

# Depolarizing the American Mind

## *How America Can Grow Beyond Its Currently Polarized Politics*

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Political gridlock in Washington is one of the most troubling problems faced by America today. The polarized state of our democracy has been called a “wicked problem” because there are multiple causes but no clear solutions. The costs of polarization, however, are easy to recognize. As a result of this logjam in the legislature action on other pressing problems is stalled. Important issues such as income inequality, climate change, budget deficits, campaign finance reform, immigration reform, and tax reform all remain unaddressed.

The problem of political polarization is now being analyzed by some of America's best minds and a variety of proposals to reduce the gridlock have begun circulating in the marketplace of ideas. Some proposals call for a revitalization of the political center through the formation of a third party that represents independent voters.<sup>1</sup> Others recommend action at the state level that employs ballot referendums to disempower partisan control over primaries and congressional redistricting.<sup>2</sup> Still others argue that polarization results from the corrupting influence of money in politics, which causes legislators to answer more to special interest groups and large campaign contributors than to voters who favor bipartisan compromise. However, as Harvard professor Jill Lepore points out in a recent article in *The New Yorker* magazine, “if polarization happens first among the electorate, and only later in Congress, then voters are driving it, in which case it is ‘representation.’”<sup>3</sup>

Here at the Institute for Cultural Evolution (“ICE”) we are in favor of many of the proposals that have been advanced by others, but our focus is on the cultural roots of the problem. This paper accordingly articulates an approach that can address the ideational divide that exists within the electorate itself, which is ultimately producing the polarized “representation” that Lepore identifies.

## CENTRAL FOCUS OF THIS PAPER

Although the “wicked problem” of our polarized, dysfunctional democracy requires remediation on many levels, our proposed contribution to a solution involves *depolarizing the American mind*. This entails helping voters think beyond the “thesis and antithesis” of contemporary politics by recognizing a potential future “synthesis” which is latent within the currently gridlocked liberal-conservative polarity of the present. Our proposed synthesis, however, can be clearly distinguished from a centrist position in the way it anticipates a “New Left” and a “New Right” of the future—positions that are now beginning to emerge within the Millennial generation. We suggest that these future Left and Right positions will increasingly exert a pull over current liberal and conservative positions, ultimately providing opportunities for new synthetic agendas and proposals to emerge that are more integrative and less reflective of the polarized status quo.

## OVERVIEW OF THIS PAPER

First we examine the historical causes of polarization and conclude that, while much of it has been caused by the Republican party’s move toward the right, the responsibility for overcoming the gridlock rests mainly with progressives and liberals. We then consider principles for working with “existential oppositions” such as the liberal-conservative polarity. These principles indicate that each side of this relatively permanent polarity needs the other for its own further and fuller development. Each side can accordingly improve and strengthen its own position by *increasing the quantity and quality of what it is able to value*.

We argue that ameliorating polarization requires cultural evolution, which involves a new form of synthesis rather than an old form of centrism. Indeed, from an evolutionary perspective, centrism is not only unfeasible, it is also regressive. This leads to the presentation of our proposed *synthesis platform*, which describes positions on specific issues that integrate the values of Left and Right. The synthesis platform proposal also includes a *method* for enlarging the set of values that American voters can hold. As we hope to show, as Americans come to better appreciate and integrate the foundational values of their political opponents into their own positions, new forms of political agreement will inevitably emerge. Fostering this kind of cultural emergence is more like gardening than engineering, which means working to create the necessary conditions that will allow for a new form of life to sprout up.

**Our proposed  
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## WHAT IS CAUSING THE POLARIZATION?

While our gridlocked government may be partially “representative” of our polarized culture, there are few who are happy about the situation. And it seems like the default assumption, and the position often repeated in the mainstream media, is that both sides are responsible, which leads to the conclusion that the appropriate remedy is for politicians to simply meet in the middle and compromise for the greater good.

Both parties are not, however, equally responsible. Political scientists attribute much of the current polarization to the Republican party's shift to the right over the past twenty years, even while Democrats have remained in relatively the same center-left position they have occupied since the Clinton administration. Yet even though the Democratic party overall has not moved substantially to the left, many Democratic donors and activists have nevertheless responded to Republicans with their own version of a combative tit-for-tat strategy that has further institutionalized the polarization. Moreover, despite polls indicating that most Americans favor bipartisan cooperation, since Newt Gingrich's term as Speaker of the House in the 1990s, many Republicans have pursued a strategy apparently designed to actually create and maintain polarization. For some, this strategy is justified by the conclusion that a polarized system works in favor of those who seek to reduce government effectiveness and maintain the status quo.

Arguing that conservatives have a covert interest in maintaining polarization, a recent white paper by political scientists Matthew Nisbet and Dietram Scheufele concludes that the responsibility to overcome the current climate of polarization rests primarily with liberals. “If liberals respond to the provocations of the Right with rigidity, vitriol, outrage, and a growing unwillingness to compromise, they only strengthen the hand of their opponents, contribute to the gridlock of our political institutions, provide Republicans with an easy justification for obstruction, and ultimately make the unthinkable—the dismantling of the postwar welfare state—thinkable. Conservatives, in this sense, are playing a long game, happy to starve the beast and delighted by dysfunction, even when they control the government. For this reason, as liberals unwittingly conspire to turn American politics into a zero-sum game, conservatives win even when they lose.”<sup>4</sup>

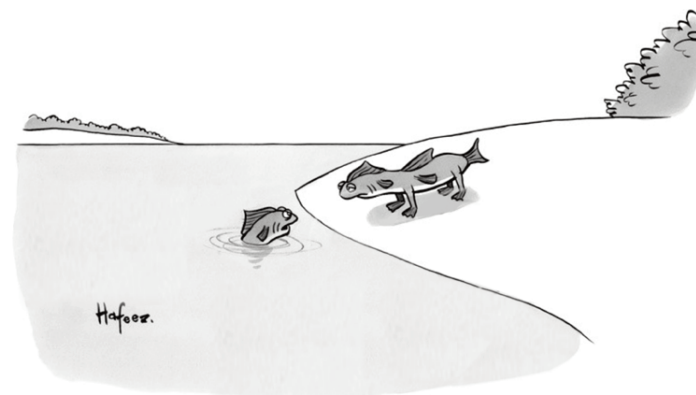
Yet even if this argument is rejected and one concludes that both sides are equally responsible and both sides thus need to work to reduce the polarization, we think liberals and progressives are primarily responsible in another way. While it may be true that the Democratic party has maintained the same center-left position it has occupied since the 1990s, progressive culture has developed a great deal in the last four decades, and we argue it is the perceived threats posed by these cultural developments that have pushed many Republicans to the right, or otherwise entrenched their positions.

Indeed, the emergence of these new forms of progressive culture can be traced to the 1960s and 1970s when America's “liberal consensus” became destabilized by the rise of a distinct countercultural worldview, which ICE identifies by the term “postmodernism” (which refers to America's progressive cultural demographic overall and not to the more narrow meaning of deconstructive critical academia). This progressive postmodern worldview burst onto the political scene with all the promise and excesses

characteristic of new movements. As millions began to identify with the values of this worldview, it changed the political dynamics of the country permanently.

