict in realistic terms; 3) could be transparent to the audience; 4) gives voice to the views of all rival parties, not merely the leaders of two antagonistic 'sides'; 5) airs creative ideas, from any source, for conflict resolution, development, peacemaking and peacekeeping; 6) exposes lies, cover-up attempts and culprits on all sides, and revealing excesses committed by, and suffering inflicted on, peoples of all parties; 7) pays attention to peace stories and post-war developments. He suggests further study is necessary to establish evidence to provide opportunities through journalism, for society to consider and value nonviolent responses to conflict.

Powers and He (2020) reviewed journal articles to identify themes that emerged in publications on media civility which included Values, Practices, Sectors, Story Topics, and Law. Weber Shandwick annual reports over the past decade also added to framing on civility (Civility in America, 2018, 2019).

The top-ten factors contributing managers perceptions of impact on civility in America (among Americans who expect civility to get worse) included social media and the internet. These were followed in order by the White House, politicians, news media, social activists, Hollywood celebrities, Congress, protestors, Liberal/Conservative, youth.

Based on previous research especially focused on news story content, the following research questions were addressed:

RQ1: What overall themes and issues emerged in media manager panel discussions on civility in media and society in relationship to coverage of controversial issues?

RQ2: What overall themes and issues emerged in a content analysis of news stories on the conflict of the Black Lives Matters movement following the killing of George Floyd?

3. Methodology

For this research, we were interested in perceptions of journalists and how they covered news rather than comment sections or audience perceptions. Summary translations were conducted on panel discussions of civility in media to identify issues of importance to media managers. The panel discussions took place in September 2019 when 22 media managers and professionals participated in a summit on the Iowa State University campus to discuss civility in media. In addition to media professionals, about 200 students, educators, administrators and industry practitioners were in attendance to engage in what was designated an important issue on campus as established in the university's Principles of Community (2017). This industry summit included two keynote presentations and six moderated panels. Each session was recorded for audio and video. Session information was gathered from video-taped sessions posted on the following website: *https://alumni.greenlee.iastate.edu/2019-summit/2019-summit-videos*. Graduate students in a media management class helped produce summary transcriptions. Each panel discussion was hour in length and each one was conducted on a topic related to civility.

A computational content analysis of panels translations was also conducted to identify keywords and phrases used by practitioners and included in stories. For the content analyses, each session was recorded for audio and video. Panel themes were as follows: (1) Covering Controversial Issues, (2) Keeping Audiences Intact, (3) Navigating Discredit and Disbelief, (4) Civility and the Election Cycle. Panelists included 20 journalists, media analysts and public relations professionals. Recommendations were then made for future studies in the area of media and civility.

Text mining or automatic text classification occurs when researchers perform a group of text classification trails to create systematic analysis of written content (Adeva et al., 2014). Ozaydin et al., (2017) indicated that using machine learning and text mining can effectively enhance manual systematic reviews. Furthermore, text-mining techniques allow researchers to analyze or detect behavior (Adeva & Atxa, 2007). Therefore, this study utilized the text mining tool in the statistical software JMP Pro 14 to analyze content. JMP Pro 14 used the document term matrix (DTM) to develop indicator variables that already exist in the text. Next, it uses multivariate techniques by clustering principle components and factor analysis to better visualize the text in phrases. It also analyzes the most frequent terms mentioned in the panels that lead to understanding of themes and issues most prominent for media managers included in the analysis (Klimberg, 2016).

The next part of the study involved an analysis of coverage of an issue related to media civility which was the Black Lives Matter movement. In a preliminary study, articles from the three newspapers from May 31-June 6, 2020 were collected to identify the inclusion of key words and themes: the *Des Moines Register*, a medium-sized city newspaper; the *Chicago Tribune*, a metropolitan newspaper; the *New York Times* a national newspaper. Positive, Neutral, and Negative coverage as

outlined by Ersoy and Miller (2020) was used. The time frame, from May 31- June 6, 2020, was selected because Google Analytics indicated people were most "interested" in BLM during this period following the death of George Floyd.

