

## **How Neuroscience Can Help Us for Understanding and Reducing Political Polarization**

Political polarization is one of the main problems that contemporary democratic societies face. In this presentation I will examine recent research in social neuroscience related to explanation of this phenomenon as well as various insights from neuroscience that might be useful for reducing political polarization. I will start my analysis with general overview of the state-of-the-art in research on political polarization in the social sciences and social neuroscience (Jost et al. 2022, Zmigrod and Tsakiris 2021). Then I will focus on two strands of neuroscientific research related to motivated reasoning and ideological orientation in order to elucidate in which way they contribute to better understanding of political polarization. In regard to the first type of research, I will look at the study which was among the first to use fMRI technique to understand political issues, and its main results related to motivated reasoning (Westen et al. 2006). For the second type of research I will turn to findings about neurological correlates of different ideological views and about political ideology as motivated social cognition (Jost and Amodio 2012). On the basis of neuroscientific understanding of motivated political cognition, I will further examine how from this perspective can be explained rejection of evidence and receptivity to misinformation that in large part contribute to political polarization (Van Bavel and Pereira 2018). In the second part of the presentation I will investigate what social neuroscience has to say about possible ways for reducing political polarization. In that context, I will argue that contributions from the perspectives of ethics and political philosophy are crucially important for normative justification of various techniques and institutional settings for reducing political polarization.

### **References**

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