

# Power, Threat, and Public Resistance to Political Compromise

*David C. Barker, American University*

*Shaun Bowler, University of California, Riverside*

*Christopher Jan Carman, University of Glasgow*

*Morten Wendelbo, American University*

**ABSTRACT:** Compromise is essential to democratic policymaking, yet many voters oppose it. Political scientists know relatively little about the determinants of such opposition (or support). Here, we consider the role of socio-demographic and political power—which we operationalize as intersecting demographic privilege and partisan majority status, respectively. With respect to each type of power, we evaluate two potential paths of influence: (1) the *leverage hypothesis* leans on Expected Utility Theory to posit that power (whether socio-demographic or political) weakens support for compromise directly, by reducing the relative costs associated with ‘no deal’ outcomes; (2) the *loss aversion hypothesis* leans on Prospect Theory to posit that such power weakens support for compromise indirectly, by conditioning the anxiety and possessiveness that people experience when they feel threatened. Across three studies, the data are more consistent with the loss aversion hypothesis—especially as it pertains to socio-demographic power—than with the leverage hypothesis.

Word Count: 10,076

The American legislative process is largely broken (e.g., Binder 2003; Theriault 2008, Lee 2016). Routine gridlock distorts policy responsiveness, exacerbates inequality, undermines political trust, and weakens democratic stability (e.g., Schaffner 2011, Mann and Ornstein 2012, Gutmann and Thompson 2016, Mansbridge and Martin 2015, Barber and McCarty 2015, Binder and Lee 2015, Lee 2016).

Citizens are not innocent bystanders to this dysfunction. Ever mindful of reelection, archetypal legislators typically strive to satisfy their constituents—especially those who vote in primary elections (e.g., Mayhew 1974, Kamarck and Wallner 2018, Anderson, Butler and Harbridge-Yong 2020). And though the public remains significantly less polarized, ideologically, than Congress (e.g., Bafumi and Herron 2010, Fiorina 2017; Broockman and Skovron 2018), many voters decry inter-partisan compromise even when inter-partisan policy preferences overlap (e.g., Harbridge and Malhotra 2011; Wolf, Strachan and Shea 2012; Harbridge, Malhotra and Harrison 2014, Bauer, Harbridge and Krupnikov 2017, Wolak 2017).<sup>1</sup>

Such voter intransigence may exacerbate legislative stalemates if (1) lawmakers pander to that intransigence (e.g., Barker and Carman 2012), and/or (2) voters punish candidates who compromise, thereby replacing them over time (Fortunato 2019). Moreover, systematic differences in voter intransigence may contribute democratic inequities (Barker and Carman 2012).<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Depending on idiosyncratic factors, between half and two-thirds of partisans tend to oppose the idea of their representatives compromising with members of the other major party (e.g., Sides 2019)—reflecting an era of heightened tribal competitiveness and “affective polarization” (e.g., Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes 2012, Iyengar and Westwood 2015, Mason 2018a).

<sup>2</sup> Indeed, several studies point to voters’ political *process* attitudes as important determinants of democratic governance (e.g., Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002, Hibbing, Theiss-Morse and Whitaker 2009; Barker and Carman 2012; Reeves and Rogowski, 2016, 2018). That said, to be clear, the sources of

Thus, understanding public attitudes toward legislative compromise is important—as an emerging literature reflects (e.g., Hibbing, Theiss-Morse and Whitaker 2009, Wolf, Strachan and Shea 2012, Haas 2016, Ryan 2017, Glaser and Berry 2018, Barker et al. 2019, Glaser, Berry and Schildkraut 2019, Delton, DeScioli and Ryan 2019).<sup>3</sup> Alas, this literature remains inchoate; to date, relatively few published studies have aimed to causally account for the variance in such attitudes (but see MacKuen et al. 2007, Haas 2016, Ryan 2017, Glaser and Berry 2018, Delton, DeScioli and Ryan 2019).

We attempt to make some additional progress here, by evaluating the potential capacity of socio-demographic and/or political power to weaken support for compromise. In three studies (two that we describe below and one that we describe in the Online Appendix [p. 8-12]), we evaluate two theoretical perspectives that point to different pathways of influence. First, the leverage hypothesis draws upon Expected Utility Theory to posit that social and/or political power weaken support for compromise *directly*, by reducing the relative costs associated with no-deal bargaining outcomes (i.e., boosting one’s BATNA [Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement]). Second, the loss aversion hypothesis draws upon Prospect Theory (as well as the anxiety literature) to posit that socio-demographic and/or political power weaken support for compromise *indirectly*, by triggering possessive mindsets in response to perceived threats.

---

legislative gridlock are multiple and wide-ranging, and many of them have nothing to do with voters (e.g., Binder 2003).

<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, studying public attitudes toward compromise is important in its own right; doing so can provide a window into the psychology of cooperativeness/obstinacy itself—as it plays out in congress and various other deliberative settings of interest to political scientists (see Arceneaux, Dunaway and Soroka 2018 for evidence that political psychology is often consistent across citizens and elites).

With respect to each hypothesis, we evaluate the distinct roles of socio-demographic power and political power simultaneously, operationalizing socio-demographic power as intersecting demographic privilege and political power as partisan majority status.

Across the three studies, the evidence is more consistent with the loss aversion hypothesis—particularly as it pertains to the predictive capacity of demographic privilege—than with the leverage hypothesis. The data also suggest that the particular psychological mechanism through which threats weaken support for compromise (at least among powerful people) is rooted in emotional anxiety rather than some “cool” calculation of loss.

With this investigation, we aim to make a few scholarly contributions. First, we shed new theoretical light on the dynamics surrounding a critical ingredient of democratic policymaking—the willingness to compromise. Second, we offer a new vision of how differences in power may influence political psychology, as well as the limits of such influence. Third, we extend the reach of Prospect Theory as a tool for understanding mass political behavior. Fourth, we augment theories pertaining to perceived threat/anxiety by suggesting that the variance in individuals’ sensitivity to such threats is associated with differences in power. Fifth, we provide a new explanation for the well-known but vexing puzzle of why Republicans tend to be disproportionately intransigent during political deliberations (e.g., Barker and Carman 2012, Grossmann and Hopkins 2016, Ryan 2017, Glaser and Berry 2018, Mason 2018b). Namely, these studies are the first to suggest that the traditionally hegemonic (and intersecting) demographic identities that disproportionately characterize the Republican coalition (white, male, Christian, bourgeois) interact with perceived threats to steer Republicans away from striking deals with political opponents.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> In its original Marxist formulation, the “bourgeoisie” referred to the European “middle-class,” who enjoyed significant wealth but were not part of the traditional aristocracy. In the US, where no such

## **Leverage, Loss Aversion, and Public Attitudes toward Legislative Compromise**

Extant empirical accounts of the variance in public attitudes toward legislative compromise document the deleterious impacts of anger (MacKuen et al. 2007), psychological rigidity (e.g., Glaser and Berry 2018), ideological commitment (Grossmann and Hopkins 2016), moral conviction (Ryan 2017, Delton, DeScioli and Ryan 2019), perceived threat (e.g., Haas 2016), and socio-political identity protectiveness/consciousness (e.g., Cohen et al. 2007, Mason 2018b). These studies also highlight substantial partisan asymmetry in support for compromise (Hibbing, Theiss-Morse and Whitaker 2009, Wolf, Strachan and Shea 2012, Grossmann and Hopkins 2016, Glaser and Berry 2018, Barker et al. 2019).<sup>5</sup>

However, political scientists have yet to consider how differences in socio-demographic and/or political power might affect public support for legislative compromise—despite considerable evidence pointing to the role of power as an important motivator of stubbornness in actual negotiations settings (e.g., Bacharach and Lawler 1980, Lawler 1992, Thompson 1998; for a good overview, see Kim, Pinkley and Fragale 2005). This is a significant omission, because legislation is an important tool for redressing inequality; if hegemonic groups are less likely than disadvantaged groups to accept compromise, they can inhibit the legislative process and therefore perpetuate social and political hierarchies.

---

aristocracy exists, the term has frequently been used to refer to the middle and upper classes alike. We follow the latter convention.

<sup>5</sup> In 2018, one prominent survey suggested that such partisan asymmetry in support for compromise was changing (Pew Research Center 2018), but that poll proved to be an outlier. Such partisan asymmetry is partially attributable to the fact that each of the aforementioned characteristics is disproportionately associated with the ideological Right, but substantial asymmetry remains even after those characteristics have been accounted for (Barker et al. 2019).

We address this gap in scholarship by evaluating two theoretical perspectives—one that conceptualizes power in terms of *leverage*, and one that conceptualizes power as a trigger for *loss aversion*. Within each of those perspectives, we consider the roles of both socio-demographic power and political power. We operationalize socio-demographic power through the lens of intersecting demographic characteristics (race, gender, religion and class; (e.g., Collins 1990, Crenshaw 1991; Kinder and Ryan 2017), and we operationalize political power through the lens of partisan majority/minority status and accompanying social context dynamics (e.g., Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995).<sup>6</sup>

### *The Leverage Hypothesis*

The leverage hypothesis posits that social/political power weakens support for compromise directly. The starting point is *Expected Utility Theory* (EUT; e.g., Nash 1950) as it has been applied to actual bargaining behavior. Among other things, EUT suggests that bargaining strategies depend on the relative amount of power—or *leverage*—that the status quo confers on each negotiator (for a broad review, see Lawler 1992). Rationally speaking, power enhances a negotiator’s “best alternative to a negotiated agreement” (BATNA), which gives the powerful negotiator a more plausible “exit” strategy than the unleveraged negotiator has, thereby reducing the powerful negotiator’s incentive to make concessions (e.g., Schelling 1960, Dwyer and Walker 1981, Keohane 1984, Pinkley, Neale and Bennett 1994, Wendt and Friedheim 1995, Fearon 1998, Moravcik 1998, Haber 2006).

The leverage hypothesis suggests that the same logic applies to the way that citizens think about legislative negotiations. It reasons that new bipartisan legislation carries greater potential costs and fewer potential benefits, on average, for citizens who profit from the status quo than for those suffer under it,

---

<sup>6</sup> For an excellent review of intersectionality and how it relates to political decision-making, see Cassese 2019.

thereby affording the former group less of an incentive to accept the concessions inherent in compromise. Put succinctly:

*H<sub>1</sub> (Leverage Hypothesis): Social/political power weakens public support for legislative compromise*

Operationally, the leverage hypothesis takes two forms—one pertaining to the social power that intersecting demographic privileges confer, and one pertaining to the political power that partisan majority status affords:

*H<sub>1a</sub> (Demographic Leverage Hypothesis): Demographic privilege (as it pertains to race, gender, religion and class) weakens public support for legislative compromise*

*H<sub>1b</sub> (Partisan Leverage Hypothesis): Partisan majority status weakens public support for legislative compromise*

Of course, there are a few reasons to treat this hypothesis with some degree of skepticism. For one thing, the psychology underlying actual negotiation strategies might not extend to that of citizens when they contemplate how their representatives should behave. Moreover, demographic privilege and/or partisan majority status might not engender hegemonic mindsets in the same way that a clear bargaining advantage seems to do in business settings. Finally, the rationality assumption inherent in Expected Utility Theory, in which the leverage hypothesis is grounded, may be unrealistic as applied to citizens expressing their opinions regarding a relatively abstract subject.

