Religious influence on ideological purity voters in the U.S. House of Congress:

The Need for Compromise.

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*On Compromise*

“Politics is the art of compromise” is a statement attributed to Otto Von Bismarck. He didn’t actually say this though. What he said was “Politics is the art of the possible, the attainable—the art of the next best (Meyer von Waldeck 1867),” but the first quote, albeit apocryphal, is the most often used (Fumurescu 2013:1-2). Both, though, work well in explaining that political compromises in a democratic system is an “art.” It requires dedicated work by professional who understand the necessities of working together to achieve an attainable goal which serves the most people best. When a good one is produced it creates something lasting and strong. Even bad ones can be beneficial. All governments, even to a certain extent autocratic dictatorships, require levels of compromise. Being able to compromise is often seen as a measure of a reasonable person. It is those who are outside of effective politics, the extremist, who are unwilling to compromise (Devine 1972).

Government is founded on compromise (Smith 1942, Rintala 1969, Devine 1972, Burke 1999:223, Margalit 2010, Rauch 2015, Obama 5-7-2016). In general, a compromise is “an agreement in which all sides sacrifice something in order to improve the status quo from their perspective, and in which the sacrifices are at least partly determined by the other side’s will (Gutmann and Thompson 2012:10).” It is the varied interest competing with each other to gain the most benefits for whom they represent (Hallowell 1944). “All governments, indeed every human benefit and enjoyment, every virtue, and every prudent act, is founded on compromise and barter” said Edmond Burke (Margalit 2010, Rauch 2013). Compromise might sound bad to some, but all political bodies compromise. It is sacrificing the “better for the good (Specter, Arlen 2007).” It’s nearly impossible to have a functioning democracy without compromise (Gutmann and Thompson 2012:1).

In 1942, Thomas V. Smith, a U.S. House Member from Illinois, and professor of philosophy at the University of Chicago and Syracuse University, wrote a moving piece explaining the moral high ground of democracy and the necessity of compromise in democracy. “Compromise is necessary because we literally cannot live without it. It is desirable because we live better with it (Smith 1942).” Compromise allows us to move together as a group, rather than as competing individuals. Compromises in politics should be made by professionals (1942). Good compromises are not the work of amateurs or the untrained. It takes dedication and an understanding of the intricacies of negotiation to reach compromises which serve the most people and the most good. Those professionals should be left the dirty work of compromise so that the people can maintain their principles (1942).

Principles can get in the way of compromise. They can cloud judgement about what is an attainable good. Principles can change the shape of political goals from achieving the greatest benefits for all to proving one’s own principles are more important than outcomes. The concept of compromise has been marred by those who label it as accommodation, or moral mediocrity. Those who compromise are made the scapegoats of politicians who place principles above governance. Politics is about compromise, and politicians are the supposed to be the specialist who facilitate compromise instead of demonize it. This makes politicians the standard bearers of compromise (Smith 1942). “Is democracy a moral enterprise dedicated to equality of access, or an immoral one dedicated to monopoly of enjoyment (1942)?” Smith’s answer is that democracy is moral driving force for equality.

***Missing Section: Defining principles, values, and interest to be added here***

Gutman and Thompson 2010

Compromises are difficult but essential for democracy. Even though they are often viewed as a sacrifice of values for expediency, they are often the best, and sometimes only, means of improving the status quo for the population (Gutmann and Thompson 2012:30). All politics can be judged on a scale and quality of their compromises. Democracy and compromise are directly related to each other (Rintala 1969; Fumurescue 2013:3). Even the very idea of a governing contract like the U.S. Constitution is a compromise between anarchy and the benefits of society through the bond of a social contract. Thus creating a mutually beneficial society where even those that dissent from the contract are forced to join by the majority, and still receive the benefit of society (Shapiro 2003:114).

There are two types of legislative compromises. The first is a *classic compromise* where differing values are in conflict and the compromise is formed with an understanding of those difference. The other kind of compromise is a *consensual compromise* were the underlying values are the same, a common-ground, and the compromise is reached by putting aside the minor differences in procedure so that consensus can be formed on the value issues. The latter is harder between opposing members, but they are the most well received. Part of the reason the consensual compromise is hard to accomplish is because overarching values are very similar, but it is in the machinations of policy creation and implementation where problems arise (Gutmann and Thompson 2012:11-15). Both of these compromises are value based, leaving principles aside as those are difficult to compromise.