Initially, it created a series of progressive passions, many of which turned into policy—environmentalism and the EPA, the peace movement, the anti-nuclear movement, the consumer protection movement—but over time, it also created its own backlash. By the 1980s, the Democratic party had become overly identified with postmodern extremes and weakened by the internal struggle between its liberal traditions and the influx and energy of millions of Boomers operating within the context of this new postmodern progressivism. While the Democrats struggled to resolve these internal tensions, the conservative movement rallied, leading Reagan into office on the backs of many crossover “Reagan Democrats,” frustrated with the Democrats' embrace of countercultural positions out of step with the majority of the country.

Then in the Clinton Era, the Democrats began to move back toward the center, upsetting the more progressive postmodern elements of the electorate, but achieving more success in Presidential politics. As the Democrats moved toward the center, the Republicans engaged in a battle for their own party—stay centrist or move right? In the internal war the Republicans waged in the 1990s and 2000s, conservative political, economic, and social issues won the day, moderates were slowly purged, practical governance was de-emphasized, economic positions reflected a more laissez-faire approach, and the culture wars heated up. Today, as we approach the election of 2014, there is some hope for a new spirit of responsible governance, but encouraging and facilitating that is going to take a lot of work. However, attempts to return to a healthy centrism will not work when so many within our country's electorate now hold worldviews that are far from that once well-populated center. Compromise has thus become ever more difficult, resulting in an increasingly dysfunctional political system, which can only be understood through an increasingly sophisticated cultural analysis.



*"I don't know who you are anymore."*

Responding to this challenge, our cultural analysis begins with the recognition that deep-seated polarities such as “liberal and conservative” or “progressive and libertarian” are naturally occurring forms of *interdependent* opposition that continue to reappear in new guise as societies change and grow. These contrasting or opposing categories have been identified by social scientists through a variety of labels such as “individual and community” or “agency and communion.” But regardless of how it is

labeled, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that there will always be a permanent polarity between those whose primary focus is on the rights and freedoms of the individual and those who are most concerned about the needs of the larger community.

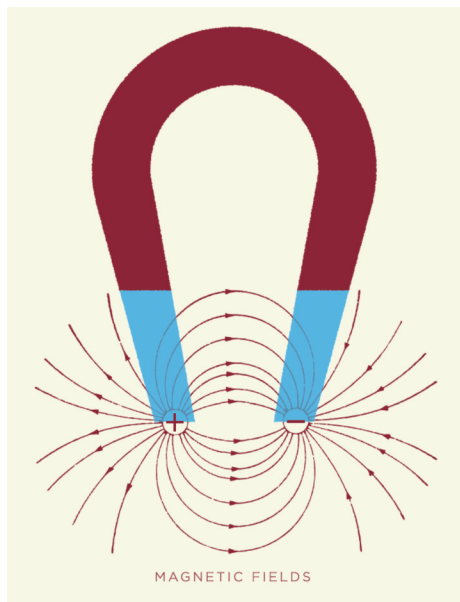
However, once we see how some form of this polarity is a permanent feature of our body politic, this instructs us as to how we can evolve our way out of the current state of gridlock. Ironically, recognizing that our democracy will always be shaped by some version of this polarity is actually a reason for optimism. Once we understand that this polarity is an existential feature of practically all forms of evolutionary development, this shows us how we can use this built-in structural opposition to advance toward a new era of greater cooperation and relative consensus.

## PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING WITH EXISTENTIAL POLARITIES

While polarities are everywhere, it is important to distinguish between two essential kinds. The first kind of polarity is straightforwardly “good and bad.” For example, prosperity is good and poverty is bad; poverty is a problem we need to solve. Unlike this first kind of positive-negative polarity, however, the second basic kind of polarity is positive-positive, wherein both sides of the opposition are worthy of preservation and respect, such as in the polarity of “masculine and feminine.” Positive-positive polarities represent partially opposing yet interdependent principles or positions that mutually enact one another by both contradicting and complementing their opposing pole. For example, in the positive-positive polarity of “individual and community,” opposing interests require continuous rebalancing or reconciling as conditions develop over time.

A common mistake is to approach an existential polarity as a problem to be solved rather than as a developmental system to be managed. For instance, progressives often view the polarity of

“competition and cooperation” as a straightforward problem that requires competition to be lessened and cooperation to be increased. And while many problematic situations can indeed be improved through greater cooperation, the attempt to eliminate all competitive tension usually results in the stifling of individual initiative and the drive for comparative excellence. According to polarity management consultant Barry Johnson, “Polarities to manage are sets of opposites which can’t function well independently. Because the two sides of a polarity are interdependent, you cannot choose one as a ‘solution’ and neglect the other. The objective ... is to get the best of both opposites while avoiding the limits of each.”<sup>25</sup>



*Permanent polarities such as “liberal and conservative” continue to reappear in new guise as societies grow*

This “evolutionary” understanding of positive-positive existential polarities serves as the guiding principle of ICE’s proposal for ameliorating political polarization in America. We start by acknowledging that the polarity of liberal and conservative is essentially a positive-positive

form of opposition wherein the best of both sides are worthy of preservation. And again, human history bears out that some form of this polarity continues to reappear in almost every human political context. These opposing viewpoints may even be genetically based and thus hardwired into our brains.<sup>6</sup> While there are certainly positive-negative versions of the liberal and conservative polarity, wherein one side is in bad faith or simply wrong, overcoming our Nation's polarized condition requires that each side sees more of the virtue of the other. That is, in the long run both sides need each other and must thus function somewhat interdependently.

Yet while the liberal-conservative polarity is relatively permanent and existential, it does change and evolve, reappearing in new form as conditions change. For example, sometimes the liberals of one era become the conservatives of the next, as seen in the history of the Republican party itself, which once represented the liberal or progressive pole in the 19th Century. So even though the contemporary American manifestation of this liberal-conservative polarity appears to be stuck, preventing any progress whatsoever, history teaches that it will eventually and inevitably continue to reappear in the future in a reconfigured but nevertheless recognizable form.

Our approach accordingly seeks to anticipate the *future state* of this existential political opposition by describing the form that the “New Left” and “New Right” will likely take in the decades ahead. We then use these “more evolved” political positions to fashion a *synthesis platform* that can be used in the present to reduce the hardened state of opposition that has made our democracy dysfunctional. Our synthesis platform proposal does not entail establishing a new political party, nor are we proposing a centrist position that seeks to solve the problem simply through bipartisan compromise. Rather, our proposal frames a higher-level form of agreement that invites evolution beyond the thesis and antithesis of our present state of polarization into a synthesis that defines some new, albeit inevitably temporary, common ground.

The higher-level synthesis we propose can be distinguished from the familiar centrist approach in that we are not attempting to “split the difference” between the current positions of the Democratic and Republican parties. As discussed below, we envision future left-wing positions that better appreciate the need for limited government and the preservation of market freedoms, and future right-wing positions that better acknowledge the imperative for social justice and environmentally sustainable economic growth. Synthetic positions such as these are not being adequately considered within mainstream political discourse, so our plan is to describe the contours of these anticipated future positions and help give them the visibility required to garner agreement from a politically significant segment of the American electorate.

