

IDSS FiloLab 2022. Polarization and Social Change

21TH TO 24TH OF JUNE 2022

The focus of this Summer School will be polarization and social change. Political polarization, the process through which a group's opinion with respect to a given political issue sets apart from a normal distribution, to form two or more groups with different levels of extremism, has been studied from several sub-disciplines within the past few years. The phenomenon has been approached from a political and social perspective, but some attention has also been paid to the epistemological problems motivated by polarization, as well as some of the linguistic factors involved. Moral and political philosophy, but also epistemology and the philosophy of language, have thus produced key results related to the topic of polarization. Together, they allow us to better understand the phenomenon, and to complement the strategies of detection and depolarization that have been independently developed.

The first studies on polarization come from the realm of sociology and social psychology. These studies focus on how more balanced components of a group tend to adopt riskier attitudes after a conversation with people who are more prone to take risks. The development of these initial studies has been supplemented not only by the aforementioned philosophical contributions, but also by research coming from political science. It is, therefore, a topic that it is simply impossible to tackle without adopting a multidisciplinary approach. This feature of the research on polarization is reflected on the composition of the different teams, and research projects, that support this application. We might be able to find moral and political philosophers, epistemologists, researchers working on the philosophy of language, but also sociologists, and political scientists.

For three days, PhD students will have the chance to meet researchers whose work on polarization is widely known and discussed. Students will not only be able to discuss some of the more recent findings within this area of research, they will also present their own research, and thus receive comments from the invited researchers. The ultimate goal of this summer school is to provide doctoral students with direct access to highly recognized researchers whose work is linked, in one way or another, to the topic of polarization

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