

How Partisan Media Influences Aversion to Political Compromise

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Abstract

We investigate how partisan media during and after the 2020 US presidential (Study 1) and 2022 midterm (Study 2) elections influenced preferences for unyielding politicians who do not compromise with partisan opponents. Our findings suggest that partisan media use may undermine willingness to support politicians who engage in deliberative compromises with opponents. This effect is likely driven by the tendency of partisan media to diminish willingness to engage in political listening and instigate moral considerations of the party’s policy goals.

Keywords

attitude moralization; deliberative democracy; election coverage; partisan asymmetry; partisan media; political compromise; political listening

1. Introduction

Compromise is essential to the maintenance of civil society (Skocpol, 2011). While plurality of voices and contestations are inherent to democratic societies (Barber, 2003), recent years have witnessed increased antipathy among partisans in the US electorate (Abramowitz & Webster, 2018; Iyengar et al., 2012). This, coupled with seemingly intractable disagreements and an unwillingness to meaningfully engage with the other side among partisan lawmakers at the federal and state levels, raises concerns about political dysfunction and the erosion of civic culture (Grumbach, 2022; Mann & Ornstein, 2016; Mason, 2018). Compounding this issue, mediated narratives warn politicians and individuals with more extreme views that compromising or even engaging in conversation with the other side is to be avoided (Huddy & Yair, 2021; Wells et al., 2017). We contend that this aversion to political compromise signals a fractured civic society in the US, potentially hindering effective democratic governance (Friedland et al., 2022). In light of these

concerns, we examine what role our increasingly polarized and asymmetric partisan media ecology might play in accelerating the erosion of civic culture, undermining a willingness to hear opposing perspectives—a precondition to negotiation and conciliation (Almond & Verba, 1963)—while at the same time instigating a moral consideration of important policy issues.

To this end, we connect patterns of partisan media use, including their changes over time, with an aversion to political compromise and further explore the underlying mechanisms of this process in the context of US politics. One such mechanism is political listening, defined as thoughtfully and fairly deliberating on divergent views (Scudder, 2020a). We propose that partisan media use may reduce individuals' willingness to engage in political listening, thereby indirectly contributing to their aversion to political compromise. Another potential mechanism is attitude moral relevance (Skitka et al., 2021). A growing body of research has found that partisan media content can trigger a process of moralization (e.g., D'Amore et al., 2022; Simonsen & Bonikowski, 2022), which refers to the increased relevance of one's standards of right and wrong with a political attitude.

Although research on affective and ideological polarization abounds, the attitudinal and behavioral manifestations of opposition to compromise remain understudied. This study hopes to fill the gap by investigating how partisan media use during and after the 2020 US presidential (Study 1) and 2022 midterm (Study 2) elections influenced preferences for unyielding politicians, using two sets of two-wave panel surveys conducted in the US. Leveraging the advantage of panel datasets, relationships are tested using fixed-effects models, such that in Study 1, we first examine how partisan media is associated with levels of aversion to compromise. We then test the mediating process in Study 2. In the following section, we first delineate the concept of political compromise before laying out how it may be attenuated by exposure to partisan media.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Political Compromise

Public support for political compromise, or coming to an agreement with political opponents, has implications for the healthy functioning of democracies in general, and in particular, within the US political context. First, it gets things done: When politicians perceive that citizens are unwilling to support compromise, they are more likely to refuse to reach across the aisle to seek mutually agreeable solutions, resulting in legislative gridlocks (Anderson et al., 2020). Indeed, the frequency of legislative gridlock, measured as the percentage of failed agenda items tallied against issue coverage in *The New York Times*, has increased from 1947 to 2012 (Binder, 2003, 2014), lending credence to the claim that “little change can happen in democratic politics without some compromise, and almost no major change can happen without major compromises” (Gutmann & Thompson, 2010, p. 1129).

Second, a willingness to cooperate across the aisle is also an important indicator in a normative sense, delivering on policy outcomes while also serving as an indicator of deliberative citizenship, open-mindedness, and accommodation toward different political views (MacKuen et al., 2010). Support for political compromise suggests a deliberative mindset (Gutmann & Thompson, 2010) because it requires mutual tolerance, a willingness to turn-take, and respect for the opposition as legitimate representatives of society (see Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2019). Such a deliberative mindset closely resembles a “strong democracy”

(Barber, 2003), where citizens resolve political conflict through democratic talk and is heralded as a marker of civic health and participatory engagement.

Despite the importance of political compromise as outlined above, negative attitudes toward lawmakers and politicians who reach agreements with political opponents continue to be observed in the general public (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002; Wolak & Marcus, 2007) or in particular groups—such as proponents of procedural democracy (Davis et al., 2022), individuals whose ideological and partisan identities are aligned (Davis, 2019), or those who hold moral convictions on policy issues (Delton et al., 2020; Ryan, 2017). This aversion to politicians engaging in efforts to reach compromise among the members of the public goes beyond opposition to reaching bipartisan agreements on deeply vested policy issues. A general aversion to reaching bipartisan agreements is likely to be driven by something else, such as a lack of mutual respect and a closed-mindedness to different opinions (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996, 2010).

2.2. Partisan Media Influence on Aversion to Compromise During Elections

Aversion to compromise fluctuates over time. While citizens are generally overwhelmingly favorable towards the principle of political compromise, responses vary over time (Pew Research Center, 2023; Tyson, 2019). One period that may trigger opposition to compromise among politicians is the election season. During this time, aversion to compromise may intensify, as candidates are motivated to present themselves as standing against their opponent and project an unwavering commitment to their party's principles (Gutmann & Thompson, 2010). This also suggests that these effects may dissipate in the wake of elections, as partisan conflicts become less focal. Research shows that media coverage plays a key role in this dynamic, fostering or dampening support for compromise. For example, partisans were more likely to believe their party should strike bargains after consuming news in which an in-party politician called for prudent concessions, compared to when news coverage featured a politician expressing a steadfast unwillingness to compromise with the opposing party (McLaughlin et al., 2017). Wolak (2020) demonstrated that people are more likely to support compromises, even when their preferred policy outcome has been achieved, if they are given information that public opinion is opposed to the outcome.

How exactly does partisan media factor into this variation in aversion to working with the other side? Partisan media, just like candidates and parties, are motivated to foster opposition to finding a middle ground with political outgroups during election periods. Partisan media sources favor particular ideological viewpoints, emphasizing the version of the news that benefits their side and sharing a cloistered media ecology that reinforces their own beliefs (Jamieson & Cappella, 2008; Levendusky, 2013a). Such an environment polarizes the audience and stigmatizes engagement with the other side (Gutmann & Thompson, 2010). Moreover, past studies found partisan sources such as cable TV (e.g., FOX News, MSNBC), conservative talk radio (e.g., Rush Limbaugh), and digital news (e.g., Daily Kos) not only dampened trust in media (Guess et al., 2021; R. K. Garrett et al., 2014; Stroud, 2010) but also polarized the electorate (Druckman et al., 2018; Levendusky, 2013a, 2013b; R. K. Garrett et al., 2019; Suk et al., 2023). Suk et al. (2022) demonstrated that increasing use of partisan-aligned media sources and engagement in conversations with co-partisans widened party differences in trust toward social outgroups. This suggests that partisan media influences political attitudes and behaviors in a direction that increases ideological and affective gaps between parties and partisans, with deeper immersion in these sources potentially driving opinions to more polarized and less conciliatory directions.