Computational analysis using JMP Pro 14 identified key words and phrases in news coverage. JMP Analysis consisted of computational analysis of the Lead and Body of the news story. JMP data were prepared by stemming words such as protestors and protestor. Words such as police and officers were also recoded as police. Stop words were identified to eliminate words such as days of the week, parts of speech such as say and said, addresses and streets. Stop words also included words used extensively in all stories such as protests, police, Black Lives Matter, and George Floyd.

4. Results

RQ1 addressed panel discussions on media civility. Table 1 compared issues addressed in literature on civility (Powers & He, 2020) with issues addressed in panel discussions of media managers, as well as the overarching theme.

Table 1. Themes of Civility in Media Research and Panel Discussions

Col 1: Theme %Literature/Panel		Col 2: Issues in Literature	Col 3: Issues additions in Panels
Values 73.9%	27%	Truth, Hate, Responsibility, Respect, Civility, Trust, Interaction, Credibility, Beliefs,	Principles, Responsibility, Accountability, Emotions
Practices 14.5%	33%	Opinion, Critical, Fair Bias, Fake, Misinformation, Content, Critiques, Users, Ambiguous	Activist, Anger, Storytelling, Discussion, Anonymity, Bans, Response, Conversation, Edits
Sectors 7.2%	30%	Television, Social Media, Education, Political, Media Platforms, Online, Society, Candidates	AI, Politicians, Public Figures, Platforms, Conservatives/Liberals
Story Topics 2.9%	9%	Race, Politics, Crime,	Killings, Violence, Change/Challenge, Polarization, Protests, Conflict
Law 1%	1.5%	Privacy, Discrimination,	Juries, Abortion, 1st Amendment, Ethics Codes, Profanity

Column 3 was important in that these issues were identified in the computational analysis of transcripts of media manager panels in addition but not excluding the issues identified in the literature.   The panel discussions of twelve media managers (E11-E44 = Expert panel one expert one--Expert panel four expert four *see Appendix 1) addressed civility in media organizations. Appendix A provides the makeup of participants of the four panel discussions under analysis. Table 1 indicates five major themes where Practices was one of the largest items of manager panel discussions followed by how different media Sectors were addressing civility.

Further analysis of the panel discussions indicated in Table 1 that media managers most discussed themes related to journalistic practices (33%) including storytelling, anonymity and editing. The next largest theme was Sectors (30%) which included issues related to media platform or politics. Values (27%) included responsibility, accountability and conflict. Story topics (9%) were also of concern including killings, change and polarization. The following summary transcriptions of

the four panel discussions contain underlined words indicating a sampling of themes/issues as listed in Table 1.

4.1. Panel 1: Covering Controversial Issues (E11-E14)

Seeking truth and understanding in storytelling can help an individual gain more knowledge on an issue. E11 asked how reporters confronted bias in their reports. E14 said not forming a strong opinion is important and so is being open to all perspectives. Biased views occur especially on controversial stories such as a first-degree murder charge on a police officer for killing a black teenager. Viewers either took the officer's standpoint on serve and protect or viewed it as a hate crime. Respect for the importance of juries and respect for reporters is crucial in covering controversial stories. Regarding how to address criticism, E11 thanks viewers, points out defense and responds to emails. E11 emphasized biased opinion or views are not the job of a news reporter. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge criticism and understand everyone is guilty of preconceived notions. Avoid letting anger or emotions get in the way of trying to understand an issue in order to find to solutions.

E12 said that everyone has biases of their own and journalist who try and pretend are not being realistic because everyone has opinions. Journalists are also affected by one another. People tune in and out of stories, but conversations and interactions bring people together for a solution. Also, acknowledging mistakes or errors can lead to better storytelling. E13 said political bias may come from family background and experience. Abortion is a good example, as well as opinions on rape and incest that call for more reporting and understanding of certain views. Conflict is news, so reports must look at a story from position "A" or "B".

Regarding negative tweets on social media and how reporters respond and protect personal lives, E11 said try to be as neutral as possible; however, it does impact personal lives. Taking a deep breath and going on with it is the best one can do. E14 said it is not easy for something not to impact your personal life unless you are the person who does truly not care about what people say which is impossible as a journalist because then why are you in the industry. Moving forward, you must let it go and realize you cannot change the world or people. E11 added that it motivates to realize the purpose as a journalist when people are mean on social media or judgmental. However, when tweets or others are a danger to one another, that is when it should not be ignored but more importantly brought to the table to discuss.

