

Four Country - Sustained Political Dialogue Study Strategies and Recommendations



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Four Country - Sustained Political Dialogue Study

Strategies & Recommendations

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2	July 2025	Final Version (V1) - For review with OU Kesi Mahendran and Sandra Obradović. Suggested modifications to layout presentation, a strengthening of the conceptual connections with EE, polarisation, and sustained dialogue.
3	August 2025	Final revisions and submission to Scientific Coordinator, Kesi Mahendran, for approval.
4	September 2025	Submitted to Administrative Coordinator for submission on the portal.

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Executive Summary (I)

Deliverable 6.6's research examines how individuals navigate challenging political discussions and, in some cases, sustain dialogue. The report offers recommendations on the findings to three intended audiences: (1) Policymakers interested in applying initiatives to understand how communities can engage in constructive political dialogue via Democratic Capacity Workshops, (2) Scholars intending to develop this research further, and (3) Front-line practitioners in NGOs seeking to support dialogue sustainment among young citizens with 6.6's Sustaining Dialogue Attunement Tool. These recommendations are based on research conducted over two studies:

Study A interviewed residents in four nations (England, Kosovo, Scotland, and Sweden) to explore if differing migration-mobility experiences influence what political positions are adopted when discussing immigration.

Study B paired residents from the same country together to explore if/how they navigate potentially polarising discussions on immigration. The participants were paired on shared political positions in the first instance and, during the discourse and without their prior knowledge, were then introduced to a potentially polarising issue to explore dialogue sustainment.

Study A: Key Outcomes

Exposing the participants to stimulus materials which presented different views on migration and borders (via depictions of protests and contrasting map projections) created a discursive space for participants to adopt a range of political positions that offered the potential for pairing.

Advocating-They Positions

How participants advocated for other community members who feel threatened by migrants or refugees offered insights into their own views. This advocating-they position allowed some a way to express a resistance to the idea of migration without explicitly presenting this as their own viewpoint.

'Acceptable Migrant' Experience

A sense of unfairness was expressed at the idea that a migrant's 'acceptability' is related to how closely they align with the host country (especially in Sweden among those with high migration-mobility backgrounds).

Borderfree world Differences

When discussing national borders, there was a clear divide between those who adopted a pragmatic position to justify borders and those who aspired to a world without them. There was no relationship between higher migration-mobility experiences and a desire for a borderless world.

Migration and Human History

The idea that the story of human history is one of migration was highly contested and offered potential as a polarising issue for Study B. These differences did not emerge along migration-mobility lines.

Study B: Key Outcomes

Study B's paired discussions offered insights into the discursive dynamics and strategies used by individuals engaged in vexed political discussions on immigration.

Opinion Masking

The discursive move of advocating for another group to mask the person's own critical views on migrants to sustain the discourse. This may be present when the person wishing to express this view is uncertain about how they will be received by others and is concerned with impression management.

Perceived Legitimacy and Attitude Certainty

Shared life experiences as migrants seemed to offer a space for sustaining dialogue despite explicit disagreements as both recognise the legitimacy of the other as someone invested in the dialogue and political struggle. This investment combined with a high level of certainty about their own views seemed to create a dynamic in which both have the confidence to disagree but also maintain a mutual respect due to their shared experiences.

Extremism Framing

Politically extreme ideas seem to be accepted more readily if framed as a 'thought experiment' or 'fantasy'. This framing seems to offer the receiver of the idea an opportunity to sustain dialogue on a challenging topic by exploring the idea in this manner. This could also be a potentially potent way in which extreme ideas could spread via dialogue in off-line spaces.

Perceived Relevancy

The paired discussions highlighted how important the perceived relevance of the talking points are for individuals to engage. During a moment of disagreement between a pair, one participant reframed the conversation by critiquing the researcher's questions on immigration as irrelevant to a Kosovo context.

Post-Discussion Relationship Dynamic

A political discussion in which the two participants are likely to meet again seems to increase the motivation to find moments of consensus and avoid engaging in any explicit disagreements, as they strive to manage their future relationship.

Executive Summary (II)

Recommendations

Policymakers

This report offers recommendations for a policy focus which moves beyond the consensus-seeking, expert-led dynamic of citizen's assemblies in favour of Democratic Capacity Workshops. These are community-focused spaces that facilitate the public developing their democratic capacities.

Researchers

Given the novelty, it would be insightful to further explore both the conceptual and methodological implications of the paired discussions. Namely, developing a greater understanding of the relationship between political positions and everyday extremism and how the pairing studies can be upscaled.

Practitioners

The report offers a step by-step guide for applying the Sustaining Dialogue Attunement Tool when working with young people. The tool offers those with political differences the space to develop a flexible understanding of those with whom they disagree and recognise their own capacity for sustaining dialogue.

How to navigate this report

This report on the Four Country Sustained Political Dialogue Study is an attunement-focused deliverable (D 6.6) as part of Work Package 6 (WP6). The report has three intended audiences:

- Policymakers interested in implementing initiatives to facilitate the public developing their capacity for constructive political dialogue
- Researchers interested in developing research to further explore the factors that influence how individuals engaged in polarised political discussions can sustain dialogue.
- Front-line practitioners seeking to support dialogue sustainment for a specific group (e.g.: NGOs collaborating with young citizens).

As such, certain sections of the report will be more relevant based on the aims of the specific target audience (see table 1 for the audience report guide).

Table 1. *Target Audience Guidance*

Report Section	Policymakers	Researchers	Practitioners
1. Introduction	●	●	●
2. Exploring public understandings of immigration		●	
3. Study A – Analysis Process		●	
4. Study A – Results		●	
5. Study A – Conclusions		●	●
6. Study B - Pairing Process		●	●
7. Study B – Exploring Sustained Dialogue		●	●
8. Study B - Paired discussion results		●	●
9. Study B – Conclusions	●	●	●
10. Recommendations	●	●	●

1. Introduction



The OppAttune project aims to track, attune, and limit the spread of Everyday Extremism, which is when a person engages in symbolic violence and/or limits someone’s capacity for democratic engagement via words or images in on-line and off-line contexts. This deliverable focuses on exploring how individuals can sustain dialogue on challenging political issues to understand how the public can develop their democratic capacities. That is to say, garner insights into how the public can talk to those with whom they disagree without resorting to personal attacks. To explore if they can move away from the ‘us vs them’ dynamic of a politically extreme worldview into one which recognises and understands different views (i.e.: become comfortable with oppositional narratives). Therefore contributing to WP6’s intention to understand the psychological drivers behind extreme narratives and how they manifest in communication. The insights from this Four Country Sustained Political Dialogue Study has also been used to develop an attunement tool intervention for frontline practitioners to contribute to the project’s aim of limiting everyday extremism.

This research consists of a two-step process (1) Study A: One to one stimulus-led interviews which explore participant’s positions on migration and offer a context for pairing participants together, and (2) Study B: Paired discussions in which the same participants are paired together based on shared positions on migration and a potentially polarising issue. This research builds on outputs from the WiDE Lens Survey (D 6.2) and its insights into the drivers of everyday extremism by adopting two of the measures used by the survey to understand how migration-mobility experiences and worldviews are valuable in contextualising political views on migration (see sections 2.1 & 2.4). Based on methods and theories from previous research (English, 2022; English & Mahendran, 2021; Gillespie and Martin, 2014; Silvia, Fernández-Navarro, Gonçalves, Rosa, & Silvia, 2020), this study aims to offer insights into how individuals could sustain dialogue during polarised interactions to contribute towards the Political Attunement Model (D6.5).

1.1. Research Aims and Objectives

This four-country pairing study explores how individuals engage in polarising dialogue on the polarising issue of migration. The data collection for this research focuses on England, (Manchester), Kosovo (Pristina), Scotland (Edinburgh), and Sweden (Malmö), and involves a two-step process with studies A & B.

Study A

Study A aimed to answer the following research question: Is there a relationship between migration-mobility experiences and political positions related to immigration management?

Study A offers potential insights into a relationship between a person’s migration-mobility experiences and the political positions they adopt discussing migration in their country of residence. The data is then used to provide a comparative context for pairing together participants on contrasting political positions to explore if/how they can sustain dialogue discussing migration-related issues in Study B.

Study B

Study B aimed to answer the following: What factors allow participants to sustain dialogue when discussing polarising immigration issues?