#### *The Loss Aversion Hypothesis*

The loss aversion hypothesis also posits that sociodemographic power and/or political power weaken support for compromise, but *indirectly*—by conditioning the anxiety and possessiveness that people experience when they feel threatened. The starting point is *Prospect Theory* (PT; e.g., Kahneman and Tversky 1979, 1992). Per PT, loss aversion—the tendency for people to dread losses more than they value gains—leads negotiators to often eschew even small concessions, thereby producing failed

negotiations in situations where strict expected utility theory would predict a deal (e.g., Khaneman, Knetsch and Thaler 1991).<sup>7</sup> Researchers have yet to analyze such loss aversion in legislative negotiation contexts, let alone among voters, but we suspect that such contexts exacerbate loss aversion dynamics—among both legislators and their partisan constituents, the latter of which are our focus here—because legislative negotiation contexts provide more ways to lose than other types of negotiating contexts do. In addition to worrying about their party losing the policy negotiation itself, partisan voters must also worry about their party losing a governing majority (or the chance to gain a governing majority) in the next election—the odds of which go up if new legislation improves the public standing of their partisan rivals. These additional concerns may further reduce the inclination to compromise, even if making the deal would result in net policy gains.

The logic underlying the loss aversion hypothesis is also consistent with research documenting the importance of emotions to political cognition (for an overview, see Brader and Marcus 2013)—particularly with the role of emotional anxiety in response to perceived threats (e.g., Albertson and Gadarian 2015). Threats activate protectiveness and rigidity, which manifest as (1) authoritarianism (e.g., Feldman and Stenner 1997, Stenner 2005, Merolla, Montalvo and Zechmeister 2012), (2) dogmatism (Tosi, Fagan and Frumkin 1968; Abramo, Lundgren and Bogart 1978; Kossowska, Csernatowitz-Kukucsza and Sekerdej 2017), (3) intolerance (e.g., Berinsky 2009, Mondak and Hurwitz 2012), (4) the need for security (e.g., Huddy et al. 2005, 2007), (5) punitiveness (Page and Shapiro 1992), and restrictive/punitive policy attitudes (Brader, Suhay and Valentino 2008), and activism (Miller and

---

<sup>7</sup> Loss aversion is a partial byproduct of the “endowment effect,” which is the inclination to over-value one’s existing assets relative those that one might yet gain (e.g., Thaler 1980).

Krosnick 2004, Miller et al. 2016). Intuitively, by extension, such mindsets also propel distaste for compromise (e.g., Maoz and McCauley 2009, Haas 2016).<sup>8</sup>

Importantly, though, not everyone is equally sensitive to threats (and thus, to the anxiety and possessive mindsets that they provoke; e.g., Duckitt and Fisher 2003). We suggest that differences in power condition such sensitivity. Prospect Theory is useful here as well; “reference dependence” demonstrates that decisionmakers who benefit from the status quo are often willing to forswear significant potential gains in order to avoid the certainty of a small loss, whereas those who suffer under the status quo are often eager to lock-in small but certain gains (e.g., Khaneman and Tversky). In negotiation contexts, such reference dependence means that those in positions of relative strength are more likely to protect their endowments, which leads to recalcitrance (e.g., Levy 1996). By contrast, negotiators in positions of relative weakness have the “freedom (of) . . . nothin’ left to lose” (Kristofferson and Foster 1969), making them less sensitive to threats and therefore more willing to compromise.

Again, we extend this logic to citizens, reasoning that power heightens threat sensitivity, and therefore possessiveness, which translates into a distaste for compromise when citizens think about how their representatives should behave. Put succinctly:

*H<sub>2</sub> (Loss Aversion Hypothesis):*

*Socio-demographic/political power heightens the role of perceived threat as a trigger of public resistance to legislative compromise*

As was the case with respect to the leverage hypothesis, the loss aversion hypothesis also takes two forms. First, the demographic loss aversion hypothesis reasons that those whose demographics

---

<sup>8</sup> This logic can also be heard in former President Obama’s notorious description of frustrated whites as *clinging* to “to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren't like them . . .,” a diagnosis he revived in 2015 (e.g., Ross 2015).

intersect to confer relative privilege tend toward greater threat sensitivity, and therefore toward possessive mindsets, than do those whose demographics confer disadvantage. In other words:<sup>9</sup>

*H<sub>2a</sub> (Demographic Loss Aversion Hypothesis): Demographic privilege heightens the role of perceived threat as a trigger of public resistance to legislative compromise*

Second, by the same logic, the partisan loss aversion hypothesis reasons that those who enjoy partisan majority status also tend toward greater threat sensitivity and psychological possessiveness—thereby making them less likely to support compromise than are those who either (a) do not feel threatened or (b) do not enjoy majority status (and have no realistic prospects of gaining it).<sup>10</sup>

*H<sub>2b</sub> (Partisan Loss Aversion Hypothesis): Partisan majority status heightens the role of perceived threat as a trigger of public resistance to legislative compromise*

---

<sup>9</sup> Although white male Christians continue to hold disproportionate power in society relative to women and racial/religious minorities, the latter are rapidly gaining status and representation across various sectors of society, and there is significant evidence that many in the former group feel threatened by those changes (e.g., Hochschild. 2016, Jones 2016). Indeed, Glaser’s (2006) observation that white South Carolinians were less willing than black South Carolinians, on average, to accept a negotiated compromise relating to that state’s Confederate flag controversy is consistent with the logic of the loss aversion hypothesis.

<sup>10</sup> However, those who lack political power but smell victory around the corner may behave like those who already hold power. That is, if a partisan’s electoral prospects are strong, s/he may just hold-out and wait until after the election, when her party’s bargaining position is stronger, before agreeing to negotiate (for evidence of this among legislators, see Lee 2016).

Finally, when it comes to the threat component of  $H_2$ , we consider the extent to which it is rooted in “hot” emotion vs. “cool” calculation (e.g., Lodge and Taber. 2005). In other words, if power does in-fact triggers loss aversion in response to perceived threats, is it because power heightens the logical calculation of danger with respect to one’s socio-political standing, or is it because power heightens the surveillance system that induces greater anxiety in response to *any* perceived threat (e.g., Gray 1987; Marcus et al. 2000, Miller et al. 2016)? This question produces competing hypotheses, about which we are agnostic:

$H_{2c}$  (*Loss Calculation Hypothesis*): *Socio/political power (as expressed through intersecting demographic privilege and/or partisan majority status) heightens the **calculation of loss** associated with threats related to that power, thereby triggering resistance to legislative compromise*

$H_{2d}$  (*Loss Anxiety Hypothesis*) *Social/political power (as expressed through intersecting demographic privilege and/or partisan majority status) heightens **emotional anxiety** in response to threats, thereby triggering resistance to legislative compromise*

Regardless of the answer to this question, it is important to point out that the broader loss aversion hypothesis is far from necessarily true. First, as we noted with respect to the leverage hypothesis, the psychology of actual negotiators might not extend to citizens when they contemplate how their representatives should behave. Second, our strategy of operationalizing power through demographic privilege and/or partisan majority status may prove inappropriate. Third, it is conceivable that those who have a minimal amount of power are actually the *most loss averse*, and thus the most resistant to compromise, because even a small loss could completely devastate them. Finally, there are some instances in which threat might enhance support for compromise, such as when people perceive a mutual threat like the threat of extinction (Halperin, Porat and Wohl 2013).

In the remainder of this paper, we describe our tests of the leverage hypothesis and the loss aversion hypothesis, as well as the sub-hypotheses associated with each.

## Research Design and Methodology

Below, and in the Online Appendix, we describe three studies. Study 1 uses nationally representative observational data from 2017 to test hypotheses  $H_{1a}$ ,  $H_{1b}$ ,  $H_{2a}$ , and  $H_{2b}$ , using different measurement and modeling strategies to perform multiple tests of the hypotheses pertaining to political power ( $H_{1b}$  and  $H_{2b}$ ). Study 2 (which we describe primarily in the Online Appendix) provides a robustness test of Study 1 using data from 2019 and more precise measures of some key variables. Finally, Study 3 uses nationally representative data from 2018 to conduct an experiment that (a) provides a tougher test of internal validity and (b) evaluates the competing *loss calculation* and *loss anxiety* hypotheses ( $H_{2c}$  and  $H_{2d}$ ) described above.

### *Study 1*

Study 1 uses survey data we collected through the 2017 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES;  $n=1000$ ) to estimate a series of linear models predicting *Support for Compromise* as a function of *Demographic Privilege*, *Partisan Majority Status*, *Perceived Threat*, multiplicative combinations of those variables, and potential confounds.<sup>11</sup> We test the demographic leverage and partisan leverage hypotheses by observing the direct relationships between *Support for Compromise* and *Demographic Privilege* and *Partisan Majority Status*, respectively. We test the demographic loss aversion and partisan loss aversion hypotheses by observing the extent to which these characteristics condition the relationship between *Support for Compromise* and *Perceived Threat*.

---

<sup>11</sup> The unique sampling strategy of the CCES (stratified by congressional district) provides an unusual opportunity to model these relationships. For methodological details, see the *CCES Guide 2016* at <https://dataverse.harvard.edu>.

## Measurement

To measure the variance in *Support for Compromise*, we put the following question to respondents:

“Some people believe that Democrats and Republicans should compromise so that stuff can get done and everyone can get a little of what they want. Others believe that compromise is selling out and makes things worse. What about you? When it comes to the following issues, to what extent do you believe that **members from your party** should bargain and compromise with the other side?”

Gun Control  
Minimum Wage  
Immigration  
Abortion<sup>12</sup>

Using responses pertaining to each of the four issues, we created a principal components index (eigenvalue=2.58; loadings in the Online Appendix, p. 2). We converted the index to a 0-1 scale, with “1” representing the strongest support for compromise (mean=.51; standard deviation=.29).<sup>13</sup>

To measure the variance in *Perceived Threat*, we asked “When you think about the various challenges we face as a society to our security, culture or economic well-being, to what degree would you say you feel threatened?” (0=Not threatened; 3=Very threatened, rescaled to 0-1; mean=.52; s.d.=.29).

To measure *Demographic Privilege*, we created a summed index of socially and economically powerful demographic traits: *Gender* (1=male; 45%), *Race* (1=white; 75%), *Religious Identity* (1=Christian [of any kind except LDS]); 56%), *Education* (five-point, converted to 0-1; 1=post-graduate degree; mean=.67; s.d.=.22), and *Household Income* (14-point; converted to 0-1; mean=.39; s.d.=.25) We converted the resulting index to a 0-1 scale (mean=.41; s.d.=.17). This index has face validity as a composite

---

<sup>12</sup> Responses are mostly consistent across issues (Cronbach’s alpha=.82), but fewer respondents support compromise when it comes to abortion (see the Onlineappendix, p. 2).

<sup>13</sup> We also estimated models predicting support for compromise as it pertains to each specific issue. See Online Appendix, pp. 3-6.

measure of demographic privilege, given each of these indicators' undeniable identity as a marker of status and privilege and their multiplicative effects on political decision-making (e.g., Cassesse 2019).

We measured *Partisan Majority Status* in two ways. First, we simply used *Party Identification* (five-point [0=strong Democrats; 1=Democrats and Independents who lean Democratic; 2=pure Independents; 3=Republicans and Independents who lean Republican; 4=strong Republicans]; rescaled to 0-1, mean=.43; s.d.=.34), given that Republicans enjoyed governing power of all branches of the federal government and the majority of state governments at the time these data were collected.

