

Identity Sorting and Political Compromise[†]

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Abstract

In this manuscript, I explore how the convergence between individuals' partisan and ideological identities—sorting—affects their propensity to value compromise. I find that citizens with sorted identities are less likely to voice support for compromise, with one important caveat: this effect is isolated among those with right- but not left-leaning identities. These differences disappear, however, when respondents are queried about the specific extent to which one's "side" deserves greater deference in the policymaking process. In this case, sorting drastically reduces the extent to which all individuals are willing to cede resources to one's out-group—even for those persons who lack a consistent framework of political attitudes. In sum, this disconnect is emblematic of the tension between abstract principles and episodic behavior that scholars have observed regarding attitudes toward public goods. While some Americans idealize compromise as a core democratic value, sorting nevertheless reduces one's propensity to accommodate out-group demands.

Key words: compromise, sorting, affective polarization, attitudinal consistency

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Politics is the art of the possible, the attainable – the art of the next best.

-Otto von Bismarck

1 Introduction

Politics is often described using game metaphors. Legislators and candidates are described as players, parties as teams, and participants as fans (c.f. Green, Palmquist, and Schickler, 2002)—even the coverage of elections is presented using frames that mimic sporting events (Lawrence, 2000). Nevertheless, the utility of this analogy is weaker beyond the immediate electoral context. While the outcomes of sporting contests are discrete and final, outcomes in politics are less simple. Elections may determine winners and losers, but effective policymaking requires members from both groups to shed those labels as they work together to successfully pass legislation.

Such compromise, however, is increasingly viewed as capitulation rather than an ideal feature of deliberative political exchange. Recent examples of interparty intransigence are replete in American politics, ranging from the one-sided passage of the Affordable Care Act in 2010, to the government shutdown over the federal budget in 2013, to the confirmation of Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch in early 2017 via the “nuclear option.” In fact, while Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) may have previously admitted that “...nobody is a dictator here. We can’t do things, one party only, in a time of divided government,” bipartisanship is nevertheless rare (Mann and Ornstein, 2012; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal, 2006).¹

Relative the behavior of their elected officeholders, the American people fare only marginally better in their desire for and willingness to accept political compromise. In fact, while the mass public pays modest lip-service to the notion that political leaders shouldn’t always get everything they want, citizens often believe that their “side” is entitled to an enormous amount of political deference (Pew, 2014). In other words,

¹ December 20, 2015. *CNN’s State of the Union with Jake Tapper*. <http://cnnpressroom.blogs.cnn.com/2015/12/20/mcconnell-well-its-pretty-clear-from-what-hillary-clinton-said-last-night-that-she-thinks-things-with-isis-are-just-fine/>

when it comes to compromising *in practice*—or, when individuals are required to belly-up to the bargaining table to make hard choices about the distribution of resources—they are much less likely to cede ground to their political opponents than they are *in principle*. Thus, citizens rarely prefer “neutral” or “moderate” policy solutions (Ahler and Broockman, 2016), much less politicians who are willing to make concessions (Harbridge, Malhotra, and Harrison, 2014; Grossman and Hopkins, 2015; Ryan, 2015).

Why do individuals resist compromise? In this manuscript, I explore how the extent to which individuals’ political identities are sorted affects the value that individuals place on compromise. I show that when partisan and ideological identities overlap, citizens are less likely to support elected officials who compromise, with one important qualification: this effect is isolated to persons with right-, but not left-leaning identities. However, when we transition to exploring the extent to which individuals are willing to cede ground to their political opponents in order to achieve their desired ends, the textured nature of this effect disappears. Even in the absence of a consistent set of ideological attitudes, sorted persons are less willing to broker balanced solutions to policy problems.

These findings are emblematic of the disconnect between a commitment to abstract principles and episodic behavior demonstrated elsewhere (e.g. Sears and Citrin, 1982; Winter and Mouritzen, 2001; Ellis and Stimson, 2012; Harbridge, Malhotra, and Harrison, 2014). Simply, when push comes to shove, citizens whose political identities align are more willing to renege on their commitment to the normative value of compromise and, instead, will prioritize their group’s interests at the expense of the competition. Thus, while many Americans consent to compromise in principle, in practice, their behavior reveals a significant resistance to bargaining with their political counterparts.

2 Compromise and its correlates

All governments must wrestle with the problem of distilling the competing preferences of its citizens into tangible policy outputs. If representatives must balance majoritarian policymaking rules with policy options that faithfully adhere to their constituency's desires, then some type of bipartisan negotiation is usually required to resolve these competing demands. Habermas (1994, pg. 5) describes the place of compromise within liberalism thusly:

[C]ompromises make up the bulk of political processes. Under conditions of religious, or in any way cultural and societal pluralism, politically relevant goals are often selected by interests and value orientations that are by no means constitutive for the identity of the community at large.

Why is compromise attractive? While some political compromises are, of course, undesirable in that they may violate a community's standards, the positive value of compromise is that it functions as "an agreement in which all sides sacrifice something in order to improve on the status quo from their perspective, and in which sacrifices are at least partly determined by the other side's will" (Gutmann and Thompson, 2013, pg. 10). Thus, not only does a general resistance to compromise implausibly presume that such change is uniformly undesirable,² but it implies that bargaining in return for concessions is objectionable, which ultimately privileges the status quo in a way that is incompatible with both liberal and conservative approaches to policy problems.³ Finally, an unwillingness to compromise undermines the shared trust and respect that are needed to effectively pursue self-governance. Such respect is

² Contestation, in fact, is a vibrant component to democracy—at least as important to democratic health as "consensus" (Tilly and Tarrow, 2006; Mill, 1977).

³ Consider a tax policy that is not ideal for large swaths of a mass public. If altering that policy benefited constituencies for both parties, yet one party refuses to compromise on even slight alterations to that policy because in so doing they either lose some measure of leverage or violate second-order intellectual preferences, both constituencies suffer as the status quo prevails.

vital in that it buoys peaceable interactions even in the face of irresolvable moral disagreement (Gutmann and Thompson, 2013).⁴

If compromise is valuable for both pragmatic and ethical reasons, then why are individuals unwilling to pursue it? Consider first the relationship between values and compromise. If compromise requires citizens to default on some of their strongly-held principles to find a consensual agreement, then it makes sense that individuals would resist this type of bargaining because it ostensibly violates these core values. George H.W. Bush's abandoning his campaign promise to not raise taxes in 1988, for example, was not only met by deep dismay from his supporters, but contributed to weak support during his reelection campaign. More recently, the success of the Tea Party during the 2010 midterm elections showcased how violators of party principles were dramatically punished at the polls. Individuals resist renegeing on their values and punish those who do.

In particular, recent research suggests that moral values, a subset of value dispositions that are not necessarily filtered through a cost-benefit framework (Tetlock et al. 2000; Bennis, Medin, and Bartels, 2010), are particularly binding in relation to compromise. Ryan (2015) demonstrates that these attitudes fundamentally reorient how individuals approach political choices. Rather than approaching choice as utility maximizers, priming moral considerations causes individuals to adhere to strict rules. In turn, this reduces the likelihood that citizens prefer compromise.

A second facet of social-psychological explanations for compromise is rooted in the non-cognitive aspects of information-processing. Given the ubiquity and power of emotions like fear, anxiety, and hope, it is possible that these affective responses shape whether and how individuals acquiesce to mutually-beneficial (and mutually-costly) policy solutions. The relationship between fear and compromise, however, is complex. While some studies show anxiety begets a willingness to compromise (e.g. Wolak and

⁴ As Gutmann and Thompson (2010, footnote 25) note, framing compromise's value in terms of mutual respect helps to redress some of the criticism that a wholly "pragmatic" approach to compromise ignores the moral constraints that are imposed on the boundaries of acceptable compromise.

Marcus, 2007), other research shows that fear regarding the wellbeing of one's group may decrease individuals' propensity to engage in compromise (Bar-Tal, 2001).⁵

In contrast to these explanations, realist theories of group interactions argue that compromise is closely related to power inequalities and, by extension, threat. Drawing from research on interstate relations (Posen, 1993) and organization development (Bazerman and Neale, 1992), this approach assumes that group behavior is not so much a function of emotions, but is instead governed by the extent to which an in-group feels threatened by an out-group.⁶ In this telling, negotiation breaks down when group members view mutual decision-making as a zero-sum game—or a scenario in which one side wins only when the other side loses (Thompson, 1995). Research indicates, for example, that perceptions of threat increase political intolerance (Marcus et al., 1995) and punitive and aggressive behaviors toward out-groups (Huddy et al., 2005), which, in turn, decrease more moderate political outcomes (Gordon and Arian, 2001).

