Political Compromise in America:
Why Are Americans So Politically Divided
And What Can Be Done To Prevent A Fractured Nation

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Ask anyone who is politically active what they believe to be the biggest problem in politics today. You will likely hear something along these lines: "The [opposing party] is ruining the country because…" or "If only the [opposing party] was willing to hear us out about [issue] then we could come to an agreement." More often than not, Americans tend to blame the failing parts of society on the stubbornness of the opposing political party. This generally opns up the floor to asking questions about whether individuals are willing to listen to members of the opposing party discuss their points of view, and unfortunately, many will choose not to listen at all, having already decided that they are wrong and there is no possibility of coming to a middle ground between the two points of view. People adopt a "my way or the highway" approach to politics. Because society is becoming obviously more and more political, as politics has found a way to imbue itself into every aspect of society, there is a deepening divide between those who identify as Republicans and those who identify as Democrats. This division, should it continue to grow, could ultimately lead to the complete division of the nation and the possibility of a second American Civil War. So why do people tend to choose not to compromise? This research paper looks to analyze this issue of political compromise in America, and strives to understand what is keeping people from coming to a middle ground on American politics. In its essence, the question is being asked: Why do people choose not to compromise in politics, and how can the nation be brought back to a place where there is a common starting point, even if the end points are different? By analyzing research and literature on the deepening political divide in this nation, as well as looking at different voting demographics and the patterns and traditions that stick to the voting process, this author hopes to ultimately debunk the idea that America is beyond the point of saving, and answer the question of where people need to come together in order to solve the political polarization of all American society.

Literature Review

Introduction to Literature Review

In order to address this research question, this author utilized the quantitative method of study in order to analyze various voting patterns of both presidential and congressional elections for various voting districts over the past 40 years. The qualititative method of study was also utilized in order to determine exactly which ideologies are prevalent in the minds of both Conservative and Liberal activists, as well as to help understand which issues are the most solidified in the fight to maintain control of American society and the national government. This paper addresses two main theories about why Americans are becoming more politically divided. The first theory addresses irreversible social and regional classes and voter blocs, which vote for policies which strengthen the divide between voter groups by alienating individuals from the minority group in a region, forcing them to leave and band together into communities of like-minded individuals, ultimately deepening the divide further and further into essentially two separate nations. The second theory being discussed presumes that the American government, due to the prevalence of the two primary political parties – Republican and Democrat – has a vested interest in keeping Americans ideologically split into two groups, and therefore pursues

agenda items which speak to the more radical groups on both the right and the left, pushing the party values further to the extremes rather than towards moderation.

Theory 1: Americans are Divided Because of Regional and Social Classes

The first theory to be addressed in this paper is that regional and social classes – stemming from indicators such as race, age, education level, and religious affiliation – play the most critical role in dividing the nation into voting blocs. As these voter blocs become more aligned with a specific political ideology, individuals who fail to fall into these specific voter blocs will gravitate towards those with whom they agree, creating even more distinct and separate voter blocs and establishing voter regions. This can be seen through the existence of red states and blue states: those states which unquestioningly vote for a specific political party year after year, so much so that it is almost a foregone conclusion that these states will vote for their political party. These blue states – California, New York, Maryland, and Washington, to name a few – and red states – Texas, Arizona, Alaska, and Indiana, for example – have all voted for the same political party in the last ten elections (with the exception of Indiana in 2008 and Arizona in 2020).[1] As these states have developed their reputation for being strong supporters of specific political parties, Republicans have been leaving blue states to go to red states, and vice versa.[2] Many corporations have made the same move, transferring to areas that are more in line with the political values of the company, such as conservative media outlet *The Daily Wire* moving from California to Tennessee[3] and Elon Musk transferring Tesla manufacturing to Texas from California.[4] By moving individuals and corporations to areas that are more politically friendly to specific opinions, the commonality between the people in these areas become more and more similar, leading to less diversity of opinion. According to a survey conducted in 2000, individuals are most likely to relate to and discuss politics with individuals who are like minded, and people are more likely to know and trust individuals of the same political party, especially in red or blue states.[5] When there is a lack of diversity of opinion between the left and the right in the country, the differences in opinion build between the left and the left-wing extremists, and the right and the right-wing extremists. Instead of disagreeing across parties, lines are drawn within the party, splintering the voting base of the party into a wider group of individuals.