## THE SYNTHESIS PLATFORM

The synthesis platform is an approach to contemporary political issues that articulates a “more evolved Left” position and a “more evolved Right” position for each major issue it addresses. Rather than

**The polarity of ‘liberal and conservative’ is essentially positive-positive, wherein the best of both sides are worthy of preservation**



proposing a single solution on any given issue, the platform presents sets of paired positions. Within these paired position sets, each side retains an essentially liberal or essentially conservative orientation. However, these “synthetic positions” are less polarized than current Democratic or Republican stances because they better integrate the wisdom of the other side.

The synthesis platform attempts to demonstrate how each political pole can better use and include the essential truths and values of the pole that opposes it. The platform also includes a methodological approach that can help depolarize the thinking of Americans around these critical issues. This approach starts by helping voters overcome the view that the liberal-conservative polarity is fundamentally positive-negative, with the “negative side” seen as whichever pole one opposes. Accordingly, we argue that the permanent polarity we are labeling liberal-conservative is fundamentally positive-positive—that the best aspects of both sides need each other and are worthy of preservation. From our perspective, this permanent polarity is best understood as a *system of development* that can be managed to facilitate the emergence of more inclusive and mature forms of culture and politics.

**This permanent  
polarity is a system  
of development  
that can lead to  
further growth**

We envision this synthesis proposal as a “platform” rather than a “party” because it seeks to influence both Democrats and Republicans by suggesting what forward movement means for each side. The overall goal of the platform is to persuade American voters to take a less polarized perspective on the issues of the day. In other words, because much of the polarization resides within the opinions of the electorate itself, reducing the hostility of both sides toward each other is crucial for reducing gridlock.

Therefore, while the synthesis platform’s paired position sets will take stands on certain contemporary issues to demonstrate the application of this approach, the platform’s primary focus is on reducing the cultural distrust that lies at the heart of the problem. Thus, while some positions will be definitive, others will be more open-ended, with the aim of fostering a less polarized cultural context that can lead to future working agreements. The initial issues addressed by the platform, and discussed further below, include: income inequality, military budgets, crony capitalism, climate change, and Federal spending. Further position sets will be added as the platform evolves.

### **The Elephant in the Room: Postmodern Rejectionism**

While there has always been some version of opposing liberal and conservative positions within American political discourse, our contemporary conditions represent the most severe polarization since the Civil War. And as first discussed above, much of the current acrimony has resulted from the emergence of the countercultural, progressive postmodern worldview over the past fifty years. Although postmodernism has contributed much to American culture, such as a deep concern for the environment and a focus on social and economic justice, postmodernism is also highly polarizing.

When attempting to understand America’s contemporary political milieu it is important to



*America has not been this polarized since the Civil War*

distinguish between progressive postmodernists and classic liberals. While mainstream liberal modernists and progressive postmodernists are both left-of-center politically, and while both groups agree on many positions, at the cultural level there is a significant difference between these two worldviews. Liberal modernists, as exemplified by the conventional positions of the Democratic National Committee, usually seek to work within the system to create a fairer and more compassionate society. By contrast, progressive postmodernists are more contemptuous of the establishment, often questioning the morality and legitimacy of American society outright. While postmodernists only represent about 20% of the electorate,<sup>7</sup> their anti-modernism and reflexive rejectionism have inflamed both social and fiscal conservatives, contributing to the severe polarization we are now experiencing.

From an evolutionary perspective, however, postmodernism has the potential to be the most evolved form of culture that has yet to appear. In many respects, its values and concerns have already transformed culture. Who would have imagined fifty years ago that ecological values and sustainability issues could work themselves so deeply into the American economic system, or that social justice issues like gay rights (and civil rights and women's rights) could rapidly become mainstream. Indeed, despite its immaturities, this worldview's values point toward part of the necessary future course of our ethical and cultural development. Unlike centrist proposals, which seek to "cut off the extremes," the synthesis platform recognizes the importance of postmodernism's role as the most progressive segment of American culture. While postmodernism is too countercultural to provide effective leadership for the nation as a whole, it cannot be easily ignored or dispensed with. In short, "progressives" have played an indispensable role in helping our society make progress.

Yet while postmodern perspectives may be highly evolved in certain respects, ironically, it is postmodernism's current polarizing stance of staunch antithesis to the mainstream that is effectively preventing the further evolution of American society overall. Because postmodern positions tend to threaten the very identity of many modernist and traditionalist Americans, progressive demands for change often end up transforming important national policy issues into "identity issues." This can be



seen in the case of climate change. Studies show that one's position on climate change can now be reliably predicted by one's party affiliation.<sup>8</sup> Even the use of the word "environmentalism" has now become highly polarizing. And once a political position is seen as threatening one's very identity, meaningful dialogue and compromise become impossible.

### **The New Left: Optimistic Postmodernists**

The relatively small size of the postmodern segment of the electorate means that their impact at the ballot box is not decisive. But their influence on American culture far exceeds their numbers. Therefore, any proposed solutions to polarization that target the cultural dimension of the problem, seeking more sustainable longer-term solutions, must reckon with both the role postmodernists have played in causing polarization as well as the indispensable role they must play in helping us grow out of the problem.

To some extent, the cultural tension that postmodernists exert will be with us for a long time. Their anti-modernism is simply part of their value system. But it can be moderated. Its values and political discourse can become more inclusive and mature. Indeed, while many postmodernists will undoubtedly continue to reject the mainstream culture of modernism, postmodern political positions can be evolved or otherwise improved by helping postmodernists better appreciate how healthy forms of modernism provide an indispensable foundation for postmodern culture as a whole. An important goal of the synthesis platform is thus to persuade significant numbers of postmodernists to move off of their current stance of antithesis to a more synthetic stance that is more positive and "optimistic" about America's future and its ongoing influence in the world.

The promotion of greater optimism and acceptance within postmodern culture is needed to counteract the highly polarizing militant tone of its discourse, which often assigns malicious motivations to its cultural opponents. For example, the well-meaning but highly polarizing Occupy Wall Street movement essentially rejects the legitimacy of the American establishment and seeks to overturn America's capitalist, market-oriented foundations. And this staunch rejectionism has become an engrained feature of postmodern discourse, which exacerbates polarization and contributes to the relative political impotency of much of the progressive agenda.

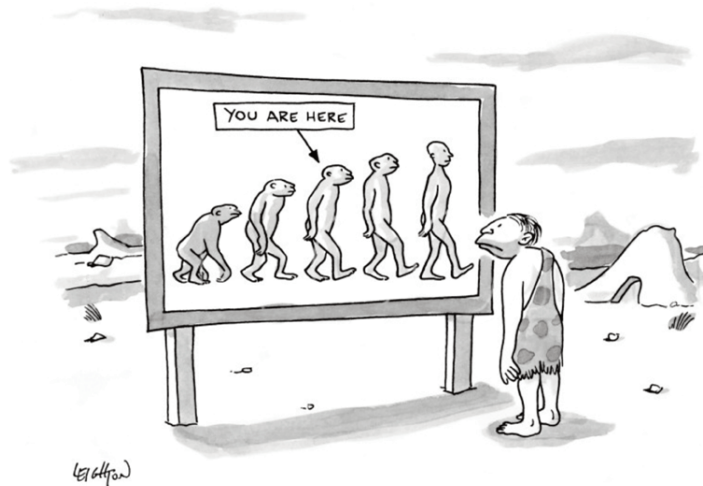
Here we return to the conclusion argued for above, that the Left is primarily responsible for overcoming our current polarization because they are most invested in progress and because it is their cultural evolution that destabilized America's former liberal consensus of the 1960s. So no matter how much blame for the problem we may assign to right-wing groups such as the Tea Party, the job of reducing our democracy's stagnation belongs to the progressive side of the divide. The synthesis platform accordingly seeks to help progressives "be the change" themselves by becoming more accepting of other worldviews and thus less polarizing in their demands.

