
Hegelian dialectic and social/attitudinal polarisation

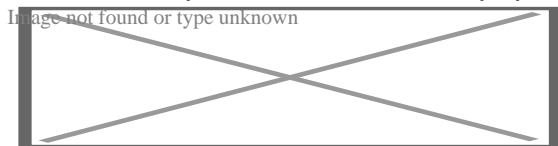
Description

Divide et Impera – Divide and rule

Polarization, in many disciplines, is a tendency to be located close to one of the opposite ends of a continuum.

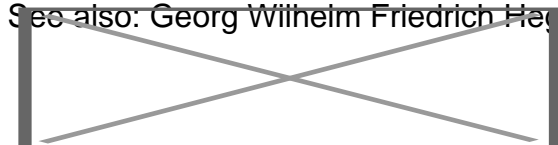
- Polarization (economics), faster decrease of moderate-skill jobs relative to low-skill and high-skill jobs
- Political polarization, when public opinion divides and becomes oppositional
- Social polarization, segregation of society into social groups, from high-income to low-income
- Group polarization, tendency of a group to make more extreme decisions than individuals' initial inclinations
- Attitude polarization, when disagreement becomes more extreme as different parties consider evidence
- Racial polarization, when a population with varying ancestry is divided into distinct racial groups

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Hegelian dialectic, usually presented in a threefold manner, was stated by Heinrich Moritz Chalybäus as comprising three dialectical stages of development: a thesis, giving rise to its reaction; an antithesis, which contradicts or negates the thesis; and the tension between the two being resolved by means of a synthesis. Although this model is often named after Hegel, he never used that specific formulation. Hegel ascribed that terminology to Kant. Carrying on Kant's work, Fichte greatly elaborated on the synthesis model and popularized it.

See also: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel § Dialectics, speculation, idealism



Singer, D. J., Bramson, A., Grim, P., Holman, B., Jung, J., Kovaka, K., ... Berger, W. J.. (2019). Rational social and political polarization. *Philosophical Studies*

Plain numerical DOI: 10.1007/s11098-018-1124-5

[DOI URL](#)

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Show/hide publication abstract

“Public discussions of political and social issues are often characterized by deep and persistent polarization. In social psychology, it’s standard to treat belief polarization as the product of epistemic irrationality. In contrast, we argue that the persistent disagreement that grounds political and social polarization can be produced by epistemically rational agents, when those agents have limited cognitive resources. Using an agent-based model of group deliberation, we show that groups of deliberating agents using coherence-based strategies for managing their limited resources tend to polarize into different subgroups. We argue that using that strategy is epistemically rational for limited agents. So even though group polarization looks like it must be the product of human irrationality, polarization can be the result of fully rational deliberation with natural human limitations.”

Eibach, R.. (2021). Ideological Polarization and Social Psychology. In Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Psychology

Plain numerical DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190236557.013.240

[DOI URL](#)

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Willer, D., Turner, J. C., Hogg, M. A., Oakes, P. J., Reicher, S. D., & Wetherell, M. S.. (1989). Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory.. Contemporary Sociology

Plain numerical DOI: 10.2307/2073157

[DOI URL](#)

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“(From the jacket) this book presents a new theory of the social group which seeks to explain how individuals become unified into a group and capable of collective behaviour. The book summarizes classic psychological theories of the group, describes and explains the important effects of group membership on social behaviour, outlines self-categorization theory in full and shows how the general perspective has been applied in research on group formation and cohesion, social influence, the polarization of social attitudes, crowd psychology and social stereotyping. The theory emerges as a fundamental new contribution to social psychology.”

Van Bavel, J. J., Rathje, S., Harris, E., Robertson, C., & Sternisko, A.. (2021). How social media shapes polarization. Trends in Cognitive Sciences

Plain numerical DOI: 10.1016/j.tics.2021.07.013

[DOI URL](#)

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“This article reviews the empirical evidence on the relationship between social media and political polarization. We argue that social media shapes polarization through the following social, cognitive, and

technological processes: partisan selection, message content, and platform design and algorithms." Simas, E. N., Clifford, S., & Kirkland, J. H.. (2020). How Empathic Concern Fuels Political Polarization. American Political Science Review

Plain numerical DOI: 10.1017/S0003055419000534

[DOI URL](#)