The registration statistics of voters in America helps to paint a picture of just how the parties are built up. In 2019, approximately 34% of registered voters identified as independents, while 33% identified as Democrats and 29% as Republicans.[6] However, these numbers are

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[1] "Historical Presidential Election Information By State," 270ToWin, Accessed February 9, 2023, https://www.270towin.com/states/.

[2] Emily Badger, "Political Migration: A New Business of Moving Out to Fit In," The New York Times, August 16, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/16/upshot/political-migration-a-new-business-of-moving-out-to-fit-in.html.

[3] Patrick Tolan, "Ben Shapiro and The Daily Wire Move to Nashville," Vanderbilt Political Review, October 28, 2020, https://vanderbiltpoliticalreview.com/9735/us/ben-shapiro-and-the-daily-wire-move-to-nashville/

[4] Heather Somerville, "Elon Musk Moves to Texas, Takes Jab at Silicon Valley," The Wall Street Journal, December 8, 2020, https://www.wsj.com/articles/elon-musk-to-discuss-teslas-banner-year-despite-pandemic-silicon-valleys-future-11607449988.

[5] Andrew Gelman, *Red State, Blue State, Rich State, Poor State: Why Americans Vote the Way They Do,* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010), 134.

[6] John Gramlich, "What the 2020 Electorate Looks Like By Party, Race and Ethnicity, Age, Education and Religion," Pew Research Center, October 26, 2020, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/10/26/what-the-2020-electorate-looks-like-by-party-race-and-ethnicity-age-education-and-religion/

drastically misleading, as there are only two major parties to vote for in presidential elections. Therefore, those 34% of self-identified independents tend to vote either Democrat or Republican, leading to a 49% to 44% advantage held by the Democratic Party when including these so-called "leaners". According to racial statistics, the Democratic Party is 59% white and 41% minority – 19% black, 13% Hispanic, and 8% other – while the Republican Party is 81% white, with only 19% of registered Republicans being in a minority group. The United States is slowly getting older, as 52% of all registered voters are over the age of 50, and nearly 25% of all voters are older than 65. By party, 56% of Republican voters are over the age of 50, but the biggest point of interest is that nearly 20% of Democratic voters are between 18-29. Democrats are aligning more often with college graduates, as 40% of the voting base has some level of college degree, while only 30% of Republicans hold a degree. This trend has broadened since 2001, where only 27% of Democrats held a college degree.[7] The third primary difference between the Republican and Democrat parties is the view on religious belief. While a majority of voters in America self-identify as Christian (64%), 79% of Republicans identify as Christian, while only 52% of Democrats identify as Christian, with 38% of Democratic voters claiming no religious affiliation. Christians have leaned heavily in support of the Republican Party, with 76% of self-identified White Evangelicals voting for President Trump in 2020.[8]

As these identifying markers for voting have expanded, people tend to find that they become identified by their voter group, rather than their political opinions, or simply their overall personality and lifestyle. This political identity has entered every aspect of American lives, even to the point where individuals of one political party will be opposed to a child marrying someone from the opposing party.[9] This embrace of political aspects being pushed into a person's personal life speaks volumes to the importance that holding a political identity has for many people. In fact, it may be the case that political identities are forced onto people, rather than simply adopted, that many would feel that these identities have overtaken their lives. Yet, to contrast, many people do take on these specific identities, and use them to not only establish a community, but to grant autonomy and build relationships with others. Establishing identities give people a unique purpose, and can have a direct effect on how people act politically. When there is direct social pressure to vote and act in a specific way, then people are less likely to think for themselves, and only think for the society. Social conformity is the idea that people tend to align their thinking or behavior with a societal or group norm. For example, littering becomes more common in areas where litter is already visibly occurring, while littering is decreased in areas that actively show that most people do not litter.[10] This drive for social conformity affects not only the community, but voting patterns as well. In the lead up to the 2020 election, the drive to get people out to vote got to the point where apps were made that detailed whether or not individuals had voted, and gave friends the ability to put peer pressure via text message to go