Past studies have also shown how the defining content features of partisan media may foster an aversion to reaching across the aisle. For nearly two decades, research on media politics has emphasized rising televised incivility; a combination of insulting discourse, close-up camera perspectives, interruptions, and an absence of civil turn-taking was found to reduce the perceived legitimacy of opponents' arguments (Mutz, 2007). This "videomalaise" cultivated by "in-your-face politics" extends to judgments of candidate incivility and reductions in political trust (Cho et al., 2009). Likewise, in the contemporary media environment, close-ups and split-screen shots are used to amplify the experience of contentious exchanges characteristic of news production, especially partisan cable news, where expressions of outrage between "talking heads" are commonplace (Sobieraj & Berry, 2011). The implication is a delegitimized opposition—one that is less likely to be considered a collaborative policymaking partner. Moreover, partisan media instill the sense that cherished identities and worldviews are under attack from political opponents (Gervais, 2019; Hasell & Weeks, 2016). Such perceptions are not conducive to openness to hearing opposing viewpoints and reaching compromises.

In a particularly relevant study, Levendusky (2013a) demonstrated that partisan media consumption negatively predicted willingness to compromise. Participants who viewed news clips from media sources that were commonly assumed to align with their party identity reported a lower willingness to compromise with the opposing party. Though not manipulated in the experiment, it was speculated post hoc that partisan media's focus on the flaws of the other party, combined with a psychological negativity bias, may be drivers of this influence. Building on this point, a recent field experiment incentivized a subset of FOX News viewers to watch CNN for one month and found that this shift fostered learning and moderated partisan attitudes (Broockman & Kalla, 2025). Taken together, we hypothesize right- and left-leaning partisan media use is positively associated with aversion to political compromise:

H1: Within individuals, increases in partisan media use are associated with increases in aversion to compromise.

2.3. Exploring Mechanisms

2.3.1. Political Listening

Political listening refers to giving fair and meaningful consideration to different opinions (Scudder, 2020a). It is one of two key communicative acts, along with reason-giving, that constitute democratic deliberation (see also Dobson, 2014) and grant legitimacy to democratic processes by ensuring that the views of participants are authentically considered, even when they are not reflected in the final decision (Scudder, 2020a). Political listening is related to, but distinct from virtues of the public sphere previously put forth by deliberative democrats (e.g., Dahlberg, 2007; Delli Carpini et al., 2004), such as empathy (which is selective and contingent on perceived common ground) or inclusivity (which is not sufficient to facilitate a fair consideration of different voices; Scudder, 2020b). Instead, ideal listening involves a concept called "uptake," meaning that listeners go beyond simply hearing or paying superficial attention to spend a sincere effort into understanding and considering the different perspectives (Scudder, 2020b, 2021; see also Bickford, 1996). Distinguishing listening from compromise, Scudder (2020a) argues that listening across lines of difference is useful for democracy even if it does not lead to compromise. Implied in this notion of listening is an openness to meaningfully engage with diverse viewpoints. This openness is also a key element underlying

the mindset for good listening, as advanced by other scholars (Bickford, 1996; Dobson, 2014; see also Eveland et al., 2020).

Given that openness encourages interaction with alternative perspectives, political listening is likely to reduce an aversion to political compromise. Authentically engaging with different viewpoints may make the prospect of political compromises less threatening. That is, while political listening—and the mindset that supports it—does not guarantee openness to political concessions, it seems likely to reduce an aversion to political compromise among elites.

2.3.2. Attitude Moralization

Attitude moralization refers to the process by which individuals transform previously non-moral attitudes, such as preferences, into morally charged ones (Skitka et al., 2021). Once an attitude becomes moralized, a negative stance is no longer merely a matter of personal dislike; rather, it is perceived as a moral wrongdoing and judged according to individuals' standards of right and wrong. Such attitudes have high moral relevance.

Attitudes with high moral relevance tend to be resistant to concessions (e.g., Ryan, 2017; Skitka et al., 2005; see also Delton et al., 2020) because when attitudes are closely tied to one's inner moral compass, individuals are likely to reject the value of negotiations with the other side, echoing the description of "principled tenacity" of the uncompromising mindset in Gutmann and Thompson (2010). In a series of telling experiments, Ryan (2017) demonstrated that individuals whose attitudes were closely associated with moral values (i.e., high moral relevance) tended to oppose political compromises and were more willing to penalize politicians for seeking bipartisan agreements on said issue. This pattern was found even after controlling for other attitude attributes, including attitude extremity and importance. Moreover, the consequences of moralization are not confined to specific issue attitudes; they spill over onto attitudes toward other policy issues (Shah et al., 1996) as well as perceptions of partisan politics in general (K. N. Garrett & Bankert, 2020). That is, when attitudes toward multiple political issues are grounded in moral values, the general tendency to regard politics as a matter of right or wrong also increases, potentially amplifying aversion to political compromises in general.

Such moral obstinacy is problematic from the perspective of bipartisanship (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996), especially if more and more politicians refuse to work across the aisle for fear of punishment from constituents (Harbridge & Malhotra, 2011; see also Anderson et al., 2020). Therefore, it is critical to understand the factors that trigger such rigid ways of thinking. Building on these previous works, we examine how exposure to partisan media might impact political listening and attitude moral relevance.

2.3.3. Partisan Media Influence on Political Listening and Attitude Moralization

As discussed above, past work indicates that partisan media play a key role in political polarization by delegitimizing the opposition (Mutz, 2007), eroding political trust (Cho et al., 2009), and amplifying negative perceptions of the other side (Levendusky, 2013a). In particular, partisan media's persistent focus on showing "why the opposition is wrong" (Levendusky, 2013b, pp. 566–567) can contribute to the vilification and denigration of political outgroups. By highlighting the flaws of the other side, partisan news reports provide situational cues that discourage political listening while encouraging individuals to evaluate politics through a moral lens.

Political listening relies on *openness*—an individual’s willingness to meaningfully engage with and consider divergent perspectives (see Eveland et al., 2020). This openness is undermined when partisan media frames political opponents as morally objectionable, portraying them as being unworthy of engagement and illegitimate members of society. Partisan media can also transform policy opinions into matters of right or wrong. One way partisan media can achieve this is by repeatedly employing media frames that present sacred values (e.g., Tetlock et al., 2000) or innocent entities (Rozin, 1997) under threat of harm, thereby morally condemning the opposition. Some scholars have referred to this type of media frame as “harm” frames—those that present the political opposition as a perpetrator inflicting harm on the ingroup or a vulnerable agent. For example, exposure to a news article describing universal healthcare as a fundamental right for Americans heightened the relevance of moral concerns in attitudes not only toward healthcare but also toward other policy issues such as the economy and education (Shah et al., 1996). In another study, participants who read news stories portraying one side of a policy debate as violent (i.e., causing harm) reported greater moral relevance of policy attitudes (D’Amore et al., 2022). Such strategic use of frames or negative portrayals of the outgroup may be especially pronounced during elections (see Smith & Searles, 2014) when these outlets are incentivized by electoral goals to place blame on the outgroup, its politicians, and supporters. As such, we propose the following:

H2: Within individuals, increases in partisan media use are associated with decreases in willingness to engage in political listening, which, in turn, predict decreases in aversion to compromise.