The social contract moves people from compromises for mere survival to compromises which promote thriving. These compromises form governments. It then becomes the role of government to govern the bond created among the people through compromises. Maybe only Plato’s philosopher kings can lead without compromise because that idealistic leader does only good for all the people. However, the vast majority of people are self-interested actors who seek their own benefits (Plato 1974:359). This makes it difficult for a leader to serve all the people’s interest as those interests will differ greatly by individual needs and wants. Additionally, people in general rely more on being steadfast in their principles rather than compromising of their values to reach equitable solutions which server the greater good by improving the status quo.

In order to maintain the peace and prosperity of the social contract, institutions arise in the form of government (Smith 1942). Once formed, the governing institutions become the controlling mechanism of further compromises (Gutmann and Thompson 2012:11). Compromises happen between differing parties in an arena. All politics happens in an arena and it is the institutions of government and the norms of society which govern the arenas (Jelen 2012). These institutions and their governance are essential for democratic politics because democratic politics are transactional politics. They are back and forth haggling between varied interests championed by elected representatives whose purpose is to get the best solutions and benefits for the people they represent. Compromises can be accepted by political actors, and championed by those actors because they all had a part in its making and a vested interest in its success (Rintala 1969). As much as democracy needs compromise in its government system, it also needs impassioned, principled citizens to drive issues into the public sphere (Gutmann and Thompson 2012:4). It is important to remember that with the diversified populace of the U.S., or any modern democracy, citizens and constituents can have differing principles. It is the job of the professional, the politicians, to satisfy, as much as possible, the principles of all their constituents by making compromises on values, on issues among themselves so as to not force the citizens to compromise their own values. This is the benefit of professional politicians, those who understand the need for compromise while also understanding the desire of citizens to maintain their principles.

The Constitutional which created the United States is essentially an exercise of compromises between competing interests. At the Constitutional Convention, held in Philadelphia starting in 1787, it was more than just a battle between the Federalist who favored a strong centralized government, and the Anti-Federalist who wanted a weak federal government and more power given to the states. There were also competing interest between the majority rural population and the growing urban population, between agriculture interest which dominated the new nation, and the fledgling manufacturing base in the nascent stages of industrialization, between slave holders and abolitionist, and numerous other competing interest which had to be ironed out lest the affiliated states under the Articles of Confederation descend into independent international states of their own.

*The Creation of the US Constitution as Compromise.*

The framers of the U.S. Constitution designed the Constitution to have compromise at its very root. Through compromise, the framers built a stronger national government than that had existed under the Articles of Confederation (Robertson 2013:4, 17). The framers tried to accomplish two main goals through the Constitution. They wanted to build a strong republican government, while also building a government which operated on the consent of the governed. From the beginning there was disagreement by the framers on how to achieve this. Compromises had to be reached to facilitate both goals and the framers beliefs (2013:4). The Constitutional Convention of 1787 in Philadelphia was essentially a giant exercise in compromise. The Federalist and Anti-Federalist had to reach a compromise on the very nature of government with the federalist wanting a strong government with clear separation from the people, and the Anti-Federalist wanting more direct democracy and protections from government. This can be observed in the Constitutional outline of the powers of the branches of government and the Bill of Rights which are the guaranteed rights of the people. The framers also had to settle on who would control the government, the elites of states, or the people. *The Great Compromise* was reached where two plans, the New Jersey Plan and the Virginia Plan, where combined to create the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives of the Legislative Branch. Slavery was also an issue of much importance at the writing of the Constitution. Counting slaves for representation would give the slave states an unfair population advantage. Additionally, slavery was such a controversial issue, the slave states wanted the debate off the table. The opposing sides were able to negotiate the Three/Fifths Compromise for counting slaves as 3/5 a person for representation, and end the debate on the importation of slaves as a Constitutional question for 20 years (Article I, Section 9, *U.S. Constitution*).

