



Call for papers

## *Affective polarization and democracy*

Interdisciplinary workshop

November 6 & 7, 2023,  
Amsterdam

Topic            The relation between **affective polarization and democracy** from an empirical, theoretical, and/or normative perspective

For whom?     **Theorists and empirical scholars**, from e.g., political science, philosophy, legal studies, political communication, political psychology, sociology, and others

Keynote speakers:     [Meena Krishnamurthy, Queen's University](#)  
[Lilliana Mason, Johns Hopkins University](#)

Can democracies cope with antipathy and negative emotions among citizens? Might it even play a constructive role? Within comparative politics, it is conventional wisdom that while ideological polarization (i.e., political disagreement as such) may be fruitful, affective polarization (i.e., antagonism between politically opposed citizens) is politically dangerous for liberal democracies, threatening its very foundations.

The empirical and normative grounds for this conventional wisdom are not self-evident. For, within political theory, ever since Machiavelli observed that affective polarization among senate and multitude created a form of 'creative turbulence' that facilitated the rise of the roman republic, agonistic theorists have championed the fruitfulness of affective polarization.

In addition, some studies find an empirical association between affective polarization and eroding democratic norms and practices, but others do not. Students of comparative politics have documented potentially beneficial implications of affective polarization, such as increased political engagement or resilience against illiberal actors. But despite promising hints, there has not been a sustained effort to bring the orists and empirical students of politics together to explore and delimit the kinds of affective polarization that might be useful to democratic life.

This workshop aims to bring together theorists and social scientists to explore this relation between affective polarization and democracy. This will also allow us to gauge the fruitfulness of collaborating and to establish a state-of-the-art baseline.

How to apply? Applicants should send a title and abstract (max. 250 words) to [e.harteveld@uva.nl](mailto:e.harteveld@uva.nl). The deadline for submissions is July 18, 2023. There is a limited budget available to cover some expenses of junior scholars.

Organizers:     Eelco Harteveld ([e.harteveld@uva.nl](mailto:e.harteveld@uva.nl)) & Eric Schliesser ([e.s.schliesser@uva.nl](mailto:e.s.schliesser@uva.nl))

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