Ethics approval for both studies was obtained by the Open University’s Human Research Ethics Committee for all of the fieldwork facilitated by Anthony English in Study A¹ and B². Study A’s Kosovo fieldwork was facilitated by Adelina Hasani of the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS), who obtained ethics approval from Panteion University. In outlining the research process, this report acts as a guide on how to facilitate this type of research. Therefore, it is important to note that the underlying assumptions guiding this research were dialogical. Considered in a political context, a dialogical approach assumes an individual’s political identities are multifaceted and dependent on elements beyond the influence of a singular out-

¹ HREC Reference: 2024-0211-3

² HREC Reference: 2024-0526-3

group (Akkermann & Meijer, 2011; Bourke, Abreu, & Rathbone, 2018). Shared-identity models offer valuable insights into various aspects of political life and group dynamics (Hogg, 2016; Sindic & Condor, 2014). Surprisingly however, identity sharing seems to be ineffective at reducing hostility among those with polarising political views (Noor et al. 2012; McNicholl, 2018). Primarily, as those with contrasting political views reject those with shared identities as ‘illegitimate’ if the issue is highly contested (Hopkins, Reicher & Rijswijk, 2015). Therefore, focusing on a dialogical method is considered here to offer a greater explanatory potential when exploring dialogue sustainment in polarising political contexts.

1.2. Country Cases

Study B involved interviewing 42 participants across four nations: Edinburgh, Scotland (N=9), Manchester, England (N=9), Malmö, Sweden (N=12), and Pristina, Kosovo (N=12). The following sections provides a rationale for why each country offers a relevant polarising political climate for exploring views on migration.

1.2.1. Edinburgh (Scotland) & Manchester (England)

England and Scotland are considered together because although Scotland does have devolved powers, these do not extend to immigration and asylum-related policies as these are set by central government. On the 1st of January 2021, the UK withdrew from the EU’s freedom of movement arrangement as a result of Brexit. Consequently, 2022 saw a record high in net migration to the UK, with the vast majority of migrants originating from non-EU countries (Lindop, 2023). This has produced much consternation among those who argued that leaving the EU was essential to reducing net migration numbers (Palmer, 2024). Another controversial UK-related issue of recent years has been the small boat channel crossings from France to the UK, which increased to 45,700 in 2022 (Migration Observatory, 2023). An especially polarising aspect to this issue has been the contrasting ideas on how those who arrive illegally should be treated by the state. The issue led to the UK Conservative Government passing the Illegal Migration Bill, with its focus on banning asylum applications from those who arrive in the UK by irregular means (Refugee Council, 2023) and the Rwanda Scheme (a deal to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda as a deterrent). Since the Labour Party were elected to govern in July 2024, the Rwanda scheme was discontinued. However, the issue of high immigration and channel crossing asylum seekers remain polarising issues.

1.2.2. Malmö (Sweden)

Since 2015, immigration has been a prominent issue in Sweden – this has been attributed to the policy which saw Sweden accept more asylum seekers per capita than any other European country (Krzyżanowska & Ekström, 2024). A particular focus has been on the idea of integration and the perception that urban areas are segregated to the point that they have become ‘no go areas’ (Hagelund, 2020). This has been attributed to a documented rise of gang-related gun violence within migrant communities (Sturup et al. 2018). Magdalena Andersson, the Prime Minister between 2021 - 2022, acknowledged this new perception of Sweden in a now famous speech “*We live in the same country but in completely different realities. We will have to reassess our previous truths and make tough decisions.*” (Henley, 2022). The recently empowered Sweden Democrats, a far-right minority partner in a ‘confidence and supply deal’, have been pivotal in the Government’s creation of ‘return centres’ which encourage rejected

asylum seekers to leave the country voluntarily. Evidence that populist narratives about the negative societal impact of immigration and assimilation have now moved into mainstream discourse and policy decisions (Tomson, 2020).

1.2.3. Pristina (Kosovo)

The Republic of Kosovo has become a key transit stop for non-EU migrants and refugees as part of the ‘Balkan route’ (Karaj, Likmeta, & Shala, 2021). As the Kosovan government aspires to join the European Union, they need to demonstrate to the EU that they can reduce migration to member states by limiting access of non-EU migrants travelling along this ‘Balkan route’ (Chastand & Jacqu , 2022). Alongside this potentially polarising issue, there are also concerns as to the increasing number of young, educated Kosovans relocating to EU countries for work (Isufi, 2023). This has been an important election issue for which every political party feels they need to provide a solution to gain power. Indeed, the 2021 landslide victory for the centre-left Vet vendosje party (‘self-determination movement’) was considered, in part, the result of their manifesto pledges to retain young Kosovans in the workforce (Robinson & Fazliu, 2021). Recent developments in a conflict known as the North Kosovo Crisis have added a sense of polarisation over borders between Kosovans and Serbians. For example, in June 2023, Pristina’s largest border crossing was forced to temporarily close in response to protest blockages on the Serbian side (a protest aimed at offering solidarity to their ethnic kin in Kosovo regarding claims over independence). Together, these three issues all present a variety of polarising issues around Kosovo’s future relationships with immigration, emigration, and borders.

2. Exploring Public Understandings of Migration



The following offers an overview of the materials used in Study A to explore the participants’ political backgrounds, views on immigration and relationships to borders. This offers a step-by-step guide as to why certain stimulus materials were included to offer some practical guidance for replicating the core ideas. The study was presented to the public without stating the overall purpose (i.e.: exploring how polarised individuals sustain dialogue) to maintain the integrity of the research. Therefore, the research advert, consent form and information sheet framed the study as ‘exploring public opinion on migration across Europe’. On completing the consent form, participants were invited to answer a pre-interview questionnaire which quantitatively measured their attitudes to immigration in their country, level of certainty about this attitude, and which worldview they found most relevant to how they understand the world. The participants were then invited to engage in a 60-minute on-line, semi-structured interview to explore the political engagement background, migration-mobility experiences, and their adopted political positions on the issue of immigration in their country. The fieldwork was conducted between February and September 2024 across all four nations. The purpose in using the following materials was to explore what dialogical positions are adopted by participants in response to specific stimulus materials. This offers a context for pairing together participants on both shared positions and a projected polarising issue to explore dialogue sustainment.

2.1. Pre-Interview Questions

The materials listed below are sequenced in the order that they were presented to the participants. In some cases, the materials were modified versions to limit the potential risk of participant fatigue.

2.1.1. Worldview Vignettes

Based on previous findings (Mifsud & Sammut, 2023; Sammut, Mifsud, & Brockdorff, 2022) and data from WP6's WiDE (Worldviews, Identification, Disaffection & Extremism) Lens Survey, five vignettes were used to explore the worldview of each participant (Table 2). Using a Likert scale (1 – 5), the participants were invited to rate the extent to which they believe each vignette applies to them. They were then invited to select the one vignette which best approximates their own views. The purpose here is to contextualise their views on migration within a wider worldview to assist with the pairing process for Study B (e.g.: to pair together on potentially polarising worldviews).

Table 2. *Five Worldviews* (Mifsud & Sammut, 2023)

Worldview	Vignettes
Localised	The future depends on us and the choices we make. Every problem has a solution. Each and every one of us can make an effort to fix the laws and institutions so that they can be just and equal for everyone. Like this we can better address the needs of people and society.
Orthodox	To succeed in life, we need to follow the rules and local customs in order to maintain social order. We also need to show respect to each other and carry out our duties. Like this we can help others in our community.
Pragmatist	In life we must adapt ourselves to our circumstances and sometimes we need to go with the flow in order to avoid trouble. The rich and powerful protect their own interests, whereas the kind-hearted suffer. Sometimes you have to work around the rules to help your loved ones.
Reward	In life, you get what you deserve. Life's challenges are overcome with the efforts we make, and these may offer new opportunities. One must co-operate with others, respect authority, and carry out one's duties. Our efforts will eventually lead to success.
Survivor	In life, things rarely end up well. People are what they are, and good people usually suffer and are exploited. It is best for one to keep his/her head down and get on with it.

2.1.2. Attitude Certainty

It could be the case that, in order to simplify a complex political landscape, there is a relationship between a person's sense of certainty about their own opinion and political extremism (Hogg, Kruglanski, & van den Bos, 2013). Principally as extremist views typically offer reassuringly simplistic visions for how the world should be (Proulx & Major, 2013), especially on the issue of immigration (Esses, Medianu, & Lawson, 2013; Gelfand, LaFree, Fahey, & Feinberg, 2013). The participants were invited to answer four questions, the first established the extent to which they agreed with the following statement: '*Immigration has been a positive influence on my home country*'. The next three questions, adopted from Petrocelli, Tormala, and Rucker's (2007) scale, measured their certainty about their views on immigration. A high score indicates the participant is certain their attitude on immigration is

correct and that others should also think the same. This offers valuable contextualising information for pairing them together for Study B and if they are likely to continue with such certainty when in dialogue with someone who disagrees.