E12 stated that you cannot ignore hate or discrimination. The conversation that needs to happen is how do you cover that without being just another megaphone for white supremacy. E13 added that people need to have principles that allow for a way to be heard instead of shouting it out. E11 emphasized a bigger message and bigger issue instead of putting it up on Facebook every time so that it can inspire people. It is on how you do it and when you do it. E12 added that there are projects that get people to interact with one another and create events where you can ask and interact with several people from all views so that it can be a safe space to learn. Journalist amplify the word or voice of the people so that it can be a learning lesson for readers or viewers.

When asked how journalists interact, E14 stated that there is a collaborative field in the newsroom. It is good to check on stories for potential <u>changes</u> because it can further develop a story and also help with potential <u>legal</u> issues. A <u>controversial</u> story should be checked and collaborated on because it can lead to more issues if it is not double checked. E13 agreed and checks and goes beyond checking on a story by talking to sources outside of the newsroom. Most newsrooms say not to distribute a story before published; however, at times it does happen because it helps with adding perspectives. E11 says she is usually the one who people go to in the newsroom because she is a woman of <u>color</u> and a <u>minority</u>. Likewise, she <u>trusts</u> people and goes to certain people for opinions to make sure she is thinking of everything, talking to five or six people before filing a story as complete.

4.2. Keeping Audience Intact (E21-E24)

This panel addressed how users react to negative/aggressive comments on companies' platforms and the importance of monitoring behavior. E21 said witnessing incivility online alters people's behaviors. Some will not post because of this or others stop using a service entirely indicating a loss in the <u>trust</u> of brands/sites. As such, these experts explored the importance of audience communication and facilitating free exchange of ideas in <u>challenging</u> environments.

E23 and E22 said the responsibility of those creating platforms is to monitor conversations. E24 said it is difficult to define true incivility. Facebook's policies, for example, on controversial issues on social media <u>platforms</u>, community members should monitor comments, but that isn't the case in other areas such as <u>broadcast</u> media that are. Nevertheless, people need spaces to feel safe in expressing their <u>opinions</u>. These impact their <u>trust</u>. E22 said it is the responsibility of media and the community to manage incivility. E24 added that <u>social media</u> platforms need to have the infrastructure in place to be able to manage comments, and users are free to comment, so they should have <u>responsibility</u>. As a reporter, E23 said it is the <u>responsibility</u> of a reporter/the publication to decide whether questions/comments should be allowed. Publications try to use <u>accountability</u> through photos/names to prevent uncivil behavior.

Both consumers and platforms have a responsibility to manage incivility online. One way to improve civility is to limit <u>anonymity</u> by forcing people to include their name's and photos (connecting directly with Facebook). Organizations must make decisions to decide whatever they believe is important to include in discourse. People aren't forced to be users of platforms so some of the blame falls on them if the incivility is excessive.

E22 emphasized the need for audience analysis. E23 said research indicates <u>conservatives</u> are skeptical of news sources more often, and different groups have different perceptions of the media. Research is in order to protect your brand and know your audience. It allows for preparation for potential backlash or comments that could be either positive or negative. Having a marketing background can help with this. Different demographics are more sensitive to content than others.

E24 said managing issues in comment sections requires policies and mid-level people to enforce these policies. E21 agreed that generally mid-level people handle civility issues in comments, and if they escalate, more senior people are engaged. Decisions on what to do with comment sections are difficult, when to reply, remove, or <u>ban</u> comments because of the need to be sensitive to freedom of speech and the <u>First Amendment</u>. Having a code of conduct would be helpful. E23 emphasized protecting the <u>platform</u> rather than monitoring what people. The audience is too great to allow someone to say hurtful things and damage their platform. The need to be clear about what is or is not allowed in comments is imperative. Organizations must protect what they have created and its reach, rather than for the promotion of questionable ideas. Platforms must be clear regarding what types of criticism or negative comments will be considered offensive. <u>AI</u> could help; however, it will never be fully automated, and input from humans will always be needed. AI has been created in an attempt to measure toxicity.