While this framework helps explain intergroup behavior in severe ethnic conflicts, it also characterizes the nature of political exchange in American politics. Consider a recent editorial appearing in the *New York Times*, which likened Republicans' and Democrats' "zero-sum thinking" to the sectarian conflict between two branches of Islam. "Because whether you're talking about Shiites and Sunnis—or Iranians and Saudis, Israelis and Palestinians, Turks and Kurds—a simply binary rule dominates their politics: "I am strong, why should I compromise? I am weak, how can

⁵ Extending the textured nature of the relationship between fear and compromise, Spanovic et al. (2010) find that the *status* of conflict moderates the effects of fear on compromise: when a conflict is ongoing, fear decreases compromise, while feelings of fearfulness during the resolution of a conflict often portend greater compromise. As Halperin, Porat, and Wohl (2013, pg. 810) write, such "collective angst has pluripotentiality—it undermines willingness to compromise in some contexts, but will facilitate it in others."

⁶ The hard distinction between this approach to compromise and an emotion-based one is rooted in the longstanding differentiation between cognition and affect within social psychology. Whereas a realist perspective stylizes threat as a form of cognitive assessment, fear is instead conceptualized as a *reaction* to such perceptions of threat (Lazarus, 1991; Maoz and McCauley, 2005).

I compromise?...Are we all just Shiites and Sunnis now?" (Friedman, 2016). Although something of a rhetorical exaggeration, recent work does show that partisan memberships are extraordinarily binding in the context of intergroup behavior. Citizens have difficulty in overcoming partisan biases in nonpolitical settings (e.g. Iyengar and Westwood, 2015), much less adjudicating matters of public policy (e.g. Harbridge, Malhotra, and Harrison, 2014).

Taken as a whole, these are all plausible explanations for why individuals might shun political compromise. However, this extant body of research on compromise has not yet grappled with how the ongoing sorting of the mass public affects these orientations. Drawing explicitly on the group-based nature of party politics and political group memberships, I argue that as individuals' political identities align, their willingness to voice that compromise is desirable and select legislators who engage in political bargaining ought to decrease. Detailing this theoretical linkage is the task to which I now turn.

3 Sorting and compromise

Social identities are powerful associations that involve the incorporation of a particular group membership into an individual's self-concept. According to Tajfel (1981, pg. 255), these identities comprise the combination of objective group membership combined with the subjective "value and emotional significance attached to [such] membership." Driven by a need for positive distinctiveness, social identities encourage individuals to favorably prioritize in-group over out-group members in order to protect their group's status.

Political identities fit this description (Huddy, Mason, and Aaore, 2015). Not only do partisans favor group members over non-group members (Mason, 2015), but partisan identification strongly biases how individuals interpret information (e.g. Bartels, 2002; Leeper, 2014; Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus, 2013; Iyengar and Westwood, 2015). Much like the passionate fans who cheer their favorite team in the heat of a competition, partisans' internalized sense of partisan identity is intimately

related to their group's victories and defeats; it is personal, rooted deeply within an individual's subconscious (Theodoridis, 2013).

In a similar respect, ideological or "liberal-conservative" identity also reflects these qualities. While ideology is often conceptualized in terms of individuals' policy preferences, a growing body of research treats liberal-conservative identification as a form of social identity (Malka and Llekes, 2010; Devine, 2015; Mason, 2016). Like partisanship, ideological identity corresponds to a group-based understanding of politics and strongly reflects affective, symbolic attachments to the liberal and conservative labels (Conover and Feldman, 1981; Zschirnt, 2011). Simply, self-identification as an ideologue constitutes a social identity insofar as an individual's self-perception as an ideologue is "experienced as a point of similarity with other in-group members and as a point of collective difference with out-group members" (Malka and Llekes, 2010, p. 160).

Given that the mere categorization of oneself as a group-member generates intergroup prejudice that reshapes economic exchange (Tajfel, 1970), political compromise, which hinges at least minimally on some degree of material, psychological, or status loss, ought to be sensitive to the strength of the underlying identities that structure intergroup relations. But while past research has examined the relationship between compromise and partisanship (Harbridge, Malhotra, and Harrison, 2014), political identities (partisanship, ideological identification) do not exist independent of each other. What happens to individuals' attitudes toward compromise, then, when these identities converge? That is to say, how does *sorting* between partisanship and ideological identification affect citizens' willingness to compromise?

3.1 Behavioral consequences of sorting

Most individuals possess multiple group identities, which variously affect a range of assessments and behaviors (Deaux, 1996; Brewer and Pierce, 2005). For example, individuals may evaluate out-group members on the basis of one dominant membership (Macrae, Bodenhausen, and Milne, 1995), evaluate individuals as a function of some additive combination of their memberships (Brown and Turner, 1979), or even evaluate others based on a “compound category with emergent properties that are not predicted from the contributing categories separately” (Roccas and Brewer, 2002, pg. 88). Of the different permutations that an individual’s identities may take when combined, this latter compound category—what Roccas and Brewer term “intersected identities”—represents an arrangement of social identities where an individual simultaneously self-categorizes with more than one social identity, yet maintains a single supraordinate sense of an in-group / out-group distinction based on the combination of those constituent identities.

Prior work on partisan-ideological sorting, or the overlap between partisan and ideological identities, indicates that the convergence of these group memberships most clearly reflects intersected social identities in that the in-group / out-group distinctions that characterize each *individual* identity are magnified when they are *combined*. For example, Mason (2015, 2016) finds that greater overlap between political identities is responsible for increased forms of social polarization, where strongly sorted individuals are more likely to possess affective bias toward out-group members. Elsewhere, Davis and Mason (2015) show that these biases have pervasive behavioral ramifications: as individuals become more sorted over time, they are less likely to support candidates of opposing parties (i.e. split their ticket).

If a lone social identity is sufficient to accentuate out-group memberships, then the combinatory nature of identity sorting ought to enhance biases toward out-group members. In the context of intergroup bargaining, which requires a willingness to release psychological or material group resources, such sorting should effectively narrow one’s in-group while simultaneously enlarging the out-group—a recipe for decreasing

compromise by via behavioral rigidity and a disregard for actions that would lead to a potential loss of material or social status. Specifically, by amplifying the importance and salience of one's interlinked group memberships, such sorting ought to decrease an individual's preference for representatives who will compromise.

H1: As the correspondence between an individual's partisan and ideological identities increases, their willingness to compromise should decrease.

3.2 Are the effects of sorting textured?

Sorting should reduce compromise. Yet, based on the underlying nature of particular political attachments, it may be the case that the effects of sorting on compromise are contingent upon the groups with which individuals identify. Consider the different motivations and compositional qualities of the Republican and Democratic Parties. Historically, the Republican Party has been described as unitary and hierarchical, where purity, deference, and loyalty to the party are prioritized and members are bound together by common ideological principles. In contrast, the Democratic Party is more pluralistic and polycentric, comprised of a coalition of constituencies with varying social, economic, and political demands (Freeman, 1986). Thus, while “Republicans face an enduring internal tension between adherence to doctrine and the inevitable concession or failures inherent in governing—a conflict that is exacerbated by the presence of an influential cadre of movement leaders devoted to publicly policing ideological orthodoxy,” Democrats, alternatively, “lack a powerful internal movement designed to impose ideological discipline on elected officials, which gives Democratic officeholders more freedom to maneuver pragmatically...” (Grossman and Hopkins, 2015, pg. 120).

These characteristics are important because they have produced sharply divergent approaches to policymaking. Whereas both parties have objectively polarized (e.g. McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal, 2006), which ought to generally reduce baseline rates of legislative cooperation for all elected officials, Grossman and Hopkins (2015, pg. 12) allege that the Republican Party has especially teetered toward “near-automatic

obstruction of initiatives proposed by the opposition.” If correct in their assessment, then this recalcitrance constitutes a salient cue, or informational signal, that flows from elites to the public that might structure how members of these different groups approach compromise.

These institutional differences, however, do not exist in a vacuum. In fact, these divergent organizational approaches dovetail with other less political—though perhaps more fundamental—differences in how ideologues view reality. While conservatives and liberals possess distinct approaches to questions of morality (e.g. Haidt, 2009), Hibbing, Smith and Alford (2014) contend that the central organizational principle that underscores differences in everything from artistic tastes to the psychological desire for closure to information-seeking behaviors is conservatives’ physiological and psychological tendency toward negativity. Specifically, “compared with liberals, conservatives tend to register greater physiological responses to such stimuli and also to devote more psychological resources to them” (297). If emotional and cognitive rigidity are congenital features of conservative identification, then the combination of conservatism with Republicanism, a party affiliation marked by a recent, yet distinct resistance to political negotiation, may moderate the effect of sorting on compromise. Thus, I expect that the negative effect of sorting on compromise ought to be particularly strong for those persons with right-leaning identities.