“Compromise is the most essential principle of our constitutional system (Rauch 2013).” Jonathan Rauch is a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institute in government studies. He has written extensively on the need for compromise in the U.S. constitutional democracy. Rauch states that democracy is an essential good, not a negative or evil, in the U.S. system of government (2013). The Constitution does not directly call for compromise (Rauch postulates this may be why some fail to see the necessity), but, instead, compromise is built into the structure of the Constitution, or, like privacy, it is in the *penumbra* (the shadow) of the Constitution. Rauch argues that compromise is the bulwark against the tyranny of the majority which so many of the anti-federalist feared. Rauch writes “compromise forces adaption (2013).” Adaption is changing to fit a new environment which is essential to the progress, politically, socially, and culturally of the American experience.

However, compromise takes time which impedes rapid change or rapid adaption. The slowness of political change in the U.S. system of government is beneficial in that the mercurial changes predicated on the fevers and desires of the people at any given time can lead to some serious problems (*Federalist* 73; Rauch 2013). Mob rule and vigilante justice are examples of rapid action without thought or debate. Governance through those violent means has proven to be dangerous and destructive. The deliberative process of democratic government allows cooler heads to prevail in reaching equitable solutions to problems. Moderation in our laws, politicians, and political outcomes might be one of the biggest benefits of the slow process of the compromise aspect built into the U.S. Constitution (Melnick 2015:70).

Jonathan Rauch attributes an understanding of compromise in the foundation of our political process to James Madison with Rauch writing that Madison understood “Politicians, like other people, compromise because they have to, not because they want to (Rauch 2013).” For context, Madison is often called the “Father of the Constitution (Galston 2015:38; Milkis and Nelson 2016:65).” Madison believed that the authority of the Legislative body should dominate, not the Executive or the Judicial (Galston 2015:29). Madison wrote that in a republican government the Legislature is the most important part (2015:40). That’s possibly why the Legislature comes first in the Constitution. Madison envisioned the Legislature to be a deliberative body filled with representatives who are the “most knowledgeable and public-spirited citizens” to be selected for national office (2015:45). The Federalist Papers claim “The best statesmen will not always be at the helm,” and “Enlightened statesmen will be able to bring together different interest and from them create public good (*Federalist* 10).” The framers, with Madison, sought to create a government which could combine the many interesting of the peoples of the nation, channeled through a representational body, into one general national interest (Rudalevige 2012:18).

The purpose of congress is to come together not just in meeting, but in a sharing of ideas, needs, and wants of the members and the people they represent. Through this sharing of ideas and desires, and the debate they foster, policy is created that hopefully satisfies the needs of the members and their constituents, but not necessarily all their wants. “In a democratic republic such as the US, it is expected that there will be at least an approximate correspondence between public opinion and public policy (Jelen 2010:57).” It is through a compromise of differing needs that the government of the U.S. functions. Because of the diversity of the U.S. electorate, and the wide swath of needs of the people, the people are best served by policy which provides for all or most, and not just some. This can be difficult for principled members of the public to accept, especially if those principles involve how the government should work. There is also a matter of honor among the members of Congress in that those who lost the debate and did not see the majority of their wants win out would still accept the outcome. Then, moving beyond acceptance, the member would take the new policy back to their constituents as sound policy to legitimate it (Mann and Ornstein 2013). The US government built on the separation of powers and power sharing institutions, requires consensus or mutually agreed upon compromises in order to include the most members, and thus the most constituents as the beneficiaries of the compromise (Rudalevige 2012:14). Often, in order for the compromise to be accepted and become institutionalized, it requires professional politicians to explain how it does the most good for the most people.

Because of the nature of compromises, the negotiation process and the necessary sacrifices, not all compromise can be made in the bold light of day. Much of the work and trading needs to be done through informal negotiation where trading of favors can be done. This means that for a government to function some informal mechanisms need to exist to get actors ready to make compromises (Rauch 2015). Open negotiations can have several problems. Grandstanding by politicians to placate principled constituents can derail a negotiation by forcing a politician to maintain their position as a principle. On the other hand, behind closed-door negotiations can lead give an air of secrecy to a compromise which can cause distrust among citizens and other elected members. A key mechanism for compromise is trust. Conversely though, the U.S. Government, to a great extent, was founded on distrust (Mann and Ornstein 2013). The U.S. system of checks and balances was created because of that distrust by setting up a system of constant monitoring and over-watch by the branches of government over each other. It is difficult to build trust out of a governing system which has “distrust” as its watchword, but through the checks and balances, power sharing, and compromises between actors within our government, trust has been built and allowed for times of high productivity and legitimacy.