H3: Within individuals, increases in partisan media use are associated with increases in attitude moral relevance, which, in turn, predict increases in aversion to compromise.

Previous research suggests that partisan media content undermines a willingness to engage in political listening and facilitates moral interpretations of issues, laying the ground for preferring a “principled” stance. Still, questions remain. Does this partisan media influence differ by (a) the political slant of the partisan media and (b) the relevant policy issue? Regarding the (a) potential asymmetry, a content analysis of partisan media found conservative media sources were more likely to emphasize moral outrage (Sobieraj & Berry, 2011; see also Friedland et al., 2022; Shah et al., 2017). However, given the lack of a systematic comparison of right- and left-leaning partisan media effects, we explore the potential asymmetry as a research question:

RQ1: How are changes in individuals’ (a) right-leaning and (b) left-leaning partisan media use related to political listening and attitude moral relevance?

Second, (b) does the partisan media influence on aversion to compromise through attitude moral relevance differ by policy issue? For example, is increased use of right-leaning partisan media associated with increased moral relevance of attitudes toward abortion but not the environmental issue? We explore the following question:

RQ2: How are changes in individuals’ partisan media use associated with changes in the moral relevance of attitudes toward different policy issues?

3. Study 1

3.1. Method

3.1.1. Data

In Study 1, we analyzed a two-wave panel survey of two swing state residents, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, collected during the 2020 US presidential election. Because swing states tend to be the most politically contested during elections and typically receive a high volume of political and media attention, they provide a useful context for examining how changes in partisan media use during and after an election shape changes in attitudes toward political compromise. Respondents were recruited using nested quotas based on gender, age, and strata, with external quotas for education, race, and income. The pre-election wave (W1) was collected between October 21 and November 1, 2020. Respondents from the first wave were contacted to participate in the post-election wave (W2) between December 7 and December 15, 2020, to capture changes in the aftermath of the election. Among respondents who participated in both waves of the survey, those who recorded a change in our outcome measure—aversion to compromise—were included in our analysis ($N = 370$), representing 20.77% of the respondents. This was mandated by our analytic strategy of employing fixed-effects logistic regression, which automatically excludes individuals who record no change on the dependent variable and conducts listwise deletion on any missing values (Allison, 2009; see S1 of the Supplementary Material for demographics).

3.1.2. Measures

As all variables were repeatedly measured in W1 and W2, for continuous variables we reported their means and standard deviations at the overall, between-person, and within-person levels based on the final sample of responses ($N = 370$ respondents \times 2 waves = 740). For dichotomous variables (i.e., aversion to compromise, restarted talking), we reported the number of positive responses at W1 and W2. As our main analyses use fixed-effects models, which employ only within-person variations, the distribution of the changes between waves is presented in the Supplementary Material (S2.1).

A dichotomous item, adapted from the American National Election Studies (2016) Time Series Study, was used to assess Aversion to Compromise: “In general, do you think lawmakers should stick to their principles no matter what or make compromises to get something done?” (1 = *stick to principles no matter what*, 0 = *compromise to get something done*). The number of respondents demonstrating an aversion to compromise was 266 in W1 and 104 in W2.

The survey included items measuring respondents’ media use: “Thinking of your recent media use, how often in the last week have you used the following types of media content?” Respondents answered the question for each media source (e.g., CNN cable news, Breitbart) on a five-point scale (1 = *never*, 5 = *very often*). Using these responses, we generated indices of left, right, and centrist media by categorizing 18 media sources based on the sources’ ideology scores estimated by Faris et al. (2020), following the approach taken in past studies (Borah et al., 2024; Ghosh et al., 2020). Media sources with Faris scores ranging from -0.3 to 0.3 were averaged as exposure to Centrist Media: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, CNN, nightly network news on CBS, ABC, or NBC, *Politico*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Hill*, and *USA Today* ($M = 1.71$, $SD_{\text{overall}} = 0.77$,

$SD_{\text{between}} = 0.73$, $SD_{\text{within}} = 0.24$). Sources with Faris scores higher than 0.3 were considered Right-Leaning Partisan Media: FOX cable news, The Daily Caller, Breitbart, conservative talk radio, and One America News Network ($M = 1.51$, $SD_{\text{overall}} = 0.72$, $SD_{\text{between}} = 0.68$, $SD_{\text{within}} = 0.24$). Sources indexed lower than -0.3 were categorized as Left-Leaning Partisan Media: MSNBC cable news, Vox, *Slate*, *HuffPost*, and National Public Radio ($M = 1.50$, $SD_{\text{overall}} = 0.72$, $SD_{\text{between}} = 0.67$, $SD_{\text{within}} = 0.27$). The Supplementary Material reports the Faris scores (S3) and descriptive statistics for media use indices by wave (S4.1). However, we found that in our dataset, the left and centrist media exposure indicators showed extremely high correlations (in both W1 and W2, $r > 0.85$, $p < 0.001$; see S4.1 of the Supplementary Material). We also ran exploratory factor analyses and found the left-leaning and centrist sources were not distinguishable, whereas the right-leaning sources formed a unique factor. To err on the side of caution, we combined the left and centrist media sources, generating an index of Left + Centrist Media Use ($M = 1.63$, $SD_{\text{overall}} = 0.73$, $SD_{\text{between}} = 0.69$, $SD_{\text{within}} = 0.23$), to compare their effects with those of right-leaning media exposure and reported these models in the Supplementary Material (S5).

An index of Attitude Extremity was generated using responses to nine issue position items. Respondents were asked to indicate their opinion on a five-point bipolar scale regarding restrictive immigration policy, raising taxes on the top 5%, Obamacare, abortion, environmental regulations, Green New Deal, strengthened background checks on gun sales, the Black Lives Matter movement, and a government requirement to wear masks in public indoor spaces. Responses were folded in the middle to create an indicator of attitude extremity, then averaged ($M = 1.28$, $SD_{\text{overall}} = 0.43$, $SD_{\text{between}} = 0.40$, $SD_{\text{within}} = 0.17$).

The partisan composition of the Talk Network was measured by asking respondents to indicate “how many days per week do you discuss politics and current events with” Republicans and Democrats (0–7 days). Then, an index was computed by subtracting the responses about Democrats from those about Republicans ($M = -0.08$, $SD_{\text{overall}} = 2.58$, $SD_{\text{between}} = 2.34$, $SD_{\text{within}} = 1.09$). A positive value indicated greater inclusion of Republicans in a talk network.

Restarted Talking was measured using the following question: “In the last two months, have you tried to restart talking with someone you had stopped talking to because you disagreed about politics?” (1 = yes, 0 = no). The number of positive responses was 28 in W1 and 36 in W2.