Second, given that *Party ID* captures much more than differences in political power/majority status (which the addition of control variables to the model can only partially account for), we created a more refined measure to account for the fact that while Republicans may have enjoyed a national governing majority in 2017, the social context in “blue America” would not have facilitated a hegemonic mindset among Republicans who live there, which may have injected systematic negative bias into the simple measure that relies exclusively upon *Party ID*.

Specifically, we focused on partisan majority/minority status within congressional districts, which means we added *District Party ID* to the model (the percentage of voters in the respondent's congressional district who had voted for the Republican congressional candidate in 2016; mean=.50; s.d.=.20), along with an interaction term that multiplies *Party ID* by *District Party ID*.

Our decision to use the intersection of party ID and district party ID to measure political power is rooted in the considerable literature showing that the social context of one's community and the networks one has within it structure one's political predispositions in important ways (e.g., Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995, Dalton and Anderson 2011, Huckfeldt et al. 2013). In this case, we suspect that even if one's party enjoys a national governing majority, one may not necessarily feel like one has much political power if one is surrounded by members of the other party at every turn. However, if one sees and hears co-partisans routinely as part of one's daily life and is aware of the fact that one is part of the dominant

political culture in an area, it is more likely to trigger the psychology associated with such hegemonic status.

The limitation of using this measurement strategy is that we cannot fully capture absolute partisan majority status (both local and national) among Democrats or absolute minority status among Republicans, given that national majority/minority status was constant in 2017. Accordingly, we can only compare the difference among Republicans of being in the majority both nationally and locally to being in the majority nationally but not locally. Restricting the range of the variable in this way increases the likelihood of observing a Type II error of statistical inference with respect to the capacity of partisan majority status to either weaken support for compromise directly or to heighten the ability of perceived threats to do so (e.g., Carmines and Zeller 1979).

### Model Estimation

We estimated several linear regression equations (deleting missing data using the listwise method and clustering the Huber-White standard errors by congressional district). In the first equation, we regressed *Support for Political Compromise on Demographic Privilege and Party ID*, to evaluate the leverage hypothesis as it relates to each type of power.

In the second equation, we added *District Party ID* and *Party ID\*District Party ID* to measure local partisan majority status and therefore provide the more refined measure of political power that accounts for social context dynamics.

In the third equation, we added an interaction term, *Threat\*Demographic Privilege*, in order to evaluate the loss aversion hypothesis as it pertains to such socio-demographic power.

Likewise, in the fourth equation, we replaced *Threat\*Demographic Privilege* with (1) *Party ID\*Threat*, (2) *District Party ID\*Threat*, and (3) *Party ID\*District Party ID\*Threat* in order to evaluate the loss aversion hypothesis as it pertains to differences in partisan majority status at the local level.

In all models, we included *Ideological Identification* (0-4; 4=Very Conservative; rescaled to 0-1; mean=.50; s.d.=.29) because it is associated not only with public attitudes toward compromise but also

with threat sensitivity, party identification, district party identification and most of the characteristics that comprise our *Demographic Privilege* index (all except education). We sought to ward off the concern that any emergent relationships between power, threat, and resistance to compromise (whether independent and interactive) could be attributable other psychological mechanisms that are wrapped up in ideological conservatism (e.g., psychological rigidity, motivated social cognition, social dominance orientation, or moral conviction; see Barker et al. 2019), rather than the dynamics of threat and/or power dynamics. For the same reason, we also include controls for *Age* (rescaled to 0-1; mean=.42; s.d.=.35), *Church Attendance* (rescaled to 0-1; mean=.32; s.d.=.33) and *Born Again Christian Identity* (0-1; 28%).

Finally, we also controlled for *Political News Attentiveness* (“How often do you follow politics and public affairs in the news?” 0=never/rarely; .5=sometimes; 1=most/all of the time; mean=.63; s.d.=.51), because partisan media on the Right, in particular, may discourage compromise among its consumers (who are not only Republicans but disproportionately white, male, Christian, and at least middle-class; e.g., Martin and Yurukoglu 2017).

### Results: Leverage Hypothesis

Table 1 displays the results of our hypothesis tests.<sup>14</sup> We see from the first column of results that *Demographic Privilege* and *Republican Party ID* both appear to each exert significant downward pressure on *Support for Compromise*, even after controlling for ideology, news attentiveness and other demographics. Likewise, the second column of results shows that as the *Party ID* plus *Party ID \* District Party ID* coefficients reveal, Republicans who live in heavily Republican districts tend to score 34 points lower on the *Support for Compromise* scale than do Republicans who live in heavily Democratic districts (.02-.36;

---

<sup>14</sup> All results are highly robust to different methodological choices with respect to (a) missing data (e.g., imputation methods or mean replacement), (b) model specification (adding or removing control variables) and/or (b) calculating the standard errors (no clustering, bootstrapping, or both).

$p < .05$ ), Moreover, the *District Party ID* constitutive term in the same results column shows that Democrats in heavily Democratic districts tend to score about 12 points lower on the *Support for Compromise* scale than do Democrats in heavily Republican districts ( $p < .09$ ). Thus, this initial look at the data seems to provide evidence in support of the leverage hypothesis as it pertains to both *Demographic Privilege* and *Partisan Majority Status* (despite the limitations in measurement associated with the latter).

However, looking at the third and fourth results columns alters that conclusion; the insignificant coefficients associated with *Demographic Privilege*, *Party ID*, *District Party ID* and *Party ID\*District Party ID* indicate that people who score higher on these power measures do not tend to be any less supportive of political compromise than do those who score lower on these measures when such power is unaccompanied by *Threat*. Thus, on the whole, these results do not provide compelling support for the leverage hypotheses.

	<i>b (s.e.)</i>	<i>b (s.e.)</i>	<i>b (s.e.)</i>	<i>b (s.e.)</i>
<i>Perceived Threat</i>	-.04 (.04)	-.02 (.04)	.16 (.09)	-.18 (.16)
<i>Demographic Privilege Index</i>	<b>-.15 (.05)</b>	<b>-.15 (.07)</b>	.07 (.13)	<b>-.15 (.07)</b>
<i>Threat * Demographic Privilege</i>	N/A	N/A	<b>-.44 (.19)</b>	N/A
<i>Party ID (GOP High)</i>	<b>-.18 (.03)</b>	<b>.02 (.09)</b>	.02 (.09)	-.23 (.20)
<i>District Party ID (GOP High)</i>		.12 (.07)	.13 (.07)	-.11 (.16)
<i>Party ID * District Party ID</i>		<b>-.36 (.15)</b>	<b>-.36 (.15)</b>	.29 (.37)
<i>Threat * Party ID</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	.47 (.34)
<i>Threat * District Party ID</i>		N/A	N/A	.49 (.31)
<i>Threat * Party ID * District Party ID</i>		N/A	N/A	<b>-1.28 (.64)</b>
<i>Ideology (Conservative High)</i>	-.01 (.04)	-.03 (.04)	-.03 (.04)	-.02 (.04)
<i>News Attentiveness</i>	<b>-.07 (.04)</b>	<b>-.07 (.04)</b>	<b>-.07 (.04)</b>	<b>-.07 (.04)</b>
<i>Age</i>	.02 (.05)	.02 (.04)	.02 (.04)	.02 (.05)
<i>Church Attendance</i>	.02 (.03)	.04 (.04)	.04 (.04)	.05 (.04)
<i>Born Again</i>	<b>-.04 (.02)</b>	<b>-.04 (.02)</b>	<b>-.04 (.02)</b>	<b>-.04 (.02)</b>
Constant	.73	.66	.56	.73
n	874	766	766	766

**NOTE:** Coefficients are unstandardized ordinary least squares regression slopes showing the difference in the value of compromise support (0-1 scale) that is associated

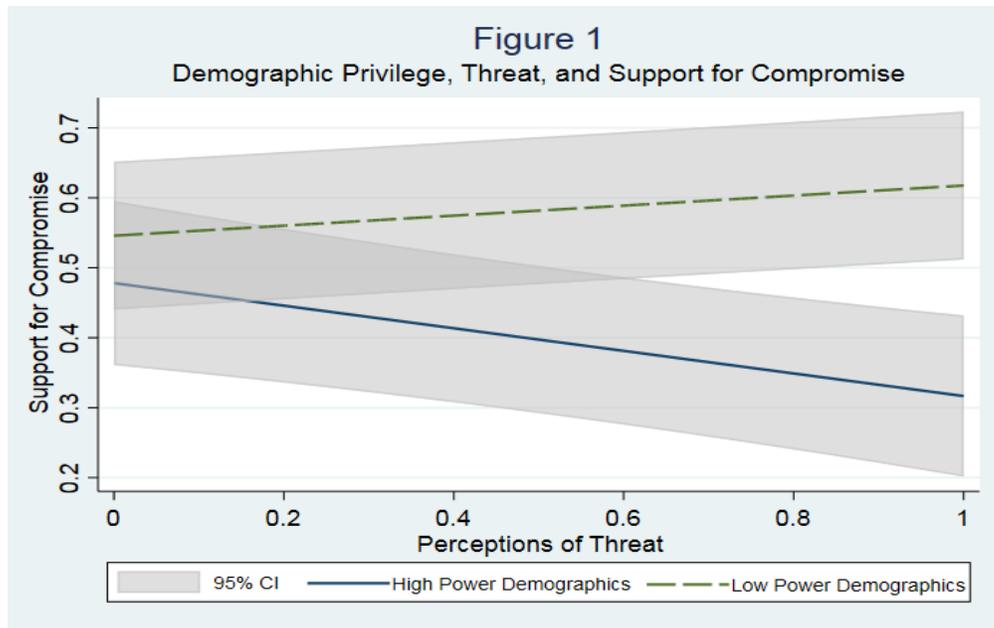
with a minimum-to-maximum difference in each explanatory variable. Statistically significant relationships ( $p < .05$ ) are in bold.

### Results: Loss Aversion Hypothesis

The loss aversion hypothesis stands up to our statistical tests much better than the loss aversion hypothesis does. As the third results column reveals, *Demographic Privilege* seems to exert a major conditioning impact on the relationship between *Perceived Threat* and *Support for Compromise*. To be precise, *Perceived Threat* is not statistically associated with attitudes toward compromise among those with few if any intersecting demographic privileges, but a minimum-to-maximum difference in *Perceived Threat* is associated with a 28-point drop in such support (on the 0-1 scale) among those with the most privileged demographic characteristics (.16-.44;  $p < .05$ ).<sup>15</sup> Figure 1 displays the results pertaining to *Demographic Privilege* and *Perceived Threat* in a more visually compelling way.

---

<sup>15</sup> All of these results hold when we replace *Ideological Identification* with a more sophisticated measure that sums a broad range of value priorities and policy preferences. Also, when we estimate models examining each of the five items in the *Demographic Privilege* index separately, the coefficients representing the interaction terms (multiplying *Threat* by each of those items five items) are in the hypothesized direction, with the most predictive conditioning characteristics being *Male* ( $b = .13$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and *Christian* ( $b = .13$ ;  $p < .05$ ). See the Online appendix (p. 7).



NOTE: The figure graphs the fitted predicted values of *Support for Compromise* according to differences in *Perceived Threat*—among (a) respondents whose demographic characteristics place them at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile or below on the *Demographic Privilege* index, and (b) those whose characteristics place them at the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile or above on that index.