[7] Lydia Saad, Jeffrey Jones, and Megan Brenan, "Understanding Shifts in Democratic Party Ideology," Targeted News Service, February 19, 2019, http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fnewspapers%2Funderstanding-shifts-democratic-party-ideology%2Fdocview%2F2183561122%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085

[8] Frank Newport, "Religious Group Voting and the 2020 Election," Gallup, November 13, 2020, https://news.gallup.com/opinion/polling-matters/324410/religious-group-voting-2020-election.aspx.

[9] Shanto Iyengar, Yphtach Lelkes, Matthew Levendusky, Neil Malhotra, and Sean Westwood, "The Origins and Consequences of Affective Polarization in the United States," *Annual Review of Political Science* 22 (May, 2019): 132, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051117-073034.

[10] Stephen Coleman, "The Effect of Social Conformity on Collective Voting Behavior," *Political Analysis* 12, no. 1 (Winter 2004): 82, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25791755?seq=1.

vote. This combination of peer pressure and the underlying belief that the rest of society wants and needs an individual to vote means that individuals are more likely to vote than if they are just asked to vote.[11] The ultimate pressure to vote does not come from the government, but one's neighbors. The government does not see you every day, but your neighbors and community play an integral part in one's life, and if the pressure exists to vote in accordance with a social identity that one may or may not totally agree with, many people will vote according to what the community desires, in order to maintain standing in the community. This is exceptionally important in political life, because a majority of Americans are passively political. This means that they will vote in presidential elections, but tend to see politics as a secondary priority to the rest of their lives. Only 14% of Americans – 8% being Democrats[12] and 6% being Republican[13] – are extremely outspoken, politically engaged, and have opinions that are far to the right or the left of their political party. This means that the remaining 86% of Americans, while holding some political views, are not actively out engaging and participating in politics regularly. Therefore, when these 14% of Americans are out engaging, there is a common belief that these individuals represent the basics of each political party, rather than the wings of the party, and the bystanders feel that the majority of individuals in the party and their community are seeking out these same goals and opinions, rather than a more moderate lane.

  To summarize this theory, Americans, being essentially social creatures, seek out communities of like-minded individuals that will work together and cooperate. In doing this, communities are created that hold similar values, races, education levels, and religions, all of which impact the way that these specific communities operate. These different demographics carry over to political identity, as the political aspects of life have bled over into personal life, helping to create a political society where everything that happens has some sort of political effect. These political identities have helped to establish political stereotypes, which drive the way that voters are categorized, and create voting trends that have a direct impact on the way that people vote. This is because individuals want to be accepted into a community, and when that community acts in a certain manner, social conformity dictates that other members of the community will act according to these norms. This carries over into voting, as, again, the personal and the political are so intertwined that it is nearly impossible for most people to separate these two separate identities. When extremely vocal members of a community desire specific actions to be taken, members of the community are more likely to acquiesce and seek out these goals, as they believe that it is truly the desire of the community at large. This influence by vocal minorities in a community establishes a community baseline to the left or right of moderate opinions, deepening the perceived divide between communities and political parties.

Theory 2: Americans are Divided Because the Government Seeks to Create Division in Order to Accomplish Political Goals

  The second theory that discusses the separation of America into two distinct and separate voting alliances is based on the fact that many politicians stand to gain from painting one

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[11] Amy Chozick, "Can Peer Pressure Defeat Trump?" The New York Times, February 22, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/22/sunday-review/2020-election-voting-apps.html.