3.1.3. Analytic Strategy

To analyze the two-wave panel dataset, we tested fixed-effects regressions with generalized least-squares estimation, which discards all between-subjects variation and employs only the within-subjects changes by using each respondent as their control. This approach has the advantage of reducing threats to spurious relationships when testing media effects and allows us to examine how an individual i 's change in partisan media use explains the change in i 's aversion to compromise.

As fixed-effects models control for time-invariant variables—even those unmeasured—our choice of model automatically ruled out many potential confounders that influence both partisan media use and attitudes toward compromise, such as partisan identity, gender, and race (Frasure & Williams, 2009; Hansen & Goenaga, 2021; see also Benesch, 2012). We, therefore, explicitly controlled only those variables that can be (a) considered as “causes” of both partisan media use and compromise attitudes and (b) expected to shift

between the survey waves for individual i . We included Attitude Extremity (Abelson, 1995) as it may increase partisan media use (Rodriguez et al., 2017) while at the same time decreasing openness to concessions with opposing parties. Additionally, we included three variables indicating the partisan (un)biasedness of individuals' communication environment (Suk et al., 2022): centrist media use, the partisan composition of political talk networks, and whether or not one restarted talking with someone from whom they had been estranged due to political differences.

3.2. Results

The fixed-effects logistic regression revealed a positive association between change in right-leaning partisan media use and variation in the likelihood of expressing an aversion to political compromise ($b = 0.84$, $SE = 0.34$, $p = 0.015$; see Table 1). Specifically, a one-unit increase in an individual's right-leaning partisan media use index was associated with 2.31 times higher odds of exhibiting aversion to compromise, after accounting for other forms of media use, interpersonal conversations, attitude extremity, and stable individual characteristics. Results remained unchanged when left-leaning partisan media and centrist media use were combined into a single index (see Supplementary Material S5.1). In contrast, greater use of left-leaning partisan media was associated with a 52% decrease in the odds of expressing an aversion to compromise ($b = -0.73$, $SE = 0.34$, $p = 0.034$); however, this pattern disappeared when left-leaning and centrist sources were combined.

To facilitate the interpretation of magnitudes and over-time patterns of change, we evaluated the mean change in partisan media use (Supplementary Material S6.1 and see also S2.1 for a visual distribution of the change scores). We found that on average, all focal variables showed a pattern of decline over time in the post-election wave, though only the reduction in right-leaning partisan media use was statistically significant. We next assessed how this average decline in partisan media use corresponded to a change in the predicted likelihood of aversion to compromise (see Mutz, 2018). Drawing on the fixed-effects model in Table 1, the net effects of the mean change in partisan media use indices were estimated as the change in the predicted

Table 1. Within-person effects of partisan media use on the likelihood of aversion to compromise.

Variables	Aversion to Compromise		
	Log-Odds	SE	Odds Ratio (95% CI)
Right-Leaning Partisan Media	0.84*	0.34	2.31 (1.18, 4.51)
Left-Leaning Partisan Media	-0.73*	0.34	0.48 (0.25, 0.95)
Centrist Media	0.33	0.35	1.39 (0.70, 2.76)
Talk Network	0.02	0.05	1.02 (0.92, 1.13)
Restarted Talking	-0.27	0.36	0.77 (0.38, 1.54)
Attitude Extremity	0.003	0.34	1.00 (0.51, 1.96)
Wave ^a	-0.93***	0.12	0.40 (0.31, 0.50)
Observations		740	
Number of Respondents		370	
McFadden R^2		0.1605	

Notes: Cell entries are obtained from a fixed-effects logistic regression model (xtlogit in Stata 18) which excludes individuals who record no change on the dependent variable and conducts listwise deletion on observations with at least one missing value in any variable (Allison, 2009); ^a = the reference category is the pre-election wave (W1); † $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

probabilities of aversion to compromise while all other variables were held at their W1 means. On average, reduced right-leaning partisan media use predicted a decrease in the likelihood of expressing aversion to compromise in the post-election period (see Supplementary Material S6.2 and S6.3).

3.3. Discussion of Study 1

Study 1 found that an individual's right-leaning partisan media use is positively correlated with one's aversion to political compromise. Left-leaning partisan media appeared to reduce this aversion to compromise, though, when combined into a single index with centrist media, the effect disappeared (see S5.1 in the Supplementary Material). This asymmetry between the left- and right-leaning partisan media is consistent with what previous studies have found regarding the bifurcated state of the political communication ecology in the US, in which the right-wing media sources have formed an echo chamber, operating in an insular and partisan manner, largely isolated from other mainstream sources (Benkler et al., 2018; see also Friedland et al., 2022). In particular, right-leaning media use spurred opposition to politicians who strive for deliberative solutions, supporting previous findings that demonstrated right-leaning sources instigate outrage or condemnation (Sobieraj & Berry, 2011).

On average, respondents reported a decline in their use of right-leaning partisan media after the election, and the extent of this decline corresponded to a net decrease in the likelihood of expressing a preference for lawmakers who "stick to principles," a finding that aligns with what Broockman and Kalla (2025) found by incentivizing FOX News viewers to watch CNN for a month and reporting more tempered policy attitudes (see S6.1–S6.3 in the Supplementary Material).

It is also interesting that no covariate in our model predicted aversion to compromise in a statistically significant manner, except the time (i.e., wave) variable. While past studies have shown that one's interpersonal networks may influence perceptions toward political compromise, we did not find evidence that the partisan composition of individuals' interpersonal conversations (i.e., talk networks, restarted talking) predicted their aversion to political compromise. That is, within-individual variation in individuals' talk networks did not impact attitudes toward political compromise, at least in the current dataset.

While shedding light on how the partisan media ecology may influence attitudes toward working with the other side, Study 1 has notable limitations. The final sample size was small due to our analytic choice. To reduce the uncertainty regarding causal inference from observational data, we restricted our analysis to within-person variations, thereby minimizing potential confounding effects. However, this approach limited the analysis to a small subset of the survey respondents (see Section 3.1.3), sacrificing efficiency to reduce bias from time-invariant confounders. Moreover, as the data was collected only in two states, our findings could be specific to the states in which the survey was conducted, which were highly contested in the 2020 presidential election. To replicate Study 1 with a larger sample and to investigate mechanisms that underlie this partisan media influence, we collected responses using a national panel survey during the 2022 midterm election period.

4. Study 2

While Study 1 found a positive relationship between sustained use of right-leaning partisan media and aversion to compromise among elected officials, it is less clear how and why this influence occurs. In Study 2, we test potential mechanisms building on insights from the literature on political listening (e.g., Bickford, 1996; Dobson, 2014; Morrell, 2018; Scudder, 2020a) and attitude moralization (Delton et al., 2020; Ryan, 2017; Skitka et al., 2021).

