



The Culture and Civil Society Lab project aims to identify ways to harness the transformative power of culture and arts to combat political polarization and rejuvenate democratic societies.

The project, launched in 2024, is led by Professor Anthony Foxx, the Emma Bloomberg Professor of the Practice of Public Leadership, co-director of the Center for Public Leadership, and former U.S. Secretary of Transportation.

Exploring the power of culture to strengthen our democratic institutions and establish a stronger foundation for the important discourse required for a high-functioning civil society. This project focuses on the forces that bring together people and seeks to understand how to bridge growing divisions in the United States and beyond.

The project also seeks to bring cultural leaders to the Harvard community to share how their contributions are intended to create connections, to cross boundaries and to formulate understanding. With faculty affiliates of this initiative, we further intend to develop research deepening our understanding of the link between culture and civility, democratic dialogue and healing political divisions.

American democracy is confronting an existential crisis from within, often categorized as a political challenge that necessitates resolute and forward-thinking public policy leadership.

While necessary, it is plausible that the root cause lies much deeper, stemming from both longstanding and emerging divisions that are increasing political discord and distrust of democratic institutions. These divisions also conceal the