The key to depolarizing postmodernism involves the articulation of a less polarized political future

**The Left is primarily responsible for overcoming our current state of polarization**

which includes both postmodernist and modernist values and concerns, but which does not represent a “regression” toward the ever-rightward moving “center.” In other words, America needs a more inclusive and evolved Left—the Left of the future (or the “New” New Left)—that will be less hostile to mainstream modernism and traditionalism, recognizing that these earlier worldviews have a foundational and ongoing role to play in making the world a better place.

The synthesis platform accordingly articulates a more positive and optimistic “future political stance” for postmodern progressives, and shows how such a stance can be applied to solve difficult issues in the present. By helping progressive politics move from a position of antithesis, which rejects many of the values of the rest of American society, to a more synthetic position that can better value what we have achieved, we hope to contribute to the emergence of progressive political positions that are able to accomplish many of their laudable political goals.



### The New Right: Progressive Libertarians

While we argue that responsibility for ameliorating polarization rests primarily with the Left (which includes both liberals and progressives), any authentic synthesis must involve movement on the Right as well. The principles of dialectical development (or methods for managing polarities) make clear that to constitute an effective synthesis our proposed political position sets must include the best of both the thesis and the antithesis, while also preserving some of the tension that comes from their existential differences.

As we anticipate both the Right and Left of the future, insights can be found by examining the contemporary opinions of young adults. Members of the “Millennial generation” (18- to 33-year-olds) are not burdened by the existential conflicts of the Baby Boom generation. So many in this demographic segment of the electorate already hold, in nascent form, the anticipated future positions we are attempting to describe. For example, many left-leaning young adults are less countercultural than their Baby Boomer counterparts. While they are passionate about the environment and social justice issues, they are also more sympathetic toward business and are enthusiastic about technological progress.

Similarly, while many right-leaning Millennials are in favor of small government and the preservation of free markets, they also tend to be more progressive on social issues than their right-wing parents.

While the label “libertarian” includes a wide spectrum of political positions, we think the phrase “progressive libertarian” is appropriate to describe the emerging position of the New Right. Those who adopt this political stance will not be doctrinaire followers of Ayn Rand. Rather, they will hold the values of individual liberty, economic progress, and limited government, while at the same time integrating the values of environmental sustainability and tolerant diversity into their positions. Indeed, the value of limiting the size and reach of the Federal government is deeply rooted in American history, as exemplified by the old American truism: “The government that governs least governs best.”

Examples of “progressive libertarianism” in action can be found in the movement for *Conscious Capitalism*, as described in the book by the same title by ICE partner John Mackey, co-founder and CEO of Whole Foods Markets.<sup>9</sup> The Conscious Capitalism movement includes both progressive libertarians and optimistic postmodernists, but within this sub-culture all parties agree that America’s free market system creates tremendous value, and that we can continue to improve this system in a way that retains its strengths while reducing its negative externalities.

**“The government  
that governs least  
governs best”**

Obviously, a complete and detailed description of both the New Right and the New Left could fill an entire book and is thus beyond the scope of this paper. Moreover, like all forms of evolutionary emergence there are aspects of these future political and cultural positions that cannot be predicted or smoothly conceptualized in the present. But even though it would be a mistake to try to define these positions in a comprehensive or static way, working to anticipate and imagine how politics will evolve in the future provides guidance for the problems we face today.

### **Emerging and Anticipated Synthetic Positions**

The purpose of the synthesis platform is not to paper over or ignore distinctions and differences that will no doubt continue to be part of our democracy well into the future. Our proposal for a higher-level synthesis is based on the premise that, even in the midst of ongoing disagreements, new opportunities to reach beyond the current state of paralysis can be found through the partial integration of opposing values. Some of these synthetic positions can already be seen arising even amidst the rancor of our current political culture. Some are harder to yet discern. So the following list of focus issues is hardly exhaustive. Indeed, the synthesis platform can go a certain distance in defining concrete policy stances on some issues, but it can’t frontload every conceivable position, as truly synthetic positions must be crafted in dialog over time. Our hope is that by outlining the way in which the New Left and the New Right could change the political landscape of the American electorate over the next decade, we can identify unseen opportunities for agreement, and encourage forward movement in areas where effective political alliances still seem, as yet, a more distant dream.

### *A) Income Inequality*

Using the issue of increasing income inequality as an initial example, a more evolved right-wing position would better acknowledge that long-term economic growth is being undermined by the decline of America's middleclass. This conclusion then points to a concrete policy position that would support capital gains and dividends being taxed as ordinary income to reduce structural inequalities. However, this revision of the tax structure could be designed to be revenue-neutral, thereby lowering the overall tax rate for everyone while collecting the same amount of taxes as before.

Additionally, a more evolved right-wing position, while being mindful of the failures of government programs to alleviate poverty, would nevertheless be more pro-active in using market-based initiatives to address persistent poverty. This could start with a willingness to be more of a pragmatic ally in the efforts to transform structural poverty into economic mobility.

Similarly, a more evolved left-wing position on this same issue would recognize that the appropriate goal should be equality of opportunity rather than equality of income, and that the Federal government should play as minimal a role as possible in redistributing wealth. The resulting policy position would therefore call for governmental assistance programs to focus primarily on developing the earning capacity of those they seek to help. This "development policy" would emphasize training in entrepreneurial skills to help workers consider a wider set of opportunities beyond conventional job seeking. It would also include the provision of micro loans and seed capital to help start small businesses.

### *B) Military Budgets*

As Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel's recent budget has demonstrated, military budgets are going down. After a decade of war, and bills to pay at home, that is probably an inevitable truth. The mainstream Left and Right for many years largely agreed on strong, expanded military budgets from Bush to Clinton to Bush to Obama. And the "war on terror" only exacerbated and extended that basic trend. But that time is ending. There is an emerging consensus in both the New Left and New Right that the global need for a world-spanning leviathan military is waning. And the need to focus a greater bulk of our resources closer to home is only becoming more acute.

The progressive Left has long been suspicious, if not outright hostile, toward American military activities overseas. Often this has been part of a reflexive hostility to perceived "American imperialism" and a conviction that America's foreign policy is too self-serving, arrogant, over-reaching, and counter-productive. A more evolved New Left position would better recognize the critical, stabilizing role that American military power does still play in an often-unstable and dangerous geopolitical world. That would lead to greater support for the continuing modernization of our military, even amidst budget reductions, and greater funding for the care of warriors who have fought the last decades of battles.