4.1. Method

4.1.1. Data

We employed a two-wave panel survey dataset administered as a web-based survey during the 2022 US midterm election through SSRS, a survey company. The survey was completed by a national probabilistic online panel recruited randomly based on a nationally representative address-based sample design. The pre-election wave (W1) was collected between October 31 and November 14, 2022. Respondents from the first wave were contacted to participate in the post-election wave (W2) between March 23 and April 6, 2023, to observe post-election shifts in public opinion. The recontact response rate was 72% ($N_{W1} = 1,792$, $N_{W2} = 1,798$; see S1 in the Supplementary Material for demographics).

4.1.2. Measures

All variables were repeatedly measured in W1 and W2. For continuous variables, we reported the means of these variables and standard deviations at the overall, between-person, and within-person levels, based on the final sample of respondents.

For Aversion to Compromise, we asked respondents to indicate agreement with the following statement: “Lawmakers should look for opportunities to compromise” (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). The item was then reverse coded ($M = 2.10$, $SD_{\text{overall}} = 0.91$, $SD_{\text{between}} = 0.81$, $SD_{\text{within}} = 0.44$).

Right-Leaning Partisan Media ($M = 1.40$, $SD_{\text{overall}} = 0.63$, $SD_{\text{between}} = 0.59$, $SD_{\text{within}} = 0.23$) and Left-Leaning Partisan Media ($M = 1.54$, $SD_{\text{overall}} = 0.68$, $SD_{\text{between}} = 0.62$, $SD_{\text{within}} = 0.26$), as well as Centrist Media ($M = 1.67$, $SD_{\text{overall}} = 0.68$, $SD_{\text{between}} = 0.63$, $SD_{\text{within}} = 0.25$) use were measured using the same items as Study 1, except right-leaning partisan media did not include national conservative radio, and left-leaning partisan media did not include *Slate*. Correlation coefficients for media use indices by wave are reported in the Supplementary Material (S4.2).

Restarted Talking was measured using the same item as Study 1. The number of participants who responded “yes” was 190 in W1 and 163 in W2.

To measure the partisan leaning of an individual’s Talk Network, we first asked participants to identify one to three “people with whom you discussed government, elections, politics, or political issues.” Then, we asked a follow-up question about the “perceived political identification” of each person (−3 = *strong Democrat*, −2 = *Democrat*, −1 = *independent who leans Democrat*, 0 = *independent* and *don’t know*, 1 = *independent*

who leans Republican, 2 = Republican, 3 = strong Republican). Responses were then averaged ($M = 0.04$, $SD_{\text{overall}} = 3.98$, $SD_{\text{between}} = 3.74$, $SD_{\text{within}} = 1.39$). Like in Study 1, a higher positive value reflected a greater inclusion of Republicans in one's talk network.

To measure Exposure to Political Content on Social Media, we first asked respondents to indicate the social media platform they most frequently used. Then, based on this answer, we assessed how often they saw (a) friends' posts about politics and social issues, (b) news organizations' posts about politics and social issues, and (c) advertisements from political campaigns or political groups on the platform. We then generated an index by averaging the three responses ($M = 2.23$, $SD_{\text{overall}} = 1.02$, $SD_{\text{between}} = 0.91$, $SD_{\text{within}} = 0.48$).

To gauge a willingness to engage in political listening, we measured respondents' Openness to Different Perspectives by asking them to indicate agreement with the following two statements: "It is important that citizens talk to those with whom they disagree" and "we should be equally open to proposals from both parties to solve public problems" (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). An index was generated by averaging responses ($M = 4.01$, $SD_{\text{overall}} = 0.70$, $SD_{\text{between}} = 0.62$, $SD_{\text{within}} = 0.33$).

To measure attitude moral relevance and attitude certainty regarding specific policy issues (i.e., topic), respondents were first asked to select two that were "most important" to themselves from a list of topics: immigration, tax, health care, abortion, the environment, gun policy, the Black Lives Matter movement, the MeToo movement, and the war in Ukraine. Then, they were asked about the moral relevance and certainty of their attitudes on one of the two issues they selected (see S9 in the Supplementary Material for the number of respondents for each issue). Attitude Moral Relevance was measured to gauge attitude moralization and was assessed by asking individuals the following question: "How much are your feelings about the issue connected to your moral beliefs" (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *very much*; $M = 3.65$, $SD_{\text{overall}} = 1.31$, $SD_{\text{between}} = 1.12$, $SD_{\text{within}} = 0.71$). Attitude Certainty was measured using three items: "How certain are you that your position is the correct position to have," "how strongly do you feel that other people should have the same position as you on this issue," and "how clear in your head is your true feeling toward the issue" (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *very much*; $\alpha_{w1} = 0.77$, $\alpha_{w2} = 0.78$, $M = 3.99$, $SD_{\text{overall}} = 0.87$, $SD_{\text{between}} = 0.76$, $SD_{\text{within}} = 0.44$).

To assess Attitude Extremity, we used a five-point bipolar scale to measure issue preference regarding the same policy issue about which individuals were asked about Attitude Moral Relevance and Attitude Certainty. Responses were then folded in the middle ($M = 1.54$, $SD_{\text{overall}} = 0.73$, $SD_{\text{between}} = 0.64$, $SD_{\text{within}} = 0.40$). For example, the following question was asked about immigration: "Using the 1 to 5 scale below, please indicate where your opinion falls on the spectrum for each issue. Oppose a restrictive immigration policy (1)—favor a restrictive immigration policy (5)."

4.1.3. Analytic Strategy

As in Study 1, we tested fixed-effects regression models with generalized least-squares estimation, employing only within-subject variations. The conceptual model is presented in Figure 1.

Our analytic strategy proceeded in three steps. First, we regressed openness to different perspectives and attitude moral relevance on partisan media use, in separate models. For attitude moral relevance, interaction terms between partisan media and topic were included, as moral relevance was measured with respect to a

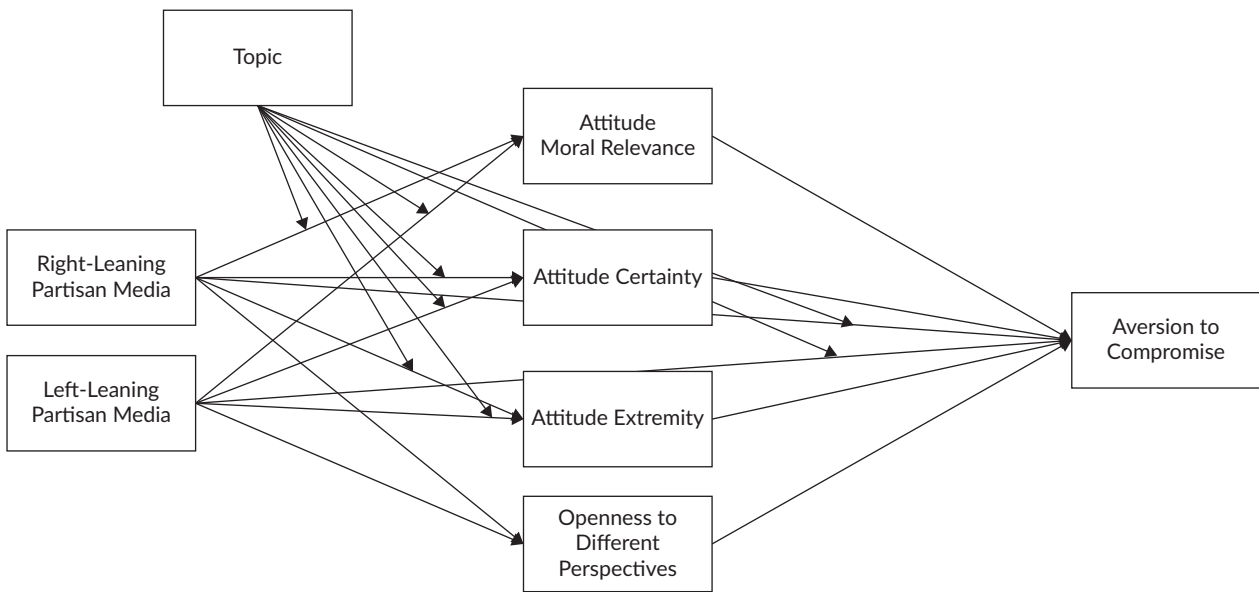


Figure 1. Conceptual model.

