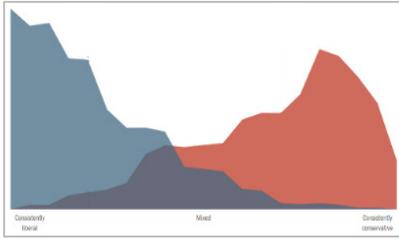


RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Getting Beyond Political Acrimony: Civil Dialogue About the Arts

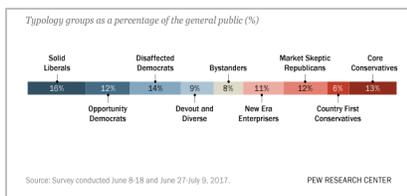
National Assembly of State Arts Agencies
Assembly 2018 | November 2018 | Baltimore, Maryland

Political Polarization and the American Public



This data from the Pew Research Center provides a longitudinal perspective on the [political attitudes](#) of our country as well as how people feel about [key issues](#). Based on a nationwide sample of up to 10,000 respondents, the research reveals how increasing partisan antipathy is affecting politics, policy and everyday life. A [dynamic data interactive](#) illustrates how polarization has increased in recent years.

Beyond Red vs. Blue: The Political Typology



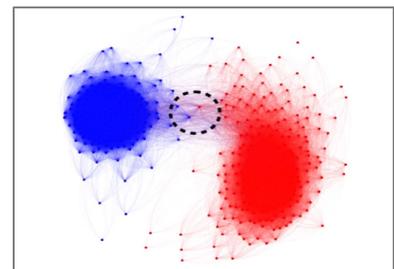
The researchers at Pew note that political attitudes come in [many shades and hues](#). Diverse views are unified by frustration with politics, but little else. As a result, both parties face formidable challenges in reaching beyond their bases and building sustainable coalitions. Pew provides in-depth data about each group's [views of society and expectations of government](#). Arts

advocates can mine this data to customize messages to each cohort. Take a [typology quiz](#) to learn where you fall on the continuum!

A sign of the times?

[Michigan State University, 2018](#)

MSU urban studies professor Zachary Neal analyzes data on Congress, mapping the erosion of cooperation and co-sponsorship. Spoiler alert: Neal finds statistical evidence of increased polarization *regardless of which party holds the majority*.



Why Polarization Matters

[The American Interest, 2016](#)

"To whatever degree we can tolerate and even have sympathy for the usages of polarization, it's clear that polarization today in the United States has become a major problem. It is crippling our politics, coarsening our culture, weakening our intellects, and making it harder to be good neighbors and good citizens."



Overcoming Confirmation Bias

To raise support for the arts across the political spectrum, cultural advocates need to overcome confirmation bias: the human tendency to accept or discount facts on the basis of whether they align with our audience's pre-existing beliefs, experiences or values. The Tali Sharot video, [The Neuroscience of Why People Won't Budge on Their Beliefs](#), explores some of the underlying cognitive causes. Jonathan Haidt, author of *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*, further translates the neuroscience into the realm of politics and social psychology. He offers a simple metaphor (the elephant and the rider) in this video: [Mr. Rogers and the Power of Persuasion](#). Haidt's Wall Street Journal article on [How to Get Beyond Our Tribal Politics](#) offers a useful summary.



The Architecture of Trust

[Craftsmanship Quarterly, 2017](#)

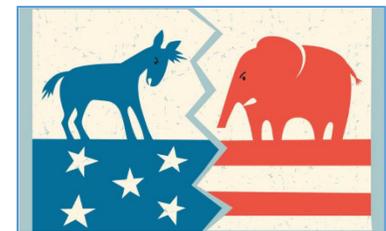
"It turns out that the capacities for informed, open-minded conversations are cultural muscles; if not exercised, those skills atrophy. Returning them to health therefore requires careful and gradual rehabilitation."



The Seven Habits of Highly Depolarizing People

[The American Interest, 2016](#)

"Over time, the intellectual habits [of polarization] became 'baked in' to how we judge what is true and decide what is right in public life. What are the antidotes to these familiar habits? How does the depolarizer understand conflict and make sense of the world? Here is an attempt to answer these questions by proposing the seven habits of highly depolarizing people."



A Better Way to Argue About Politics

[The Atlantic, 2017](#)



This video offers a quick introduction to moral foundations theory, how to reframe arguments to reach across ideological divides and appeal to the values of other people. For more information on values reframing useful for advocates, see [How Jonathan Haidt's 6 Moral Tastebuds Can Heal a Divided World](#) (High Existence), [How to Have Better Political Conversations](#) (TED Talk by Rob Willer) and [Red Brian, Blue Brain: The Neurobiology of Political Values](#) (TED Talk by Hannah Holmes).

De-Polarizing Conversations



[Better Angels](#) is a citizens' movement that helps "red" and "blue" Americans find new ways to talk and participate in public life. It brings liberals and conservatives together to get beyond stereotypes and teach practical skills for communicating across political differences. This is not an arts group, but its methods offer useful tips for cultural advocates. [Talking Across the Political Divide](#) offers practical "do's and don'ts" for policy conversations. (And defusing tense moments at the dinner table, too!)

Better Angels and many similar groups [borrow principles from the field of marriage counseling](#)—a body of research and practice that's increasingly useful to community advocates in polarized times. Give a listen to a [podcast conversation between Arthur Brooks](#) (former President of the American Enterprise Institute) and clinical psychologist John Gottman. Gottman is a family counselor who has conducted longitudinal studies following more than 3,000 couples for up to 20 years. His [research](#) isolated quantifiable, observable indicators of relationship conflict. With more than 90% accuracy, Gottman's research predicted whether a couple would divorce based on the presence of the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse"—blame, defensiveness, contempt, and stonewalling. And yes, there are [antidotes](#) to these traps!



OpenMind Platform

[OpenMind](#) is a free, interactive, psychology-based curriculum designed to foster intellectual humility, empathy, and mutual understanding across a variety of differences. OpenMind equips people with the essential cognitive skills and language to overcome political differences and work together to solve problems. The OpenMind Platform provides a set of tools which universities, organizations, and corporations can use to depolarize their communities. OpenMind, Heterodox Academy, Ethical Systems, and [Civil Politics](#) are part of the same family of organizations that utilize [evidence-based research](#) to create more open, ethical, and inclusive civic dialogue.



For a digital version of this resources sheet (with active links) email:

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For arts advocacy tools and tips explore:

<https://nasaa-arts.org/advocacy>