H2: Higher levels of sorting among those with right-leaning identities should reduce a preference for compromise more than those with left-leaning ones.

3.3 Attitudinal consistency, identity, and compromise

While it is feasible that convergence between political identities may decrease compromise, what role might attitudes play? Scholars have long inquired into the systemization of individuals’ preferences (Converse, 1964, 2000). Although constraint among mass preferences remains low (Lupton, Myers, and Thornton, 2015), recent research nevertheless demonstrates that there is a growing division in the way that partisans approach a wide range of public policy issues (e.g. DiMaggio, Evans, and

Bryson, 1996; Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope, 2005; Baldassarri and Gelman, 2008). While these divisions are sometimes described errantly as “polarization” (e.g. Pew, 2016), the matching between policy attitudes and partisanship is better described as “sorting” (Levendusky, 2009) or perhaps “issue partisanship” (Fiorina and Abrams, 2008; Bafumi and Shapiro, 2009). In either case, these divisions imply that greater consistency among individuals’ political attitudes exists. Is there a distinction to be made between this *attitudinal* consistency and sorted *identities*? If so, then how might this attitudinal “constraint” affect the relationship between identity sorting and compromise?

Consider that sorting involves the matching of ideology to partisanship, yet it is possible to treat liberal-conservative policy attitudes and liberal-conservative identity as complementary parts of how individuals think about ideal approaches to social, economic, and political order. Put another way, if the former category of preferences comprise the particular policy recommendations that structure how citizens think about the implementation of governmental regulations, then the latter constitutes a group-based orientation that taps into affective, and even tribal-like, preferences for a social group. While there is some overlap between this ideological self-identification and issue-based ideology, a growing body of work conveys that these are, in fact, distinct facets of ideology (Conover and Feldman, 1981; Malka and Llekes, 2010; Ellis and Stimson, 2012; Devine, 2015).

Conceivably, such attitudinal consistency and identity sorting may exert similar or differentiated effects on an individual’s propensity to compromise. If issue consistency reflects a form of systematic coherence among preferences, then I expect that greater consistency among one’s policy preferences ought to undercut an individuals’ willingness to accept compromise. However, given 1) the tribal nature inherent in identities (Mason, 2015; Mason and Davis, 2016), and 2) that political compromise most frequently involves *intergroup* bartering, identity sorting may be sufficient to reduce a citizen’s willingness to compromise independent a coherent framework of attitudinal preferences. In this way, we can imagine that attitudinal consistency and identity sorting might contribute independent or, perhaps, multiplicative effects on sorting.

4 Data

To test these hypotheses, I draw on two datasets: the 2012 American National Election Studies' Evaluations of Government survey (ANES EoG) and the Pew Research Center's 2014 Political Polarization and Typology survey (Pew PPT).⁷

4.1 Operationalizing compromise

There are a variety of ways that one might think about individuals' preferences toward compromise. One productive way to conceptualize these orientations is to distinguish between attitudes about compromise as a "normative" or "social" good, what we might label preferences regarding *compromise in principle*, and attitudes toward the distribution or allocation of resources relating to actual political bargaining, what I term *compromise in practice*.

I begin with the concept of compromise in principle, or the value that respondents assign to the importance of political leaders finding compromise. Commonly, many surveys assess whether individuals are willing to consent to the idea that compromise is a valuable trait for elected officials to exhibit. In the ANES EoG survey, respondents are asked whether they prefer a leader (U.S Representative or President) who "sticks to their principles regardless of outcomes" or someone who "will compromise to get things done." Responses to this question are coded 0 for "wants leader who sticks to principles" and 1 for "wants leader who compromises." Similarly, the Pew PPT survey asks respondents to choose between "I like elected officials who make compromises with people they disagree with," coded 1, and "I like elected officials who stick to their positions," coded 0. In both cases, higher values convey a preference for compromise.

In contrast to valuing compromise in principle, one practical way of thinking about compromise is to consider how much deference any one side should receive in a policy debate. Because successful policymaking often requires leveraging certain

⁷ In addition, I provide a series of robustness checks in Appendix C, which draw on an original survey collected to test alternative explanations for compromise.

resources or favors in order to receive desirable concessions, we can assess the propensity of individuals to engage in practical instances of compromise by examining respondents' attitudes toward their willingness to cede ground to their opponents during the process of negotiation. Specifically, the Pew PPT survey asks individuals what the distribution of goods should look like when political leaders engage in policymaking: "When Barack Obama and Republican leaders differ over the most important issues facing the country, where should things end up?" Responses to this item range from 0, "Barack Obama gets all demands" to 100 "Republicans get all demands." The value 50, then, represents an equal distribution of the demands that both "sides" get during negotiations.

I create a metric that reflects an applied sense of compromise by folding responses on the above variable at the value "50." Values on this new variable range from 0, or a preference for "pure compromise" where both sides yield equally, to 50, or a preference for uncompromising politics where one side receives all demands. As individuals transition from 0 to 50, the extent to which they believe that one (their) side should receive total deference in the policymaking process increases. Thus, larger values can be interpreted by an aversion to an even or balanced trade.

The careful reader might wonder, however, whether this distinction between compromise in principle and in practice is valid. In other words, do these two survey items really capture different facets of compromise? Fortunately, because the Pew PPT survey includes survey items reflecting both constructs, we can assess the extent to which these items are interdependent. Comparing the variables *compromise in principle* with *compromise in practice* outlined above, the Pearson's correlation coefficient measures -0.03, conveying that there is virtually no systematic relationship between these two items. In effect, then, the in-group bias item seems to reliably pick up on a different facet of compromise than whether individuals prefer elected officials who prioritize and pursue compromise.

4.2 Identity sorting

Prior research operationalizes *identity sorting* by measuring the overlap between ideological and partisan identification and then multiplying the resulting value by the strength of those identities (Mason, 2015; Davis and Dunaway, 2016). Liberal-conservative and partisan identification both range from left- (1) to right-leaning orientations (7). By subtracting and taking the absolute value of one self-placement (ideology) from the other (partisanship), we can derive a measure of overlap where lower values convey perfect overlap and high values significant discordance between identities. To make better sense of this item, the overlap between identities is then reverse-coded so that larger (smaller) values represent greater (less) overlap. To this score I add the value (1) and then multiply it by folded measures of partisan and liberal-conservative strength. The final variable is then rescaled to range from 0, “low overlap, weak (cross-cutting) identities,” to 1, “perfect overlap, strong identities.”⁸

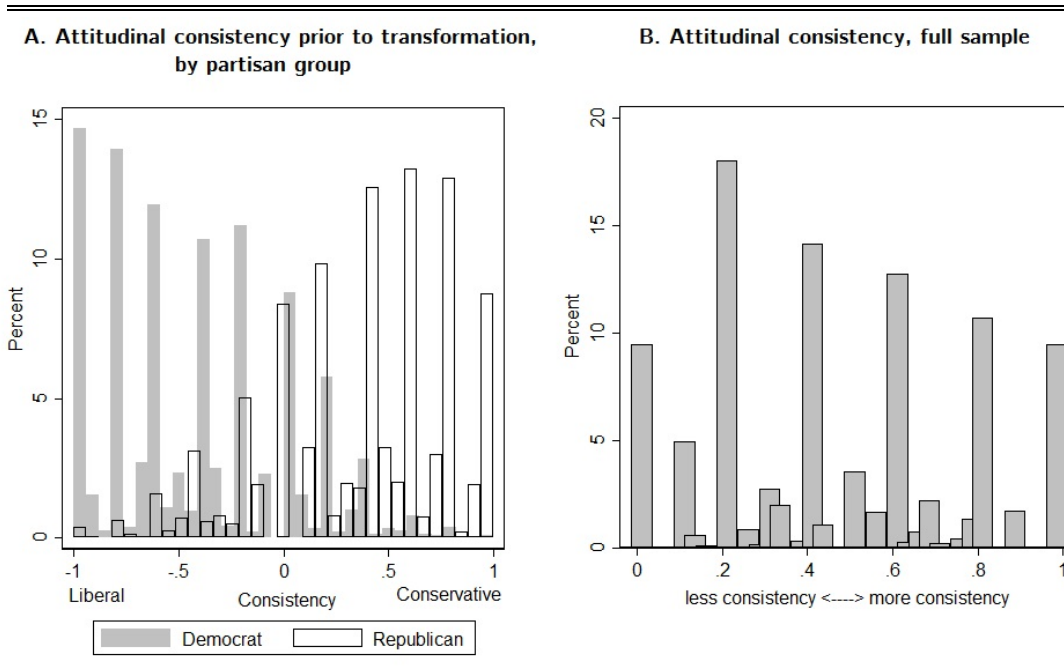
4.3 Attitudinal consistency

One way of thinking about a resistance to compromise includes the extent to which individuals possess a coherent worldview. When it was first released to the general public, the Pew PPT survey received notable attention in the popular press for a series of graphics that showed how the mass public’s preference orientations had become more consistent over time. Information on ten issues were collected, including respondents’ opinions on government regulation, waste, how government cares for the poor and needy, affirmative action, corporate profits, environmental policy, the size of the military, and same-sex marriage. For each policy item, individuals are given a pair of statements from which to choose the statement that comes closest to their views.