specific policy. Second, we estimated the influence of openness to different perspectives and attitude moral relevance on aversion to compromise. Attitude certainty and attitude extremity were included as predictors in this step because these alternative attitude dimensions were considered parallel mediators that may underlie partisan media’s effect on compromise attitudes (see Ryan, 2017). Third, we conducted a formal test of the significance of the indirect effects of partisan media on aversion to compromise by estimating 95% confidence intervals using the Monte Carlo method for assessing mediation with 20,000 replications (Selig & Preacher, 2008). In all models, we included a set of covariates that were kept consistent with Study 1 where possible. Specifically, we included indicators of the partisan (un)biasedness of the communication environment (Suk et al., 2022): Centrist Media, Talk Network, and Restarted Talking. In Study 2, we also included a measure of exposure to Political Content on Social Media.

4.2. Results

4.2.1. Within-Person Effects of Partisan Media Use on Openness and Attitude Moral Relevance

Results of the fixed-effects regression models are presented in Table 2. Regarding openness to different perspectives, a within-person increase in right-leaning partisan media use predicted reduced openness ($b = -0.09$, $SE = 0.04$, $p = 0.034$). In contrast, left-leaning partisan media use showed no significant association ($p = 0.565$; see Table 2, Model 1).

Next, we examined the interaction effect of partisan media use and topic on attitude moral relevance, controlling for all covariates (Table 2, Model 2; Figure 2). Results indicated that the overall F -tests for both interaction terms were statistically significant ($p = 0.014$ for right-leaning partisan media and $p = 0.026$ for left-leaning partisan media), suggesting that the associations between partisan media use and attitude moral relevance differed across topics. A decomposition of these interactions revealed that right-leaning partisan media use was positively associated with higher moral relevance of individuals’ attitudes on the issues of tax ($b = 0.50$, $SE = 0.16$, $p = 0.002$) and abortion ($b = 0.41$, $SE = 0.17$, $p = 0.018$). Conversely, left-leaning

partisan media use negatively predicted the moral relevance of abortion attitudes ($b = -0.31$, $SE = 0.15$, $p = 0.035$) and was positively related to the attitude moral relevance regarding the Ukraine topic ($b = 0.44$, $SE = 0.19$, $p = 0.020$). Results for attitude certainty and extremity are reported in the Supplementary Material (S7).

To clarify the magnitudes and temporal dynamics of change, we examined the average change in partisan media use (see Supplementary Material S6.4; see S2.2 for a visual distribution of the change scores). Both partisan media use variables showed a pattern of decline, though the magnitude of the change was statistically significant only for left-leaning partisan media use. Using the predicted values derived from the fixed-effects model (Table 2, Models 1 and 2), we then estimated the total net change in openness to different perspectives and attitude moral relevance driven by the mean change in partisan media use in order to aid the interpretation of our findings (see S6.5 and S6.6 in the Supplementary Material). The decline in the average left-leaning partisan media use predicted a net increase in openness in the post-election wave. While the corresponding over-time change in right-leaning partisan media was not statistically significant (see S6.4), the magnitude of the average change was also associated with an increase in political listening after the election. With respect to attitude moral relevance, the direction of the predicted net change varied across topics, as expected, given the topic-specific associations between partisan media use and moral relevance of the tax, abortion, and Ukraine topics.

4.2.2. Within-Person Effects of Openness and Attitude Moral Relevance on Aversion to Compromise

Next, we regressed aversion to compromise on openness to different perspectives and attitude moral relevance (Table 2, Model 5). Results indicated that within-person change in political listening was negatively associated with aversion to compromise ($b = -0.44$, $SE = 0.03$, $p < 0.001$) while attitude moral relevance positively predicted aversion to compromise ($b = 0.04$, $SE = 0.02$, $p = 0.009$).

Formal tests of significance were conducted on the indirect effects of political listening and attitude moral relevance, using the Monte Carlo method (see Section 4.1.3). Right-leaning partisan media use was negatively associated with openness to different perspectives, which in turn, was linked with a reduction in aversion to compromise ($ab = 0.041$, Monte Carlo 95% CI [0.003, 0.080]). It was also positively associated with the moral relevance of attitudes, which subsequently predicted greater aversion to compromise (tax: $ab = 0.020$, Monte Carlo 95% CI [0.004, 0.044]; abortion: $ab = 0.017$, Monte Carlo 95% CI [0.001, 0.039]).

Left-leaning partisan media use was positively linked to the moral relevance of Ukraine attitudes, which in turn was associated with greater aversion to compromise ($ab = 0.018$, Monte Carlo 95% CI [0.001, 0.042]). On the other hand, it was negatively related to the moral relevance of abortion attitudes, which positively predicted aversion to compromise ($ab = -0.013$, Monte Carlo 95% CI [-0.031, -0.0002]).

Given the high correlation between left-leaning partisan media and centrist media use indices, we also fitted alternative versions of all models presented in Study 2 using a combined index of left-leaning and centrist media, similar to what we did in Study 1. Results largely replicated the main models (see S5.2 in the Supplementary Material).

Table 2. Within-person effects of partisan media use on aversion to compromise through openness to different perspectives and attitude moral relevance.