[12] Stephen Hawkins, Daniel Yudkin, Miriam Juan-Torres, and Tim Dixon, "Hidden Tribes: A Study of America's Polarized Landscape," More in Common, 2013, 29-31, https://hiddentribes.us/media/qfpekz4g/hidden_tribes_report.pdf.

[13] Ibid., 53-55.

political party to be anti-American, while defending the patriotism of their own party. In this way, politicians are able to stir up a voting base for their own political agenda, while attempting to minimize the role that the opposing party will have in the government. In fact, in some cases, it has gotten to the point where some politicians have declared: "We're not going to pass a law that's going to help blue states."[14] This has led to politicians losing the incentive to be responsive to the entire populace, increasing the emphasis placed on extreme candidates and accusing moderate candidates of lacking the bonafides to be a member of the party. Politicians also have worked to diminish the humanity and goodness of the voters of the opposite party, with Hillary Clinton famously saying "…you could put half of Trump's supporters into what I call the basket of deplorables. Right? The racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamaphobic – you name it."[15] This trend has emerged primarily as a result of the nationalizing of the two primary political parties. From America's founding, the idea of a two party system was looked at with caution, with President George Washington addressing the divisive influence of factions in a democracy.[16]

The acceptance of the division of political opinions into two major parties has made it difficult to govern, as having a two-party system means that voting generally splits even, creating a divided government which generally fails to pass any major legislation with nearly no actual legislative activity.[17] This failure of government, however, is not seen as an increase in fringe policies by the parties, but rather as a result of obstruction of the opposing party. Whenever one party is in control of the presidency, but the other party controls the Congress, the immediate assumption is that the political parties are holding legislation hostage, resulting in a stalemate of political activity. This decreases trust in the government, which opens up the ability for politicians to blame other politicians for the failure, rather than looking at the parties and finding ways to compromise.

The secondary issue behind the division of the political parties is the increased radicalization of the parties, and the necessitation for government officials to speak to the needs and desires of the furthest wings of the political party. Ultimately, instead of working to expand voter blocs, politicians instead double down on consistent voters, hoping that they will add up to a voting majority for the upcoming election cycle.[18] This cycle serves in the same manner as political activists when discussing the permeation of division within the United States: as politicians capitulate to the radical wings of the party, and as the party elects those politicians who are more radical, division increases as elected officials have a lesser desire to find a solution, and a greater desire to maintain power and to please their radical base.

When viewing the overall implications of having a radical political class, from both Democratic and Republican voters, it is easy to see why support for more political parties is on

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[14] Christie Aschwanden, "Why Hatred and 'Othering' of Political Foes Has Spiked to Extreme Levels," Scientific American, October 29, 2020, https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/why-hatred-and-othering-of-political-foes-has-spiked-to-extreme-levels/.

[15] Chozick, "Hillary Clinton Calls Many Trump Backers 'Deplorables,' and G.O.P. Pounces," The New York Times, September 10, 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/11/us/politics/hillary-clinton-basket-of-deplorables.html.

[16] Sarah Pruitt, "The Founding Fathers Feared Political Factions Would Tear the Nation Apart," The History Channel, March 7, 2019, https://www.history.com/news/founding-fathers-political-parties-opinion.

[17] Taylor McNeil, "The Politics of Division," Tufts Now, November 4, 2020, https://now.tufts.edu/articles/politics-division-2020.

[18] Yuval Levin, "Why Do Our Politicians Keep Pursuing a Losing Strategy?" New York Times, March 29, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/29/opinion/democrats-republicans-american-politics.html.

the rise. The Pew Research Center, in a survey conducted in 2022, shows that nearly 40% of individuals feel that there should be more political parties, with 21% of the total population strongly feeling this way.[19] This sentiment is strongest amongst Independents, with nearly 30% feeling that more parties should be involved in national politics. However, because of the expanding influence of the primary political parties, third-party politics is largely sidelined, feeding into the political self-fueling cycle of radicalizing in response to perceived support and public opinion.