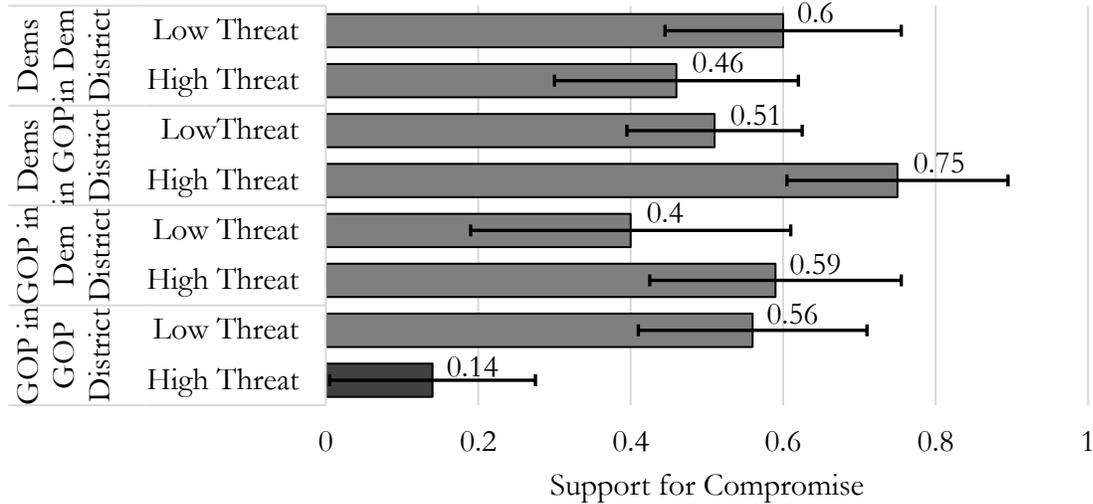
Similarly, as the fourth results column of Table 1 reveals via the coefficients and standard errors associated with *Party ID*, *District Party ID*, *Perceived Threat* and their multiplicative terms, the predictive capacity of *Perceived Threat* is restricted entirely to those who enjoy partisan majority status both nationally and locally (Republicans in Republican districts), for whom a minimum-to-maximum difference it is associated with a 51-point drop in *Support for Compromise* on the 0-1 scale ( $-.18 + .47 + .49 - 1.28$ ;  $p < .05$ ).<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the slope associated with the constitutive term for *Perceived Threat* ( $-.18$ ), which conveys the relationship among Democrats in heavily Democratic districts, suggests that local partisan majority status may also drive down support for compromise among Democrats. The relationship does not approach statistical significance, though, which may be attributable to the fact that even Democrats who enjoyed significant majority status in their districts were nevertheless aware of the fact that they did not enjoy

Figure 2 displays these results more clearly, comparing strong Democrats to strong Republicans at the 15<sup>th</sup> and 85<sup>th</sup> percentiles of co-partisanship within their districts.

**Figure 2: Party ID, District Party ID, Threat, and Support for Compromise**



In sum, the results of Study 1 are consistent with the loss aversion hypothesis, in both of its forms, but do not provide compelling support for the leverage hypothesis.

*Study 2*, which we describe in the Online Appendix (pp. 8-12) replicates this study using a large sample from Amazon’s Mechanical Turk pool, using a broader set of issues in the *Support for Compromise* index and a conceptualization of *Perceived Threat* that captures perceptions of gain vs. loss explicitly. The results corroborate Study 1, thereby providing an added layer of robustness and generalizability to these observational results.

*Study 3*

---

such status nationally. Further research is needed using data collections over time that facilitate measuring the variance in national governing majority status among Democrats as well as Republicans.

Study 3 enhances both the internal and external validity of the previous studies, by conducting a randomized controlled experiment using a national probability sample that randomly exposes some respondents to an *apolitical* (and deliberately absurd) threat trigger (an image of a menacing great white shark), for the purpose of assessing the degree to which the psychological mechanism driving the loss aversion affects we observed in Studies 1 and 2 (with perceived threats predicting compromise resistance among the demographically privileged and those in the partisan majority but not otherwise) are a byproduct of logical calculation or emotional anxiety.<sup>17</sup> If random exposure to the image of the shark is associated with lower levels of support for compromise, and if that treatment effect is again conditioned by *Demographic Privilege* and/or *Partisan Majority Status*, it will suggest that the mechanism is at least partially rooted in content-free emotion—which would broaden the potential for such effects to play out and for campaigns to exploit them.

#### Data, Measures and Experimental Procedure

GfK collected data for this experiment in the late spring of 2018 (May 3-16; n=773).<sup>18</sup> We measured support for compromise with a similar question to the one we used in the other two studies, but we did not reference specific issues, rendering a simple three-point response scale:

---

<sup>17</sup> Using images—including completely apolitical images (including spiders, worms, and so on)—to prime emotions, in order to analyze the psychological impact of such emotions, is becoming widespread (e.g., Way and Masters 1996, Huddy and Gunthorsdottir 2000, Yiend and Matthews 2001, Brader 2006, Lang et al. 2008, Gadarian 2010, Smith et al. 2011, Banks 2014, Hibbing, Smith and Alford 2014, Albertson and Gadarian 2015).

<sup>18</sup> GfK (formerly Knowledge Networks) uses probability-based random sampling to recruit panelists using address-based sampling (ABS) methods. Households are provided with access to the Internet and hardware if needed. The completion rate for this survey was 56%.

*“Some people believe that Democrats and Republicans should compromise so that stuff can get done and everyone can get a little of what they want. Others believe that compromise is selling out and makes things worse. What about you? In general, thinking about some problem that you think needs to change, should members of congress from your party compromise to get some (but not all) of the policy changes you want, or stand firm—knowing that policy might gridlock and the problem might not improve at all?”*

(0= Support Compromise; .5=Don’t Know; 1=Support “Standing Firm”; mean=.28; s.d.=.38.

We used a skewed logistic regression model to predict the probability of supporting representatives who “stand firm” relative to either of the other two categories (e.g., Nagler 1994).

We measured *Demographic Privilege* the same way we had in Studies 1 and 2, but we measured *Threat* by randomly assigning some respondents (without warning) to the following image and caption:

**ATTACK!**<sup>19</sup>



---

<sup>19</sup> We validated exposure to the image as a measure of threat by asking people “how does this picture make you feel,” and coding all respondents as “1” who mentioned anything about feeling “afraid,” “threatened,” scared,” etcetera, and as “0” if they did not. Sixty-one percent of respondents who saw the image responded accordingly. We submit that including the full treatment group in the analysis is preferable to restricting the sample to those who had indicated that they were scared or nervous, both

We then created an interaction term that multiplied exposure to this treatment by *Demographic Privilege* (mean=.57; s.d.=.21), and we included all three variables in the first model.

Next, we created a second interaction term that multiplied exposure to the treatment by *Party ID* (mean=.49; s.d.=.36) and included all three of those variables in the second model.

As we had in the previous studies, in both models we included the “other” measure of power as a control, to clarify the relationships that we care about in each model. That is, in the first model we also included the measure of *Party ID*, and in the second model we also included the *Demographic Privilege* index. Likewise, we also included *Ideological Identification* (0-4; 4=Very Conservative; mean=.52; s.d.=.25), *Age* (rescaled to 0-1; mean=.62; s.d.=.36), *Church Attendance* (0-5; 5=Every week or more; rescaled to 0-1; mean=.41; s.d.=.36), and *Born Again Christian Identity* (0-1; 27%).<sup>20</sup>

Finally, we also attempted to capture the effects of elite messaging, and in this study the measures are more refined than they were in the previous studies, in that it captures partisan media consumption directly. We asked respondents “On how many days last week did you get at least ten

---

for reasons pertaining to statistical power and (especially) because we do not think that we can take at face value respondents’ stated reaction to the image. In fact, we submit that the propensity to deny feeling anxious in such instances is not random, and would introduce systematic error into our estimates, therefore potentially biasing them toward making a Type I error of statistical inference (falsely rejecting the null hypothesis).

<sup>20</sup> Control variables are not needed in large samples to ward off spuriousness as it may relate to the treatment effect, but they are useful as a means of warding off spuriousness as it may relate to the conditioning effects of *Demographic Privilege* and *Party ID*. Importantly, though, model specification does not affect our results; all the conclusions we draw are the same regardless of whether we include the control variables.

minutes of political news from each of the following sources?” To measure *Conservative Media Consumption*, we summed the responses pertaining “Fox News” and “Call-in talk radio programs like Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity and so on” (rescaled to 0-1; mean=.12; s.d.=.22). to measure *Liberal Media Consumption*, we summed the responses pertaining to “MSNBC,” “Political satire shows like the Daily Show, Stephen Colbert, Jimmy Kimmel, and so on” and “Podcasts” (rescaled to 0-1; mean=.07; s.d.=.14).<sup>21</sup>

## Results

Table 2 displays the marginal effects with respect to differences in the probability of preferring representatives who “stand firm.” The first results column shows that among demographic groups with the weakest levels of socio-demographic power, exposure to the shark treatment actually increased the probability that a respondent would *oppose* such candidates (i.e., support those who compromise;  $p < .05$ ). Likewise, among those who were not exposed to the image of the shark, *Demographic Privilege* is also associated with weaker support for representatives who “stand firm” ( $p < .05$ ). However, among respondents who are members of historically powerful demographic groups, exposure to the shark treatment was associated with a 15 percentage-increase in support for representatives who “stand firm” ( $-.17 + .32$ ;  $p < .05$ ). As was the case in the previous two studies, these results are consistent with the loss aversion hypothesis but not with the leverage hypothesis.

---

<sup>21</sup> All variables except the partisan media variables were measured prior to exposure to the experimental treatment.

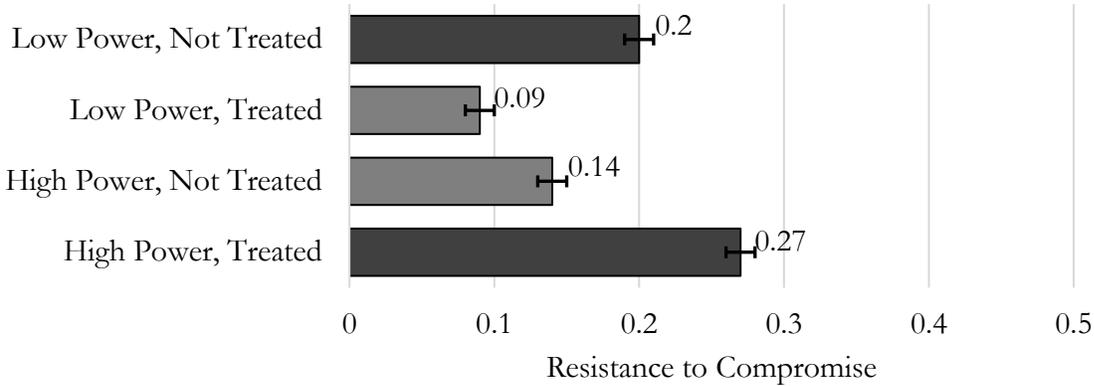
**Table 2: Power, Threat and Support for “Standing Firm”  
Study 3 Evidence**

	dy/dx ( <i>delta s.e.</i> )	dy/dx ( <i>delta s.e.</i> )
<i>Threat Treatment (Exposure to Shark Image)</i>	<b>-.17 (.03)</b>	-.01 (.04)
<i>Intersecting Demographic Privilege Index</i>	<b>-.14 (.03)</b>	-.05 (.05)
<i>Threat Treatment * Demographic Privilege</i>	<b>.32 (.05)</b>	N/A
<i>Party ID</i>	.05 (.04)	.04 (.04)
<i>Threat Treatment * Party ID</i>	N/A	.03 (.06)
<i>Ideology</i>	.08 (.09)	.08 (.09)
<i>Conservative Media</i>	<b>.18 (.02)</b>	<b>.18 (.03)</b>
<i>Liberal Media</i>	.07 (.05)	.08 (.06)
<i>Age</i>	<b>-.08 (.03)</b>	<b>-.09 (.02)</b>
<i>Church Attendance</i>	-.01 (.02)	-.01 (.02)
<i>Born Again</i>	<b>.05 (.01)</b>	<b>.05 (.01)</b>
<b>n</b>	1513	1513

**NOTE:** Coefficients are differences in the predicted probability of expressing support for representatives who “stand firm” (resist compromise), relative to supporting candidates who compromise or feeling unsure, associated with minimum-to-maximum differences in each explanatory variable.  $p < .05$  (two-tailed) in bold.