Variables	Mediators								Outcome	
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5	
	Openness to Different Perspectives		Attitude Moral Relevance		Attitude Certainty		Attitude Extremity		Aversion to Compromise	
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>
Right-Leaning Partisan Media	−0.09*	0.04	0.50**	0.16	0.09	0.10	−0.02	0.09	0.10	0.09
Left-Leaning Partisan Media	−0.03	0.04	−0.30†	0.16	−0.06	0.10	0.08	0.09	−0.09	0.09
Centrist Media	0.004	0.05	−0.02	0.10	0.11†	0.06	0.02	0.05	0.08	0.06
Talk Network	0.001	0.01	0.03*	0.01	0.0003	0.01	0.01†	0.01	−0.004	0.01
Restarted Talking	0.05	0.05	−0.17†	0.10	−0.09	0.06	0.003	0.06	0.10	0.06
Political Content on Social Media	0.01	0.02	−0.05	0.04	0.02	0.02	−0.01	0.02	−0.01	0.02
Wave ^a	−0.05**	0.02	−0.06	0.04	−0.02	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.02
Topic ^b	—	—	<i>p</i> = 0.342		<i>p</i> = 0.004		<i>p</i> < 0.001		<i>p</i> = 0.756	
Right-Leaning × Topic ^c	—	—	<i>p</i> = 0.014		<i>p</i> = 0.157		<i>p</i> = 0.192		<i>p</i> = 0.241	
Left-Leaning × Topic ^c	—	—	<i>p</i> = 0.026		<i>p</i> = 0.025		<i>p</i> = 0.029		<i>p</i> = 0.164	
Openness	—	—	—		—		—		−0.44***	0.03
Attitude Moral Relevance	—	—	—		—		—		0.04**	0.02
Attitude Certainty	—	—	—		—		—		−0.06*	0.03
Attitude Extremity	—	—	—		—		—		−0.03	0.03
Observations ^d	3,589		3,590		3,590		3,588		3,588	
Number of Respondents	2,000		2,001		2,001		2,000		2,000	
Within <i>R</i> ²	0.0116		0.0399		0.0599		0.0652		0.1372	

Notes: Cell entries are unstandardized coefficients and standard errors; the final sample size for each model fitted differs because the fixed-effects regression conducts listwise deletion on observations with a missing value in any variable (xtreg in Stata 18); ^a = reference category is the pre-election wave (W1); ^b = topic is a factor variable with nine levels, indicating the policy issue about which attitude moral relevance, certainty, and extremity items were asked (a set of eight dummy variables was created to include topic in the regression model, with tax set as the reference level in the table); ^c = *p*-values are from overall *F*-tests for the interactions between partisan media and topic; ^d = number of observations does not match that of respondents because Stata includes singleton groups when fitting the regression models (however, these unpaired observations do not influence the substantive outcome of interest); † *p* < 0.10, * *p* < 0.05, ** *p* < 0.01, *** *p* < 0.001.

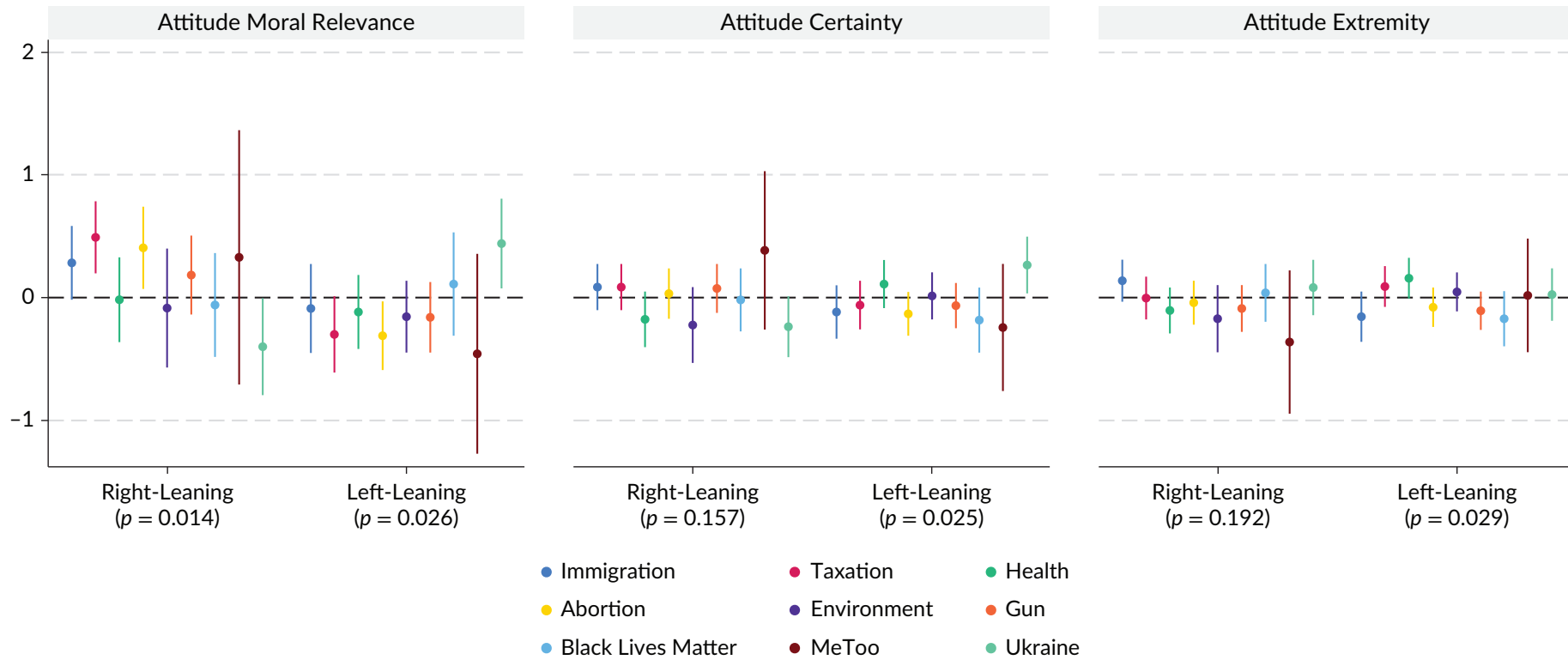


Figure 2. Within-person effects of partisan media use across topics. Notes: The graphs present the effects of right- and left-leaning partisan media on attitude moral relevance, attitude certainty, and attitude extremity, for each level of topic; the *p*-values from overall *F*-tests are indicated in parentheses.

4.2.3. Supplementary Analysis on Openness and Aversion to Compromise

A supplementary analysis using the Study 1 dataset (post-election wave) replicated findings from the fixed-effects models above. Openness to different perspectives mediated the relationship between right-leaning partisan media use and aversion to compromise (see S8 in the Supplementary Material).

4.3. Discussion of Study 2

Study 2 examined political listening and attitude moral relevance as potential mechanisms linking partisan media use to aversion to compromise. Regarding political listening, consistent with expectations, increases in right-leaning partisan media use were associated with reduced openness to opposing views, which in turn predicted lower aversion to compromise. No other variable in the model, aside from the survey wave, significantly predicted openness to differing perspectives. Further supporting this pattern, a supplementary cross-sectional analysis that included an item on respect for political opponents suggested an indirect effect of right-leaning media on aversion to compromise through diminished openness to different perspectives, consistent across multiple measures of aversion to compromise (see S8 in the Supplementary Material). While these measures of openness to different opinions are proxy measures of political listening, they reflect respect for and recognition of divergent perspectives as legitimate and being willing to engage across political divides (Eveland et al., 2020; Morrell, 2018; Scudder, 2020a). Such openness is critical to the functioning of American democracy, which requires inter-party cooperation to govern effectively. To the extent that partisan media erode this mindset, they may weaken the communicative foundations of democratic negotiation. These findings also highlight the need for more refined tools to measure political listening (Scudder, 2020b; see also Rojas, 2008) and better understand how media environments shape deliberative orientations over time.