*Compromise creates legitimacy through trust and stability*

“If a liberal society cannot be unified by a shared conception of the good life or by commonly acknowledged ties of blood, it can be held together by citizens’ respect for one another’s’ reason. It can be a society in which citizens’ respect one another as reasonable and show that respect by offering another reason they can share (Weithman 2002:6).” Madison wrote in Federalist 62 that “No government, any more than an individual, will long be respected without being truly respectable; nor be truly respectable without possessing a certain portion of order and stability (Madison, Federalist 62; Mann and Onstein 2013:3).” Mutual respect is vital for compromise and legitimacy (Gutmann and Thompson 2012:16). Democracy needs principled citizen to push issues into the public sphere (Obama 5-7-2016). It then requires the professional lawmakers to compromise between the two sides. That is the function government serves, as the arbitrator of differences between people. The legitimacy of government allows these brokered solutions to be accepted by both sides (2012:4). Legitimacy is built through trust, consistency, and honesty. Commitment to truth telling by a government is essential to trust, consistency, and, thus, legitimacy (Shapiro 2003:201) It is important for the people to see a stable government with consistent policy or it could be damaging to the legitimacy of a democratic government like the government of the U.S. A stable government requires legitimacy in the eyes of the citizens in order to function properly (Mann and Ornstein 2013:2).

Mere compromise does not produce legitimacy. Compromising on falsehoods or impropriety creates distrust which harms legitimacy. The compromises need to be for the most good based on mutually sound principles in order to foster trust and legitimacy (Shapiro 2003: 204). In order to achieve the most good for the diversified people of the U.S., one side cannot get everything it wants because that means the opposing side will most likely lose on all their issues. There is a need for sacrifice in compromise (Gutmann and Thompson 2012:16). Compromise depends on trusting members of the opposition, and also having a principled understanding of the need for compromise and sacrifice rather than relying on unmovable moral principles (2012:3). Effective compromise between opposing parties should create mutual respect for the individual actors, if not for their positions. Having respect for members of the opposition leads to stronger bonds and more willingness to work together. Additionally, mutual respect goes a long way to stabilizing periods of uncertainty in politics (2012:111-112). It is through trust between actors that un understanding of equal, or nearly equal mutual sacrifices are necessary to compromise. Compromise is not a zero-sum game, though, it may be seen as one by novices. The idea behind a good political compromise is for all sides to sacrifice a little in order to gain a lot. However, principled positions are often viewed as all or nothing, a zero-sum. Because of the nature of principles, any sacrifice of parts or all of them can be viewed as a total loss of the principle stand.

*The crises of legitimacy*

The goal of congressional deliberations is to produce agreements (Shapiro.2003: 204). These agreements are between political actors holding different positions on how to achieve improvements in the status quo. Hopefully, the values of actors, the goals they hope to achieve and the reasons why, are the same. This would allow the actors to achieve a *consensual compromise.* If the values are different, then a *classic compromise* is still possible where agreements can be made to allow each side to move toward aligning closer to their value position while stile serving the greater whole. However, when values, or even interests become principles, then it is seemingly more important to convince the opposition of the rightness of one’s position than to achieve an agreement. Thomas Jefferson said “Every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle” (Jefferson 1801). Compromise is rationalized even through a moral lens. This can be accomplished by accepting that in politics it is the morally correct practice to compromise. If one believe that compromise is immoral, then that would lead one to believe all politics is thus immoral (Fumurescu 2013:47). Conversely, if it is politics that one views as immoral, than political compromise must be as well. This lead to a problem of compromise is in how one views politics. If politics is approached as a negotiation between parties, then compromise is the driving force. If one views politics as value-laden then policies become principles and they cannot be compromised (2013:4). “Although compromises are typically seen as, and often are, the products of unprincipled bargaining and reinforcement of the prevailing balance of power, they are also the primary-and often the only-means by which democratic politics can improve the status quo (Gutmann and Thompson 2012:31).”