2.2. Interview Sections

2.2.1. Political Engagement

The interview's first section explores both the participant's past and current relationship with political groups and activities. This provides a context for identifying any dialogical positions related to political engagement (see Appendix A for the interview questions for this and all of the following sections).

2.2.2. Migration-Mobility Questions

This second section of the interview uses six questions from the Migration-Mobility Continuum (MMC) to explore the participants' current residency, mobility background, and future aspirations. The MMC was developed by Mahendran (2013) and been used to explore how global identification relates to precarity and migration (Mahendran, Nieland, English, and Goodman, 2023). The MMC has also been used in the Identification section of the WiDE Lens Survey to explore the relationship between migration-mobility and everyday extremism. The MMC is a 10-point continuum broadly categorised as non-mobility, low migration-mobility, or high migration-mobility (Figure 1). The MMC 1 encapsulates those from a generationally non-mobile background (e.g.: no migration-mobility for Parents, Grandparents, etc.). MMC 2 are those born in their current country to migrant parents, whilst MMC 3 describes a non-migrant in a long-term partnership with a migrant. The low migration-mobility positions (MMC 4, 5/6, and 7) focuses on non-migrant hometown returnees, internal migrants, and cross-border single move settled, respectively. High migration-mobility relates to those frequent movers who have either now settled (MMC 8), engaged in/or are planning circular migration (MMC 9) or are serial migrants (MMC 10) likely to move again in the future. These Migration Mobility questions offer insights into a participant's relationship to migration through understanding their own mobility which offers a relevant context for pairing in Study B.

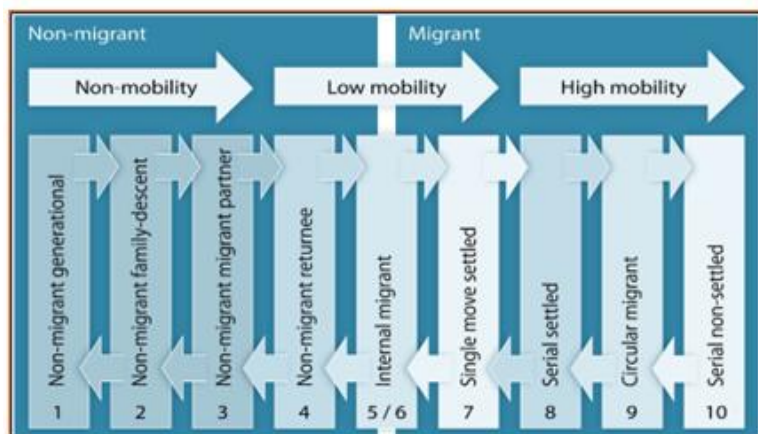


Figure 1. *Migration Mobility Continuum (Mahendran, 2013).*

2.2.3. Nation State/Border-Free Map Comparison Task






Previous map-based research (Mahendran, Nieland, English, & Goodman, 2023; O'Loughlin & Talbot, 2005) found this type of stimulus material creates an opportunity for researchers to explore the relationship participants have with borders. Especially their assumptions on how

the world functions and their idea of an ‘ideal world’ (e.g.: borderless, bordered differently, etc.). The use of map stimulus material alongside MMC questions affords the opportunity to explore any tensions which may exist between a participant’s migration-mobility position and their relationship with borders. The comparative map task invited participants to select a preference from one of two map projections: (1) Border-free earth map or (2) Nation state border map (image 1 and 2). Both of these projections are based on Google Earth’s spherical normal variant as it provides a level of familiarity for the participants. After a preference was selected, they were asked to elaborate on their choice with four questions.



2.2.4. Immigration Protest Images

Table 3. Study A Stimulus Materials

Stimulus Material – Study A				
1. 2015: Malmö	2. 2022: Manchester	3. 2018: Pristina	4. 2015: Edinburgh	5. 2021: Kent
 <p>Anti-refugee position: A group in Malmö protesting against Sweden’s open borders policy during the 2015 ‘migrant crisis’, a period in which Sweden accepted the highest number of refugees from the Syrian civil war.</p>	 <p>Pro-refugee position: Individuals in Manchester protesting the UK’s 2022 Nationality and Borders bill (a bill which has provisions to automatically discount any asylum applications for those who arrived via a non-government-sanctioned route).</p>	 <p>Border dispute: A 2018 protest in Pristina over the proposed territory exchange with Serbia. The image shows protestors explicitly rejecting the idea this would offer a ‘border correction’ between the two nations.</p>	 <p>Anti-refugee position: A protest by a far-right Edinburgh-based group arguing for the reprioritisation of resources for local communities.</p>	 <p>Pro-migration position: This shows a 2021 protest in which protestors offer support for asylum seekers by arguing migration is a part of human history.</p>

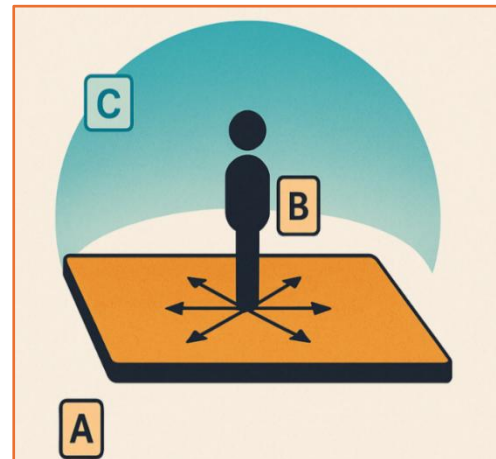
To explore views on migration, participants were invited to view a slideshow which represented four contrasting protests images and asked a series of questions. Each image depicts a direct

expression of support or antagonism from local residents in response to an immigration-based government policy or proposal (Table 3). Alongside understanding their views on migration, the stimulus materials also offer participants the opportunity to engage in a dialogue with contrasting views on immigration. Hereby, creating valuable data from which to pair together participants based on their responses to these pro- or anti-migrant arguments.

3. Study A – Analysis Process



The qualitative aspect of Study A involves a line-by-line dialogical analysis of the interview scripts for each participant at three different levels of understanding: (A) Internalised: Assumptions about the political issue being discussed, (B) Interactive: The political positions they adopt as a consequence of those assumptions and how they position themselves in relation to others, and (C) Dimensional: Where they locate the discussed issue in time and space (see intext figure). The first level (internalised) are Social Representations, or political narratives. These are a person's 'common-sense' understanding of the world which they assume are fundamentally true. These political narratives could be assumptions that are shared by other members of a person's group or nation (known as Hegemonic Representations) or assumptions that symbolise societal conflicts between groups (Polemic Representations) (Galli & Fasanelli, 2020; Höijer, 2011). Another important representation in the context of political polarisation are Alternative Representations, which are what a person believes another thinks about their own political view (which are susceptible to bad-faith interpretations or self-deception) (Gillespie, 2008). All three of these are highly relevant to exploring a participant's political views beneath what they wish to express explicitly (see section 4.2.2, extracts 4 & 5 for an example of a social representation/ political narrative).



The second step (interactive) explores the dialogical positions that a person adopts in positioning themselves on the issue of migration (known as an *I-Position*). Understanding these positions can show who the person consider themselves aligned with (*We-position*), distanced from (distancing they-position), or who they will advocate for despite not being a part of that group (advocating-they position) (Mahendran, 2018; Gillespie & Martin, 2014; Vee, Dobber, & Oers, 2018). For an example of an *I-Position*, see section 4.2.3, extract 6, and section 4.2.1, extract 2 and 3 for advocating-they positions. The final step (dimensional) is the most abstracted in that it considers where in time and space a person is locating the political issue discussed. This is known as a Chronotope, which refers to the temporal connections or spatial boundaries that are evoked for the person when discussing a political issue (Perić, 2015; Zittoun et al. 2013) (see section 4.2.4, extract 10 for an example). Alongside this three-step dialogical analysis, Study A has quantitative measures on each participant's attitude towards immigration,

their level of certainty about this, and their worldview. The quantitative measures will contextualise the qualitative analysis and together offer a means of pairing together participants for Study B, to explore how they could sustain dialogue when polarised. This is consistent with a mixed methods concurrent nested design in which both qualitative and quantitative data are collected in the same instance, before one set of data is prioritised whilst the other offers a contextualising role (Castro, Kellison, Boyd, & Kopak, 2010; Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003).

