

# **Inequality and Polarization: An Axiomatic Approach**

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## **Abstract**

This paper characterizes several indices of polarization, expressed as increasing functions of between-group term and decreasing functions of within-group term of a population subgroup decomposable inequality index using intuitively reasonable axioms. The between-group term represents the ‘identification’ component of polarization and the within-group term can be regarded as an inverse indicator of the ‘alienation’ component of polarization. The relevant class of inequality indices includes the generalized entropy family, the variance and the exponential index. A numerical illustration of some of the indices is provided using Indian National Sample Survey data.

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