One of the issues standing in the way of compromise might be as simple as the initial compromise on what an effective compromise it. Both sides may be willing to compromise, but they may have completely different interpretations of the concept. Some may interpret as a “meeting in the middle” on issues, whereas others see more of a “give-and-take.” The former of these two means compromising one’s own policy positions with the opposition until the two positions form a new one in the middle of the political spectrum. The later means breaking the policy down into its component parts, then sacrificing some parts so as to keep the others. Additionally, politicians may use the term compromise at their own discretion, so the term itself loses traditional meaning. Whereas using “compromiser,” “accommodator,” and/or “sellout” as an insult is often employed as a political weapon in intra-party conflict. Just as using “unwilling to compromise” can serve the same purpose in extra-party conflict. These insults can move beyond simple “ugly politics” to attacking a politician’s concept of self, and, more importantly, the voters’ concept of the politician (Fumurescu 2013:5, 24-29). Over time the public’s normative opinion that the government is acting in the public’s best interest have shifted to a belief that typical political processes of forming compromise are inherently self-interested and lack real public goods (Rauch 2015). The solutions produced by compromises are hardly ever the first or even the second choice of the participants who came together to broker the deal. Compromises, by their very nature, are not perfect choices. They are messy and hardly ever live up to the ideal solution of the parties involved. It may be best to not judge compromises on metrics of good or bad. Compromises are a necessary function of government, and value judgements are best left out (Margalit 2010:6-7). However, that is a difficult concept for cognitive miser voters to accept, especially principled voters.

Former Senator Alan Simpson believes that a good representative should be able to make compromises while still maintaining principles (Gutmann and Thompson 2012:100). Political compromises should be external compromises and not internalized (2012:81). This means that, as individuals, politicians should be able to separate their political ideology form the personal convictions and principles. The compromises should result from the external aspect of a politician’s job, and not be internalized as part of the individual’s sense of self. This may be the difficulty in allowing elites to make all the political decisions which is the more elite they become the more disconnected they become form the masses. It is the masses who should maintain principled positions as a guide for the political elites to aim for. However, these principles should be pathways to legislation, not roadblocks (2012:4, 84). This can lead to the politicians having to be as principled as most their voting constituents who elect them. Eventually, the decisions of the political elite are not representative of the population, but rather are only made to maintain power by placating the half or so of voters who put them in office. This can be seen in the ending of honest deliberation on issues. When decisions are made not on merit, but rather on political expediency and maintaining power, the democratic system loses its validity as representational (Shapiro 2003:205).

One of the actions which can create legitimacy in a politician is the perception that the politician is fighting for what is “right.” Compromising for power or position can be viewed as the actions of a self-interested actor and not someone who is representing their constituents. There is little vision of the long-game for voters. Trading votes here to gain votes in the future can be viewed as distasteful. Transactional politics of give and take, which are a natural part of democratic politics, only work with score keeping. Principled voters look at the single issue or groups of issues which are most important to them. Understanding the overall benefit of transactional politics is an abstract idea (Mayhew 2000:20; Rauch 2015, Obama 5-7-2016).”

Some politicians, like people everywhere, have a compromising mindset in that they understand and appreciate the need to come to equitable solutions. Others have an ingrained uncompromising mindset. An uncompromising mindset is typified by staunch principled stands and a distrust of the intentions of the opposition (Guttman and Thompson 2010). It is discernable that politicians in the U.S. political history have campaigned with an uncompromising mindset, but then changed to a compromising mindset once they get to the governing body (Guttman and Thompson 2012:65, 69). Rauch claims that the Madison system does not require every member of Congress to be a moderate. It is usually the stalwarts and idealist on both sides of the aisle which provides the energy needed to negotiate effective compromises (Rauch 2013). However, some recent politicians in the U.S. House have maintained their uncompromising mindset as a principle well after taking their position in the elected assembly. The danger of a principled, uncompromising politician is measuring legislative efforts as a zero-sum game. It is either all win or all lose. With this mindset, opposition members apparently are not motivated to improve the status quo, but instead are seeking to be seen as uncompromising, principled politician (Obama 5-7-2016). This can lead to cynicism about the intentions of the opposition. Cynicism is mistrust, and prevents trust from being fostered between elected members thus destabilizing the legitimacy of the institution (2012: 85). Each are bad enough on their own, but together they can prevent even the most basic of communication between politicians (2012:91). At this point there is very little trust between the parties, or between the people and the politicians.