4. Study A – Results



This first section offers an overview of the quantitative results of the pre-interview questionnaire overall and for each nation as the participants were paired together via their place of residence. These quantitative findings provide contextualising data in which to pair participants together based on the qualitative analysis of their political narratives, dialogical positions, and chronotopes.

4.1. Quantitative Results

The highest MMC position across the sample was MMC 4, which is that of a non-migrant returnee (i.e.: someone that has left their place of birth for a brief period but has now returned, be that to study, for professional reasons, etc) (Table 4). The participants generally expressed a positive attitude towards immigration and most were highly certain that theirs was the ‘correct’ attitude to have on this issue. Aligned with previous dialogical map work (Mahendran, Nieland, English, & Goodman, 2023), the borderless projection was selected more often as the favoured map (although there is a risk of social desirability bias as this may have been the projection participants felt was the ‘open-minded’ option to select). For the worldview endorsements, the Localised worldview was by far the most frequently selected option at 73%. That an optimistic, people-focused worldview was the most prevalent selected among a liberal sample aligns with Mifsud and Sammut’s (2023) own findings.

Table 4. *Study A: Quantitative Results*

Age	Gender	MMC Position	Immigration Attitude	Attitude Certainty	Map Preference	Worldview Endorsement
M: 36 20-29: 15 30-39: 17 40-49: 5 50-59: 2 60-69: 2 70-79: 1	Male: 20 Female: 22 Trans-male: 0 Trans-female: 0 Non-binary: 0	MMC 1: 8 MMC 2: 1 MMC 3: 0 MMC 4: 11 MMC 5/6: 5 MMC 7: 2 MMC 8: 8 MMC 9: 0 MMC 10: 7	Highly positive: 18 Somewhat positive: 12 Neutral: 7 Somewhat negative: 4 Highly negative: 1	High: 32 Medium: 9 Low: 1	Borderless: 21 Nation-State: 8 Not applicable: 13	Localised: 31 Pragmatist: 5 Orthodox: 4 Reward: 1 Survivor: 1

4.1.1. Edinburgh

The Edinburgh quantitative scores show highly positive attitudes towards immigration and a high level of certainty about this view. Given the prevalent narratives about Scotland’s need for migration (Kyambi & Kay, 2024), this positive view was an anticipated outcome. The exception here being one highly negative view on the issue - however, this could be a participant error as their adopted positions did not align with that view. Given the similarities in views on the issue of immigration, the Edinburgh pair were matched on nuanced differences regarding how others in the Edinburgh community perceive the issue of migration and borders, as opposed to focusing on starkly different personal views they hold about the issue.

Table 5. *Study A: Edinburgh Results*

Age	Gender	MMC Positions	Immigration Attitude	Attitude Certainty	Map Preference	Worldview Endorsement
M: 42 20-29: 1 30-39: 4 40-49: 1 50-59: 2 60-69: 1 70-79: 0	Male: 5 Female: 4 Trans-male:0 Trans-female:0 Non-binary: 0	MMC 1: 1 MMC 4: 1 MMC 5/6: 3 MMC 7: 1 MMC 8: 3	Highly positive: 7 Somewhat positive: 1 Neutral: 0 Somewhat negative: 0 Highly negative: 1	High: 8 Medium: 1 Low: 0	Borderless: 4 Nation-State: 3 Not applicable: 2	Localised: 8 Pragmatist: 1 Orthodox: 0 Reward:0 Survivor:0

4.1.2. Malmö

The Malmö sample were the most mobile of all four locations with the majority positioning themselves as MMC 10. This is a non-settled person who has moved across borders more than once and intends to do so again. However, the immigration attitudes are not as positive as would be expected given the highly mobile life experiences. This offers an interesting dynamic for exploring dialogue sustainment which moves beyond an obvious settled vs. mobile dynamic.

Table 6. *Study A: Malmö Results*

Age	Gender	MMC Position	Immigration Attitude	Attitude Certainty	Map Preference	Worldview Endorsement
M: 36 20-29: 2 30-39: 6 40-49: 4 50-59: 0 60-69: 0 70-79: 0	Male: 4 Female: 8 Trans-male:0 Trans-female:0 Non-binary:0	MMC 2: 1 MMC 7: 1 MMC 8: 3 MMC 10: 7	Highly positive: 6 Somewhat positive: 4 Neutral: 2 Somewhat negative: 0 Highly negative: 0	High: 8 Medium: 3 Low: 1	Borderless: 7 Nation-State: 1 Not applicable: 4	Localised: 8 Pragmatist: 2 Orthodox: 2 Reward: 0 Survivor: 0

4.1.3. Manchester

The Manchester sample had a high number of internal migrants (MMC 5/6) and all stated they have positive attitudes towards migration (and are generally certain about their views). As with Edinburgh, the pairing process was based on dialogical positions with nuanced underlying assumptions on this issue or differences in how they understand the contrasting views of others in the local community.

Table 7. *Study A: Manchester Results*

Age	Gender	MMC Position	Immigration Attitude	Attitude Certainty	Map Preference	Worldview Endorsement
M: 42 20-29: 2 30-39: 5 40-49: 0 50-59: 0 60-69: 1 70-79: 1	Male: 6 Female: 3 Trans-male:0 Trans-female:0 Non-binary:0	MMC 1: 1 MMC 4: 2 MMC 5/6: 4 MMC 8: 2	Highly positive: 5 Somewhat positive: 4 Neutral: 0 Somewhat negative: 0 Highly negative: 0	High: 7 Medium:2 Low:0	Borderless: 5 Nation-State: 0 Not applicable:4	Localised: 6 Pragmatist: 2 Orthodox: 1 Reward: 0 Survivor: 0

4.1.4. Pristina

A key difference with the Pristina sample is the high number of MMC 1 positions (generationally non-mobile) which is distinctive when compared to both the other locations and previous migration-mobility research (Mahendran, 2017; Mahendran, English, & Nieland, 2021a). There is some research (English, 2022) to indicate the MMC 1 position is associated with patriotic positions, which, combined with the neutral and somewhat negative immigration attitudes, offers the potential for a polarising pairing.

Table 8. *Study A: Pristina Results*

Age	Gender	MMC Position	Immigration Attitude	Attitude Certainty	Map Preference	Worldview Endorsement
M: 26 20-29: 10 30-39: 2 40-49: 0 50-59: 0 60-69: 0 70-79:0	Male: 5 Female: 7 Trans-male:0 Trans-female:0 Non-binary:0	MMC 1: 6 MMC 4: 4 MMC 5/6: 2	Highly positive: 0 Somewhat positive: 4 Neutral: 5 Somewhat negative: 3 Highly negative: 0	High: 9 Medium: 3 Low: 0	Borderless: 5 Nation-State: 4 Not applicable: 3	Localised: 9 Pragmatist: 0 Orthodox: 1 Reward: 1 Survivor: 1

4.2. Qualitative Results

This section offers four key findings from the dialogical (qualitative) analysis of the participants' responses to the stimulus materials. Each section includes one extract as an example of the finding (the rest are included in Appendix B).

Threatened-Community Advocate

Asking about the idea of a threatened local community seems to offer insights into their own preoccupations regarding pro- or anti-migrant views. To be clear, an advocating positioning is when a person expresses understanding for a group/person at a social/civil level, despite not being affiliated with them. Whilst advocating for a group which feel threatened by migrants and asylum seekers, some also challenged any perceived racism or xenophobia. However, some participants used this advocating position to foreground their own negative sentiments towards non-white migrants.

4.2.1. Function of the 'Threatened-Community Advocate' position

The dialogical analysis shows there is a distinctive difference between how the participants advocate for local communities that feel threatened by migration. In response to the anti-migrant protest stimulus images, a number of participants adopted an *I*-Threatened-Community-Advocate position. That is to say, they recognised that some in their community

may *feel* a sense of threat from immigration on their economic precarity. One example of this is Mitch³ (MMC 10) an American-born Malmö resident who relocated for postgraduate study and intends to move again. He (Extract 1) advocates for the local community whilst also rejecting any underlying racist ‘othering’, which seems to align with his own anti-racist views (see Appendix B for other examples of this across the nations).

Extract 1

Mitch

I think for people in a certain class position, I completely understand why they say that, um, why they feel that way... I don't, you know, I don't want to be sympathetic with racism in the sense that they're like 'we don't want brown people coming in' or whatever 'we want our country to stay white', um, yeah but at least on the economic side, I don't feel like I can really shake my finger at them and tell them they are not right to have an opinion about this, you know?