While right-wing politics have traditionally supported a strong and growing military, that position is under some pressure today. The isolationist wing of the Republican Party has always questioned

America's overseas engagements, and we expect the New Right to express similar hesitancy about America's military adventures. Indeed, a more evolved right-leaning position would take into account the blowback that a long-term open-ended war on terror can too easily foster, turning would-be friends into future enemies. It would more deeply recognize that the powerful desire for independence and autonomy in so many developing countries is perhaps greater today than it was in the decades past, and the willingness to tolerate even limited foreign intrusion is vastly diminished. These new truths, along with sober economic and budget analysis, lead such a more evolved position to support smart budgetary reductions on the military. This New Right position would also emphasize the responsibility of our allies to pay their way in troops and in dollars when it comes to providing critical geopolitical security.

### *C) Crony Capitalism*

The term "crony capitalism" has come to represent a whole host of questionable business practices that favor government insiders. These practices allow certain businesses and individuals to operate with a kind of shield, legal or otherwise, from the disciplining power of authentic competition in a free market. The current progressive Left is quick to point out these abuses, but is then just as quick to turn their ire on the corporate sector in general, which leads them to seek greater federal regulation and oversight. Crony capitalism fans the flames of their anti-corporate, anti-capitalist rhetoric. However, a more evolved New Left position would recognize that sometimes the answer is not more regulation but less, and that sometimes the best governmental approach to such concerns is to remove as much governmental involvement as necessary from the equation. A less "anti-corporate" approach to crony capitalism could actually lead to greater support for all kinds of anti-corruption, anti-cronyism policies, but without seeking to impose an undue or punitive regulatory burden on business.

The current Right seeks freedom from interference by the government in our free enterprise system. But too often that legitimate and important concern has morphed into an ideology of sorts, with laissez faire approaches to regulation being the only ones sanctioned no matter what the situation. A more evolved New Right approach would recognize that every modern free market economic system is a complex mix of industries and sectors which can misbehave for a multitude of reasons, and a laissez faire one-size-fits-all approach can end up actually discouraging appropriate market forces from winning the day. Such a New Right position on crony capitalism could also lead to a greater willingness to consider concrete action on campaign finance reform, as well a greater cooperation in updating and streamlining regulatory bodies (as opposed to either expanding them or eliminating them), thereby investing them with market-appropriate levels of power and oversight.

### *D) Climate Change*

With respect to the crucial issue of climate change, both the New Left and the New Right positions will take this problem very seriously. The synthesis platform's more evolved right-wing position would start by affirming that care for the environment can be a strong value for conservatives and is not "owned by the Left." As free-market energy advocate Josiah Neeley writes, "Conservatives and libertarians should not be afraid to stake out the moral high ground on environmental issues, and to show how their principles can produce a positive vision that is both environmentally friendly and



authentically free market.”<sup>10</sup> Rather than focusing on unenforceable international treaties, the New Right position on climate change will advocate strongly for positive economic incentives to harness the innovation and efficiency of the private sector to develop new forms of energy technology, and to improve existing renewable energy sources. This New Right position may even advocate for redirecting subsidies currently received by oil companies to firms that are more capable of developing a new sustainable energy industry.

The synthesis platform’s more evolved left-wing position on climate change would carefully distinguish itself from those on the current Left who seek to use global warming as a weapon against capitalism. The New Left position would undermine current conservative opposition to action on climate change by extending its concern for the environment to include the “fragile ecology of markets.” Further, the New Left would work harder to engage the creative power of business and acknowledge that the gradual transition to sustainable forms of energy can be accomplished more readily by the private sector than by the Federal government. It would also advocate for strategies that do not result in significantly higher energy costs or place undue economic burdens on developing nations. In terms of policy, this position would favor significant investment by public and private partnerships for research and development of new sustainable technologies that will actually produce economic growth rather than constrain it.

ICE’s analysis of the politics of the climate change debate, together with its recommendations for cultural evolution around this issue, are outlined in some detail in ICE’s 2012 *Campaign for Climate Change Amelioration* paper found here: [www.culturalevolution.org/campaign-issues/climate-change](http://www.culturalevolution.org/campaign-issues/climate-change).

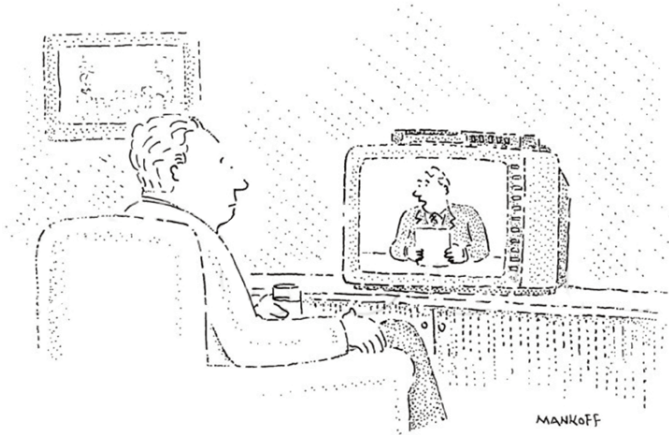
### *E) Federal Spending and Budget Deficits*

Regarding the issue of Federal spending and budget deficits, a more evolved New Left position would better acknowledge that the Federal government’s current levels of spending are unsustainable and potentially disastrous for America’s long-term economic and social interests. Although George W. Bush is primarily responsible for the current budget deficit, it is unrealistic to expect that we can simply grow our way out of it. While Bill Clinton did overcome Ronald Reagan’s budget deficit through a decade of robust economic growth and relative peace internationally, given the economic challenges we face in this century, we cannot rely on that happening again. While the New Left will be loathe to cut entitlements, it must nevertheless develop its own recommendations for the reduction of Federal spending. As a matter of policy, the New Left could negotiate cuts in certain government programs, such as agricultural subsidies and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, that could be matched with corresponding cuts in the U.S. military budget. The wonky details of such a policy are beyond the scope of this paper, but just as conservatives need to better “own” the issue of climate change, progressives need to take more responsibility for making Federal spending sustainable.

A more evolved New Right position on Federal spending and budget deficits would be less stubborn about cuts in the military budget. As part of this more flexible position, the dangers of America being perceived as weak by other nations could be offset by new strategic stances in foreign policy that preserve American hegemony while getting other wealthy nations to help foot the bill for

protecting the global economy. Further, a more evolved right-wing stance would acknowledge the need for a more functional health care system in America, and would thus come to the table with its own affordable health care legislation, rather than simply trying to abolish Obama care.

As these New Right and New Left positions emerge, synthetic consensus on Federal spending may be possible in the context of tax reform, which is an issue that will be added to the synthesis platform as it develops.



*“In Washington today, the sun rose over Capitol Hill and received broad bipartisan support.”*

These brief examples only begin to illustrate the approach of the synthesis platform. And while the specific positions described above may at first seem less than transformational in themselves, as the synthesis platform’s paired New Left and New Right positions evolve and become more visible within the culture, the platform’s potential to produce forward movement will become more apparent.