Creation and Testing of Hypothesis

Hypothesis: Most Americans Want to Compromise and Do Not Seek Extreme Political Polarization

Compromise is not a dirty word. At least, not to the average voter. Most voters actually agree that political differences doe not preclude agreement on other topics of discussion, and 77% of Americans believe that compromising does not equal weakness.[20] Most Americans do not have uniformly conservative or liberal views, and most do not see the opposing political party as an existential threat to the nation, but those who are moderate and in the middle of America are more likely to be distant and disengaged from politics, leaving the vocal minority to run the party through greater political participation.[21] It may seem quite obvious to many, but compromise is essential to an effective government. John Hallowell, writing about the idea of compromise in government, insisted that compromise is "the distinguishing and essential characteristic of democracy as a form of government."[22] Hallowell compares compromise in democracy to compromise in marriage. All marriages require some form of compromise. The difference is that the compromises in different marriages have different sides, different solutions, and different frequencies in each different relationship. In the same way, the government requires compromise, but it does not necessarily mean that every scenario requires a compromise, or that every compromise will necessarily be good for both political parties.

When looking at the reliability of compromise as a solution, many would argue that there is no need to compromise if one political party is in power; it should simply do what it wants and effect the changes that it wishes to see in the world. However, this leads to one of the first pieces of evidence that compromise in politics is a desireable trait: what happens when power shifts to the opposing political party? The variable governance of America's democratic principles result in constant shifts of power between the two political parties. While the party in power does tend to pass and execute certain items that are in their agenda, it also works to bring in the opinions of

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[19] ""As Partisan Hostility Grows, Signs of Frustration With the Two-Party System," Pew Research Center, August 9, 2022, https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2022/08/09/as-partisan-hostility-grows-signs-of-frustration-with-the-two-party-system/.

[20] Daniel Cox, Jacqueline Clemence, and Eleanor O'Neil, "Public Views of Political Compromise and Conflict and Partisan Misperceptions," American Enterprise Institute, October 2, 2019, https://www.aei.org/research-products/report/public-views-of-political-compromise-and-conflict-and-partisan-misperceptions/.

[21] "Political Polarization in the American Public: How Increasing Ideological Uniformity and Partisan Antipathy Affect Politics, Compromise and Everyday Life," Pew Research Center, June 12, 2014, https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2014/06/12/political-polarization-in-the-american-public/.

[22] John Hallowell, "Compromise as a Political Ideal," Ethics 54, no. 3 (April, 1944): 157, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2989224.

the minority party, granting representation on committees, making policy through consensus rather than raw power, and even granting concessions to the opposing party.[23] This is in line with what Americans are typically seeking out of their government, with 51% of Americans saying that they approve of elected officials who are willing to make compromises with individuals with whom they disagree.[24] This leads to the conclusion that, if there was a way to reach compromise in some manner, more people would be in support of it than against it. However, the major reason that most Americans are unwilling to actively embrace compromise stems from a lack of understanding of the opposing party, as well as the constant pushing of nationalized information on both sides of the political aisle decrying the policies and value systems of the opposing party.

Mechanisms Continuing Problem

The increased political polarization of America has deepened the issue of the divide between conservatives and liberals, with many feeling that it has come to the point of no return. Even as many seek political compromise, there is an underlying feeling that there is not a way to reach a middle ground in politics, resulting in a silencing of moderate, cooperative voices and allowing the loudest, and most extreme voices to lead the conversation and debate, driving the wedge even deeper.[25] In fact, the Cato Institute conducted a survey showing that 62% of Americans say that the political climate prevents them from saying what they believe because others might be offended.[26] Across the political spectrum, this rings true, with 77% of conservatives self-censoring, 64% of moderates, and even 52% of liberals. Only strong liberals are exempt from this censorship – only 42% feel like they are prevented from saying what they believe.[27] This is creating the "exhausted majority" – Americans who want to come to some kind of middle ground, but are being overwhelmed by the inability to havea moderate voice heard over the roar of the extremes – and causing many Americans to simply feel like politics is beyond saving, and the only way to have their voice heard is to fall in line with the mainstream of their political party, hoping that the party itself will moderate on certain issues. However, as previously discussed, politicians gain when the opposing party is painted as unwilling to cooperate, leading to even more polarization in the quest for some semblance of authority or greater power.