⁸ In the Pew PPT survey, ideology is measured using a five category liberal-conservative self-placement. As such, I condense Independent leaners with weak partisans, which results in a five-category partisanship item (Petrocik [2009] argues that there are few differences between these groups. However, I provide an alternative measurement scheme in the Appendix B that uses the full spectrum of partisan responses to capture sorting). Importantly, results are robust across specifications.

These statements effectively translate into a “conservative” and a “liberal” perspective, with a third option that comprises “both / neither / don’t know.” For example, regarding the effectiveness of government, individuals are asked to choose between “Government is almost always wasteful and inefficient” (conservative response) and “Government often does a better job than people give it credit for” (liberal response). Selecting the conservative response on any given policy item is coded (+1), the liberal perspective (-1), and the neutral category 0.⁹

Figure 1. Attitudinal consistency among respondents



Source: 2014 Pew Polarization and Typology survey

Notes: Panel A conveys full range of “liberal” and “conservative” consistency broken down by partisan affiliation (leaners collapsed with other partisans). Panel B conveys range of attitudinal consistency after transformation, where 0 conveys no consistency and 1 conveys perfect ideological consistency across ten survey items.

Using responses to these ten questions, I then construct a measure of *attitudinal consistency*. I do this by first averaging all responses together. Recalling that “liberal” responses take the value (-1) and “conservative” responses (+1), the range on this new

⁹ The full list of these items is available in Appendix A.

variable comprises a continuum that reflects liberal-to-conservative consistency (values near or at 0 convey a mix of liberal and conservative preferences). Panel A in Figure 1 breaks these consistency scores down by partisanship, which illustrates that, as expected, Democrats espouse liberal attitudes and Republicans conservative ones. I then transform this variable by taking its absolute value to purge the directionality from the scale. By folding the variable at the value 0, the resulting item ranges from 0, or no directional / inconsistent preferences, to 1, maximally consistent preferences across all ten items. Panel B in Figure 1 depicts the full distribution of the attitudinal consistency item used in the forthcoming analyses.

4.4 Control variables

There are a number of covariates that might explain individuals' orientations toward compromise for which we ought to account. First, individuals with high levels of *political knowledge* may be more likely to understand that politics often requires compromise to achieve one's ends. In the ANES EoG survey, political knowledge comprises an additive index of correctly identifying the Prime Minister of England, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the area in which the US government spends the least amount of money. In the Pew PPT survey, a political knowledge index accounts for correctly identifying which party enjoys House and Senate majorities, as well as which party prefers tax increases. The resulting indices are coded consistently such that they range from 0, "no correct answers," to 1, "correctly answers all knowledge items."

Similar to the relationship between political knowledge and compromise, we might expect *news consumption* and *political interest* to be related to compromise insofar as those persons who pay greater attention to political events may be more likely to perceive that compromise is a social good. The former item is simply the number of days that a respondent watches or reads the news, ranging from 1 to 7, while the latter variable ranges from 0, "not very interested," to 1, "very interested."

A recent study of compromise also demonstrates its close relationship with *moral values*. Ryan (2015) shows how preferences grounded in strong moral convictions are much less malleable when it comes to compromising. In the ANES EoG survey, respondents are asked to what degree their attitudes on their self-professed most important issue is rooted in moral values. Responses range from 1 “not at all,” to 5, “a great deal.” Related to these values, I also control, where possible, for individuals’ religious identities. Individuals who consider themselves *Evangelicals* are coded 1 and otherwise 0. So, too, are those who identify as *religiously secular* or *religious liberal*.

Finally, I control for a number of standard demographic covariates. Respondents who identify as *white* or *black* are coded 1 and otherwise 0. *Age* ranges from a minimum value of 17 to 97 years old. *Education* is coded somewhat differently across surveys, but values on this item are always recoded to range from 0, “lowest category of educational attainment,” to 1, “highest completed degree.”

5 Results

The models presented in Table 1 depict the relationship between sorting and an individual’s propensity to prefer an elected official who either sticks with their principles or compromises to achieve their goals. I find that, for both referents (legislator, president), analysis of the full sample does not produce a significant coefficient estimate for identity sorting (Models 1 and 4). Instead, the effect of sorting on the likelihood that an individual will value elected officials who compromise is isolated to those persons with right-leaning identities (Models 3 and 6).¹⁰

¹⁰ If we relax our standards of significance to $p < 0.10$, however, sorting actually has a *positive* effect on a preference for a representative who engages in compromise among those with left-leaning identities. In that case, greater sorting on political identities generates *greater* commitment to the standard of compromise. The coefficient for “US President” is similarly positive for this group of persons, although the estimate is considerably less precise given that the standard error is roughly double the coefficient estimate. On balance, then, the positive effect of sorting on compromise for persons with left-leaning identities appears both isolated and relatively weak.

Table 1. The effect of sorting on preference for elected officials who compromise

	Would you prefer a ___ who sticks to his or her principles no matter what, or who compromises to get things done?					
	<i>Representative in U.S. Congress</i>			<i>U.S. President</i>		
	Full sample	Left	Right	Full sample	Left	Right
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Sorting	-0.12 (0.28)	0.85 (0.55)	-0.80* (0.42)	-0.25 (0.27)	0.22 (0.48)	-0.79* (0.42)
Political knowledge	0.91** (0.29)	1.06* (0.51)	-0.01 (0.41)	0.88** (0.28)	0.73 (0.45)	0.39 (0.41)
News consumption	0.08* (0.03)	0.06 (0.05)	0.12** (0.05)	0.06 (0.03)	0.02 (0.05)	0.10* (0.05)
Education	0.80** (0.27)	1.75** (0.46)	0.58 (0.36)	0.55* (0.26)	1.07* (0.43)	0.36 (0.35)
Evangelical ID	-0.81** (0.25)	0.93 (0.57)	-1.21** (0.30)	-0.68** (0.24)	0.35 (0.49)	-1.15** (0.29)
Secular ID	0.99 (0.88)	0.69 (1.15)	0.30 (1.64)	0.97 (0.85)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.99 (1.52)
Religious liberal ID	0.43 (0.40)	-0.35 (0.45)	3.61** (1.23)	-0.00 (0.36)	-0.50 (0.42)	0.77 (1.29)
Moral values	-0.14* (0.06)	-0.14 (0.10)	-0.22** (0.08)	-0.10 (0.06)	-0.01 (0.09)	-0.17* (0.08)
Tea Party member	-0.55 (0.36)	-----	-0.12 (0.37)	-0.85* (0.38)	0.46 (1.60)	-0.42 (0.37)
White	0.39 (0.24)	0.84* (0.36)	0.36 (0.38)	0.70** (0.23)	1.06** (0.32)	0.64 (0.38)
Black	0.86* (0.38)	0.99 (0.51)	-----	1.26** (0.38)	1.15* (0.46)	-----
Male	-0.05 (0.17)	0.02 (0.29)	-0.14 (0.23)	0.13 (0.16)	0.21 (0.26)	-0.09 (0.23)
Constant	-0.32 (0.35)	-1.11 (0.57)	0.64 (0.56)	-0.54 (0.35)	-1.08* (0.52)	0.26 (0.56)
Pseudo R2	0.074	0.131	0.110	0.068	0.077	0.090
N	1,233	548	535	1,233	543	535

Source: 2012 ANES Evaluations of Government Survey

Notes: Coefficient estimates convey log-odds ratios; standard errors in parentheses. Categories “left” and “right” correspond to Democratic and Republican identifiers. Empty cells convey no observations on that variable. *p<0.05, **p<0.01, one-tailed test.

How large is the magnitude of this effect? Consider respondents with right-leaning identities and their attitudes regarding legislative compromise (Model 3): moving from minimum to maximum values of sorting results in a 20 percentage point reduction in the probability that a respondent prefers a legislator who will compromise relative one that sticks to their principles.¹¹ Although the average person, on balance, is likely to prefer representatives who compromise ($\bar{y} = 60\%$), maximum levels of partisan-ideological sorting among these persons implies that, on balance, the highly sorted conservative-Republican will prefer elected representatives who do *not* compromise.¹²

How robust are the contours of this observed relationship between sorting and compromise in principle? Table 2 depicts a series of models that reproduce the analyses found in Table 1 using Pew data. In an analysis of the full sample (Model 1), transitioning from minimum to maximum levels of sorting decreases the predicted probability of a preference for compromise by roughly 50 percent. However, again, sorting exerts a textured effect on a preference for elected officials who compromise with people with whom they disagree. As the split-sample models indicate, the effect of sorting on compromise is isolated to those with right- (Model 3) but not left-leaning identities (Model 2).