*The end of compromise*

In the modern political climate, compromises in the U.S. House between Republicans and Democrats are few and far between. Taking a stand against compromises in general has become a political principle (Guttman and Thompson 2012:70). Even those with an understanding of the messiness of legislation see that Congress is not functioning like it is supposed to. Oct 2011 was the lowest approval rating for congress in its history at 9% (Mann and Ornstein 2012:xx-xxii). Part of the acrimony in Congress and the lack of approval from the public can be blamed on the growing trend of polarity between the two parties since the Republican Revolution of 1994. Since then there has been a growing sentiment which has placed party idealism above congressional compromise (Edwards 2012:x;).

[Insert charts and graphs here on polarity and lack of production]

In 1994 the Republican Party gained control of both the U.S. House and Senate since the 83rd Congress of 1953-1955. Also, it was the first time the Republicans had gained control of both houses in opposition to a Democrat President, Harry Truman, since the 80th Congress of 1947-1949. The 80th Congress is popularly referred to as the “Do Nothing” Congress which was given to it by then President Harry Truman (Ritchie 2011:101). In reality, the 83rd Congress was middle-of-the-pact productive since the end of WWII. It was more productive in bills introduced, and the ratio of bills passed to bills introduced than the several of the last few Congresses, especially in the House (Brookings Institute 2017). However, it would appear that Congress is he least productive now. The 2010-2014 congresses are the least productive in the last 60 years (Melnick 2015:68).

[Insert table with Brookings Data on Congressional Activity]

Since the 1994 election there has been a growing trend of polarity in both the U.S. House and Senate. Polarization is the separation of peoples and elected members into two opposing camps split along conservative and progressive ideologies (McCarthy et al. 2006:3). Polarization can have long-term negative effects of the legitimacy of government and democratic institutions, and even on the government itself. Polarization can be damaging to the gentile, or at the very least civil, decorum of legislative negotiating (McCarthy et al. 2006, Galston 2008). Former Congress Member and Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (R, GA, 1979-99) attempted to create polar cohesion in the Republicans in the House along ideological lines (Mayhew 2000:250; Mann and Ornstein 2012:36). Arguably, the recent trend of polarization in the U.S. House can be linked to Gingrich’s and the Republican’s plan to break the Democrats’ long standing control of Congress. Gingrich’s strategy was to “destroy the institution of Congress so it could be rebuilt with Republican majority control (Mann and Ornstein 2012:37).” His goal was to unite the Republicans behind his vision of less government, lower taxes, and conservative moral philosophy, while at the same time playing obstructionist to Democrat agendas. Additionally, he advocated for, and participated in a vocal attack on the corruptness of the institution of Congress. (Mann and Ornstein 2012:37). His, and his colleagues’, attacks on the institution seemingly was to destroy trust and hamper legitimacy so as to rebuild it as a new institution within his ideal framework.

Gingrich began a strong push to convince Republicans in the House to become obstructionist in 1992 with the election of Democrat President Bill Clinton (1993-2000). Clinton was the first Democrat to hold the office in twelve years, and eventually the first Democrat President to be reelected to office since Franklin D Roosevelt in 1944. Gingrich was able to rally the enough Republicans in the House against major policy attempts by the President that Clinton had to attempt to seek unity votes from Democrats in the House and then hope to cleave off a few votes from the Republican center in order to get his agenda passed. However, the Democrat members at the time were not nearly as unified as Republican members under Gingrich. Thus Clinton was unable to earn every democratic vote on many of his major initiative which caused his own agenda to be derailed. The old political process of trying to reach compromise and gain the most votes from the middle suffered a serious blow (Mayhew 2000, Mann and Ornstein 2012:39).