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"Over the past two decades, there has been a marked increase in partisan social polarization, leaving scholars in search of solutions to partisan conflict. the psychology of intergroup relations identifies empathy as one of the key mechanisms that reduces intergroup conflict, and some have suggested that a lack of empathy has contributed to partisan polarization. yet, empathy may not always live up to this promise. we argue that, in practice, the experience of empathy is biased toward one's ingroup and can actually exacerbate political polarization. first, using a large, national sample, we demonstrate that higher levels of dispositional empathic concern are associated with higher levels of affective polarization. second, using an experimental design, we show that individuals high in empathic concern show greater partisan bias in evaluating contentious political events. taken together, our results suggest that, contrary to popular views, higher levels of dispositional empathy actually facilitate partisan polarization."

Valdesolo, P., & Graham, J.. (2016). Social Psychology of Political Polarization. Social Psychology of Political Polarization

Plain numerical DOI: 10.4324/9781315644387

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"The 21st-century political landscape has been defined by deep ideological polarization, and as a result scientific inquiry into the psychological mechanisms underlying this divide has taken on increased relevance. the topic is by no means new to social psychology. classic literature on intergroup conflict shows how pervasive and intractable these group conflicts can be, how readily they can emerge from even minimal group identities, and the hedonic rewards reaped from adopting an 'us vs. them' perspective. indeed, this literature paints a bleak picture for the efficacy of any interventions geared toward reducing intergroup discord. but advances in the psychology of moral judgments and behavior, in particular greater understanding of how moral concerns might inform the creation and stability of political identities, offer new ways forward in understanding partisan divides. this volume brings together leading researchers in moral and political psychology, offering new perspectives on the moral roots of political ideology, and exciting new opportunities for the development of more effective applied interventions."

Lees, J., & Cikara, M.. (2021). Understanding and combating misperceived polarization. Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences

Plain numerical DOI: 10.1098/rstb.2020.0143

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“By many accounts politics is becoming more polarized, yielding dire consequences for democracy and trust in government. yet a growing body of research on so-called false polarization finds that perceptions of ‘what the other side believes’ are inaccurate – specifically, overly pessimistic – and that these inaccuracies exacerbate intergroup conflict. through a review of existing work and a reanalysis of published data, we (i) develop a typology of the disparate phenomena that are labelled ‘polarization’, (ii) use that typology to distinguish actual from (mis)perceived polarization, and (iii) identify when misperceived polarization gives rise to actual polarization (e.g. extreme issue attitudes and prejudice). we further suggest that a specific psychological domain is ideal for developing corrective interventions: meta-perception, one’s judgement of how they are perceived by others. we review evidence indicating that correcting meta-perception inaccuracies is effective at reducing intergroup conflict and discuss methods for precisely measuring meta-perception accuracy. we argue that the reputational nature of meta-perception provides a motivational mechanism by which individuals are sensitive to the truth, even when those truths pertain to the ‘other side’. we conclude by discussing how these insights can be integrated into existing research seeking to understand polarization and its negative consequences. this article is part of the theme issue ‘the political brain: neurocognitive and computational mechanisms’.”

Roblain, A., & Green, E. G. T.. (2021). From perceived polarization of immigration attitudes to collective action. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*

Plain numerical DOI: 10.1016/j.ijintrel.2020.11.009

[DOI URL](#)

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“In the context where immigration divides the political space of western societies, perceived social polarization as an explanation of collective action is surprisingly understudied in contemporary social psychology. we hypothesize that the more people perceive polarization, the more they will engage in collective action in line with their attitudes. moreover, this effect should be explained by two interrelated factors: identification and perceived efficacy. perceived polarization should shape how important immigration attitudes are for individuals’ self-definition and thereby believing oneself capable of making a change, which in turn triggers collective action. to test our predictions, we conducted three studies (studies 1 and 2 were correlational and study 3 experimental) among mobilized and non-mobilized samples in two countries (i.e., belgium and switzerland). results partially support our predictions that perceived social polarization on immigration issues relates to engaging in collective action. indirect effect analyses revealed the predominant role of identity dynamics in the social psychological processes linked to perceiving polarization. these results provide potential explanations to the strong mobilization that emerged since 2015 following the so-called migrant crisis. implications of our findings for collective action literature are discussed.”