One solution, according to E23 is to respond to incivility with civility. Show them that you are human. This is part of being a reporter. Organizations must choose when to <u>engage</u>, using civility and asking questions which helps the uncivil commenters because more civil. Such interactions are less about monitoring incivility and more about <u>connecting</u> with the community on a case by case basis.

In summary, civility can be uncreased by anticipating audience reactions, deciding when to respond, creating codes of conduct, avoiding <u>anonymous</u> posting, empowering audiences to police each other and showing the community you <u>care</u>. Journalists must also alert consumers to controversial subjects of stories where people may reach out in good or bad ways.

4.3. Panel 3: Navigating Discredit and Disbelief (E31-E34)

This panel addressed how public relations and other national and international institutions receive information that is often edited, filtered, and watered down. According to E31, misinformation and distrust in the media is evolving, so media and marketers must regain trust by encouraging conversations among all audiences and understand that journalists produce a very small amount of information that is produced worldwide. Much deceit and disinformation have come from countries such as Russia. Facebook stated that 126 million people have seen content from disinformation campaigns (Kremlin-controlled or otherwise). There are many examples where Russia has hacked into Georgian, Spanish, and French servers to spread disinformation about local governments to create unrest. Additionally, the Iranian government has more than 7,000 fake accounts on social media.

E33 said this disinformation is the surround sound that we all must sift our way through. This creates the opportunity for journalists and media managers to tell the truth. Trust is the roots of all thinking, availability and civil communication. As such informed public trust levels have increased significantly since 2012, and trust in traditional media is at an all-time high. However, social media is facing major trust hurdles with concern around fake news and data privacy. Fake news is real. Misinformation happens and it's dangerous.

The industry has changed with the invention of the iPhone, according to E34, and you can find exactly what you want, when you want it. As such journalism has become personalized. If an individual chooses to watch a cable network of their choice, hopefully they know what biases they are viewing. It's important to give local news stations support and love. They're the ones with the boots on the ground. You'd be pleasantly surprised at how they filter out a lot of the noise that you get elsewhere. Also, it's good to have people in your life who sometimes help you disconnect from the news media. It's not about what you read; it's about how you read. Be knowledgeable about who's making, writing, publishing, and producing the news you read. It's amazing what happens when you surround yourself with people from different races, religions, and economic backgrounds. Trust comes from being in, talking to, and advocating for different communities.

"You go quicker alone but further together," according to E33.

According to E31, the education system has been repurposed from access to information, to consumption as a survival skill for the 21st century. In 10-20 years, most of our information in the world will be created by artificial intelligence. As such anything that helps build civility and trust is welcome. It takes a civil government public institution to require the infrastructure that the media needs. The lack of trust in media institutions has come to stem from our lack of trust in government institutions. Furthermore, social media drives people to loneliness, incivility, and distrust. If we want long-term sustainable results, educators need to work on de-emphasizing social media and emphasize human-to-human connections inside schools in order to increase civility.

4.4. Panel 4: Civility and the Upcoming Election (E41-E44)

This panel addressed the definition of civility. E44 discussed two vying definitions: first is the show of <u>respect</u> given to someone else; the second focuses on the content of the message. Using <u>profanity</u> or violating social norms is considered civil/ uncivil; however, norms can change over time. <u>Political</u> campaigns in particular are based in incivility: <u>TV</u> smear campaigns using visuals, auditory cues that emphasize who the "bad" candidate is are two examples of what causes polarization between voters in these times. We like our own <u>political</u> party and are indifferent towards the other candidates. Pew surveys state that individuals would be unhappy if their spouse married someone of a differing or opposing political party. According to E44, we have a history of political civility/ polarization. <u>Polarization</u> has to do with the divide between two issues and how Americans are moving more to the <u>left/right</u>, in addition to affective polarization to <u>political</u> parties and how people "<u>hate</u>" the other parties. This has increased within the last 30 years.