¹¹ Splitting the sample into these two groups makes immediate comparisons easier. However, models that include an interaction term between group type and sorting are available in the Appendix. These analyses indicate that these differences are persist at the conventional thresholds of statistical significance.

¹² Interestingly, the split-sample models also indicate that the effects of certain control variables contrast across those persons with left- and right-leaning identities. Respondents who belong to left-leaning groups with higher levels of political knowledge and education are 17 and 28 percentage points more likely to value compromise, while evangelicals with right-leaning identities are about 11 points more likely to prefer resolute and uncompromising elected officials. For those respondents that strongly link their moral values to issues of personal import, the likelihood of valuing an elected official who will compromise decreases modestly by about 5 percentage points.

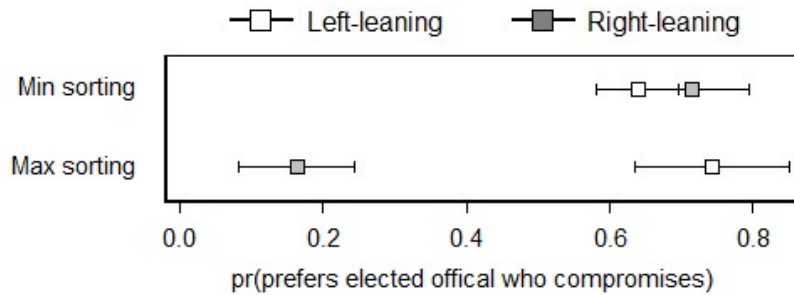
Table 2. The effect of sorting on a preference for elected officials who compromise, 2014
Pew PPT

	Full sample	Left- leaning	Right- leaning	Interaction model
Sorting	-1.32** (0.22)	0.09 (0.43)	-2.48** (0.49)	0.32 (0.31)
3-category PID	-----	-----	-----	0.12 (0.10)
Sorting × PID	-----	-----	-----	-1.50** (0.21)
Attitudinal consistency	0.58** (0.18)	1.36** (0.36)	-0.49 (0.40)	0.48* (0.19)
Age	-1.02** (0.28)	-1.34* (0.54)	0.28 (0.64)	-0.84** (0.28)
Education	1.02** (0.23)	1.12* (0.45)	-0.25 (0.48)	0.87** (0.23)
Black	0.36 (0.20)	0.11 (0.33)	0.99 (0.73)	0.23 (0.20)
White	0.43** (0.16)	0.33 (0.30)	0.77* (0.39)	0.55** (0.16)
Income	0.43* (0.19)	0.35 (0.37)	0.39 (0.41)	0.54** (0.19)
Male	-0.04 (0.10)	0.24 (0.20)	-0.19 (0.22)	0.05 (0.10)
Political interest	0.41* (0.18)	0.80* (0.36)	0.65 (0.42)	0.50** (0.19)
Knowledge	0.56** (0.20)	0.87* (0.38)	-0.39 (0.44)	0.48* (0.21)
Constant	-0.65** (0.24)	-1.32** (0.48)	0.04 (0.58)	-0.95** (0.26)
N	2,449	779	566	2,449

Source: Pew Polarization and Political Typology survey, 2014

Notes: *p<0.05, **p<0.01; standard errors in parentheses

Figure 2. Predicted probability estimates of preference for elected officials who compromise



Source: Pew Polarization and Political Typology survey, 2014

Notes: Estimates derived from Model 4, Table 2. Categories “left-” and “right-leaning” correspond to Democrat and Republican identifiers.

Leveraging estimates drawn from Model 4 in Table 2, Figure 2 plots the marginal effect of sorting on compromise for persons with left- and right-leaning identities. Beginning first with those persons with left-leaning identities, the extent to which a person is sorted exerts no discernable effect on a preference for elected officials who compromise. However, for those persons with right-leaning identities, maximum levels of sorting reduce the likelihood of preferring elected officials who compromise by almost 60 percentage points in relation to those who possess minimal levels of sorting.

Across both datasets, the evidence presented here indicates that identity sorting exerts a textured effect on individuals’ orientations toward compromise as a social good.¹³ However, when it comes to the practical business of politics—that is, when individuals are actually required to acknowledge the extent to which they are willing to forego resources to achieve their preferred political goals—do we observe that the contours of this one-sided effect persist? We do not.

¹³ In Appendix C, I provide a supplementary analysis of a sample collected from Amazon’s mTurk worker pool that controls for additional covariates like out-party fear, out-party affect, need for cognition, and personality traits associated with orientations toward compromise. The results presented there robust to a variety of model specifications: even controlling for these alternative explanations, sorting exerts a strong, directional effect on orientations toward compromise.

Turning to the analyses presented in Table 3, I explore whether individuals believe that competing political actors should receive different levels of deference in the policymaking process. Beginning first with an analysis of the full sample, we see that identity sorting correlates with a preference for one-sided policymaking. As individuals' partisan and ideological identities converge, they are more likely to believe that one (their) side should receive more of its demands.

However, while we might expect those persons with right-leaning identities to be biased toward in-group deference beyond those with left-leaning identities (an assumption borne out in the previous set of analyses), the data reveal precisely the opposite pattern here. As the coefficient for the interaction between sorting and the three-category partisanship variable in Model 2 indicates, persons with left-leaning identities are much more likely to believe that their group should receive all of its demands relative those persons with right-leaning identities. Moreover, the difference in magnitude is statistically significant (Figure 3). Putting this into realistic context, the extent to which liberal Democrats convey that then-President Obama should receive his demands regarding policy is almost 50 percent greater than conservative Republicans' preferences regarding the corresponding deference to which their own side should receive.

How do we square this evidence with the results that indicate that sorting among those belonging to the left has no effect on abstract commitments to compromise? In light of this evidence, does the earlier finding presented in Figure 2 imply that citizens who belong to left-leaning groups are disingenuous about their "true" orientations toward compromise? Could it be that in spite of a generalized commitment to compromise in principle these citizens are secretly harboring nefarious attitudes toward working with the other political team?

Table 3. Who gets what? Compromise in practice

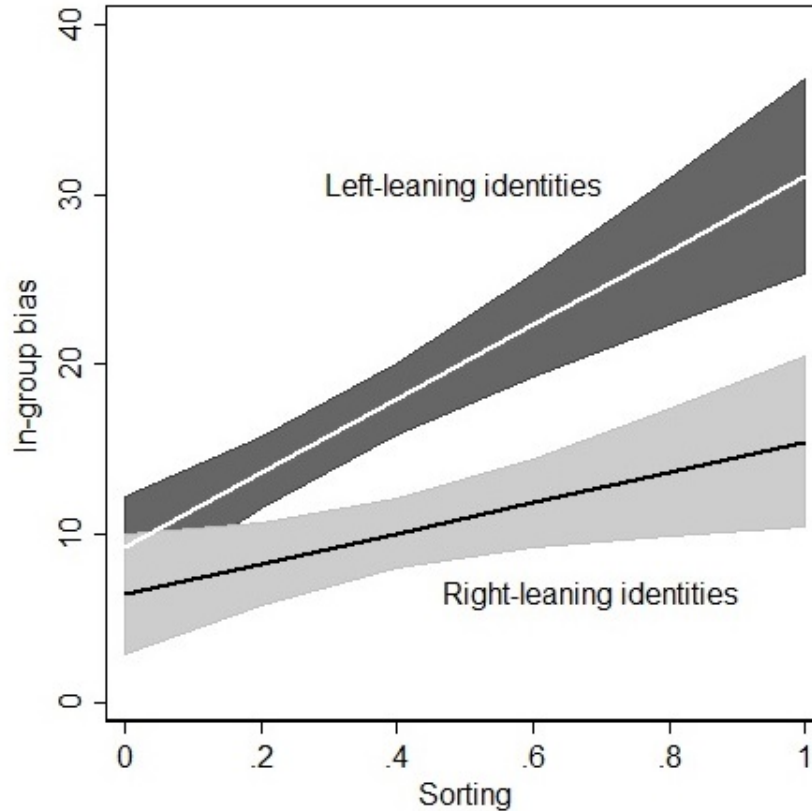
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Sorting	17.41** (2.71)	23.39** (3.42)	17.97** (5.09)
Attitudinal consistency	0.81 (2.04)	-0.55 (2.03)	1.07 (2.87)
Three-category PID	----	-2.29* (1.00)	----
Sorting × PID	----	-5.32* (2.15)	----
Sorting × consistency	----	----	-0.97 (7.32)
Age	-1.80 (2.83)	-1.59 (2.82)	-1.81 (2.83)
Education	-0.92 (2.41)	-2.02 (2.40)	-0.92 (2.41)
Black	2.25 (2.49)	0.76 (2.44)	2.24 (2.49)
White	-2.58 (1.77)	-1.44 (1.73)	-2.59 (1.77)
Income	-1.84 (2.02)	-0.88 (1.97)	-1.84 (2.01)
Male	0.62 (1.07)	1.48 (1.05)	0.62 (1.07)
Political interest	3.35 (2.02)	3.73 (2.00)	3.35 (2.02)
Knowledge	2.00 (2.24)	1.57 (2.25)	2.01 (2.25)
Constant	7.12** (2.47)	8.24** (2.60)	7.01** (2.58)
R2	0.09	0.12	0.09
N	1,167	1,167	1,167

Source: 2014 Pew Polarization and Political Typology survey

Notes: Robust standard errors presented in parentheses; *p<0.05, **p<0.01

Figure 3. The effects of sorting on compromise in practice by group type

When Barack Obama and Republican leaders differ over the most important issues facing the country, where should things end up?