To clarify these results, Figure 3 graphs the treatment effects as conditioned by *Demographic Privilege*, comparing respondents in the fifteenth percentile or lower of socio-demographic power to people in the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher.

**Figure 3: Threat Treatment, Socio-Demographic Power and Resistance to Compromise**



However, when it comes to the conditioning impact of *Party ID*, which we are using as a proxy for *Partisan Majority Status* and thus political power, we cannot reject the null hypothesis. As the second results column in Table 2 shows, the coefficient for the interaction term (*Threat Treatment \* Party ID*) is in the hypothesized direction, but it is relatively small and does not approach statistical significance. This null finding mitigates the empirical support that this investigation can provide for the Partisan loss aversion hypothesis, but it may be a byproduct of the crude way in which we were able to measure such status; ad we been able to employ the same measure that we used in Study 1, taking into account the variance in partisan majority status within local communities, we may have found more support.

In sum, as was the case in Studies 1 and 2, these results are not consistent overall with the leverage hypothesis but they are consistent with the loss aversion hypothesis—at least as it pertains to demographic privilege. That is, simply enjoying demographic privileges does not seem to translate directly into greater support for recalcitrant candidates, but it does seem to heighten the capacity of threats to do so. Furthermore, given that the measure of threat in this experiment is a completely apolitical image of a shark, the loss aversion hypothesis has not only passed a very conservative test but it appears to be driven by emotional anxiety more than rational calculation.

## Conclusion

In three studies (two of which we have described here and one that we describe in the Online Appendix), we have tested two sets of hypotheses relating to the role of social and/or political power and support for political compromise. The demographic leverage and partisan leverage hypotheses posit that social/political power weakens support for compromise in a straightforward way, whereas the demographic loss aversion and partisan loss aversion hypotheses posit that such power interacts with perceptions of threat to dampen support for compromise. The data across the studies do not provide compelling support for the former hypotheses, but they are consistent with the latter hypotheses—especially the demographic loss aversion hypothesis. In short, the results suggest that loss aversion may well impede democratic functioning, but that simple inequities in “leverage” among vicarious negotiators may not.

Our findings shed new theoretical light on the factors that structure public support for political compromise, and they contribute to the study of political psychology more generally. First, these studies extend Prospect Theory as a tool for understanding political behavior by (1) broadening the concept of loss aversion to include considerations of electoral loss and governing loss, in addition to strict negotiating loss, (2) extending the logic of actual bargaining preferences to voters when they consider whether to support legislative compromise, and (3) synthesizing the Prospect Theory literature with that pertaining to the political consequences of threat and anxiety.

Second, these studies stand to add to collective understanding of the ways that differences in power affect mass political psychology, suggesting that such effects are rooted more in emotion than rational deduction.

Third, these studies stand to augment social scientific understanding of the ways threat sensitivity influences political decisions by offering some evidence that the variance in such sensitivity may be contingent upon a certain level of political and especially socio-demographic power.

Finally, these results may also address a vexing applied politics puzzle. For decades, researchers have observed that Republicans are disproportionately resistant to compromise (e.g., McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal 2006, Hibbing, Theiss-Morse and Whitaker 2009, Grossmann and Hopkins 2016, Ryan 2017, Mason 2018b, Glaser and Berry 2018), but the precise causal mechanism(s) remain unclear (but see Glaser and Berry 2018, Barker et al. 2019). Our results suggest that one mechanism may be differences in socio-demographic power between Democrats and Republicans (e.g., Mason 2018a) and the precariousness of that power. Such intersecting demographic privilege might also explain Republicans' broader tendency to perceive threats more acutely than Democrats do (Jost et al. 2007, Hibbing, Theiss-Morse and Whitaker 2009).<sup>22</sup>

Of course, much work remains. First, the inconsistent results as they pertain to partisan majority status might be a byproduct of measurement error, given the fact that national partisan majority status was a constant in our studies (in favor of Republicans), and that we were only able to measure the variance in local partisan majority status in one of our studies. More studies are needed across time to examine Democrats who enjoy true majority status—both nationally and locally—to see if they behave similarly to Republicans under such conditions.

Additionally, it remains a mystery what causes some powerful people to feel threatened by societal changes—and thus to experience loss aversion—whereas other powerful people do not. This is an important avenue for further investigation.

---

<sup>22</sup> What is more, Republicans' *political power* is even stronger than their percentage in the population suggests, because (1) the Electoral College and the constitutional allocation of senators (two per state, regardless of population) give people who live in rural areas outsized electoral influence, and (2) Republicans have historically been more likely to vote than are Democrats, meaning that their proportion of the electorate has tended to be quite larger than their proportion of the citizenry (though this may be changing).

Likewise, researchers can only learn so much about individuals' propensity to compromise from survey data; behavioral measures via simulated negotiations or deliberations would be helpful (e.g., Neblo, Esterling and Lazer 2018).

Furthermore, these studies represent only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to understanding the determinants of public attitudes toward compromise. Many potential determinants remain unexplored, including institutional and contextual differences (perhaps especially cross-national differences).

Finally, it remains to be seen whether the psychology of actual legislators in negotiation settings is consistent with those of partisan voters when they think about legislative negotiation. We anticipate that the logic of the loss aversion hypothesis is even more applicable to the horse-traders themselves, but that is an empirical question that must be pursued in future investigations.

## References

- Abramo, Joseph L., Lundgren, David C., and Dodd H. Bogart. 1978. "Status Threat and Group Dogmatism." *Human Relations*, 31(8), 745-752.
- Ahler, Douglas J., Roush, Carolyn E. and Guarav Sood. 2019. "The Micro-Task Market for Lemons: Data Quality on Amazon's Mechanical Turk." Working paper.
- Albertson, Bethany and Shana Kushner Gadarian. 2015. *Anxious Politics: Democratic Citizenship in a Threatening World*. Cambridge University Press.
- Anderson, Sarah E., Butler, Daniel M. and Laurel Harbridge-Yong. 2020 (in-press). *Rejecting Compromise: Legislators' Fear of Primary Voters* (ISBN: 9781108487955).
- Arceneaux, Kevin, Dunaway, Johanna and Stuart Soroka. 2018. "Elites are People Too: The Effects of Threat Sensitivity on Policymakers' Spending Priorities." *PLoS ONE* 13(4): e0193781.  
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0193781>
- Bacharach, Samuel B., and Edward J. Lawler. 1980. *Power and politics in organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bafumi, Joseph, and Michael C. Herron. 2010. "Leapfrog Representation and Extremism: A Study of American Voters and Their Members in Congress." *American Political Science Review* 104(03): 519-542.
- Banks, Antoine J. 2014. *Anger and Racial Politics: The Emotional Foundation of Racial Attitudes in America*. Cambridge University Press.
- Barber, Michael, and Nolan McCarty. 2015. "Causes and Consequences of Polarization." *Political Negotiation: A Handbook*, 39-43. Brookings Institution.
- Barker, David C. and Christopher Carman. 2012. *Representing Red and Blue: How the Culture Wars Change the Way Citizens Speak and Politicians Listen*. Oxford University Press.

- Barker, David C., Christopher J. Carman, Shaun Bowler and Morten Wendelbo. 2019. "Public Resistance to Political Compromise." Presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association. April, Chicago, IL.
- Bauer, Nicole M., Harbridge-Yong, Laurel and Yanna Krupnikov. 2017. "Who is Punished? Conditions Affecting Voter Evaluations of Legislators Who do not Compromise." *Political Behavior*, 39(2), 279-300.
- Berinsky, Adam. 2009. *In Time of War: Understanding American Public Opinion from World War II to Iraq*. University of Chicago Press.
- Berinsky, Adam J., Gregory A. Huber, and Gabriel S. Lenz. 2012. "Evaluating Online Labor Markets for Experimental Research: Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk." *Political Analysis*, 20(3), 351-368.
- Binder, Sarah A. 2003. *Stalemate: Causes and Consequences of Legislative Gridlock*. Brookings Institution Press.
- Binder, Sarah A., and Frances E. Lee. 2015. "Making Deals in Congress." *Political Negotiation: A Handbook*, 91-118. Brookings Institution.
- Brader, Ted. 2006. *Campaigning for Hearts and Minds: How Emotional Appeals in Political Ads Work*. University of Chicago Press.
- Brader, Ted and George E. Marcus. 2013. "Emotion and Political Psychology" in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Brader, Ted, Suhay, Elizabeth and Nicholas Valentino. 2008. "What Triggers Public Opposition to Immigration? Anxiety, Group Cues, and Immigration Threat." *American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 52(4):959 - 978
- Broockman, David. E. and Christopher Skovron. 2018. "Bias in perceptions of public opinion among political elites." *American Political Science Review*, 112(3), 542-563.
- Carmines, Edward G. and Richard A. Zeller. 1979. *Reliability and Validity Assessment*. Thousand
- Cassese, Erin C. 2019 (early view). "Intersectional Stereotyping in Political Decision Making." New York: *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*.