E43 provided guidance on news media incivility. Posting on social media p about Hurricane Dorian, and relating it to the fifth natural disaster that has hit since our current President has been in office. And how social media has given people a platform to voice their unbiased <u>opinions</u> and what that looks like on Twitter, Facebook, etc. on other platforms of social media. E44 discussed responsibilities with political content: Knowing the journalist's duty to report what is valid with what is said. For example, if the current <u>President</u> posts something on social media that is relevant or is something that is not worth reporting on…How social media is like a shiny thing that many politics

have the desire to grab and show off, but how it is important to remember that our current situation with our <u>President</u> is outside of the norm and is not like any other candidate for President we have been exposed to prior to this time. E42 discussed how a reporter's background is due to her experience building revenue and how that differs from others in the same field. How if you advertise yourself how that can affect others investments into what you are trying to sale. How politicians fall into a hole today with navigating media today can be a sort of nuisance and how to mitigate those surroundings.

On the subject of President Trump, panelists said if people are stuck in a certain mindset then it is difficult from them to stray away or see other views. Regarding a CNN story comparing Trump and Obama's successes, there was a reference to <u>racism</u> and how we might <u>pretend</u> it was not there during Obama while we know it was and is with Trump as well. They said that not all news is driven by bait and clicks, and evidence indicates people want positive news versus news that may <u>change</u> views without investigative or factual information. They emphasized how interacting with people is key. Creating civility cannot be created by calling people out because it is not taken well. Instead, focus on people who are hearing you and are your allies for it can further the spread of civility. They added the importance of seeking truth and accountability along with listening in order to understand the views of reporters and capture them in a better sense.

Regarding coverage of future controversial issues and politics, E41 says <u>political</u> stuff is not going away any time soon. The responsibility of *informing* people is becoming more and more difficult to do, <u>fact checking</u> is important. Politics has been brutal in a behind the scenes way, but has evolved in becoming more present in the up-front form. E43 says fascinating stories are the types that affect people of where they live and mostly get the ideas for people who are being affected to make it more relatable to the people in that area. It has to start with voters and positive campaigns from candidates; news will follow suit. However, stories about negative campaigns are more popular online due to bait clicks. As voters we all have <u>responsibility</u>.

As discussions of civility have appeared surrounding the Black Lives Matter Movement (Reardon, 2020), a follow-up analysis to the panel discussions was conducted. RQ2 addressed the content including themes and words used in coverage of Black Lives Matter in the *Chicago Sun Times,* the *New York Times* and the *Des Moines Register.* Based on a computational analysis, key words and phrases of Black Lives Matter coverage fell into three categories: Positive, Neutral, and Negative. Table 2 indicates the coverage was similar for the two larger newspapers. Words with negative connotation made up 39 percent and 44 percent of coverage in the *Sun Times* and the *New York Times*. Words of negative connotation made up 13 percent of coverage in the *Des Moines Register*. Table 2 also indicates words with more positive connotation made up a higher percentage of reporting in the *Des Moines Register* than the other two newspapers at 54 percent.

Table 2. Coverage of BLM Movement in Three Newspapers

Theme	Issues	Sun		
		Times/NYT/Register		
Negative	Anger, Arson, Argument, Arrested, Battle, Brutality, Colonization, Danger, Damaged, Devastated, Deaths, Horrified, Killings, Looters, Murders, Racist, Shooting, Slavery Strangleholds, Violent, Wrong, Discrimination	39%	44%	13%
Neutral	Accountability, Conversations, Citizens, Color, Curfew, Demonstration, Marching, Movement, Racial, Rally, Scared, Strife, Tension,	36%	31%	33%
Positive	Chanting, Community, Civil, Equality, Gathered, Hope, Justice, Neighborhoods, Order, Peace, Peaceful, Respect, Tolerate, Change	25%	25%	54%

5. Conclusion

Media managers discussed concern with media's potential for creating distrust and incivility online and in society. While local media leaders of this study, expressed faith in the journalism profession's commitment to honesty and fact, managers were increasingly aware that social media were often to blame for fostering incivility. Building trust was imperative in moving forward and creating credibility. However, the media managers fear that their products get tarnished by the polarization of viewpoints online. For example, in Panel 1, managers indicated one way to combat incivility is to avoid letting emotions get in the way of understanding. Acknowledging bias and mistakes was also key. When media avoid being a megaphone for issues such as "white supremacy" they can identify overarching issues in order to inspire rather than incite. Panel 2 on keeping audiences intact is where managers indicated the critical need for media to moderate conversations online. Here the emphasis was on responsibility to audiences and enforcing policies or codes, as well as anticipating audience reactions. Panel 3 was concerned with navigating discredit and disbelief from an international perspective and on disinformation spread by entities outside U.S. news media. Managers related a distrust to media with a distrust in government. Regarding elections, managers placed responsibility on reporters as a key take-away in that news judgement is when something is or is not worthy of report.