Source: 2014 Pew Polarization survey

Notes: Dependent variable ranges from 0, which conveys neutral responses or “a point of compromise,” to 50, which conveys that respondent believes that their side should “get everything they want.” (2) Estimates derived from interaction model available in Appendix.

Not necessarily. Regarding preferences for elected officials who compromise, it could be the case that there are social desirability or self-moderation pressures at play, where those with left-leaning identities are conforming to group-centric pressures of appearing like good, open-minded, and democratic citizens (whereas those with right-leaning ones feel little pressure to obscure their opinions). Alternatively, perhaps Democrats’ sensitivity to seeing their side receive greater concessions is unremarkable. Institutionally, Democrats do not have a storied history of being an opposition party—or at least not an effective one. Republican legislators, on the other hand, willingly

accepted the label “The Party of No,” and took pride in obstructing then-President Obama’s agenda (Grunwald, 2012). Maybe people with left-leaning identities do truly value compromise in the abstract more than their peers with right-leaning identities, but, given party-based cues stemming from the refusal of Congressional Republicans to work with President Obama on various issues ranging from the federal budget to the Affordable Care Act, those among the left were simply less willing to engage in balanced policy arrangements that put them at a further disadvantage (see: Grossman and Hopkins [2015] for an expanded discussion of this point).¹⁴

The differential nature of this effect aside, the ubiquitous tendency to prefer that one’s group “wins” helps explain the general contours of this effect. Given the pressures stemming from the perceived potential damages related to compromise—i.e. some type of loss function that operates using the logic “if you give someone an inch, then they’ll take it a mile”—a reluctance to remain even mildly deferential to one’s opponents is not strictly irrational. In the end, although there is some evidence of a stronger commitment to compromise in principle by members of left-leaning groups, the convergence of political identities produces a general reluctance to act in ways that are ultimately contrary to the best material and psychological interests of one’s group.¹⁵

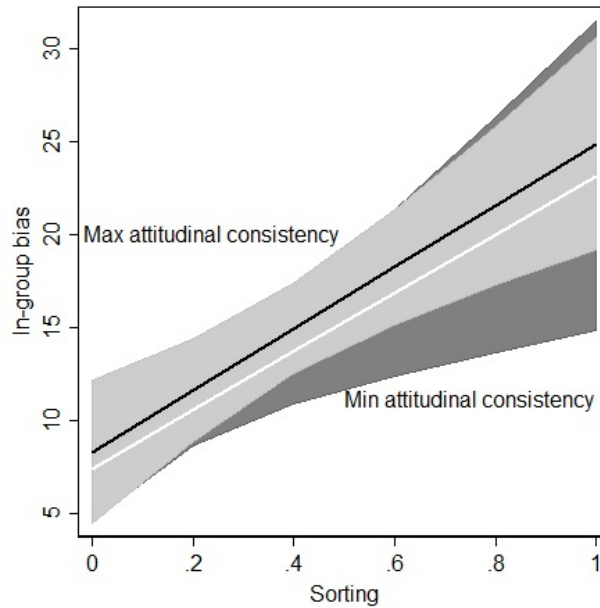
To test whether the relationship between sorting and compromise is further textured by the extent to which individuals profess coherent attitudinal preferences, I interact sorting with the measure of attitudinal consistency (Model 3, Table 3). As the coefficient estimate for this interaction term reveals, the effect of sorting on compromise in practice does not vary across different levels of attitudinal consistency.¹⁶

¹⁴ Consider one Clinton supporter prior to the 2016 presidential election who was quoted as saying, “In Utopia, I’d like to see compromise, but with the political environment that is going on now, that’s impossible. It’s stand on principle and I don’t give an inch” (Lightman, 2016). This general attitude comports with these findings.

¹⁵ One alternative explanation might be that group-members are more protective of a President, as highest group prototype, relative a diffuse group of legislators. Unfortunately, digging further into this distinction is not possible given data restraints.

¹⁶ Supplementary analysis indicates that this transforming values consistency from the original range of values to quartiles does little to change the substantive shape of this

Figure 4. The effect of sorting on compromise, contingent on value consistency



Source: 2014 Pew Polarization survey

Notes: Dependent variable ranges from 0, which conveys neutral responses or “a point of compromise,” to 50, which conveys that respondent believes that their side should “get everything they want.”
(2) Estimates derived from interaction model available in Appendix.

Indeed, as Figure 4 indicates, the confidence intervals for the plotted point estimates of sorting overlap considerably, which implies that the relationship between sorting and group biases is independent from attitudinal preferences. In other words, individuals who have well-sorted identities and possess highly-consistent values orientations are no more or less likely to cede resources to their political opponents than those persons with overlapping political identities *who possess a weak grasp of how political values cohere with those identities*. Perhaps this is unremarkable given Converse’s (1964) durable assertion that individuals utilize *group cues* to navigate the political landscape, but the fact that such “baseless” sorting exerts a similar effect on

non-significant effect. Simply put, as individuals transition from low to high values on sorting, the marginal effect of sorting on compromise does not vary as a function of value consistency.

compromise relative the highly sophisticated may help explain a general erosion in political debate, much less support for unyielding politics. Simply put, even if citizens are unable to think about politics in a sophisticated manner (i.e. most of the mass public), sorting enhances the distinctions between in- and out-groups, which, by extension, significantly reduces the likelihood of intergroup cooperation (i.e. compromise).

6 Summary and conclusion

Referring to his Republican counterparts, Senator Harry Reid (D-NV) once argued that “...with a bully, you cannot let them slap you around. Because if they slap you around today, they slap you 5 or 6 times tomorrow.” This type of attitude premises that interparty bargaining requires not just firm resolve, but a combative spirit; that, in the face of undesirable or suboptimal outcomes, one ought to fight tooth and nail to prevent the passage of undesirable policy. This strategy has been the defining feature of Congress over the last decade (Binder, 2014), and, with the transition to a unified executive and legislature in 2017, the status of interparty cooperation continues to look bleak. “The pessimistic scenario,” argued one panelist in a preelection forum, “is scorched earth from day one.”¹⁷ Indeed, if the filibuster of Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch and the subsequent threat of the “nuclear option” to confirm him is any indication, then even the senatorial saucer has begun to resemble more frying pan than cooling dish.¹⁸

Elites’ tendencies to avoid compromise are not wholly divorced from the practical preferences of the American mass public—preferences which are exacerbated by the ongoing sorting of citizens’ political identities. For those among the right, such sorting drastically reduces commitment to compromise as a normative good. In part,

¹⁷ The remarks came from a panel hosted by the Institute of International Finance in Washington, D.C. (see: www.marketwatch.com/story/scorched-earth-might-be-all-thats-left-in-washington-after-this-election-2016-10-08).

¹⁸ A turn of phrase credited to Thomas Wentworth Higginson in an 1884 article in *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*.

this finding might be explained by virtue of Republicans legislators' highly confrontational approach to governance and tendency to expunge moderates and party apostates filtering down into the mass public (Grossman and Hopkins, 2015). Yet there are also philosophical reasons for why those among the "right" might be less likely to acquiesce to compromise than those on the "left." If the underlying tension between these groups is related to the role of the state, then any individual compromise means inevitably contributing to the expansion of the state. In that case, it may be highly rational for those among the right to resist such compromise if compromise inevitably leads to expansion.