- Clifford, Scott, Jewell, Ryan M. and Philip D. Waggoner. 2015. Are samples drawn from Mechanical Turk valid for research on political ideology? *Research & Politics*.
- Cohen, Geoffrey L., Sherman, David K., Bastardi, Anthony, Hsu, Lillian, McGoey, Michelle, and Lee Ross. 2007. "Bridging the Partisan Divide: Self-Affirmation Reduces Ideological Closed- Mindedness and Inflexibility in Negotiation." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 93(3): 415-430.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 1990. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman.
- Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1991. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review*, Vol. 43(6), 1241–1299.
- Dalton, Russel J. and Christopher J. Anderson 2011. *Citizens, Context and Choice: How Context Shapes Citizens' Electoral Choices*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Delton, Andrew W., DeScioli, Peter and Timothy J. Ryan. 2019 "Moral Obstinacy in Political Negotiations." *Political Psychology*.
- Duckitt, John and Kirstin Fisher. 2003. "The Impact of Social Threat on Worldview and Ideological Attitudes." *Political Psychology* Vol. 24(1): 199 - 222
- Dwyer, F. Robert and Orville C. Walker. 1981. "Bargaining in an asymmetrical power structure." *Journal of Marketing*, 45(1), 104-115.
- Fearon, James D. 1998. "Bargaining, Enforcement, and International Cooperation." *International Organization*, 52(2), 269-305.
- Feldman, Stanley and Karen Stenner. 1997. "Perceived Threat and Authoritarianism." *Political Psychology*, 18(4), 741-770.
- Fiorina, Morris. 2017. *Unstable Majorities: Polarization, Party Sorting, and Political Stalemate*. Palo Alto, CA: Hoover Institution Press
- Fortunato, David. 2019. "The Electoral Implications of Coalition Policy Making" *British Journal of Political Science* 49(1): 59-80

- Gadarian, Shana Kushner. 2010. "The Politics of Threat: How Terrorism News Shapes Foreign Policy Attitudes." *The Journal of Politics* 72(2): 469-483.
- Glaser, James M. 2006. "Public Support for Political Compromise on a Volatile Racial Issue: Insight from the Survey Experiment." *Political Psychology*, 27(3), 423-439.
- Glaser, James M., and Jeffrey M. Berry. 2018. "Compromising Positions: Why Republican Partisans Are More Rigid than Democrats." *Political Science Quarterly*, 133(1), 99-125.
- Glaser, James M., Berry, Jeffrey M. and Deborah J. Schildkraut. 2019 (early view). "Education and the Curious Case of Conservative Compromise." *Political Research Quarterly*.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1065912919866509>
- Gray, Jeffrey A. 1987. *The Psychology of Fear and Stress*. Cambridge University Press.
- Grossman, Matt and David Hopkins. 2016. *Asymmetric Politics*. Oxford University Press.
- Gutmann, Amy and Dennis Thompson. 2016. *The Spirit of Compromise: Why Governing Demands It and Campaigning Undermines It*. Princeton University Press.
- Haas, Ingrid J. 2016. "The Impact of Uncertainty, Threat, and Political Identity on Support for Political Compromise." *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 38(3), 137-152.
- Haber, Lawrence J. 2006. "Labor Negotiations and Game Theory: The Case of Asymmetric Bargaining Power." *Journal of Collective Negotiations*, 31(1).
- Halperin, Eran, Porat, Roni and Michael Wohl. 2013. "Extinction Threat and Reciprocal Threat Reduction: Collective Angst Predicts Willingness to Compromise in Intractable Intergroup Conflicts." *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 16(6), 797-813.
- Harbridge, Laurel and Neil Malhotra. 2011. "Electoral Incentives and Partisan Conflict in Congress: Evidence from Survey Experiments." *American Journal of Political Science*, 55(3), 494-510.
- Harbridge, Laurel, Malhotra, Neil and Brian F. Harrison. 2014. "Public Preferences for Bipartisanship in the Policymaking Congress." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 39(3): 327-33.

- Hibbing, John R. and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse. 2002. *Stealth Democracy: Americans' Beliefs About How Government Should Work*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hibbing, John, Theiss-Morse, Elizabeth and Eric Whitaker. 2009. "Americans' Perceptions of the Nature of Governing." In Jeffrey J. Mondak and Dona-Gene Mitchell, eds., *Fault Lines: Why the Republicans Lost Congress*. New York: Routledge.
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 2016. *Strangers in their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. New York: The New Press
- Huckfeldt, R. Robert and John Sprague. 1995. *Citizens, Politics, and Social Communication: Information and Influence in an Election Campaign*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Huckfeldt, R. Robert, Mondak, Jeffrey, Hayes, Matthew, Pietryka, Matthew T. and Jack Reilly. 2013. "Networks, Independence, and Social Influence in Politics" in Huddy, Leonie, Sears, David O. and Jack S. Levy (eds.) *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Huddy, Leonie and Anna H. Gunthorsdottir. 2000. "The Persuasive Effects of Emotive Visual Imagery: Superficial Manipulation or the Product of Passionate Reason?." *Political Psychology* 21(4), 745-778.
- Huddy, Leonie, Feldman, Stanley, Taber, Charles and Gallya Lahav. 2005. "Threat, Anxiety, and Support of Antiterrorism Policies." *American Journal of Political Science*, 49(3), 593-608.
- Huddy, Leonie, Feldman, Stanley and Christopher Weber. 2007. "The Political Consequences of Perceived Threat and Felt Insecurity." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 614(1), 131-153.
- Iyengar, Shanto, Sood, Guarov and and Yphtach Lelkes. 2012. "Affect, Not Ideology: A Social Identity Perspective on Polarization." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76(3): 405–31.
- Iyengar, Shanto and Sean Westwood. 2015. "Fear and Loathing across Party Lines: New Evidence on Group Polarization." *American Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 59(3):690-707

- Jones, Robert P. 2016. *The End of White Christian America*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Jost, John T., Napier, Jaime L., Thorisdottir, Hulda, Gosling, Samuel D., Palfai, Tibor P. and Brian Ostafin. 2007. "Are Needs to Manage Uncertainty and Threat Associated with Political Conservatism or Ideological Extremity?" *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 33(7): 989-1007.
- Kahneman, Daniel and Amos Tversky. 1979. "Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision under Risk." *Econometrica*, 47(2), 263-292.
- Kahneman, Daniel and Amos Tversky. 1992. *Judgment Under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Kamarck, Elaine and James Wallner. 2018. "Anticipating Trouble: Congressional Primaries and Incumbent Behavior" *R Street Policy Study* 156.
- Keohane, Robert O. 1984. *After Hegemony*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Kim, Peter H., Pinkley, Robin L. and Alison R. Fragale. 2005. "Power Dynamics in Negotiation." *Academy of Management Review* 2005, Vol. 30 (No. 4): 799–822.
- Kinder, Donald R. and Timothy J. Ryan. 2017. "Prejudice and Politics Re-Examined The Political Significance of Implicit Racial Bias" *Political Science Research and Methods* Vol 5(2): 241-59
- Kossowska, Malgorzata, Czernatowicz-Kukuczka, Aneta and Maciej Sekerdej. 2017. "Many Faces of Dogmatism: Prejudice as a Way of Protecting Certainty Against Value Violators Among Dogmatic Believers and Atheists." *British Journal of Psychology*, 108(1), 127-147.
- Kristofferson, Kris and Fred Foster. 1969. "Me and Bobby McGhee." Various recordings.
- Lang, Peter J., Bradley, Margaret M. and Bruce N. Cuthbert. 2008. *International Affective Picture System (IAPS): Affective Ratings of Pictures and Instruction Manual*. Technical Report A-8. University of Florida, Gainesville, FL.
- Lawler, Edward J. 1992. "Power Processes in Bargaining." *The Sociological Quarterly*, 33(1), 17-34.
- Lee, Frances E. 2016. *Insecure Majorities: Congress and the Perpetual Campaign*. University of Chicago Press.

- Levay, Kevin E., Freese, Jeremy, and James N. Druckman. 2016. "The Demographic and Political Composition of Mechanical Turk Samples." *Sage Open*, 6(1): 1-17.
- Levy, Jack S. 1996. "Loss Aversion, Framing, and Bargaining: The Implications of Prospect Theory for International Conflict." *International Political Science Review* 17(2): 179–195.
- Lodge, Milton and Charles S. Taber. 2005. "The Automaticity of Affect for Political Leaders, Groups, and Issues: An Experimental Test of the Hot Cognition Hypothesis" *Political Psychology*. 26(3)455-482.
- MacKuen, Michael, Marcus, George E., Neuman, W. Russell and Luke Keele. 2007. "The Third Way: The Theory of Affective Intelligence and American Democracy." In *The Affect Effect: Dynamics of Emotion in Political Thinking and Behavior*. pp. 124-151. The University of Chicago Press.
- Mann, Thomas E. and Norman J. Ornstein. 2012. *It's Even Worse Than It Looks*. Basic Books.
- Mansbridge, Jane, and Cathie J. Martin. 2015. *Political Negotiation: A Handbook*. Brookings Institution Press.
- Maoz, Ifat, and Clark McCauley 2009. "Threat Perceptions and Feelings as Predictors of Jewish-Israeli Support for Compromise with Palestinians." *Journal of Peace Research*, 46(4), 525–539.
- Marcus, George E., Neuman, W. Russell and Michael B. MacKuen. 2000. *Affective Intelligence and Political Judgment*. University of Chicago Press.
- Mason, Liliana. 2018a. *Uncivil Agreement: How Our Politics Became Our Identity*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Mason, Lilliana. 2018b. "Losing Common Ground: Social Sorting and Polarization." *The Forum* Vol. 16(1): 47-66).
- Martin, Gregory J. and Ali Yurukoglu. 2017. "Bias in Cable News: Persuasion and Polarization." *American Economic Review* Vol. 107(9): 2565-99.
- Mayhew, David R. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. Yale University Press.

- Merolla, Jennifer J., Montalvo, Daniel and Elizabeth Zechmeister. 2012. "Terrorism and Democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean." Claremont Graduate University, unpublished manuscript.
- McCarty, Nolan, Poole, Keith T. and Howard Rosenthal. 2006. *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches*. M.I.T. Press.
- Miller, Joanne M. and Jon A. Krosnick. 2004. "Threat as a Motivator of Political Activism: A Field Experiment." *Political Psychology* 25 (4):507-24
- Miller, Joanne M, Krosnick, Jon A., Holbrook, Allyson, Tahk, Alexander and Laura Dionne. 2016. "The Impact of Policy Change Threat on Financial Contributions to Interest Groups." In Krosnick, Jon A., Chiang, I-Chant A. and Tobias H. Stark (eds.) *Political Psychology: New Explorations*. New York: Routledge.
- Mondak, Jeffrey J. and Jon Hurwitz. 2012. "Examining the Terror Exception." *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 76(2), 193-213.
- Moravcsik, Andrew. 1998. *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht*. Cornell University Press.
- Nagler, Jonathan. 1994. "Scobit: An Alternative Estimator to Logit and Probit." *American Journal of Political Science* 38(1): 230-55.
- Nash, John. F. 1950. "The Bargaining Problem." *Econometrica: Journal of the Econometric Society*, 155-162.
- Neblo, Michael A., Esterling, Kevin M. and David M. Lazer. 2018. *Politics with the People: Building a Directly Representative Democracy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Pew Research Center 2018. "Wide Gender Gap, Growing Educational Divide in Voters' Party Identification: College Graduates Increasingly Align with Democratic Party." March 20 (online).
- Pinkley, Robin L., Neale, Margaret A., & Bennett, Rebecca J. 1994. "The Impact of Alternatives to Settlement in Dyadic Negotiation." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 57: 97-116.