Levendusky, M. S.. (2018). When efforts to depolarize the electorate fail. *Public Opinion Quarterly*

Plain numerical DOI: 10.1093/poq/nfy036

[DOI URL](#)

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“The mass public has become affectively polarized-ordinary americans increasingly dislike and distrust those from the other party, with negative consequences for politics. drawing on work in political and social psychology, this paper tests two mechanisms for reducing this discord, both of which have been shown to reduce similar biases in other settings: heightening partisan ambivalence, and using self-affirmation techniques. a population-based survey experiment shows that neither strategy reduces affective polarization in the aggregate. but this null finding masks an important heterogeneity: heightening partisan ambivalence reduces affective polarization for ideological moderates, but increases such discord for those with more extreme ideological identities. efforts to depolarize the electorate can make it more deeply divided, with important implications for our understanding of contemporary politics and the durability of affective polarization.”

Brady, W. J., Wills, J. A., Jost, J. T., Tucker, J. A., Van Bavel, J. J., & Fiske, S. T.. (2017). Emotion shapes the diffusion of moralized content in social networks. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*

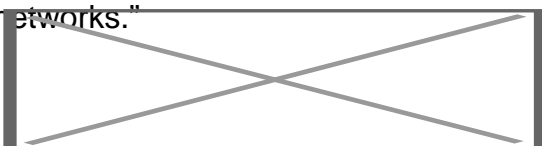
Plain numerical DOI: 10.1073/pnas.1618923114

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“Political debate concerning moralized issues is increasingly common in online social networks. however, moral psychology has yet to incorporate the study of social networks to investigate processes by which some moral ideas spread more rapidly or broadly than others. here, we show that the expression of moral emotion is key for the spread of moral and political ideas in online social networks, a process we call ‘moral contagion.’ using a large sample of social media communications about three polarizing moral/political issues (n = 563,312), we observed that the presence of moral-emotional words in messages increased their diffusion by a factor of 20% for each additional word. furthermore, we found that moral contagion was bounded by group membership; moral-emotional language increased diffusion more strongly within liberal and conservative networks, and less between them. our results highlight the importance of emotion in the social transmission of moral ideas and also demonstrate the utility of social network methods for studying morality. these findings offer insights into how people are exposed to moral and political ideas through social networks, thus expanding models of social influence and group polarization as people become increasingly immersed in social media networks.”



McKenna, T.. (2011). Hegelian dialectics. Critique

Plain numerical DOI: 10.1080/03017605.2011.537458

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“This article is an attempt to trace the development of modern dialectics. george w.f. hegel brought the method of dialectics to fruition through an analysis of the history of philosophy beginning with the ancient greeks and ‘Oriental’ thought, before traversing the various stages which would eventually culminate in the philosophy of hegel himself. the author of this article concentrates on the modern epoch in particular, whereby the rationalism of descartes and the empiricism of hume are opposed by kant. subsequently kant is fiercely critiqued, by fichte and schelling among others, and the hegelian philosophy emerges, to some extent, as the critique of this critique. dialectics is the method of marxism but it is the contention of the author that dialectical materialism (marxism) cannot be appreciated without reference to hegel, who was the first thinker to consciously apprehend the movement and interconnection of both thought and being – as totality. marx made reference to hegel as ‘that mighty thinker’ in the preface to his magnum opus while lenin was later to comment that it is impossible to understand das capital without ‘having thoroughly studied and understood the whole of hegel’s logic’. there is certainly a great deal of difference between hegel and marx but dialectics is the method, the thread, which runs through both. © 2011 critique.”

Gremmen, B.. (2021). Dialectical Methodology of the Praxis of Biology. Foundations of Science

Plain numerical DOI: 10.1007/s10699-020-09769-8

[DOI URL](#)

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“Zwart uses hegel’s dialectical method to develop a dialectical methodology for assessing biology as technoscience during the anthropocene. in this paper i will evaluate this use of hegelian dialectics in biology. i will first elaborate the meaning of hegel’s method of ‘dialectics’. this helps me to evaluate zwart’s dialectical scientific methodology from the perspective of hegel’s method of ‘dialectics’ and to evaluate zwart’s dialectical scientific methodology from the perspective of the praxis of biology. finally, i will oppose zwart’s claim that the synthetic cell is an appropriate case study to demonstrate the relevance of dialectics for understanding contemporary biological research.”