In contrast, Giles and Karli advocated by focusing on non-white immigrants and integration issues around language (i.e.: immigrants and refugees who do not speak the language of the host country). Whilst both adopt positive positions on the idea of immigration at other points in the interview, the focus of their advocating position suggests this is a way of criticising non-white immigration without directly expressing their own voice. Giles (MMC 5) is a retired lawyer and judge who is an internal migrant and has now settled in Manchester. He (Extract 2) pointedly advocates for threatened communities by highlighting race when discussing immigration.

Extract 2

Giles

But the people, saying 'close our borders', you can understand where they're coming from because they feel afraid. In this country, people feel that there are some people who feel the country is being taken over by Muslims or immigrants or black people or foreign people, strangers. And in some areas, that's real.

Karli (MMC 2) is Danish-born but spent her entire childhood and teenage years in Sweden and, consequently, has dual-citizenship. Karli (Extract 3) advocates by criticising multi-culturalism in Malmö; depicting the city as segregated and inhospitable to ‘Swedes’ who may reside in the area.

Extract 3

Karli

And then you can be in other areas where all the, like, written text on the floor is different, you know? Even, like, all the stores, their facades. Like, when all the shops are in foreign script in a language that you can't even read, right? Not even, like, it's not in Swedish, it's

³ Please note: All participant names are pseudonyms and the descriptions omit any key identifying features.

not in English. It's in other languages. And they have their own kind of a bubble. So, I think it's incredibly segregated. And I think as a Swede, if you happen to live in an area where you become the minority, I can emphasize with them feeling unsafe or maybe they feel suddenly unsure about where they live (.) they think 'what is this place?'

4.2.2. 'Acceptable' Migrant (political narrative)

'Acceptable' Migrant (political narrative)

Those with a high level of mobility (MMC 7 or above) were distinctive in highlighting the 'acceptable migrant' narrative (the idea that some migrants are considered more 'acceptable' to a host country because they align with the ethnicity and cultural norms of the population's majority). There is a strong fairness and anti-racist intention motivating how this experience is disseminated by those experiencing it. This finding shows a clear distinction in the everyday experiences of those with high and low mobility among this sample, which may influence how immigration is discussed if participants from differing mobility pasts are paired together.

The 'Acceptable Migrant' was the most dominant narrative among those with a MMC 7 or above when discussing their own mobility past (see Appendix B for all examples). This narrative seems to be a key one for those with a highly mobile past as this was not found among the low-mobility Pristina interviewees. UK-born Jilly (MMC 10) has resided in 10 different countries over the course of her adult life. She is not settled in Sweden and is only staying to gain citizenship status to allow further mobility within the EU. She embodies this representation (Extract 4) in recalling her own experiences and what she considers to be a racist sub-text to this narrative.

Extract 4

Jilly

Yeah, I mean, I've lived in 10 countries, so I can't really be anti-immigrant, you know (laughter). And actually, it's quite funny, though, but a lot of it is like, I mean, I've had so many stories of people here being like, 'Oh, no, no, but I don't mean like your type of immigrant. I mean, like the other ones'. And you're just like, what do you mean the other ones? Oh, the brown ones and the black ones, you mean!

Another resident of Malmö, Romanian-born Amalia (MMC 8) who relocated due to a previous relationship, shares an almost identical situation (Extract 5).

Extract 5

Amalia

At work, every discussion that you would have, it would involve this hatred of immigrants. And everybody felt so freely to speak in front of me, where myself I was an immigrant, but I was white and I just felt like, of course I knew my privilege, but I think I just got super disgusted by it.

4.2.3. Borderfree World

Borderfree World

Residents in Sweden with a higher level of migration-mobility seem resistant to the idea of a border-free world due to concerns over security. This contrasts with less mobile residents in other countries who aspired towards a border-free world. The idea of a border-free world and its implications for freedom of movement and security could be a salient topic for pairing discussions due to those contrasting views.

Understanding the participants' relationships to borders via the map comparison task offers the potential for interesting, location-specific paired discussions on immigration. The findings show higher mobility participants residing in Sweden are more conflicted over the idea of a border free world and frequently reject the concept as an idealistic utopia. This was enacted with the frequently adopted *I-Border-Pragmatist* position, which foregrounds the idea that borders serve a function (e.g.: security, trade regulation, etc.) essential to the security of the person's home nation. Ingmar (MMC 8) was born and raised in the UK but, due to a fascination with the Nordic model of Social-Democracy, has resided in various Scandinavian countries and is now settled in Sweden. Here (Extract 6) his pragmatic positioning focuses on security within the context of present-tense global conflicts with the assumption nation-states have a duty of care to citizens (see Appendix B for variations on this idea of pragmatism).

Extract 6

Ingmar

The state of world affairs, we have so many conflicts on (.) all different (.) from conflicts as extreme as war to conflicts or just disagreements over certain resources and inequalities (...) so this is essential security, ultimately, it is a question of security and a question of safety. And I think, unfortunately, nation states do, they have to look after, their primary reason is to look after and protect their citizens.

All of the participants in these examples reside in Sweden, a country which has been framed as increasingly dangerous due to immigration (Lowe, 2024). The Swedish concept of *Folkhemmet* (People's Home) and the idea that those who break the law become "orphans of Sweden" (*styv barn i det Svenska Folkhemmet*) could be influencing these border endorsements on the basis of security (Pratt, 2008). In contrast, some of the participants with a lower migration-mobility are unequivocal in adopting an *I-Border-Free-Advocate* position when comparing the borderless and nation-state maps. Jimmy (MMC 5), an internal migrant who relocated from Glasgow to Edinburgh to study journalism, foregrounds the personal freedoms that a borderless world will bring (Extract 7). Pristina-born Astrid (MMC 1), who is generationally non-mobile, also focuses on the limitations to individual freedoms (Extract 8).

Extract 7

Jimmy

I think it's good not to have any borders, you can have the right to go and choose where you want to live, where you want to work, have a family.

Extract 8

Astrid

Ideally, I'd go for the map without borders because it removes those imposed divisions and might allow people to coexist without constant territorial disputes.

4.2.4. Migration – The Story of Human History – a contested narrative

Migration – The Story of Human History – a contested narrative

The idea that migration is the story of human history was one of the most polarising ideas discussed that originated directly from the stimulus materials. Unlike other metrics which detail immigrants numbers (e.g.: statistics on population numbers), this temporal-orientated argument seems to resonate with some and disengage others in equal measure. Previous chronotope-focused political research has also found that individuals evoking these temporal and spatial dimensions oppose or support an issue with a 'sense of certainty' (Davidson, 2007; Georgiadou, 2019; Ranta & Nancheva, 2019). This offers a meaningful difference for exploration in Study B if relevant temporal-focused stimulus materials are used.

Stage four of the interview involved showing an image of protestors offering support for asylum seekers by arguing migration is a part of human history (Image 5 – Table 3), which evoked highly conflicted responses. Simon, an internal migrant (MMC 4), is a 28-year-old teacher who relocated to Manchester after a year travelling. He is extremely critical of this temporal-oriented chronotopic idea (Extract 9) and rejects the proposal that travel is inherently 'natural' or should be relevant to the present (see Appendix B for other similar criticisms of this idea).

Extract 9

Simon

I think it's a bit pointless as an argument because you could make any argument using something that humans have done at some point in their history and say, "therefore that's natural." You know, we used to kill other tribes and go on the attack—I wouldn't suggest we do that now either.

Danish-born Norbert (MMC 10) has travelled around Europe (UK, Germany) for his postgraduate studies and is temporarily residing in Malmö to be with his partner. He (Extract 10) evokes a chronotope of Africa as the birthplace of humanity (which is representative of other replies also) and then compares those that do not recognise migration is a part of human history as being akin to evolution deniers.

Extract 10

Norbert

I mean if I had to picture myself in any of those pictures that that would be the one! I mean I think that's just a fact! I mean that's true (.) I mean we all come from (.) I mean, I do believe in the theory of evolution which means that we all come from the same place!*

5. Study A – Conclusions



Study A – Key Outcomes

Advocating-They Positions

Differences in how the participants view and advocate for those who feel threatened by migrants and/or refugees offers a clear divide in their understanding of the issue. As this advocating-they position was a proxy for some of participants' own anti-migrant views, pairing together those with different reasons for advocating is relevant to exploring polarising discourse in Study B.