## **A SYNTHETIC METHOD FOR POLITICAL EVOLUTION**

If it is true that a significant part of America’s political polarization is actually *representative* of our highly polarized culture, then the remedy must inevitably involve cultural change. However, the prospect of changing culture—changing people’s values—is usually seen as either too unrealistic or too long-term a project to garner much attention from commentators and experts on political polarization. This is largely due to the fact that methods for evolving culture and changing values are under-theorized in the social sciences. So the experts usually have no idea about how to go about it, which results in much of the discussion in this area being limited to ideas from evolutionary psychology and behavior modification theory.

While we acknowledge that the “psychology of persuasion” can be useful in the project of cultural change, our focus goes deeper. In addition to charting the broad contours of the New Left and the New Right, and in addition to describing synthetic issue position sets, the synthesis platform also advances a new *method* for depolarizing the American mind. This new method seeks to evolve the electorate’s “cultural center of gravity,” not by asking people to give up the values they hold dear, but rather by

persuading them to add new values to their existing set of values. This method is derived from the evolutionary principles for working with polarities (discussed above), which show how the fundamental goals of both poles can be achieved most effectively by better integrating and including the values of their opposing pole. The details of this synthetic method are discussed below. But first we address potential objections to this approach.

### Gardening for Synthetic Emergence

Some may object to the very idea of changing people's values, arguing that this amounts to social engineering, which most people will reject as disrespectful or manipulative. Our approach, however, is better compared to gardening than engineering. That is, like all forms of evolution, cultural evolution unfolds through *emergence* whereby something *more* arises from something *less*. And the best way to foster emergence is to approach it like gardening, which means working to create the necessary conditions that will allow for a new form of life to sprout up.

As described above, America's current state of polarization was originally brought about by a previous cultural emergence—the emergence of postmodernism—and therefore further emergence will be required to grow our way out of the contemporary stagnation. And while cultural emergence cannot be smoothly engineered, it *can* be fostered and nurtured.

Conceptualizing political polarization in terms of evolutionary emergence helps overcome the natural tendency to seek middle ground. While bipartisan compromise is certainly good where possible, events of the last decade make clear that centrism is a failed strategy. Despite the large number of voters who identify as “independents,” research shows that most independents reliably lean one way or another, which indicates that there is really no stable centrist position on most issues.<sup>11</sup> And from an evolutionary perspective, centrism is not only unfeasible, it is also regressive. So rather than trying to “glue the thesis and antithesis back together,” a more realistic approach involves applying the evolutionary principles for managing permanent polarities to foster the emergence of new synthetic agreements.

### Restoring Our “Political Health” Through Increased “Value Metabolism”

Again, a central principle for working with positive-positive existential polarities is that each pole needs the other for its own further and fuller development. If one pole dominates or vanquishes the other, pathology is the inevitable result. Applied to politics, this principle indicates that the most sound and politically effective conservative positions will be those that integrate legitimate liberal values while remaining true to conservative values. Liberal values can serve to improve conservative positions by challenging and moderating such positions in a way that makes them stronger. The same can be said about the role of conservative values in strengthening liberal positions. While the difference between the synthetic integration of opposing positions and mere difference-splitting compromise may at first be hard to appreciate or detect, we believe there is a significant difference between centrism and the goals of the synthesis platform.

This principle of polar interdependence is illustrated in the positive-positive polar relation between masculinity and femininity. Over the last fifty years or so our ideas of what it means to be a “real man” have grown to include being sensitive and even occasionally emotional. Likewise, our ideals of femininity have evolved to include strong and independent women. In short, the realization of mature masculinity and femininity both involve a partial integration of the qualities normally associated with the other. When done well, however, such integration does not involve a move toward androgyny. While there is nothing wrong with androgyny, it does represent a kind of centrist compromise. So rather than trying to split the difference between the poles, in this example the cultural ideals of masculine and feminine remain rooted in their existing gender differences even as each seeks to integrate the strengths of the other side. In this way, both sides can allow their contrasting differences to “true each other up.”

This principle of polar interdependence also applies to the value sets that underlie liberal and conservative poles. From this perspective the most mature conservative values will adequately account for the needs of the community, and the most mature liberal values will fully recognize the need to preserve individual freedom and autonomy. Effective integration, however, means going beyond simply acknowledging the abstract legitimacy of the opponent’s position. The program of depolarizing the American electorate must involve efforts to increase the degree to which each side can truly value and “own” at least some essential elements of the wisdom of the other side.

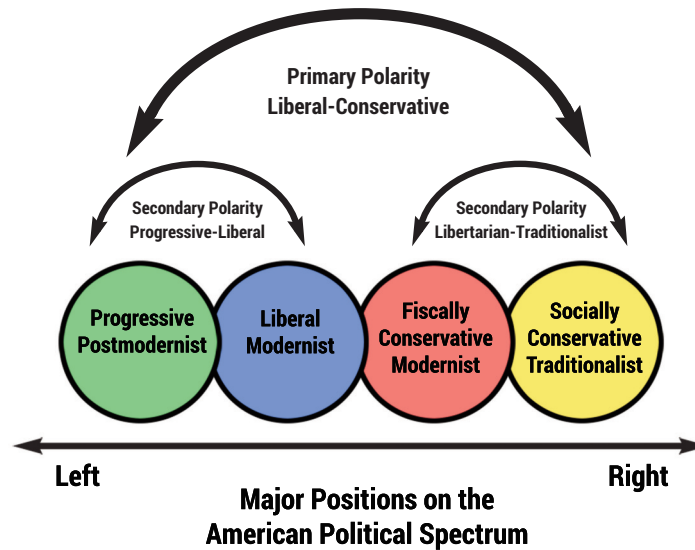
In our view, values can be understood as having a kind of psychic energy. The values we hold motivate us to act and guide us in decision making. Moreover, we use values to construct our identities and to define what we stand for. Therefore, one way to evolve the overall consciousness of the American electorate is to *increase the quantity and quality of what they are able to value*. In other words, if we can increase the “value metabolism” of the body politic so that both sides begin to better use some of their opponent’s foundational values to actually construct their identities, this will create the conditions in which a new form of cultural emergence may appear, including the new opportunities for synthetic agreement that would come with it.

### **The Polarization Test: Prescriptions for Depolarizing the American Mind**

Most knowledgeable commentators agree that the simple bipolar continuum of Left and Right no longer adequately captures the complexity of America’s political milieu. Our analysis accordingly recognizes how the existential polarity we are calling “liberal and conservative” expresses itself in multiple ways and on multiple levels within the overall electorate. Although there are numerous political camps, our model of the American body politic goes beyond the familiar yet outdated liberal-conservative conception, while retaining the necessary simplicity to be useful in understanding the electorate as a whole. This model recognizes the *four distinct political positions* that comprise America’s contemporary political landscape. These are, from the most right-wing to the most left-wing: 1) socially conservative traditionalists, 2) fiscally conservative or libertarian modernists, 3) liberal modernists, and

**This method  
persuades people  
to add new values  
to their existing  
set of values**

4) progressive postmodernists. (Each of these political positions are briefly described in the Appendix.) Notice, however, that the existential liberal-conservative polarity exists not only between the first two and the last two, but also between 1 and 2 and between 3 and 4, as shown in *figure 1*. This means that the synthesis platform must recognize and work with multiple versions of this existential polarity simultaneously.