The Republican takeover of the House and Senate in 1994 was partially successful by Republican candidates, popular media personalities, and the Religious Right portraying Democrats as anti-American, or at least anti-traditional American. One of the tools used was sighting both real and perceived corruption of the Congressional institution. This was equated to an institutional failure precipitated by the long control of the House and Senate by Democrats. Most of the 73 freshman congress members who entered in 1995 ran on a platform of cleaning “government corruption” and a “return to American values (Mann and Ornstein 2012:40). This tactic was initially successful as Gingrich and Senate Majority Leaders Bob Dole (R, KS, 1969-96) and Trent Lott (R, MS, 1989-2007) were able to negotiate compromises with President Clinton from positions of Republican power. However, the key element was they were able to negotiate compromises on major pieces of legislation instead of demanding full acquiescence of the Democrats and Clinton ***(List some of the compromises***).

Arguably, Gingrich’s plan of destroying the institution of Congress has been successful. Congressional approval is consistently low. According to Gallup tracking, after reaching a peak of 84% approval on Oct 14, 2001 (an artificially high spike owing to the events of 9/11/2001, Congressional approval was at 42% Sep 7-10, 2001) Congressional approval has steadily dropped. Immediately after the election of 2016 (Nov 9-13, 2016) Congressional approval was at 19% with 74% disapproving. The low point for Congressional approval was Nov 7-10, 2013 where approval was 9% and disapproval was 86%. Since the T-Party Revolt of 2010 the highest Congressional approval has risen May 5-8, 2011 at 24%. In fact, since the mid-term election of 2010 to the election of 2016 congressional approval has risen to or above 20% only four times. For reference, the last time Congressional approval was at or above 50% was Jun 15, 2003 with 50%; the last time it was at or above 40% was February 10, 2005 with 45%; the last time it was at or above 30% was September 2, 2009 with 31%. ([http://www.gallup.com/poll/ 1600/congress-public.aspx](http://www.gallup.com/poll/%201600/congress-public.aspx)).

[Insert Gallup Congressional Tracking Poll about here]

As much as the plan to destroy the institution of congress, or at least approval and trust in the institution by the public, might be working, the desire to see it rebuilt along Republican Party ideals of government might not be working. Polarity has been achieved, but in order for the plan to be successful, the Congress would have needed to shift to the right as a whole. If anything, the Congress has become rigidly polar along Party lines, but internally there are problems for ideological control of the Party. The two parties have reformed themselves around opposing poles and there are few members in the middle left to foster compromise (McCarthy et al. 2006; Rauch 2013). Legislation passed by a single party with little or no votes from the opposition plays into a crises of legitimacy in Congress (Mann and Ornstein 2013).Cohesion appears to be better in the Democrat Party than the Republican Party. With the growth of the T-Party movement of 2010, and with the rise in power of the Freedom House Caucus starting in 2015, it would appear that the Republican Party is factionalizing creating internal anarchy between members. “By a faction, I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or a minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community (*Federalist* 10). Factionist and anarchy can stand as a real danger to US style Republican government (Rudalevige 2012:14). This factionalization has caused problems with internal compromise between U.S. House member of the Republican Party, let alone the ability to reach across the aisle and compromise with Democratic members.

It’s possible that Tea-Party movement of 2010 is a threat to our Constitutional democracy (Melnick 2015: 70). Modern Republicans in general, but particularly Tea-Party members, are more likely to be hostile to the idea of compromise. The Tea-Party has such high levels of opposition they could be labeled “Ideologically Opposed” to compromise. Any hint of compromise on legislation makes the legislation naturally suspect for these members (Rauch 2013). Rauch states that modern movements within the political right, not just the Tea-Party, but also The Freedom Caucus, believe that compromise has become the method through which the Constitution is superseded or undermined (2013). It would appear if certain factions within the Republican Party have adopted the attitude that if they cannot build a national majority which will allow them to institute their ideology at will, they seem to be more than happy to create an obstructionist minority so that no work can get done (2013). This actually works in their favor as they see a large government as incapable of functioning properly and their actions help to prove their belief right. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