Regarding attitude moral relevance, we found that the indirect effects varied by issue, with significant effects observed only for abortion, taxation, and Ukraine. Increases in right-leaning media use predicted greater moral relevance of tax and abortion—longstanding focal points in conservative discourse (Wagner & Gruszczynski, 2016)—which in turn heightened aversion to compromise. In contrast, left-leaning partisan media use negatively predicted the moral relevance of abortion attitudes. Left-leaning media use was also linked to greater moralization of the Ukraine issue, aligning with its prominence in left-leaning media during the study period. While we posed this as an exploratory question and cannot rule out chance findings, the presence of topic-specific variation is consistent with research showing that issues are not inherently moral or nonmoral, but rather, they become moralized at particular moments in history (Rozin, 1999)—often as a result of strategic framing by parties and media (Kreitzer et al., 2019). For example, it is widely accepted that the abortion debate is dominated by moral frames in US political discourse, ever since *Roe v. Wade* mobilized the pro-life camp (Luker, 1984), further amplified when the *Dobbs* decision ended the Constitutional right to abortion and allowed individual states to regulate or prohibit abortion access. Taxation, by contrast, has traditionally been viewed as a nonmoral and technical policy domain. However, recent studies suggest that it too can be moralized under certain conditions, when framed in ways that make its moral relevance more salient (Simonsen & Widmann, 2024). Future studies should investigate how media narratives contribute to the moralization of domestic policy issues like taxation and foreign policy issues like Ukraine.

It is also worth noting that as respondents reduced their partisan media use after the election, openness to differing perspectives and the moral relevance showed a net increase and decline, respectively, in the post-election wave, suggesting that political tensions were heightened during the election period. This pattern aligns with Gutmann and Thompson's (2010) view that elections can hinder deliberative mindsets.

Two important limitations deserve note. First, the results regarding attitude moral relevance were observed for issues that respondents personally deemed important (see Section 4.1.2), raising the possibility that topic-specific effects may partly reflect self-selection (see S9 for the demographics of individuals who selected into each topic in the Supplementary Material). For instance, the observed moderated mediation effect for the abortion issue may be a function of those who considered abortion to be an important issue to themselves. Because our design did not randomize issue assignment, we cannot rule out this alternative explanation. Experimental studies with random assignment would help clarify these dynamics. The small indirect effects also warrant attention. This may be due to our use of fixed-effects models, which, while reducing bias, limit observable variation (see the SD_{within} vs. $SD_{between}$ in Section 4.1.2) and the product-of-coefficients method (Baron & Kenny, 1986), which typically yields smaller estimates by design. Additionally, the mismatch in specificity between the issue-level mediators and the general outcome measure (i.e., aversion to compromise) may have further attenuated the effects (see the compatibility principle; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977; Kraus, 1995). Nonetheless, the observed patterns offer valuable insight into the mechanisms through which partisan media use shapes aversion to political compromise.

5. Conclusion

This study finds that increased partisan media use is associated with an increased aversion to political compromise, based on two panel surveys from the 2020 and 2022 US elections. Using fixed-effects models, we relied exclusively on within-person variations, controlling for time-invariant confounders and key features of respondents' communication environments, such as centrist media use and talk networks.

Across both studies, right-leaning partisan media had a consistently stronger relationship with compromise aversion than left-leaning partisan media, suggesting asymmetry. Study 1 showed that increases in right-leaning media use predicted greater aversion to compromise. Study 2 further demonstrated indirect effects through reduced openness to opposing views (a proxy measure for political listening) and increased attitude moral relevance, varying by issue. These findings suggest partisan media may differ not just in ideology but in how they frame the other side and moralize political issues, undermining deliberative norms (Barber, 2003). Future studies should empirically test this idea by systematically examining the content broadcast by right- and left-leaning partisan media sources to better understand the topic variations in these effects. Another important next step, given the persistence of right-leaning partisan media effects, would be to examine how exclusive exposure to right-leaning media compares to more ideologically mixed media diets in their influence on the mechanisms underlying partisan media effects on compromise attitudes.

Several limitations warrant discussion. First, our media use measures do not capture the entirety of respondents' communication environment, let alone political news sources. News aggregators and social media are frequent sources of news that we could not score in terms of their ideological slant, as content varies by user. While we included political content on social media as a covariate in Study 2 to improve our measures from Study 1, our measures are still limited, though more comprehensive than many empirical

investigations. Additional limitations related to measurement—such as the use of single-item indicators, variation in the items across studies, and the interpretation of variables for non-partisan respondents—are discussed in greater detail in S10 of the Supplementary Material.

Second, important contextual differences exist between the studies. The 2020 presidential election was highly salient, marked by a change in party control and the incumbent's populist rhetoric, which may have impacted partisan media use and resistance to compromise (Çınar et al., 2020). The 2022 midterm election was less salient in comparison. The timing of the post-election surveys also differed: Study 1 (2020) was fielded in December during widespread discourse about election legitimacy, especially in right-leaning networks, while Study 2 (2022) was fielded the following April. These differences likely shaped both media content and respondents' answers—for instance, left-leaning partisan media use was negatively associated with compromise aversion in Study 1 but not in Study 2, possibly reflecting distinct post-election attitudes. Still, given the complexity of these factors, it is difficult to predict their precise effects.

Third, our findings may not generalize to other electoral contexts. Recent US elections have been particularly contentious, with partisan media displaying more negative content than usual. The US also has a distinct two-party system and media environment (Hallin & Mancini, 2004)—such differences in political systems and media structures can shape how media influences democratic attitudes. For example, parliamentary systems like those in Scandinavia often require coalition governments by design, thus fostering inter-party negotiation (Arter, 2004). In such contexts, norms of consensus may encourage more favorable public attitudes toward compromise. Cross-national studies are needed to examine how these differences shape partisan media effects on compromise attitudes.

Fourth, all relationships observed are correlational, not causal. While our use of fixed-effects models addresses time-invariant confounders, it does not resolve the endogeneity problem. For example, individuals whose attitudes are moralized may seek more partisan media, which tend to employ anger and outrage in their content (e.g., Sobieraj & Berry, 2011). As such, without random assignment of treatment, strong assumptions are needed for causal interpretation, especially in the case of the mediation models in Study 2 (see VanderWeele, 2015). This challenge is common in observational studies of media effects. Future studies could build on experimental efforts to randomly assign media use (e.g., Broockman & Kalla, 2025).

This study connects the literature on deliberative attitudes (e.g., Barber, 2003; Gutmann & Thompson, 2010) with partisan media (e.g., Levendusky, 2013a, 2013b; R. K. Garrett et al., 2014), drawing on political listening (Dobson, 2014; Scudder, 2020a) and attitude moralization (Skitka et al., 2021) to illuminate the underlying mechanisms of this relationship. Despite limitations, we find partisan media's adverse impact on civic culture, specifically an aversion to compromise among elected officials. We hope these findings will lay the groundwork for future research that empirically and systematically examines the characteristics of partisan media and their impact on unwillingness to listen, moral consideration of political issues, and opposition to political compromise.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

Data Availability

The data underlying this article will be shared upon request to the corresponding author.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the author (unedited).

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