*Figure 1. Liberal-conservative polarities among various positions in the electorate*

But no matter how many iterations of the liberal-conservative polarity we may find, the principles for effectively managing such polarities so as to achieve political progress remain the same. The synthesis platform's program for depolarizing the American mind thus involves using arguments and exercises that invite each side of every identifiable polarity to consider the usefulness and legitimacy of the opposing set of values that provide the positive polar counterpart to their own value sets.

As the synthesis platform becomes established it will employ a variety of strategies designed to achieve these integrative aims. But as a start, in addition to publicizing the idea of the synthesis platform through this paper and other spin-off media, the platform also invites value integration through a simple values survey. This "polarization test" locates those who take it within one of the four essential political positions described above. Then once one's position is "diagnosed," the polarization test offers a specifically tailored "prescription" designed to increase the value metabolism of that specific position, together with exercises designed to help strengthen these prescribed values in the mind of the subject.<sup>12</sup>

The idea is not to try to get people to move off their identity-providing political positions, but rather to improve and strengthen their existing positions by integrating the aspects of the opposing pole that complement and moderate their own values. Using the analogy of masculinity and femininity discussed above, this method does not seek to persuade men to become effeminate or women to become manly, but it does suggest how incorporating the qualities of the opposing pole can enhance the effectiveness, maturity, and authenticity of each side.



While some Americans may be hardened in their polarized positions or otherwise unwilling to consider “prescriptions” for better value integration, for many, demonstrating what a future synthesis may look like can lead to movement in this direction. With national elections now decided by very slim margins, even a small change in the “cultural center of gravity” of the American electorate could result in significant changes in the Federal government. Again, the definitions of each of the four essential political positions “diagnosed” by the polarization test are described in the Appendix to this paper. The Appendix also sets out the corresponding “prescriptions” for value integration that the test generates. Although we encourage readers of this paper to actually take the polarization test on-line on ICE’s website and do the exercises it suggests, the Appendix provides an overview of the underlying strategy of the test as a whole.

Learning gleaned from previous values surveys suggests that liberals and progressives will be more inclined than conservatives to take the test and consider how their positions may become more synthetic and less polarized. However, this anticipated lack of balance does not undermine the utility of this prescriptive test because the synthesis platform is focused primarily on evolving left-wing political positions. As we argued above, the primary responsibility to overcome polarization rests with the Left, so this is where the necessary depolarization in thinking and valuing must start. But as the Left evolves toward political positions that evince more integration of essential conservative values, these new positions will threaten conservative identities less and will thus lead to reduced polarization among many on the Right.

## **THE SYNTHESIS PLATFORM’S DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

As mentioned, this paper and the accompanying polarization test only mark the initial beginning of ICE’s campaign to ameliorate gridlock through the promotion of the synthesis platform. Obviously, overcoming this “wicked problem” will take a national movement, so we hope to soon combine our efforts with the work of other organizations who share our synthetic goals. Whether or not the synthesis platform will have the necessary appeal to spread organically by word-of-mouth has yet to be seen. But academic social movement theory has shown how every viable social or political movement depends on the work of critically thinking intellectual communities that serve to incubate the ideas that can eventually mobilize politically significant numbers of people.

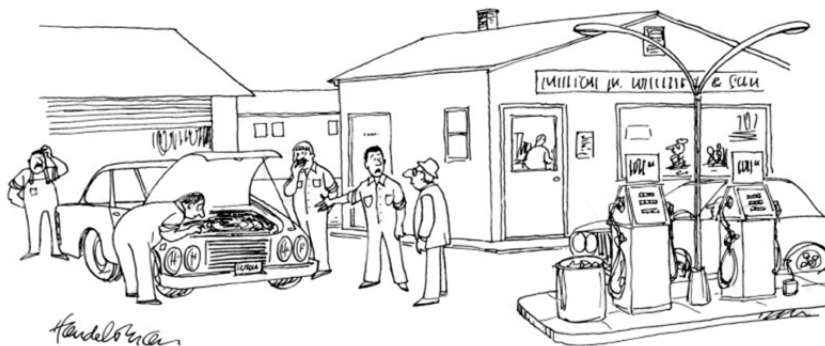
Beyond the modest prescriptions for value integration proposed by the polarization test, ICE’s larger campaign to foster the emergence of new synthetic positions within American politics will also employ other means to depolarize the American mind. These additional programs will include public presentations and videos, as well as intensive workshops designed to evolve people’s thinking about the causes and solutions of our contemporary political stagnation.

The synthesis platform’s larger mission also includes plans to develop a “caucus” of supporters who can help refine the platform’s positions and work to increase the visibility and influence of this emerging form of political activism. We recognize that some of ICE’s larger campaign goals are not easily quantified—the better functioning of our democracy, an increasing effectiveness in our political system to respond to the needs of the populace, a reduction in partisanship among legislators, the rise of

pundits who reject the politics of extreme polarization, and ultimately, a decrease in polarization among the electorate. At the same time, in furtherance of this campaign, ICE has also formulated the following measurable goals which can be used to objectively evaluate the progress and effectiveness of the synthesis platform project:

- 1) Secure mainstream media attention and visibility for ICE's synthesis platform and help seed “a national conversation” about a more synthetic form of politics. This goal will be measured by the number of blogs, articles, conference presentations, and related media which either reference ICE's synthesis platform directly, or otherwise show increasing awareness of this new type of proposed political approach.
- 2) Produce politically significant favorable movement in the reduction of political polarization in America, as measured by ongoing periodic polls on the issue conducted by the Pew Polls and the American National Election Studies organization.

Regarding our immediate next steps, in the summer of 2014 ICE will launch a crowd-funding campaign to raise \$50,000 for the further development of the synthesis platform campaign. Then in October 2014, in association with the Esalen Center for Theory and Research, ICE is co-sponsoring a *Conclave on Political Polarization*. This small invitation-only gathering of leading public figures, academics, pundits, and theorists of political and cultural polarization in America will work to further the thinking of the intellectual communities who are working on this problem. Although many positions will be represented at the Conclave, ICE will present the ideas behind the synthesis platform with the hope that this campaign will find support from the larger community of activists who are dedicated to making our democracy less dysfunctional.



*“We can’t come to an agreement about how to fix your car, Mr. Simons.  
Sometimes that’s the way things happen in a democracy.”*

In the time ahead ICE will also work to evolve the synthesis platform to include a fuller articulation of the New Right and New Left, as well as a more detailed description of the platform’s specific issue position sets. And if we are able to attract the support of other progressive think tanks and more established nonprofit organizations—if the synthesis platform has “legs”—it may well fulfill its goal of starting a more meaningful national conversation on the subject of America’s political future.

To learn more about the synthesis platform, to take the polarization test, or to join the growing caucus of synthesis platform supporters, please visit the ICE website at: [www.culturalevolution.org](http://www.culturalevolution.org)

## APPENDIX

### POLARIZATION TEST OVERVIEW

ICE's Political Polarization Test asks test-takers to choose their top 3 values from the list of 7 values shown below, ranking their top 3 choices in priority.