'Acceptable Migrant' Experience

The sense of unfairness expressed at the reasons why migrants are judged (i.e.: how closely they 'fit in' with the host country) was prevalent among residents of Malmö with a higher migration-mobility. This offers a strong potential point of connection for Study B among those who have experienced this as migrants in Sweden.

Borderfree World Idea

There is the potential here for finding connections and exposing differences based on exploring the relationship paired participants have with borders. Some adopted an *I-Pragmatic* position to argue for the importance of borders (rejecting any other view as idealistic), which clearly contrasts with those advocating for such a world.

Migration and Human History

The highly contested idea that the story of human history is one of migration offers potential as a polarising issue among those who disagree on the validity of the claim, regardless of their migration-mobility experiences.

This analysis answered the following research question: Is there a relationship between higher migration-mobility experiences and pro-migration positions? As expected, based on previous MMC research (English, 2022; Mahendran, English, & Nieland, 2020), the relationship between positions on migration and personal migration-mobility experiences is a complex one. Differences in how migrants, refugees or the concept of immigration is understood can be influenced by the person's own migration-mobility'. However, it is not as simple as 'higher mobility correlates to higher pro-migration narratives. The dialogical analysis found those with contrasting migration-mobility experiences position themselves differently on migration issues depending on the relevance of the issue to that country. Those with a higher level of migration-mobility in Sweden frequently adopted a pragmatic position to the idea of a world without borders. Important to note that focusing on the practical implications of a border-free world is not an inherently anti-migrant position. However, in a cultural context in which the idea of open borders for refugees has been frequently cited as the instigating factor for Sweden's high crime rate by right-wing populists (Sarnecki, et al. 2025), a pragmatic position on borders seems to align more with the current narrative that Sweden should not accept high numbers of

migrants. One factor here could be that those with this higher-level mobility can more readily acknowledge the functional value in borders without being perceived as anti-migrant. Another influence could be that they have internalised a prevalent media narrative that free movement across borders is a threat to Folkhemmet (People's Home) – which aligns with previous research on populist understandings of home (Mahendran, English, & Nieland, 2021b). In understanding the participants' positions and narratives on a host of migration-related issues, there is now a comparative context for pairing together individuals to explore dialogue sustainment on polarising issues.

6. Study B - Pairing Process

Individuals residing in the same location were paired together on two shared features based on the interview analysis (e.g.: Internalised, Interactive or Dimensional) which was then contextualised by their survey responses (e.g.: immigration positivity score, attitude certainty, worldviews). They were also paired on a projected polarising issue relating to migration in their country of residence. The pairing process began by revisiting the dialogical three-step analysis and using NVivo 12, software designed to organise qualitative data. NVivo 12's Comparison Diagram feature was used to explore what shared features exist for each combination of pairing (e.g.: all the residents of Edinburgh, etc.). The criteria was qualitative rather than quantitative in that no weight was given to which pairings shared the highest number of shared features overall. Rather, the focus was on the type of shared features that emerged based on the same stimulus materials. For example, a shared *I-Refugee-Advocate* position in response to the immigration protest images in Study A implies similar values on this issue. The Comparison Diagram feature also offer insights into what issue may be potentially polarising on an immigration-related issue (see Appendix D for an example of the process).

To maintain the integrity of the research, participants were not informed of Study B's aims as it may have influenced their behaviour. Instead, Study B was presented as a post-election follow-up interview alongside another participant (e.g.: the 2024 UK General Election or European Election). Important to acknowledge that re-recruiting participants for Study B was challenging due to a variety of factors. Some of the participants initially invited expressed concerns about speaking with another participant as they anticipated a conflict could occur. Another issue was the logistics of arranging a suitable time for two participants and a researcher to meet amongst their other commitments. Consequently, a researcher replicating this process must be prepared to create an alternative pairings list on the premise their 'first choice' pairings may not be available (which occurred for Pairing A and B in this study).

7. Study B – Exploring Sustained Dialogue



Study B paired together two individuals from each country based on shared core political positions that both adopted in response to the same stimulus materials/questions (contextualised by their answers to the pre-interview questionnaire). Each pairing also had to

have a projected polarising issue between on immigration (or a wider political issue). Important to note that the participants engaged with Study B on the false premise that it was a follow-up study to understand their views on immigration in the aftermath of recent UK or European elections. This lack of disclosure as to the real aim of Study B (i.e.: exploring how they could sustain dialogue on a polarising issue) was to protect the integrity of the research as a pre-knowledge of this could have influenced how they behaved. The paired discussions all followed a three-stage process (Figure 2).

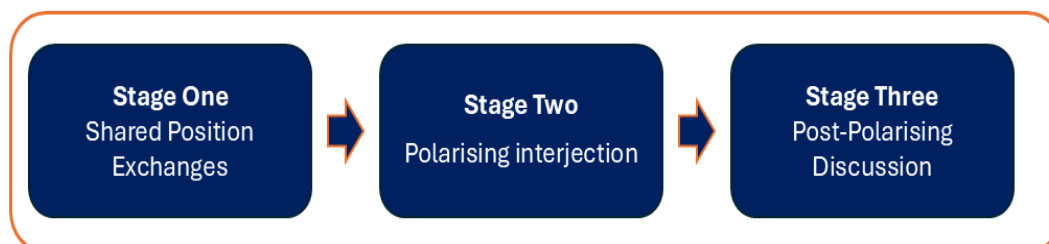






Figure 2. Paired Discussion Structure

Stage 1) Ask the pair six questions split evenly between two previously evoked representations or positions from Study A shared by both interviewees. For example, if both adopted a *I-Migrant-Advocate* position in response to the same stimulus materials in Study A, three of the questions would ask questions to ‘re-evolve’ this position (e.g.: ‘*If you were to make a pro-immigration argument – what would that be?*’).

Table 9: Stage Two - Projected Polarising Issues

Projected Polarising Issue			
A: Edinburgh	B: Manchester	C: Pristina	D: Malmö
Edinburgh community responses to refugees.	Democratic voting rights.	Pristina community responses to refugees.	Socialism’s potential to help migrants.
			
Report on UK riots and views on refugees. Time code: 2.15 – 3.015 (60 seconds)	Different opinions on the outcomes for the UK election Time code: 1.00 – 2.00 (60 seconds)	Report on Pristina residents’ reactions to refugees and immigration. Time code: 4.15 – 5.15 (60 seconds)	Report on the conflicting views on immigration in Sweden. Time code: 3.15 – 4.15 (60 seconds)

Stage 2) Expose the participants to footage which serves two purposes: (1) Opening footage that supports the premise of the study from the perspective of the participants (e.g.: content showing the UK General and European election results), and (2) Interweave polarising content on the issue of immigration that is projected to be relevant to each of the pairings (see Table 9 for how the projected polarising materials were included into the stimulus materials for each pairing).

Stage 3) Ask the pair four questions on their projected (i.e.: anticipated by the researcher) polarising issue to explore how they understand each other’s views on the issue and how they engage in dialogue with one another (see Appendix D for an example of this interview structure).

8. Study B - Paired Discussion Results



The following is an overview of the findings and what aspects provide an understanding of micro-level attunement between individuals to contribute towards the Dialogue Sustainment Attunement Tool. Please note, the extracts are highly condensed to exemplify the outcome in the most efficient way possible.

8.1. Pairing A (Edinburgh): Gerado and Tyson

Gerado

An Edinburgh University student with a high-mobility background (born in Mexico, childhood in the States) who is currently settled in Edinburgh.

Tyson

Tyson, a computer programmer and Green Party activist, was born in Jersey but relocated to Edinburgh upon graduation for work purposes and is settled.

Important to note that, whilst they did not know one another personally, the participants recognised each other instantly once the discussion began as both had attended a meeting as members of the Scottish Greens.

Table 10: *Pairing A (Edinburgh)*

	Age	Gender	MMC position	Immigration Positivity / Attitude Certainty	Map Preference	Worldview
Gerado	20	Male	8	Highly Positive / High	Borderless	Localised
Tyson	33	Male	7	Highly positive / High	Nation-state	Localised

Pairing A: Results Overview

As the only pairing that did not have any moments of dissensus at any stage in the discussion, this offers valuable insights into the type of discursive dynamic which must exist to implement this concept in real-world settings. As the participants recognised each other from a previous political meeting and would likely meet again, there was a risk of consensus-seeking behaviour as this interaction could have future implications. A secondary factor could be that the material used for this pairing did not offer Gerado an opportunity to adopt an advocate position for the local community.