Etim, F., & Akpabio, M. K.-A.. (2018). Hegelian Dialectics: Implications for Violence and Peace in Nigeria. Open Journal of Philosophy

Plain numerical DOI: 10.4236/ojpp.2018.85037

[DOI URL](#)

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Picardi, R.. (2015). The place of Hegelian dialectics in Paul Ricoeur’s thinking. Revue Des Sciences

Philosophiques et Theologiques

Plain numerical DOI: 10.3917/rspt.994.0599

[DOI URL](#)

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“The place of hegelian dialectics in paul ricoeur’s thinking. by r. picardi. this paper reconstructs the principal stages of ricoeur’s confrontation with hegel’s dialectics, from the first manuscript notes on hegel’s negativity to the 1975 essay the place of dialectics . the author’s objective is three-fold. first to recover at its genesis the ricoeurian effort toward regionalization of hegelian dialectics, the reasons of which cannot be reduced to a generic refusal of the effects of systematic totalization of the hegelian identification of negation with mediation. secondly, he aims to underscore the exogenous and endogenous reasons that underlie the extension and displacement of hegelian ethics, due to the ricoeurian grafting of hermeneutics onto phenomenology. finally, the author intends to determine the variable place maintained by hegelian dialectics regarding other dialectics that fuel the dialectical style of ricoeur’s philosophy, from kierkegaard’s dialectics of paradox and the dialectics of the five genders of the sophist – as he interprets them – to the nabertian dialectics between act and signs.”

Zwart, H.. (2021). The Empirical and the Holistic Turn: A Hegelian Dialectics of Technoscience Revisited. Foundations of Science

Plain numerical DOI: 10.1007/s10699-020-09748-z

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“My effort to address the comments made by the two distinguished scholars (to ‘negate their negations’ as it were), consists of three steps. i will start with a brief resume of hegel’s dialectical logic, to provide a scaffold for the debate. subsequently, i will address the comments made. in the case of hans-jörg rheinberger, i will focus on his reference to althusser. in the case of bart gremmen, i will focus on the dialectics of biology (on biology as an inherently dialectical science), notably on his reference to mendel. finally, i will address the tension between the conceptual and the empirical dimension of philosophical scholarship.”

Tavilla, I., Kralik, R., Webb, C., Jiang, X., & Manuel, A. J.. (2019). The rise of fascism and the reformation of hegel’s dialectic into italian neo-idealist philosophy. XLinguae

Plain numerical DOI: 10.18355/XL.2019.12.01.11

[DOI URL](#)

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“Fascism’s rise to power in italy directly involved the main exponents of neo-idealism – the dominant philosophy at that time: giovanni gentile and benedetto croce, who were promoters respectively of the

manifesto of the fascist intellectuals and the manifesto of the anti-fascist intellectuals. at the beginning of the century the two philosophers were committed to reforming hegelian dialectic, the outcomes of which seem to account for both gentile's fervent adherence to fascism and croce's equally fervent opposition."

Ebbesen, D. K., & Olsen, J.. (2021). Exploring the Preconditions for a Developmental Science: Hegelian Metaphysics and Dialectics. Human Arenas

Plain numerical DOI: 10.1007/s42087-021-00210-5

[DOI URL](#)

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"In this article, we explore the metaphysics of hegelian dialectics and its implications for a developmental science. more specifically, we investigate how hegel initiated the move from classical mechanicism to dialectics, thus rearranging the ruling scientific logic at his time. we do this by introducing some of the metaphysical assertions implied by mechanicism and showing how these assertions are scientifically inadequate in explicating the relation between the empirical matter and abstract representation of a given (developmental) phenomenon. this claim leads us to a discussion of the theory of knowledge offered by hegel as opposed to kant, and how these theories relate to the struggle between process and structure. finally, we find that the subject is displaced in between observation and experience and thus epistemically constrained in its access to empirical matters. this fact draws attention to the importance of considering the metaphysical aspects of the sense-modalities, and how such aspects relate to any given developmental phenomenon. overall the article illustrates the potentials of hegelian dialectics for avoiding entrenched dualisms and static oppositions in future research."

Category

1. General

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