These abstract preferences for compromise as a democratic good notwithstanding, in practice, the convergence between partisan and ideological identities significantly reduces even those with left-leaning identities' willingness to cede resources to their political opponents. In fact, in an ironic twist on the first set of results, liberal Democrats are less likely to cede resources to their opponents than conservative Republicans. When push-comes-to-shove, group members with overlapping identities are *all* more likely to eschew even distributions of deference in the bargaining process. In terms of the general shape of this effect, the disconnect between a commitment to compromise in principle and a general resistance to compromise in practice can be explained by some of the limitations to rationality that economists and psychologists observe. Beginning with the notion that the incentive, much less capacity, to obtain information is limited, people are generally poor at deciphering the implications or calculating the consequences of their choices. Combined with the finding that individuals do not neatly rank their goals (Winter and Mouritzen, 2001) and tend toward ambivalence (e.g. Zaller, 1992), a person faced with making a generalized judgment about the value of compromise as a social good is likely to divorce the meaning of this abstract democratic value from the implications of what compromise means in practice. As such, it is not surprising that a preference for a compromising posture disappears when individuals are pressed to think about the distribution of resources in political bargaining.

Perhaps most troubling, however, is that sorting exerts this effect on compromise independent of respondent sophistication—cross-pressures, or discordant attitudes that ought to destabilize goal-directed behaviors (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee, 1954), have virtually no effect on the relationship between identity convergence and orientations toward practical instances of compromise. In other words, even when citizens with well-sorted identities possess an inconsistent mix of preferences regarding important and salient matters of public policy, these individuals are no less likely to prefer compromise than their well-sorted counterparts with consistent attitudes. If sorting induces tribal thinking, then any hope that thoughtful citizens with a mixture of preferences will be more “reasonable” is probably misplaced.

Although the average citizen pays lip service to preferring compromise in the abstract, these findings complement other work that suggests that individuals often don’t practice what they preach. Recent research, for example, shows that prospective voters do not penalize legislators who eschew bipartisanship (Harbridge, Malhotra, and Harrison, 2014), which helps explain the absence of an electoral penalty associated with Republican legislators waiting out the then-President Obama’s nomination of Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court nomination prior to the 2016 presidential election. Coupled with an increase in sorting over time (Levendusky, 2009; Davis and Dunaway, 2016), the findings presented here convey that it is highly unlikely that Americans with sorted identities—the citizens who are most likely to participate in politics—will come together to support bipartisan solutions to the major issues of the day. If elites have little incentive to compromise, in part because sorted citizens don’t actually prefer such behavior, then Congressional bipartisanship should remain low. Future research should continue to probe the nature of these attitudes toward compromise and under what conditions even the highly-sorted are willing to pursue public policy that benefits, at minimum, pluralities of Americans. Given prior research that shows that certain “wedge” issues can undercut the power of political identity (Hillygus and Shields, 2008), focusing on the interaction between sorting and these particular issues likely provides opportunity for generating “kinder, gentler politics.”

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Appendix A – Descriptive data

Table A1. Descriptive data, ANES Evaluations of Government Survey

	n	mean	std. dev.	min	max
Prefers legislators who compromise	1253	0.66	0.47	0	1
Prefers president who compromises	1253	0.64	0.48	0	1
Partisan-ideological sorting	1238	0.32	0.32	0	1
Knowledge	1253	0.55	0.32	0	1
News consumption	1251	3.22	2.61	0	7
Education	1253	0.61	0.32	0	1
Evangelical ID	1253	0.11	0.31	0	1
Secular ID	1253	0.00	0.07	0	1
Religious liberal	1253	0.06	0.24	0	1
Moral values	1244	3.11	1.42	1	5
Tea Party member	1253	0.06	0.23	0	1
White	1253	0.72	0.45	0	1
Black	1253	0.11	0.32	0	1
Male	1253	0.48	0.50	0	1

Source: 2012 Evaluations of Government survey

Table A2. Descriptive data, Pew Polarization and Typology Survey

	n	mean	std dev	min	max
In-group bias (compromise)	1534	11.90	15.98	0	50
Partisan-ideological sorting	1273	0.25	0.23	0	1
Attitudinal consistency	1534	0.42	0.30	0	1
Age	1523	0.48	0.18	0.19	1
Education	1531	0.49	0.25	0	1
Black	1534	0.12	0.33	0	1
White	1534	0.74	0.44	0	1
Income	1401	0.46	0.31	0	1
Male	1534	0.50	0.50	0	1
Political interest	1534	0.73	0.31	0	1
Knowledge	1534	0.53	0.28	0	1

Source: 2014 Pew Polarization and Typology Survey

Table A3. Variables utilized to operationalize *attitudinal consistency* index

Next I'm going to read you some pairs of statements that will help us understand how you feel about a number of things. As I read each pair, tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own views—even if neither is exactly right...

1. Government waste [q25a]: (-1) Government often does a better job than people give it credit for, (1) Government is almost always wasteful and inefficient, (0) both / neither
2. Government regulation [q25b]: (-1) Government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest, (1) Government regulation of business usually does more harm than good, (0) both / neither
3. Government benefits / poor [q25c]: (-1) Poor people have hard lives because government benefits don't go far enough to help them live decently, (1) Poor people today have it easy because they can get government benefits without doing anything in return, (0) both / neither
4. Government assistance [q25d]: (-1) The government should do more to help needy Americans, even if it means going deeper into debt, (1) The government today can't afford to do much more to help the needy, (0) both / neither
5. Aid to blacks [q25f]: (-1) Racial discrimination is the main reason why many black people can't get ahead these days, (1) Blacks who can't get ahead in this country are mostly responsible for their own condition, (0) both / neither
6. Immigration [q25g]: (-1) Immigrants today strength our country because of their hard work and talents, (1) Immigrants today are a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing, and healthcare, (0) both / neither
7. Military strength [q25i]: (-1) Good diplomacy is the best way to ensure peace, (1) The best way to ensure peace is through military strength, (0) both / neither
8. Business / wealth [q25n]: (-1) Business corporations make too much profit, (1) Most corporations make a fair and reasonable amount of profit, (0) both / neither
9. Environment [q50r]: (-1) Stricter environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost, (1) Stricter environmental laws and regulations cost too many jobs and hurt the economy, (0) both / neither
10. Homosexuality [q50u]: (-1) Homosexuality should be accepted by society, (1) Homosexuality should be discourage by society, (0) both / neither

Notes: Values recoded so “liberal” responses are coded (-1), “conservative” responses (+1), and neutral values (0).

Appendix B – Supplementary analysis

In the Pew PPT survey, liberal-conservative self-placement is a five-category item, unlike the seven-category item utilized in the ANES surveys. In the analyses incorporated in the main body of the manuscript, I utilize a five-category partisanship item matched to this five category ideological self-placement because the mathematical expression of sorting requires that values match across both variables. The rub with this approach, obviously, is that it limits the range in the distribution of values.

An alternative is to retain the seven-category partisanship item and to recode the five-category liberal-conservative self-placement variable to match. In this case, the five-category liberal-conservative variable is recoded on a seven-category scale by assigning strong ideologues (liberals, conservatives) the values (1,7), weak ideologues the values (3,5) and moderates the value (4). This allows for the use of the full partisanship scale without the need to collapse categories.

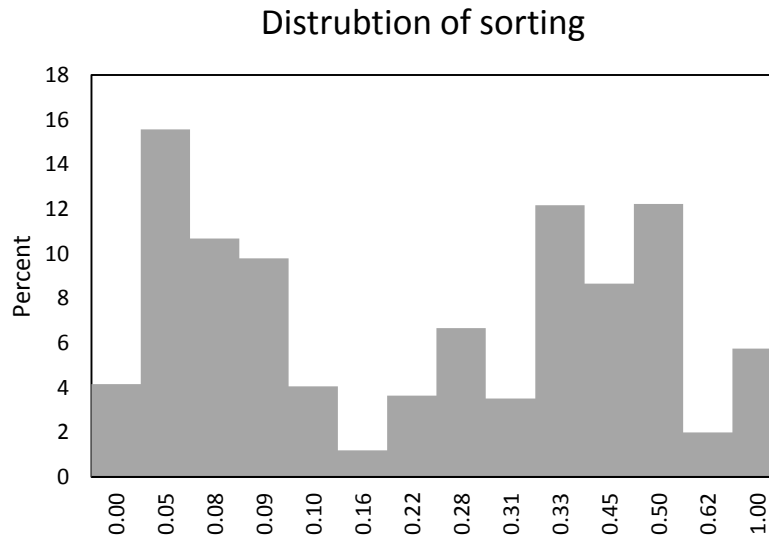


Table B1. Who gets what? Compromise in practice

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Sorting	16.20** (2.59)	22.43** (3.66)	15.75** (5.14)
Attitudinal consistency	1.13 (2.02)	0.10 (2.02)	0.91 (2.98)
Three-category PID	-----	-1.61 (1.19)	-----
Sorting × PID	-----	-6.08* (2.67)	-----
Sorting × consistency	-----	-----	0.80 (7.71)
Age	-2.01 (2.85)	-1.81 (2.79)	-2.00 (2.85)
Education	-0.72 (2.43)	-1.87 (2.42)	-0.73 (2.42)
Black	2.16 (2.50)	0.96 (2.46)	2.18 (2.51)
White	-2.52 (1.77)	-1.55 (1.73)	-2.51 (1.77)
Income	-1.84 (2.04)	-1.07 (1.99)	-1.84 (2.03)
Male	0.67 (1.07)	1.37 (1.05)	0.67 (1.07)
Political interest	3.35 (2.02)	3.57 (2.00)	3.35 (2.02)
Knowledge	2.10 (2.25)	1.71 (2.26)	2.10 (2.26)
Constant	7.06** (2.47)	7.95** (2.64)	7.15** (2.60)
R2	0.08	0.12	0.08
N	1,167	1,167	1,167