Future Relationship Risks

The possibility that those engaged in discourse will meet again could limit how willing they are to engage in challenging political discussions as it risks their future relationship.

Relevant Discussion Points

Any stimulus material used to start a discussion must align closely with the person's views or risk being unrepresentative and, therefore, irrelevant to those involved.

Shared positions:

I-Green-Party-Member

Both participants adopted this position when discussing their political engagement in the first section of Study A's interview. This position is adopted throughout the interview to contextualise their understanding of immigration.

I-Refugee-Advocate

In response to the stimulus materials in Study A's fourth section (immigration protest images), both advocate for refugees who are fleeing their own country and seeking asylum in the UK.

Projected Polarising Issue: Edinburgh community responses to refugees.

Gerado: *I-Threatened-Community-Advocate*

Tyson – *I-Anti-Refugee-Critic*

The polarising issue between them seems to be that Gerado adopts an advocating-they position of local community advocate for anti-refugee protestors (despite disagreeing with their fundamental argument). In contrast, Tyson adopts an 'I-Anti-Refugee-Critic' position and claims '*zero sympathy – of all the opinions, this is the one I have the least in common with*'.

8.1.1. Interview Stages

As outlined, the first stage involves asking each pair six questions evenly split between two shared features (e.g.: position, social rep) relevant to both participants.

***I-Green-Party-Member* section**

In response to an explicit prompt on what positive things they would say to someone when describing the Scottish Green Party, both participants adopted this position. Therefore signalling to each other that they have a shared investment in the organisation.

Extract 11

Interviewer

Okay, um, so if you were to offer someone a few positive things about what the Scottish Green Party are about, what would you say?

Tyson

Um the general positive things is it's the progressive left-wing force in Scottish parliamentary politics. There is no other party that is so firm on ensuring that the wealthy pay their fair share of tax, that trans rights are respected, that everyone deserves a roof over their heads. That combination does not exist in any other party.

Gerado

Yeah, I think I'd probably come at it to a similar approach. I think we're one of the only parties that really take seriously the relationship between social justice and climate justice and acts on it. And I think our capacity as a party to lead change on these elements, to try and do whatever we can with the Scottish devolved settlement to not just act on climate but also act on tangibly improving the lives of people in Scotland, especially the disadvantaged.

I-Refugee-Advocate section

In this section both adopt a complimentary I-Media-Critic position when explicitly asked about the role of 'traditional' media in the immigration debate within the UK.

Extract 12

Interviewer

Tyson, you mentioned something I wanted to follow up on about the role of the media - the role they may have played in stoking antagonism towards migrants and refugees?

Tyson

I'd go further (.) I'm not saying that they (the media) played a role in saying that they deliberately and maliciously whipped up violence against refugees! Intentional (.) it was an intentional act and I think the main thing that can be done about it is we shouldn't be in a position where our entire media landscape is owned by three billionaires and one hedge fund because it's impossible to exist as a journalist in a situation where your only potential employers are billionaires and hedge funds.

Interviewer

Gerado, I am interested in your opinions?

Gerado

Yeah, I mean, I agree with that point very much. That's one of the big challenges we face right now. And it does put journalists in a very difficult position, as Tyson said, because truth has to be compromised to an extent.

Post-Polarising section: Edinburgh community responses to refugees

Unusually, when compared with the other pairings, the introduction of the polarising stimulus materials did not lead to any moments of dissensus between the pair regarding Edinburgh communities' responses to refugees. Whilst both Gerado and Tyson adopted an *I-Refugee-Advocate* position during Study A, there was a difference in how they positioned local communities that may have concerns about this issue (Gerado adopted an *I-Threatened-Community-Advocate* in contrast with Tyson's *I-Anti-Refugee-Critic*). However, during their discussion of this issue in the final stage, both align with one another to advocate for refugees by comparing them to trans rights. Tyson instigates this comparison (a preoccupation of his evident in Study A) by comparing the pro-trans consensus in Spain with what he considers to be negative attitudes in Scotland. Gerado agrees with this comparison and takes this idea forward in framing how he then talks about Scottish attitudes towards refugees.

Extract 13

Tyson

I think for me I really like useful comparison is trans rights um and the fact across the UK especially in Scotland we've seen people building up that priming of prejudice across the population which makes it a lot easier to then flick the switch into prejudicial policies...look across in Spain and they (the Scottish) are shocked and appalled by just how quickly trans rights has advanced in Spain and how there is no resistance to it at all...it kind of shows that Scotland is just as capable of building these prejudicial consensus across politics and the media, it just so happens that immigrants and refugees haven't been the target here.

Gerado

Yeah, I think uh I agree with all those points um on uh you got the issue of trans rights um and it is a very good example of how there are we also have to think beyond borders. This disintegration of the consensus on trans rights in Scotland is just as possible if we're not careful on immigrants and refugees um so it'd be interesting to see what lessons we can take from countries like Spain that were able to maintain their consensus.

8.2. Pairing B (Manchester): Kelsey and Bridget

Bridget

Bridget works in the charity sector and recently relocated to Manchester for professional reasons. Whilst not native to Manchester (she was born in the south-east of England), she is settled in the area at present.

Kelsey

Kesley is an American-born resident of Manchester as a result of his academic career. Although retired, he is still active in the academic life of the city.

Pairing A share a strong advocating positions for immigration as a concept and a mutual dislike for social media as an influencing force in political life. The pair have the potential to disagree on Kesley's ideas about democratic participation which, within the parameters of this project, could be defined as everyday extremism.

Table 11: *Pairing B (Manchester)*

	Age	Gender	MMC position	Immigration Positivity / Attitude Certainty	Map Preference	Worldview
Bridget	34	Female	4	Highly positive / High	Borderless	Pragmatist
Kelsey	65	Male	8	Somewhat positive / High	Borderless	Localised

Pairing B: Overview

Kelsey and Bridget seemed to both connect over their shared positions in the first stage of their discussion. In the third stage, they did disagree on the projected polarising issue about the public's democratic right to vote. However, this initial disagreement did not create a polarising dynamic between the pair. Bridget went on to agree with Kelsey's frustrations on what they considered to be public ignorance driving the success of far-right populists. A key takeaway from Pairing B is that the unexpected potency of Kelsey's idea about limiting voting rights for those who he considers to be 'uneducated' among the UK public. In the definition of OppAttune, this idea would be considered to be everyday extremism. Interestingly, the framing of the idea as a light-hearted fantasy may have helped in diminishing the impact of an idea which limits democratic capacities for others. Bridget, who initially disagrees, quickly adopts and justifies the idea by arguing it is 'unfair' for informed members of the public to be impacted by other people's voting preferences.

Everyday Extremism Framing

When an extreme political view is presented as fantastical and playful, it could be seen as more acceptable to agree and develop the idea.

Conformity Pressure

Presented with passionate political views (even one which is extreme) can be difficult to refute if the person is unsure of the issue.

Shared positions:

I-Migration-Advocate

Both are strong advocates for migration as a positive force for the UK. Bridget focuses on Manchester and the benefits of immigration on the city, whilst Kelsey focuses on larger idea of migration being the 'history of humanity' and that it reduces prejudice.

I-Social-Media-Critic

At various points in their respective Study A interviews, both position themselves as being critics of social media when it comes to finding reliable news sources.

Projected Polarising Issue: Democratic voting rights.

Kelsey: *I*-Voter-Suppressor

Bridget: *I*-Politically-Unaware

The polarising issue between them is Kesley's everyday extremism regarding democratic citizenship. His idea is that those who do not pass a 'democracy quiz' should not have their votes counted at elections as he argues they are not informed enough to participate in democracy. If this idea were to be enacted, it would likely impact on Bridget's positioning of herself as *I-Politically-Unaware* which has the potential to be a disruptive idea.

8.2.1. Interview Stages

***I*-Migration-Advocate section**

In response to being asked explicitly to offer a pro-migration argument, both Kelsey and Bridget agree on the positive impact of migration on UK culture. They do so by framing the issue within their own personal migration-mobility backgrounds (Kelsey with an *I-Migrant* position and Bridget as an *I-Migrant-Descendant*) and find mutual connection because of this and how they appear to others (i.e.: white).

Extract 14

Interviewer

So, if you were to make a pro-immigration argument – what would that be?