- Reeves, Andrew and Jon C. Rogowski. 2018. "The Public Cost of Unilateral Action," *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 62(2): 424–440, 2018.
- Reeves, Andrew and Jon C. Rogowski. 2016. "Unilateral Powers, Public Opinion, and the Presidency," *Journal of Politics*, vol. 78(1): 137–151, 2016.
- Ross, Jamel. 2015. "Obama Revives His 'Cling to Guns or Religion' Analysis — for Donald Trump Supporters." *The Washington Post* (December 21<sup>st</sup>). <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2015/12/21/obama-dusts-off-his-cling-to-guns-or-religion-idea-for-donald-trump/>
- Ryan, Timothy 2017. "No Compromise: Political Consequences of Moralized Attitudes." *American Journal of Political Science*. 61(2), 409-423
- Schaffner, Brian F. 2011. "Party Polarization." In *The Oxford Handbook of the American Congress*. Oxford University Press.
- Schelling, Thomas C. 1960. *The Strategy of Conflict*. Harvard University Press
- Sides, John. 2019. "Many Americans Say they Want Politicians to Compromise. But Maybe They Don't." *The Monkey Cage, The Washington Post*. (January 16<sup>th</sup>).  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2019/01/16/many-americans-say-they-want-politicians-to-compromise-but-maybe-they-dont/>
- Smith, Kevin B., Oxley, Douglas, Hibbing, Matthew V., Alford, John R. and John R. Hibbing. 2011. "Disgust Sensitivity and the Neurophysiology of Left-Right Political Orientations." *PLoS one*, 6(10), e25552.
- Stenner, Karen. 2005. *The Authoritarian Dynamic*. Cambridge University Press.
- Thaler, Richard H. 1980. "Toward a Positive Theory of Consumer Choice." *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, (1), 39-60.
- Theriault, Sean M. 2008. *Party Polarization in Congress*. Cambridge University Press.
- Thompson, Leigh L. 1998. *The Mind and Heart of the Negotiator*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

- Tosi, Donald J., Fagan, Thomas K. and R. M. Frumkin. 1968. "Relation of Levels of Dogmatism and Perceived Threat Under Conditions of Group Personality Testing." *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 26(2), 481-482.
- Way, Baldwin M. and Roger D. Masters. 1996. "Political Attitudes: Interactions of Cognition and Affect." *Motivation and Emotion* 20(3), 205-236.
- Wendt, Alexander, and Daniel Friedheim. 1995. "Hierarchy Under Anarchy: Informal Empire and the East German State." *International Organization*, 49(4):689-721.
- Wolak, Jennifer. 2017. "Support for Compromise in Principle and in Practice." Annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, CA.  
[https://convention2.allacademic.com/one/apsa/apsa17/index.php?cmd=Online+Program+View+Paper&selected\\_paper\\_id=1258328&PHPSESSID=tu2d3d6es0k64099et83inb3q1](https://convention2.allacademic.com/one/apsa/apsa17/index.php?cmd=Online+Program+View+Paper&selected_paper_id=1258328&PHPSESSID=tu2d3d6es0k64099et83inb3q1)
- Wolf, Michael R., Strachan, Cherie J. and Daniel M. Shea. 2012. "Incivility and Standing Firm: A Second Layer of Partisan Division." *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 45(3), 428-434.
- Yiend, Jenny and Andrew Mathews. 2001. "Anxiety and Attention to Threatening Pictures." *The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology Section A* 54(3), 665-681.

## Online Appendix

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Table OA1: Study 1 Distributions of Support for Political Compromise, by Issue	2
Table OA2: Study 1 Factor Loadings for <i>Support for Compromise</i> Index	2
Table OA3: Power, Threat and Support for Political Compromise: Minimum Wage	3
Table OA4: Power, Threat and Support for Political Compromise: Immigration	4
Table OA5: Power, Threat and Support for Political Compromise: Gun Control	5
Table OA6: Power, Threat and Support for Political Compromise: Abortion	6
Table OA7: Individual Demographics, Threat, and Support for Political Compromise	7
<b>Study 2: Power, Perceptions of Gaining-Losing Power, and Support for Compromise</b>	8
Table OA8: Study 2 Factor Loadings for Support for Compromise Index	9
Table OA9: Power, Perceptions of Gaining-Losing, and Support for Compromise: Study 2 Evidence	11

**Table OA1: Study 1 Distributions of Support for Political Compromise, by Issue**

	Minimum Wage (%)	Guns (%)	Immigration (%)	Abortion (%)
Strongly prefer compromise	26	27	24	19
Somewhat prefer compromise	36	29	34	24
Somewhat oppose compromise	20	22	21	22
Strongly oppose compromise	19	23	21	36

**Table OA2:**  
**Study 1 Factor Loadings for *Support for Compromise* Index**

Minimum Wage	.50
Immigration	.31
Abortion	.49
Gun Control	.50

**Table OA3: Power, Threat and Support for Political Compromise: Minimum Wage**

	<i>b (s.e.)</i>	<i>b (s.e.)</i>	<i>b (s.e.)</i>	<i>b (s.e.)</i>
<i>Perceived Threat</i>	-04	-.01 (.05)	.12 (.13)	-.18 (.18)
<i>Demographic Privilege Index</i>	<b>-.18 (.08)</b>	<b>-.18 (.09)</b>	-.01 (.21)	-.17 (.09)
<i>Threat * Demographic Privilege</i>	N/A	N/A	-.32 (.31)	N/A
<i>Party ID (GOP High)</i>	<b>-.15 (.05)</b>	.00 (.11)	.01 (.11)	-.26 (.21)
<i>District Party ID (GOP High)</i>	N/A	.04 (.09)	.05 (.09)	-.23 (.18)
<i>Party ID * District Party ID</i>	N/A	-.23 (.20)	-.23 (.20)	.53 (.40)
<i>Threat * Party ID</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	.50 (.40)
<i>Threat * District Party ID</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	.57 (.35)
<i>Threat * Party ID * District Party ID</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>-1.52 (.73)</b>
<i>Ideology (Conservative High)</i>	.01 (.06)	-.05 (.06)	-.05 (.06)	-.04 (.06)
<i>News Attentiveness</i>	<b>-.08 (.04)</b>	<b>-.09 (.04)</b>	<b>-.09 (.04)</b>	<b>-.09 (.04)</b>
<i>Age</i>	.03 (.06)	.03 (.06)	.03 (.06)	.03 (.06)
<i>Church Attendance</i>	.06 (.05)	.08 (.05)	.08 (.05)	.09 (.05)
<i>Born Again</i>	.04 (.03)	-.05 (.03)	-.05 (.03)	-.04 (.03)
Constant	.75	.72	.65	.79
n	874	766	766	766

**NOTE:** Coefficients are unstandardized ordinary least squares regression slopes showing the difference in the value of compromise support (0-1 scale) that is associated with a minimum-to-maximum difference in each explanatory variable. Statistically significant relationships ( $p < .05$ ) are in bold.

**Table OA4: Power, Threat and Support for Political Compromise: Immigration**

	<i>b (s.e.)</i>	<i>b (s.e.)</i>	<i>b (s.e.)</i>	<i>b (s.e.)</i>
<i>Perceived Threat</i>	-.03 (.04)	-.02 (.04)	.17 (.10)	<b>-.51 (.21)</b>
<i>Demographic Privilege Index</i>	<b>-.11 (.06)</b>	-.10 (.09)	.15 (.14)	-.10 (.09)
<i>Threat * Demographic Privilege</i>	N/A	N/A	<b>-.48 (.21)</b>	N/A
<i>Party ID (GOP High)</i>	<b>-.26 (.04)</b>	-.12 (.10)	-.11 (.10)	-.49 (.25)
<i>District Party ID (GOP High)</i>	N/A	.06 (.08)	.06 (.08)	<b>-.49 (.20)</b>
<i>Party ID * District Party ID</i>	N/A	-.25 (.15)	-.25 (.15)	.65 (.45)
<i>Threat * Party ID</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	.75 (.44)
<i>Threat * District Party ID</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.13 (.40)
<i>Threat * Party ID * District Party ID</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>-1.82 (.82)</b>
<i>Ideology (Conservative High)</i>	-.03 (.04)	-.06 (.06)	-.06 (.05)	-.06 (.05)
<i>News Attentiveness</i>	-.03 (.03)	-.03 (.04)	-.03 (.04)	-.02 (.04)
<i>Age</i>	-.08 (.05)	-.09 (.06)	-.09 (.06)	-.10 (.06)
<i>Church Attendance</i>	.03 (.04)	.05 (.04)	.05 (.04)	.06 (.04)
<i>Born Again</i>	-.03 (.02)	-.04 (.03)	-.04 (.03)	-.03 (.03)
Constant	.77	.73	.63	.97
n	874	766	766	766

**NOTE:** Coefficients are unstandardized ordinary least squares regression slopes showing the difference in the value of compromise support (0-1 scale) that is associated with a minimum-to-maximum difference in each explanatory variable. Statistically significant relationships ( $p < .05$ ) are in bold.

**Table OA5: Power, Threat and Support for Political Compromise: Gun Control**

	<i>b (s.e.)</i>	<i>b (s.e.)</i>	<i>b (s.e.)</i>	<i>b (s.e.)</i>
<i>Perceived Threat</i>	-.08 (.05)	-.07 (.05)	.10 (.10)	-.04 (.21)
<i>Demographic Privilege Index</i>	-.12 (.09)	-.16 (.10)	.06 (.14)	-.15 (.10)
<i>Threat * Demographic Privilege</i>	N/A	N/A	<b>-.43 (.20)</b>	N/A
<i>Party ID (GOP High)</i>	<b>-.18 (.04)</b>	.16 (.10)	.17 (.10)	.06 (.26)
<i>District Party ID (GOP High)</i>	N/A	<b>.23 (.10)</b>	<b>.23 (.10)</b>	.22 (.23)
<i>Party ID * District Party ID</i>	N/A	<b>-.67 (.15)</b>	<b>-.67 (.15)</b>	-.36 (.45)
<i>Threat * Party ID</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	.19 (.42)
<i>Threat * District Party ID</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	.03 (.40)
<i>Threat * Party ID * District Party ID</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	-.59 (.75)
<i>Ideology (Conservative High)</i>	-.08 (.07)	-.05 (.08)	-.05 (.08)	-.05 (.08)
<i>News Attentiveness</i>	-.07 (.05)	-.06 (.05)	-.06 (.05)	-.05 (.05)
<i>Age</i>	-.06 (.06)	-.06 (.05)	-.06 (.05)	-.06 (.05)
<i>Church Attendance</i>	.06 (.04)	.07 (.04)	.08 (.04)	.08 (.04)
<i>Born Again</i>	-.03 (.03)	-.04 (.03)	-.04 (.03)	-.04 (.03)
Constant	.80	.68	.59	.66
n	874	766	766	766

**NOTE:** Coefficients are unstandardized ordinary least squares regression slopes showing the difference in the value of compromise support (0-1 scale) that is associated with a minimum-to-maximum difference in each explanatory variable. Statistically significant relationships ( $p < .05$ ) are in bold.