As the exhausted majority continues to rise, so does the the disparity in understanding the opposing political party. Penn State conducted a poll that showed that only 27% of Republicans believe that most Democrats are voting in the best interests of the nation, and only 40% of Democrats believe the converse.[28] According to a poll conducted by Axios in 2018, approximately 60% of Democrats believe that Republicans are racist/bigoted/sexist or ignorant,

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[23] Avinash Dixit, Gene Grossman, and Farak Gul, "A Theory of Political Compromise," Princeton University, May, 1998, https://www.princeton.edu/~fgul/dgg.pdf.

[24] John Sides, "Many Americans Say They Want Politicians To Compromise. But Maybe They Don't," The Washington Post, January 16, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2019/01/16/many-americans-say-they-want-politicians-to-compromise-but-maybe-they-dont/.

[25] Hawkins, et al.. 128.

[26] Emily Ekins, "Poll: 62% of Americansa Say They Have Political Views They're Afraid to Share," Cato Institute, July 22, 2020, https://www.cato.org/survey-reports/poll-62-americans-say-they-have-political-views-theyre-afraid-share.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Eric Plutzer and Michael Berkman, "Americans Not Only Divided, But Baffled By What Motivates Their Opponents," Penn State University, November, 2018, https://democracy.psu.edu/poll-report-archive/americans-not-only-divided-but-baffled-by-what-motivates-their-opponents/.

and 50% of Republicans believe that Democrats are spiteful and ignorant. What is even more telling is that nearly a quarter of both Democrats and Republicans believe that the opposing party is actually evil.[29] This is not a new phenomenon, as there has been an increase in party hostility cycling between dislike and distrust for the past four decades, as a result of three general trends: 1) the nationalization of American politics; 2) the division of Democrats and Republicans along demographic lines; and 3) increasingly narrow margins in national elections.[30]

This first trend is a fairly new phenomenon, with news media becoming more and more nationalized, resulting in politics across America becoming local politics. This emphasis on national politics helped to establish the power of the national political party, as individuals rallied together under the banner of being a Republican or a Democrat in order to unify the people of the nation to achieve a national goal. The second trend was already discussed as a manner of dividing America, but this division helped to solidify the understanding that Republicans and Democrats are universally the same, rather than having various different opinions – regardless of specific demographic – which creates the illusion of widely polarized political opinions. The third trend has come to a head in 2020, with the presidential election ostensibly being decided by only 45,000 votes.[31] With nearly 150 million voters in the election, this is approximately 0.0003% of voters who ended up being the difference between President Biden and President Trump. As these narrow elections become the norm, it becomes much more crucial to rally voters to one side, resulting in the vilification of the opposing party, in an attempt to sway more voters to join against the evils of the enemy, rather than looking to bring people together to solve the problem of distrust among everyday Americans.

Developing the Solution

The primary reason that individuals tend to dislike and display animus towards individuals of the opposing party is misconception about the typical voter for each party.

> "The modal member of both parties is a middle-aged, white, nonevangelical Christian, but this is not the image most people carry around in their heads when they think about Democrats and Republicans. Instead, most people think in terms of partisan stereotypes: Democrats are urban minorities and young people, Republicans are older, wealthy, or evangelical Christians."[32]

If misperceptions of the opposing party create the greatest amoung of hatred among individuals, then the immediate action that should be taken is working to reduce these stereotypes in the minds of Americans. A large proportion of Republicans overestimate the Democratic percentage of LGBT individuals within the party, and Democrates overestimate the number of Republicans

[29] Kim Hart, "Exclusive Poll: Most Democrats See Republicans as Racist, Sexis,." Axios, November 12, 2018, https://www.axios.com/poll-democrats-and-republicans-hate-each-other-racist-ignorant-evil-99ae7afc-5a51-42be-8ee2-3959e43ce320.html.

