BEYOND PARTISAN:
Bridging Divides Across the Immigration Debate

America's Hidden Political Tribes

Research on Americans' political interests and motivations from the international initiative More in Common reveals a more complex landscape than left versus right. It categorizes us into seven "hidden political tribes," and while the left wing (eight percent of Americans) and right wing (25 percent) tend to dominate the immigration conversation, most Americans fall into the "exhausted majority" (67 percent), and have varied beliefs about immigration. This research shows that the U.S. population is not divided 50/50 on issues like immigration, but that there is more nuance to our interests, and we have much more in common than we do dividing us.

Understanding White, Working-Class Americans

Political scientist Dr. Justin Gest's research uncovers misunderstandings about white, working-class Americans as well as three truths that help us better understand their beliefs and motives.

"Anti-immigrant sentiment is more *passionate* than pro-immigrant sentiment."
Of those who consider immigration the most important voting issue, many more oppose than support it.

"Both race *and* economics are driving Americans to vote for farther right candidates."
White, working-class Americans are concerned that they are losing their status in society.

"For change to take place, we need to connect with white, working-class Americans."
Current attempts at reaching working-class Americans are unsuccessful because they do not meet their interests. White, working-class Americans desire a sense of control over the country they're proud to be a part of, and they want to be valued contributors.

Strategies to Reach Beyond Your Political Base

Listen first. Start by hearing what others have to say. Create a space to listen without judgment and reserve sharing beliefs until they have expressed all their concerns. Focus on hearing their side first, taking their words at face value and responding respectfully.

Avoid stereotyping. Take a step away from social media and cable news to hear from people in your communities. Often the loudest voices don't accurately represent the majority of the group.

Reconsider your purpose. Keep in mind the goal is not to convince one person in a single conversation. It's important to share your ideas without the intention of convincing someone to think the way you do. Sometimes, your real audience are those listening in on your conversation or reading on the internet.

Meet people where they are. Try to best understand which political "tribe" your audience is coming from and use their jargon to better speak to their needs. Don't assume you share the same values. Instead, listen to what matters to them and frame your argument with this in mind.
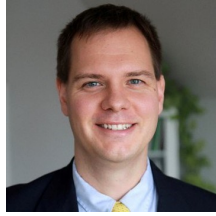
Toolkit

🔧 [The Hidden Tribes of America](#)
📄 [Immigrants Recognize American Greatness](#)
📑 [Research Brief: Deep Canvass, Deep Change](#)
🌐 [Meaningful Contact Across Difference](#)

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Evangelical Immigration Table

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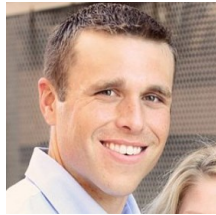
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