- A) Protect the Environment
- B) Strong Social Safety Net
- C) Protect the Middleclass
- D) Economic Vitality and Growth
- E) Small Government
- F) Strong Military
- G) Respect Heritage and Traditions

The test results then assign test-takers to one of four “diagnosis pages,” which include a prescription (tailored to each position) intended to increase the test-taker’s “value metabolism” by considering some of the values inherent in the pole that opposes their position. Test-takers are invited to consider a series of questions that bring out the values of the opposition. Subjects are then asked to write out their answers to each question. And as a further exercise, test-takers are invited to identify people they know who are even more polarized than themselves (either further right or further left) and discuss with them the idea of political progress through synthetic integration.

The polarization test itself will evolve as the synthesis platform takes shape and the diagnosis pages will be periodically updated to include further reading and links to relevant internet content that encourages value integration. The four basic positions diagnosed by the test (shown in *figure 1*, above) are described below, followed by their corresponding prescriptions for greater value metabolism. This test is not intended as social science research, it is simply an interactive method for demonstrating some of the ideas behind ICE's polarization campaign.

#### The Four Essential Political Positions Diagnosed by the Test:

- A) Diagnosis: Progressive postmodernist, you tend to highly value environmental sustainability, multicultural diversity, social justice, a foreign and domestic policy that admits wrongs and makes amends, and equality among Americans.
- B) Diagnosis: Liberal Modernist, you tend to highly value a strong social safety net, economic justice, a peaceful foreign policy, a balance of jobs and environmental protection, and equality among Americans.
- C) Diagnosis: Fiscally Conservative or Libertarian Modernist, you tend to highly value economic vitality and growth, freedom from government regulation or interference, global free trade, meritocracy, and “equity” where rewards are proportional to effort and talent.
- D) Diagnosis: Socially Conservative Traditionalist, you tend to highly value loyalty to country and faith, laws that protect heritage and traditions, a strong military, and a culture of “equity” in America where rewards are proportional to effort and talent.

### Prescriptive Questions Tailored to Each of the Four Political Positions:

#### *A) Prescription for: Progressive postmodernist*

Five Questions to Consider:

1. What is the best way to integrate care for the environment with care for our country's economic wellbeing? How much should prosperity be valued?
2. What is the best way to integrate the value of multiculturalism and diversity with the value of assembling the most competent and productive team or group? How much should meritocracy be valued?
3. Is the history of the American government's crimes and malfeasance somewhat mitigated by the good that America has done in the world? Is loyalty to what is good about America a value?
4. We know that having a lean body is good for our health and performance. Might this same principle of health and efficiency also point to the need for a "lean government"?
5. How can we integrate the value of *equality* (a society that provides for the needy) with the value of *equity* (a society that rewards our most productive)?

Depolarization Exercises: Write a brief answer to each question. Then speak to someone you know who is even more left of center than you about these issues.

#### *B) Prescription for: Liberal Modernist*

Four Questions to Consider:

1. What is the best way to care for people who need help without encouraging dependency or enabling a non-productive life?
2. What are the downsides of increasing government involvement in the economy and society? We know that having a lean body is good for our health and performance. Might this same principle of health and efficiency also point to the need for a "lean government"?
3. What would justify American military action abroad? Do you see any such threats on the historical horizon today?
4. How can we integrate the value of *equality* (a society that provides for the needy) with the value of *equity* (a society that rewards our most productive)?

Depolarization Exercises: Write a brief answer to each question. Then speak to someone you know who is even more left of center than you about these issues.

#### *C) Prescription for: Fiscally Conservative or Libertarian Modernist*

Four Questions to Consider:

1. What are the downsides of a large underclass? What responsibilities does government have to those who have failed or become hurt?
2. When is taxation justified and how do we decide what functions the government should undertake on behalf of society?
3. What are the downsides of globalization and how can those be ameliorated?
4. How can we integrate the value of *equity* (a society that rewards our most productive) with the value

of *equality* (a society that provides for the needy)?

Depolarization Exercises: Write a brief answer to each question. Then speak to someone you know who is even more right of center than you about these issues.

#### ***D) Prescription for: Socially Conservative Traditionalist***

Four Questions to Consider:

1. How can we integrate the values of patriotism and piety with the value of being critical and dissatisfied with the status quo?
2. What is the downside of excluding or negatively judging those who are different from us and do not hold our values?
3. Despite the upside, what is the downside of America having the world's largest military by far?
4. How can we integrate the value of *equity* (a society that rewards our most productive) with the value of *equality* (a society that provides for the needy)?

Depolarization Exercises: Write a brief answer to each question. Then speak to someone you know who is even more right of center than you about these issues.

### NOTES

1. See: Charles Wheelan, *The Centrist Manifesto* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2013) and <http://www.centristproject.org>.
2. See: Mickey Edwards, *The Parties Versus the People: How to Turn Republicans and Democrats into Americans* (Yale University Press 2013).
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4. Nisbet and Scheufele, "The Polarization Paradox, Why Hyperpartisanship Strengthens Conservatism and Undermines Liberalism" *The Breakthrough Institute Journal*, Summer 2012.
5. Barry Johnson, *Polarity Management* (HRD Press 1996) p. xviii.
6. See: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biology\\_and\\_political\\_orientation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biology_and_political_orientation).
7. See, e.g. Ronald Inglehart, ed. *Human Values and Social Change* (New York: Brill 2003); Paul Ray and Sherry Anderson. *The Cultural Creatives, How 50 Million People are Changing the World* (New York: Harmony Books 2000); and Jenny Wade. *Changes of Mind: A Holonomic Theory of the Evolution of Consciousness* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press 1996).
8. See e.g.: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/10/121004134731.htm>, and <http://www.climateaccess.org/blog/exploring-role-political-identity-climate-attitudes-highlights-becc-2013>.
9. See John Mackey and Rajendra Sisodia, *Conscious Capitalism: Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business* (Harvard Business Review Press, 2014). See also <http://www.consciouscapitalism.org>.
10. Josiah Neeley, *Right on Green: In Search of Authentic Free-market Environmentalism*. Retrieved April 7, 2014 from: <http://www.masterresource.org/2014/04/book-review-responsibility-resilience/#more-30109>
11. Hawkins, C. B. & Nosek, B. A. (2012). "Motivated independence? Implicit party identity predicts political judgments among self-proclaimed Independents" *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 18, 1441-1455. This tendency to lean to one side or the other can be compared trying to find the middle of a magnet; balance is difficult to maintain as one is always pulled toward one pole or the other.
12. Brief writing exercises have been shown to reduce polarized evaluations. See Waytz, A., Dungan, J., & Young, L. "The whistleblower's dilemma and the fairness loyalty tradeoff" *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, Vol. 49, Issue 6, (November 2013) pp. 951-1216.



ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR CULTURAL EVOLUTION (“ICE”): Founded in 2013, ICE is a nonprofit think tank organized around the goal of applying groundbreaking insights taken from Integral philosophy, developmental psychology, evolutionary theory, and the social sciences to help create significant forward movement in the evolution of the American cultural and political landscape. ICE is focused on creating small but critical shifts in public opinion, opening up new opportunities for political action. [www.culturalevolution.org](http://www.culturalevolution.org).

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