Guide to Articles on Understanding Polarization in the Immigration Context and Holding Effective Conversations

Below are links to various articles on polarization in immigration and how to talk to those on the other side of immigration issues:

**American Immigration Council** – organization advocating for immigrants through litigation and research.

*What Immigration Issues Do Americans Hold Sacred?* - research paper identifying the sacred values that groups for and against immigration hold on various immigration issues, and how to communicate with people about their sacred values. The paper recommends learning more about people’s beliefs, threat perceptions, and sense of societal belonging, and respecting and affirming the intention behind the sacralization (e.g., protecting families). See an article summarizing the paper [here](#).

*Immigration Advocates Can Have a Role in Advancing National Unity* - article arguing that we must stop dehumanizing those with opposing views, create broader intersectional coalitions, and research the reasons behind people’s beliefs. The article also urges us to recognize that immigration does not always have to be a stand-alone issue, and that advocating for issues like the economy, healthcare, and the justice system also helps immigrants.

**Apolitical**

*How to Talk about Immigration: Better Storytelling in a Polarised Time* – While a UK article, it provides relevant suggestions, such as to tell stories about ordinary immigrants in our communities. It also advises against raising the “immigrants are good for the country” argument that still reinforces a “them versus us” narrative and instead talking about a broader story of “us”.

**Brookings Institute** – a nonprofit public policy research organization.

*National Reconciliation in America* – article discussing root causes of national divisions, including income inequality, geographic disparities, and systematic racism that are breeding grounds for scapegoating. The article has many structural suggestions for change.

**Frame Works** – a think tank that helps organizations communicate on social issues.

*Highlighting Shared Humanity and Prosperity to Advance Immigration Solutions* - article on the importance of framing and what types of phrases to avoid, such as “chain migration” and immigrants “coming out of the shadows”. Advocates should position immigrants as part of a collective “we” instead of only talking about “worthy” immigrants, as doing so encourages Americans to evaluate whether individual immigrants deserve
Integrating Issues: Framing for Racial Equity and Children in Immigrant Families - guide on how to rephrase arguments and stories around children of immigrant families so that they are more digestible to those against immigration.

National Immigration Forum – nonprofit policy and advocacy organization.

Polling Update: American Attitudes on Immigration Steady but Showing More Partisan Divides - article gathering many different studies from various organizations to show American's attitudes towards immigration levels, legal immigration, undocumented immigrants, family separation, and asylum.


NBC News

9 Tips for Talking to People You Disagree With – article on how to disagree with grace, suggesting that we use specific, personal stories rather than broad generalizations, and try to agree with a part of what the other person said before adding something in response.

Psychology Today

11 Tips for Talking to Someone You Disagree With – article with strategies on how to engage with people of different views, including telling people that they matter before starting the conversation, showing that you see the person beneath his or her opinions, and sharing your sources.

Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) - a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that conducts independent research.

A Nation of Immigrants? Diverging Perceptions of Immigrants Increasingly Marking Partisan Divides - a very extensive eight-part study about where Americans stand on different immigration issues depending on political party, race, age, education, gender, and more.

In Trump Era, Increasing Polarization on Immigration, but Common Ground Remains for Path to Citizenship, Opposing Family Separation – article identifies bipartisan support for providing a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants and opposing family separations at the border. The border wall, Muslim travel ban, and sanctuary cities remain some of the most contested issues.

TED Talks
How to Use Moral Reframing to Persuade Conservatives to Support Immigration—To make a convincing argument, Robb Willer, a Stanford University professor, suggests trying to give up your own ideas about why an issue is important and instead appeal to the values of the person you are talking to. The Atlantic article The Simple Psychological Trick to Political Persuasion further discusses how conservatives are more likely to support immigration if arguments are “morally reframed” to appeal to their values like patriotism, individual freedom, and loyalty.

4 Tips for Talking to People You Disagree With - Megan Phelps-Roger, who left the Westboro Baptist Church after strangers on Twitter changed her mind, gives tips on how to have effective conversations. She suggests to not assume bad intent, ask questions to make the other side feel heard, stay calm during the conversation, and make arguments instead of conclusive statements about our beliefs.

Welcoming America—a nonprofit organization that works with local communities to create a welcoming environment for immigrants.

Change is Hard—article on the anxieties Americans have about demographic change, and what individuals and organizations can do to address negative perceptions about immigrants.

Engaging Local Leaders to Foster Welcoming Communities—article identifying key local leaders and how they can advance inclusion in their communities.