There would appear to be a crises of legitimacy and the ability to lead with our current congress. Our parties have become polarized to the point of dysfunction, perhaps more so on the Republican side than Democrat (Mann and Ornstein 2013). This single minded focus seemingly has gone beyond the ideas of governing, but rather proving one side right and the other side wrong. “The single-minded focus on scoring political points over solving problems, escalation over the last several decades, has reached a level of such intensity and bitterness that the government seems incapable of taking and sustaining public policy decisions responsive to existential challenges facing the country (Mann and Ornstein 2012:101). To be sure, the Democrat party is not free of guilt in the current collapse of trust in government. However, Democrat politics rest on government for the good and institutional trust. There are plenty of party pursiest in the Democrat party, but those ideological purist as obstructionist are rare have been rare in the Tea-Party Congress. This lack of ideological purist in the Democrat side of the house could partially be because an ideological pure Democrat believes in a functioning government (Mann and Ornstein 2012:103).

*Tyranny of the minority*

Tea-Party members are not a majority in the House, and they are not a majority in the Republican side of the house. There were 87 self-identified members of the Tea-Party when they became a national movement in 2010. By 2016, nearly ¼ of those members had either lost reelection bids, moved on to the Senate, or are not serving in Congress for another reason (Berman 2-22-2016). The Freedom House Caucus (FHC), whose membership is not publically listed, hovers around thirty members (Reynolds 10-8-2015; Binder 10-12-2015). Members of the FHC often belong to the Tea-Party Caucus as well. However, because of their cohesive voting practices, their dogmatic ideology, and the scorch and burn tactics with members of their own party, they have dominated Republican politics since 2010.

Fear of the tyranny of the majority lead Madison and the federalist to devise a multi-level system of vetoes to prevent the will of an elected majority to move forward without full consent (*Federalist* 10; Mayhew 2000: 178-180). There can also be a tyranny of the minority if the institutional system of a democracy falters. Democracy can give way to a statically, well-placed minority or even the tyranny of “irrational arbitrariness.” There can even be a situation where there is a tyranny of the majority of elected members who are not representative of the majority of the democratic population (Shapiro 2003:208). The problem with the protections that the founders put in place to prevent a tyranny of the majority from exercising their will over the government, is that only prevents bills from becoming laws. However, it does nothing to protect the will of majority from being subverted by a motivated few who use the protections the founders put in place to derail legislation (Shapiro 2008:204-208). The founders may not have envisioned a group of obstinate, obstructionist who want to see government fail use the safeties built into the Constitution for their own means.

*Principle as moral*

One of the problems which arises on compromise is how to facilitate a compromise without sacrificing one’s own morality. If the issue at hand is deemed to be a moral matter, as opposed to a purely political one, the compromise moves from being politically expedient to a moral dilemma. Compromise is the method of governing, but not necessarily the principle on which politics should be based. Politicians and politics is draped in ideology and morality which tends to not translate well into compromise (Fumurescu 2013:25, 43-47). This might be the explanatory metric. Whereas throughout the history of the U.S. Congress, political positions on economics and governance were based on value judgements, they are now moral position. Reasonable arguments against positions are supposed to be respected in a liberal society, but the more irrational the opposition’s argument seems there more likely it is that the two sides will question the other’s citizenship and moral fiber. When this counter argument is based on morality, like a religious ideology, compromise becomes exceptionally difficult and the division between the two sides can become almost insurmountably wide (Weithman 2002: 6-9).

Another way to understand political compromises is to view one as economic and the other is religious. Economic does not mean simple money matters, but it means that in a rational choice type model everything is negotiable and compromises are equitable solutions which answers needs and wants (Margalit 2010:24-25). If politics is religious in ideology then there are some things which can never be compromised because to do so would be sacrilegious and dangerous to one’s eternal being (O’Connell 2016). In economically styled politics compromise is a success, but in religiously styled politics compromise is compromising the holy. Having religious styled politics doesn’t mean compromises are impossible, but on issues which are seen as sacrosanct it makes compromise very difficult unless that compromise is in line with the eventual goal of keeping the sacred (Margalit 2010:24-25). Religious ideology as politics is not to be viewed only negatively. When a state ask a people to go to war and sacrifice its young and treasure the people consent because they have a true belief in the power and legitimacy of the state. The rational choice bargain of an economic political process doesn’t motivate people to fight, doesn’t rally them together for a common cause. A normative state needs a certain amount of religious political ideology to function (2010:148).

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