**Table OA6: Power, Threat and Support for Political Compromise: Abortion**

	<i>b (s.e.)</i>	<i>b (s.e.)</i>	<i>b (s.e.)</i>	<i>b (s.e.)</i>
<i>Perceived Threat</i>	.01 (.05)	.03 (.05)	<b>.24 (.11)</b>	.02 (.23)
<i>Demographic Privilege Index</i>	<b>-.18 (.08)</b>	-.19 (.10)	.08 (.14)	-.18 (.10)
<i>Threat * Demographic Privilege</i>	N/A	N/A	<b>-.53 (.21)</b>	N/A
<i>Party ID (GOP High)</i>	<b>-.13 (.04)</b>	.04 (.13)	.04 (.13)	-.19 (.27)
<i>District Party ID (GOP High)</i>	N/A	.18 (.12)	.19 (.12)	.11 (.27)
<i>Party ID * District Party ID</i>	N/A	-.30 (.21)	-.30 (.22)	.28 (.48)
<i>Threat * Party ID</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	.42 (.45)
<i>Threat * District Party ID</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	.15 (.45)
<i>Threat * Party ID * District Party ID</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	-1.14 (.83)
<i>Ideology (Conservative High)</i>	-.08 (.05)	.06 (.05)	.06 (.05)	.06 (.05)
<i>News Attentiveness</i>	<b>-.11 (.04)</b>	<b>-.12 (.04)</b>	<b>-.12 (.03)</b>	<b>-.11 (.04)</b>
<i>Age</i>	.05 (.07)	.05 (.07)	.05 (.07)	.05 (.07)
<i>Church Attendance</i>	-.05 (.04)	-.04 (.04)	-.03 (.04)	-.03 (.04)
<i>Born Again</i>	-.04 (.04)	-.04 (.04)	-.04 (.03)	-.04 (.03)
Constant	.59	.48	.37	.47
n	874	766	766	766

**NOTE:** Coefficients are unstandardized ordinary least squares regression slopes showing the difference in the value of compromise support (0-1 scale) that is associated with a minimum-to-maximum difference in each explanatory variable. Statistically significant relationships ( $p < .05$ ) are in bold.

**Table OA7: Individual Demographics, Threat and Support for Political Compromise**

	<i>b (s.e.)</i>	<i>b (s.e.)</i>	<i>b (s.e.)</i>	<i>b (s.e.)</i>
<i>Perceived Threat</i>	.02 (.06)	.02 (.06)	.02 (.06)	.07 (.07)
<i>White</i>	-.03 (.05)	<b>-.06 (.02)</b>	<b>-.06 (.02)</b>	<b>-.06 (.02)</b>
<i>Threat * White</i>	-.06 (.09)	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Male</i>	.02 (.02)	.02 (.04)	.02 (.04)	-.02 (.02)
<i>Threat * Male</i>	N/A	-.08 (.07)	N/A	N/A
<i>Christian</i>	.01 (.03)	.01 (.03)	.01 (.03)	.01 (.03)
<i>Threat * Christian</i>	N/A	N/A	-.08 (.07)	N/A
<i>Education</i>	<b>-.06 (.03)</b>	<b>-.06 (.03)</b>	<b>-.06 (.03)</b>	.03 (.07)
<i>Threat * Education</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	-.18 (.11)
<i>Income</i>	.04 (.04)	.03 (.05)	.03 (.05)	.03 (.05)
<i>Threat * Income</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Party ID (GOP High)</i>	.04 (.08)	.04 (.08)	.04 (.08)	.04 (.08)
<i>District Party ID (GOP High)</i>	<b>.18 (.07)</b>	<b>.17 (.08)</b>	<b>.17 (.08)</b>	<b>.16 (.08)</b>
<i>Party ID * District Party ID</i>	-.35 (.13)	<b>-.34 (.13)</b>	<b>-.34 (.13)</b>	<b>-.33 (.13)</b>
<i>Ideology (Conservative High)</i>	-.05 (.05)	-.05 (.04)	-.05 (.05)	-.06 (.04)
<i>News Attentiveness</i>	<b>-.09 (.03)</b>	<b>-.08 (.04)</b>	<b>-.08 (.04)</b>	<b>-.08 (.04)</b>
<i>Age</i>	.01 (.05)	.01 (.05)	.01 (.05)	.00 (.05)
<i>Church Attendance</i>	-.01 (.04)	-.01 (.04)	.01 (.04)	-.02 (.04)
<i>Born Again</i>	-.04 (.03)	-.04 (.03)	-.04 (.03)	-.04 (.03)
Constant	.60	.63	.63	.61
n	876	876	766	766

**NOTE:** Coefficients are unstandardized ordinary least squares regression slopes, showing the difference in the value of compromise support (0-1 scale) that is associated with a minimum-to-maximum difference in each explanatory variable. Statistically significant relationships ( $p < .05$ ) are in bold.

## Study 2: Power, Perceptions of Gaining-Losing Power, and Support for Legislative Compromise

This study uses public opinion survey data sampled from Amazon’s Mechanical Turk labor market in February of 2019 (n=1541).<sup>23</sup>

### *Measurement*

We measured attitudes toward political compromise by prompting respondents with the following question:

Some people say that political compromise is necessary, so the country can make progress on big problems. Others say that compromise is just selling out and giving in to one’s enemies. What do you think? Should the (Democrats/Republicans/People who share your beliefs) in Washington make compromises with the other side? Or should they stand firm no matter what?<sup>24</sup>

(Five-point scale, converted to 0-1; 0=strongly support standing firm; 1=strongly support making compromises)

We then asked respondents to consider the same question as it pertains to six specific issues (the minimum wage, health care, tax rates, abortion regulation, immigration, and gun control). We created a principal-components index of these seven items, which we converted to a 0-1 scale (mean=.52;

---

<sup>23</sup> For evidence that samples using MTurk respondents are useful for predictive modeling, see Berinsky, Huber and Lenz (2012); Levay, Freese and Druckman (2016), and Clifford, Jewell and Waggoner (2015). However, MTurk samples do tend to attenuate treatment effects to some degree meaning that the findings we report below may be understated (Ahler et al. 2019).

<sup>24</sup> We asked Democratic respondents (including Independent Leaners) to consider whether “Democrats” should compromise and Republicans/Republican leaners respondents whether “Republicans” should compromise. We asked true Independents whether “people who share your beliefs” should compromise

s.d.=.25; eigenvalue=3.79).<sup>25</sup> This index serves as the outcome variable in this study. The factor loadings are as follows.

**Table OA8: Factor Loadings for Support for Compromise Index**

General	.35
Minimum Wage	.39
Health Care	.42
Tax Rates	.40
Abortion	.34
Immigration	.38
Gun Control	.36

In accordance with our theoretical discussion in the main text, we operationalized *Demographic Privilege* with a summed index of socially and economically powerful demographic traits: *Gender* (1=male; 45%), *Race* (1=white; 75%), *Religious Identity* (1=Christian (of any kind except LDS); 56%), *Education* (five-point, converted to 0-1; 1=post-graduate degree; mean=.67; s.d.=.22), and *Household Income* (14-point; converted to 0-1; mean=.39; s.d.=.25). We converted the resulting index to a 0-1 scale for analysis (mean=.57; s.d.=.18). This index has face validity as a composite measure of socio-political power, given each of these indicators' undeniable identity as a marker of status and privilege. The measure is surely weaker, however, in terms of reliability, the consequence of which is to bias our hypothesis tests toward making a Type II error (failing to reject the null; see Carmines and Zeller 1979).

---

<sup>25</sup> As expected, a considerable majority of respondents indicated that they prefer compromise in the abstract and a slight majority preferred compromise when it came to the economic issues, but a majority opposed compromise on gun control, immigration and especially abortion. This variance provides preliminary suggestive evidence in support of our hypothesis, because the latter issues are wrapped up in things that many people find viscerally threatening (crime, racial displacement, and changing gender roles).

We measure the variance in threat perceptions by asking respondents to indicate whether they perceive “people like you to be gaining or losing power in society” (three-point, converted to 0-1; 0=Gaining; .5=Neither; 1=Losing). We call this variable *Gaining-Losing Power* (mean=.47; s.d.=.39).

### *Model Estimation*

We estimated three linear regression equations. In the first equation, we regressed *Support for Political Compromise* on *Gaining-Losing Power*, *Demographic Privilege*, *Party ID* and the additional covariates described in Study 1. This enables a simple test of the leverage hypothesis, while controlling for perceptions of threat. In the second equation, we added an interaction term that multiplied *Gaining-Losing Power* and *Demographic Privilege* (mean=.46; s.d.=.24), which enabled a straightforward test of the loss aversion hypothesis as it pertains to intersecting demographic privilege. In the third equation, we replaced that interaction with another one that multiplied *Gaining-Losing Power* and *Party ID*, which enabled a replication of the simple Study 1 test of the loss aversion hypothesis as it pertains to partisan majority status.

### *Results*

As the first results column of Table SM9 makes clear, this model reveals no support for the leverage hypothesis as it relates to either *Demographic Privilege* or *Party ID*. When it comes to the loss aversion hypothesis, however, the data again provide significant support. As the first results row of Table SM1 reveals, there is no relationship between *Gaining-Losing Power* and *Support for Compromise* among those with the least amount of demographic privilege in the sample (nonwhite, female, non-Christians with low levels of education and income). However, the coefficients in the first and third rows (summed) show that among those with the most demographic privilege (white, male, Christians with high education and income), a full-range difference on the *Gaining-Losing Power* scale is associated with an 11-point drop on the 0-1 *Support for Compromise* scale (.02-.13;  $p < .05$ ).

**Table OA9: Power, Perceptions of Gaining-Losing, and Support for Political Compromise  
Study 2 Evidence**

	<i>b (s.e.)</i>	<i>b (s.e.)</i>	<i>b (s.e.)</i>
<i>Gaining-Losing Power</i>	<b>-.05 (.02)</b>	.02 (.06)	-.01 (.03)
<i>Demographic Privilege</i>	<b>.11 (.04)</b>	<b>.17 (.06)</b>	<b>.12 (.04)</b>
<i>Gaining-Losing Power * Demographic Privilege</i>	N/A	<b>-.13 (.09)</b>	N/A
<i>Party Identification (GOP High)</i>	.02 (.02)	.03 (.03)	<b>.06 (.03)</b>
<i>Gaining-Losing Power * Party ID</i>	N/A	N/A	<b>-.09 (.05)</b>
<i>Ideological Identification (Conservative High)</i>	-.01 (.03)	.01 (.03)	.01 (.03)
<i>News Attentiveness</i>	<b>-.15 (.03)</b>	<b>-.15 (.03)</b>	<b>-.15 (.03)</b>
<i>Age</i>	.01 (.04)	.00 (.04)	.01 (.04)
<i>Church Attendance</i>	.03 (.02)	.03 (.03)	.03 (.02)
<i>Born Again</i>	-.10 (.02)	-.10 (.02)	-.19 (.02)
Constant	.46	.52	.54
n	1225	1225	1225

**NOTE:** Coefficients are unstandardized ordinary least squares regression slopes, showing the difference in the value of compromise support (0-1 scale) that is associated with a minimum-to-maximum difference in each explanatory variable. Statistically significant relationships ( $p < .05$ ) are in bold.<sup>26</sup>

The same pattern holds with respect to *Party ID*. There is no relationship between *Gaining-Losing Power* among Democrats, but among strong Republicans, a minimum-to-maximum difference in *Gaining-Losing Power* is associated with a ten-point reduction in support for compromise ( $-.01$ -.09;  $p < .05$ ).

In sum, Study 2 provides additional evidence to support the loss aversion hypothesis but not the leverage hypothesis. As with the other studies, there is no evidence that intersecting demographic privilege or partisan majority status weakens support for political compromise directly. If anything, the former may even strengthen it in the abstract. However, the evidence suggests that both privilege and

<sup>26</sup> This pattern of results holds in alternative model specifications in which we (a) replace *Ideological Identification* with a more complicated index of policy preferences and value priorities, and/or (b) remove any combination of control variables

partisan majority status may have a conditioning effect: the prospect of losing power does not appear to matter much to those who have little power to lose or among those who are in the partisan minority (Democrats), but it may markedly weaken support for compromise among those with considerable demographic privilege and/or those who are in the partisan majority (Republicans).