The main themes that emerged from the computational content of analysis panelist discussions were similar to the overall themes from the literature review. However, the makeup of the panelists impacted the focus of discussion. For the first panel which was made up entirely of journalists, values of media were the top priority of discussion. For the second panel which was made up of strategists and marketers, the practices of media were of greatest concern including how comment sections and conversations brand media. For the panel on disbelief which included policy and research managers, along with a PR professional and a journalist, the major issues of concern addressed differences in sectors of media and society. For example, the relations between the media and the public sphere including politics, communities, education and institutions were of greatest concern. The last panel which was made up of a mix including media managers, journalists and strategists also viewed sectors of society and media as key in the discussion of civility with social media such as Facebook playing a major role.

How are such concerns being put into practice? The main themes that emerged from the computational analysis of Black Lives Matter news stories points out the need for future study on perceptions of civility and differences between audiences, governments, public relation and advertising professionals and journalists. Most of the early coverage of the movement was focused

on negative aspects including anger, devastation, looting and violence which indicates why Black Lives Matter protesters would be upset. Presenting images of destroying property and blocking traffic is one-sided. While this was breaking news during this time period, it may not be the most useful or just way to tell a story. As the literature and panelists indicate, addressing ideas that promote violence requires alternatives approaches to hurtful messages.

The issue of Black Lives Matter was closely tied to civility/incivility issues in media and society and one worth much more analysis. The next phase of this research will delve into the context of news stories in a broadened sample both during the time of the protests and later. Future research, for example, must explore follow-up coverage of the George Floyd killing and the Black Lives Matter movement. Has coverage changed, expanded, enlightened over time? More research is also needed to assess the impact of comment sections on social media and alternative media and how media civility is being addressed in light of heightened political and health tensions that exist. How does civility and the use of language differ depending on the media platforms deployed. Another avenue of research is needed to explore differences in civility when covering politicians v. protestors or other sources of news. Many other directions exist for researchers to gain knowledge and dig deeper to identify best means of creating understanding and progress through the field of journalism.   Finally, as issues in society evolve, more research is need to analyze how coverage changes from hard news events to in-depth reporting that inevitably sheds light on a myriad of issues involved in complex controversies. Journalism has the potential to raise the consciousness of racism and other matters and ideology to inspire hope for change and more depth of understanding.

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Appendix A: Professional Background of Panelist Experts

Panel 1: Controversial Issues	Panel 2: Audiences Intact	Panel 3: Discredit and Disbelief	Panel 4: Civility and Elections
E11: Medium Market TV News Reporter	E21: Digital Strategist	E31: Director Policy Institute	E41: News Director
E12: Freelance journalist	E22: Hispanic Marketing consultant	E32: VP International Research Institute	E42: Dir. Media Int. Innovations
E13: Opinion Editor	E23: Newspaper Journalist	E33: Public Relations	E43: TV Political Reporter
E14: Large Market TV News Anchor	E24: Content Strategist, Media Conglomerate	E34: Large Market TV New Director	E44: Professor Political Advertising

Biography:

Angela Powers is a specialist in media management and entrepreneurship. Teaching awards include the University Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award at Northern Illinois University and the AEJMC MME Barry Sherman Teaching Award. Diversity initiatives include advising NABJ, receiving the Outstanding Unit Award for Enhancing Diversity at Kansas State and co-chairing the AEJMC Presidential Diversity and Inclusion Career Development Fellowship Task Force. She is a Fulbright Scholar on developing media in Eastern Europe and the Caribbean. Fellowships include teaching journalists at Al-Ahram and Al Akhbar in Egypt and research at the Media Management Transformation Center in Sweden. She has authored more than 80 peer-reviewed articles, book chapters and presentations appearing in outlets such as Journal of Media Economics. Currently, she serves as Associate Editor of the Nordic Journal of Media Management. She has also served as director of two schools of journalism and communications at Kansas State and Iowa State University. Professional experience includes television reporting on CBS and NBC affiliates.