[30] Lee Drutman, "How Hatred Came to Dominate American Politics," FiveThirtyEight, October 5, 2020, https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/how-hatred-negative-partisanship-came-to-dominate-american-politics/.

[31] Richard Johnson, "What Biden's Narrow Election Win Reveals About the Challenges and Obstacles Facing His Administration," London School of Economics and Public Policy, November 19, 2020, https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2020/11/19/what-bidens-narrow-election-win-reveals-about-the-challenges-and-obstacles-facing-his-administration/.

[32] Iyengar, et al.. "Hidden Tribes," 139-140.

who make at least $250,000 in a year.[33] When individuals look at the base demographics of specific voter blocs, the desired point of view should be that each of these voters is not a Democrat or a Republican, but an American first and foremost. In fact, during the 2016 Presidential Election, the Democratic Party took for granted the overwhelming turnout in 2012 from young people, diverse voters, and college-educated whites and ended up losing; the Republican Party did the same in 2020, relying heavily on support from older, rural, non-college graduate white voters.[34] In order to truly gain the support of voters, then it is imperative that both the Democrat and Republican Parties work to build a coalition of voters that span a broad cross-section of the American population, bringing people togther instead of tearing them apart. For the people, it becomes imperative that voters work to understand just how the other party actually views different policies. Many voters want to look for the best in people, but have a hard time truly understanding where the other party comes from.[35] The opportunity for growth arises when individuals who represent the majority of the political party, not the extreme left or right wings of the party, are given a central stage in discussion and debate, opening up the arena for a talk about where Democrats and Republicans share opinions, rather than only focusing on what the other party does wrong.

Conclusion

There is a deep divide in America today between Democrats and Republicans. This divide is more than just political in nature; it is also social and personal. With the separation of the Democratic and Republican parties based on issues, there has been a growth in movement and socializing of communities based on political ideologies – or at the very least, perceived political ideologies. Differing opinions has led to the growth of communities which are built around specific demographics, all of which have been stereotyped into various voter identities. Whether as a result of actual compliance and agreement with political ideologies from political parties or due to social conformity, these communities tend to vote in line with each other and their supposed political parties. This has led to a division in America that is only growing. These demographic shifts have established themselves as the predominant identifier of a person's political party. All of this also comes at a time where politicians are seeking ot divide America further in half, all in an attempt to maintain power in government, or to reduce the ability of the opposing party to gain any political power. However, this division is not what the majority of American voters want. Many people hope to gain some sort of political compromise from the government, with many seeing political compromise as a sign of a government committed to bettering society.

The primary issues with reaching political compromise in America stem from issues of transparency and understanding. Many individuals have been led to believe by both the media and politicians that members of the opposing party are evil in their essence, when the majority of people would typically agree on a wide range of issues with disagreements in other areas. The polarization of the common voter has overwhelmed and exhausted many voters, allowing members of the extreme wings of the party to hold the reins of the future of the party, leading

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[33] Aschwanden, "Why Hatred and 'Othering' of Political Foes Has Spiked to Extreme Levels."

[34] William Frey, "Exit Polls Show Both Familiar and New Voting Blocs Sealed Biden's Win," Brookings Institute, November 12, 2020, https://www.brookings.edu/research/2020-exit-polls-show-a-scrambling-of-democrats-and-republicans-traditional-bases/.

[35] Plutzer and Berkman, "Americans Not Only Divided, But Baffled By What Motivates Their Opponents."

both parties down the road of further polarization. With more than half of all voters believing that members of the opposing party are evil and a majority of voters unable to understand the basic logic behind why individuals choose to vote for the opposing party, the road to bridge is wide. However, the greatest thing that can be done is simply bring people to the table and show individuals that a majority of Americans – 86% to be precise – have some beliefs in common and are not part of the radical wings of the Democratic or Republican parties. If people can see that voters on both sides of the political aisle are normal and willing to compromise, then the divide between Americans will slowly divide into a moderation with the potential for compromise and growth as a nation.

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