Source: 2014 Pew Polarization survey

Notes: Robust standard errors presented in parentheses; *p<0.05,

**p<0.01

Appendix C – Robustness checks

Due to survey design constraints, the analyses presented in the main text of manuscript exclude a number of relevant covariates that may affect the relationship between sorting and compromise. These variables are mostly specific to studies of intergroup behavior and are unlikely to appear on large, generalized surveys like the Pew or ANES questionnaires. However, in March of 2016, pilot data was collected using Amazon.com’s mTurk worker pool that allows us to at least model a cursory test of how sorting affects compromise in relation to these items. The resulting sample of 1,100 persons is clearly a nonprobability sample, and, while such convenience samples are perhaps less of a problem for experimental work (e.g. Berinsky, Huber, and Lenz, 2012; Tomz and Weeks, 2013), it would be difficult to include these analyses in the main body of text given this unrepresentativeness. Be that as it may, the results produced in the forthcoming analyses are strikingly similar to the one’s presented in the main text. In particular, it is worth noting that the inclusion of variables like “out-party fear” and “out-party affect” and more general orientations toward compromise do little to mediate the strength of the relationship between sorting and compromise.

C1 Additional covariates

Issue extremity conveys the extremity of an individual’s attitudes. This variable comprises an index of an individuals’ attitudes toward government spending, health insurance, aid to minorities, job creation, same-sex marriage, the death penalty, the legality of marijuana, defense spending, immigration policy, physician-assisted suicide, stem cell research, and whether government should regulate access to pornographic materials. On 11 of 12 items, the response format juxtaposes a liberal (1) and conservative (7) response, with moderate or “compromise” position (4). By folding these items at their midpoint, we can derive the extremity of individuals’ issue preferences. For the issue of same-sex marriage, however, the compromise category “civil union” is coded 1, while “allow / disallow same-sex marriage” is coded 4 (thereby creating numerical parity with the operationalization of the other items). Averaged together,

the resulting index of *issue extremity* ranges from 1, “preference for moderate or blended policy solutions” to 4, “preference for extreme or one-sided policy solutions.”

Out-party fear is derived from the following question: “Does the [party] ever make you feel afraid?” A four category response set ranges from 0, “never,” to 1, “often.” It could be the case, however, that a more generalized dislike of out-groups explains an unwillingness to compromise. *Out-party affect* is a thermometer rating for the out-group party, ranging from 0 to 100.

The variable *sees multiple solutions* captures how individuals think about general problem-solving. This tendency is ostensibly linked to the type of openness required to engage in compromise insofar as it conveys that an individual is open to considering a bevy of alternative solutions. Respondents were asked: “In situations when you see two people in a conflict with one another, how often can you see how both sides could be right?” Responses to this item comprise a five-category Likert scale that ranges from “never,” coded 1, to “always,” coded 5.

Need for closure is a psychological tendency that describes an individual’s desire for firm answers and a general aversion to situations of ambiguity. Ostensibly, these tendencies might reduce the likelihood that a person would acquiesce to compromise because they retard information processing and hypothesis generation, which introduces bias into thinking. Given a reliance on early cues in the decision-making process, higher levels of need for closure might forestall compromise, which often requires a substantial give-and-take (see Kruglanski and Webster, 1996). Need for closure is operationalized by creating an index constructed from a principle components factor analysis of three items commonly utilized in social-psychological research: (1) I dislike unpredictable situations; (2) I don’t like situations that are uncertain; and, (3) I dislike questions which could be answered in many different ways.¹⁹ Responses to these questions range from 1 “disagree strongly,” to 5, “agree

¹⁹ Two items are dropped from the analysis for not surpassing the threshold of $r = 0.70$: (1) I enjoy having a clear and structured mode of life; and, (2) I would quickly become impatient and irritated if I would not find a solution to a problem immediately.

strongly.” The three questions load onto a common factor (Eigenvalue = 2.74) where higher (lower) values convey a greater (smaller) need for closure.

C2 Results

The evidence presented in the main body of the manuscript reveals a strong link between sorting and orientations toward compromise, but the data utilized therein are missing a number of key covariates that represent alternative explanations for why individuals might not value compromise. As a robustness check, the analyses presented in Tables C1 and C2 replicate these models with the inclusion of additional covariates that are unavailable in both the Pew and ANES surveys. In Table C1, I show that exchanging the binary dependent variable “prefer legislators who compromises / sticks to principles” for a five-category item that asks individuals about the “importance of leaders compromising” does little to change the results: persons with right-leaning identities are much less likely to agree that it is important for leaders to compromise as the synergy between their partisan and ideological identities increases.

In Table C2, the evidence that sorting exerts a direct effect on the value of compromise is thin. When asked whether or not they prefer an elected representative who sticks to their principles no matter what (coded 0) or one who will compromise to get thing done (coded 1), individuals identifying with right-leaning groups are, again, significantly more likely to prefer that their leaders act in more rigid ways. Translating the odds-ratio coefficients into predicted probabilities, moving from completely unsorted to fully sorted reduces the likelihood that an individual will prefer a legislator who compromises by 35 percentage points—or almost one standard deviation.

On the whole, even controlling for an individual’s baseline propensity to approach problems from multiple angles, the extremity of their attitudes, and the emotional orientations toward out-groups, sorting exerts a strong effect on the value that individuals assign to compromise and the likelihood that they will value legislators who compromise rather than remain resolute in the face of pursuing solutions that cut against their principles.

Table C1. The effect of sorting on whether or not it is important for leaders to compromise on important issues

	<i>It is important for political leaders to compromise on important issues</i>	
	Left	Right
Sorting	-0.03 (0.10)	-0.44* (0.22)
Need for closure	0.10** (0.03)	-0.00 (0.07)
Out-party fear	-0.01 (0.04)	-0.09 (0.07)
Out-party affect	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Knowledge	0.21 (0.13)	0.27 (0.25)
News consumption	0.05** (0.02)	0.08* (0.04)
White	0.13 (0.08)	0.04 (0.20)
Male	0.16* (0.07)	0.27* (0.13)
Age	0.00 (0.00)	0.01 (0.01)
Education	0.04 (0.04)	-0.09 (0.08)
Constant	3.67** (0.24)	3.55** (0.49)
R2	0.07	0.08
N	605	293

Source: mTurk sample collected March, 2016

Notes: Dependent variable asks, “Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement: It is important for political leaders to compromise on important issues.” Responses range from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5). Standard errors in parentheses, *p<0.05, **p<0.01

Table C2. Effect of sorting on compromise using full battery of alternative covariates

	<i>Prefer leader who compromises...</i>		
	Full sample	Democrat	Republica n
Sorting	-0.04 (0.27)	-0.05 (0.38)	-0.95* (0.47)
Sees multiple solutions	0.49** (0.10)	0.27* (0.14)	0.58** (0.16)
Need for closure	0.01 (0.09)	0.19 (0.12)	-0.03 (0.15)
Out-party fear	-0.14 (0.10)	0.05 (0.14)	-0.30* (0.15)
Out-party affect	-0.00 (0.00)	0.01 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)
Issue extremity	-0.41* (0.18)	0.17 (0.28)	-0.49* (0.28)
Knowledge	0.76* (0.30)	0.76* (0.42)	0.14 (0.51)
News consumption	0.07 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.06)	0.15* (0.08)
White	0.28 (0.20)	0.73** (0.25)	0.30 (0.41)
Male	0.28 (0.17)	0.40 (0.24)	-0.12 (0.28)
Age	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Education	0.12 (0.10)	0.22 (0.15)	0.22 (0.16)
Control	-0.63 (0.77)	-2.26 (1.17)	-0.69 (1.21)
N	895	604	291

Source: mTurk sample collected March, 2016

Notes: Dependent variable is dichotomous, where “prefers leaders who stick to principles” is coded 0 and “prefers leader who compromises to get things done” is coded 1.

*p<0.05, **p<0.01