Kelsey

Well, my response to the turbulent summer and how, if there could be an argument, which is pro-immigration, is that not only the fact that I'm an immigrant, Not only am I an immigrant, but my grandparents on my mother's side were immigrants and on my father's side. I ended up back at the country with my mother's grandparents. So basically, I'm not really an immigrant because my DNA came from here. But in doing so, it actually has massively increased my cultural understanding of not just myself. And my family and the history and the multiple cultures I've come to experience. But it's actually allowed me to engage with much, much wider groups than the white, educated English speaking as a first language male. And all those privileges that come with that.

Interviewer

Well, I'll move on to Bridget now. What's, what would your sort of pro-immigration argument be?

Bridget

Yeah, very, yeah. Equally. I come from a family, like as much as I'm white, my family are from other countries originally and have like gone on interesting journeys to come to the UK. So I'm completely pro-immigration and behind the benefits. Like just the richness it brings to communities, just makes life more interesting. Like so boring if it were all the same in my work, in my social life. Like it's, it just brings such a richness to my life, to my communities, to my, not just to me, but to everybody. Like my street is super multicultural, like all the different celebrations that everyone observes and how that kind of. I know those are all like very romantic ways of looking at immigration, but you can't help to see the benefits. When you live in positive immigration, in my opinion. I'm really very pro, for me, it would be hard to think of a really bad reason, a bad reason for immigration.

***I*-Social-Media-Critic section**

Both participants adopt an *I-Media-Critic* position when discussing the 2024 UK summer riots which occurred in the aftermath of mass murders in Stockport and the false claims the perpetrator was an asylum seeker (Venkataramakrishnan, 2025).

Extract 15

Kelsey

The media has a huge role to play in this and politicians and the language that they've used for years. It's now become (..) it's far right. Well, in my opinion, it's like far. It's the same as what the far-right use.

Bridget

Yeah, like I completely agree. I think actually the far right and like if we're thinking of like refugees, asylum seekers, they're actually really, they should be fighting together against the powers that be, not against each other. But this like this misuse of well of the truth is it's just evil. And it's I think that's what's to blame. Part of what's to blame this summer, which is it's horrible. Like it's so upsetting. Like it's so disappointing.

Post-Polarising section: Democratic voting rights

As projected, Kelsey repeats his idea about limiting democratic capacities (i.e.: right to vote) for those considered to be lacking in political knowledge. However, he softens the implicit everyday extremism in this by framing the idea as a 'fantasy'. Whilst Bridget explicitly rejects this idea but, in her next utterance, agrees with the frustration he expresses regarding support for far-right populist figures.

Extract 16

Kelsey

...what I would like to see in my fantasy world is that alongside on that ballot paper are 10 questions which are an all-party they're constructed by all parties involved and I hate to say it even reform um UK and they have they have the questions and you have to answer the question by choosing the correct answer and if you get fewer than seven out of ten correct your vote doesn't count because if you're voting grossly misinformed then how could your vote have any validity as to what you are voting for so someone gets eight out of ten right and they're voting for Farage I would count that vote but if they're only getting three out of ten correct and the voting for Rishi we throw out the vote people have to be informed about what they're voting for yeah that's my fantasy! (laughs).

Bridget

I (...) yeah, I don't know if I'd go as far as doing that. I totally agree with you in terms of like there's people going to vote but they actually have no (.) they've not engaged with the process (.) they've like okay maybe they've watched a bit of the election videos but that's all just a big pantomime it's a load of rubbish it's not really the truth is (.) it's like the show before the vote but like it is frustrating when you see parties like doing better and it's like I don't know a lot of what they say is actually lies.

Despite a prompt from the interviewer to expand on her initial reservations about Kelsey's idea, Bridget takes the opportunity to expand on the idea and support his rationale for limiting voting rights. How Bridget expands on the idea indicates that, despite an initial objection, she does

see an appeal in the idea This is an interesting development as it shows how an extreme idea can be presented as appealing (framed as a fantasy) and shared with another.

Extract 17

Bridget

I don't know, I don't (.) I don't think it would go down very well like with human rights (.) I don't know (.) No (...) I actually agree with it but like in my ideal I don't know (.) maybe I do (.) maybe I do completely agree but I feel bad because it makes sense to me (.) I completely agree with you Kelsey (.) it isn't like (.) it makes sense that people should there should be a bit of a verification of like 'do you know what's going on?' like 'do you know what this party believes in?' or 'what they're actually planning to do or have you read a few choice articles or a couple of Tik Tok videos?' like it does seem unfair that for people that really engage and really care and like whether it's right-wing or left-wing, like it doesn't really matter, but really engage what that party believes in and that aligns and then somebody's vote is like doesn't really (.) it's very it feels unfair sometimes, do you know?

8.3. Pairing C (Pristina): Flora and Arben

Flora

Flora currently works for an NGO (climate awareness) and is considering relocating to study for a Masters in an EU country as she has never resided anywhere but Pristina.

Arben

Arben did not disclose his current employment circumstances but, aside from a brief period residing in Vilnius (Lithuania) for his studies, is now settled in Pristina.

Table 12: *Pairing C (Pristina)*

	Age	Gender	MMC position	Immigration Positivity / Attitude Certainty	Map Preference	Worldview
Flora	25	Female	1	Somewhat negative / Medium	Borderless	Localised
Arben	30	Male	4	Somewhat positive / High	Nation-state	Localised

Pairing C both shared pragmatic positioning on the concept of borders for Kosovo and were critical of the persistent issue of young people leaving to work in EU countries. A potentially polarising issue was how the local Pristina community do and should respond to refugees seeking a new home. Important to note that this pair had also met previously at a graduate youth program. Unlike Pairing A however, they were unlikely to meet again in any formal setting which may have diminished any concerns about future interactions.

Pairing C: Overview

Pairing C offers insight into how individuals discussing a polarising political issue (community responses to refugees) navigate moments of dissensus. In the first stage of the discussion, both share positions on the importance of borders and in their critique of the high number of young professionals migrating from Kosovo. In the post-polarising stage, Arben offers his concerns on refugees moving into area of Pristina by advocating for others in the community. As seen in Study A, an advocating-they position can be useful for individuals that are concerned by how others will interpret their own views (especially if they have an exclusionary focus). When this strategy does not reduce Flora's level of disagreement with his initial premise, Arben redirects his attention to the interviewer by arguing that the issue of refugee acceptance in Kosovo is an irrelevant one given the numbers.

Distraction Strategy

In a vexed moment between the pair, one or both may redirect the discussion towards the facilitator as a distraction strategy to lessen the tension.

Opinion Masking

Advocating for others offers the opportunity for a person to voice views they may worry will be perceived as controversial by others.

Shared positions:

I-Border-Pragmatist

They both shared the position based on the idea that, although a borderless world would be appealing in an ideal world, a bordered world is essential for the countries to function.

I-Migrating-Youth-Critic

Both Arben and Flora adopt this position in a present tense chronotope to lament that younger people are migrating to the EU due to the limited job opportunities.

Projected Polarising Issue: Pristina community responses to refugees.

Flora: *I*-Refugee-Advocate.

Arben: *I*-Threatened-Community-Advocate.

In response to the section four's focus on immigration protests in Study A, they adopt different positions on how communities in Pristina should react to refugees. Arben adopts an advocating position for communities which feel threatened by high levels of immigration in their area. In contrast, Flora rejects the protests against refugees and positions herself to align with their struggles.

8.3.1. Interview Stages

I-Border-Pragmatist section

Flora and Arben connect in the first stage of the discussion as they share a pragmatic position on the idea that a borderless world is unrealistic given the current geopolitical climate.

Extract 18

Interviewer

One of the ideas that came out of the first study was the discussions around borders, this idea of a borderless world what would that look like (.) what are your kind of thoughts on this idea of a borderless world?

Flora

Okay, so um I would like also to like to divide my desire and like the reality of the situation in this question because also uh like being from Kosovo and having issues with the freedom of movement for such a long time (..) I would support this uh concept of borderless and freedom of movement but is it realistic? I don't know (.) because people are there is like very uh nationalistic rhetoric going on around and people are very protective of their own culture their own territories and then what is considered their own and uh there is also this process of othering of like this is ours and that's not it's not yours (.) this versus the other so um this is more or less what I think.

Interviewer

Okay, what do you what do you think Arben?

Arben

Yeah, a borderless world (..) I don't know for me is not realistic. I don't want to sound very pessimist or like I would like to be more optimistic on this direction. First of all I don't think that it's very necessary I mean depends on the context if we are talking about goods moving from a country to a country I think more or less it's happening on the regions that I know more I mean I'm not sure that everything is going smoothly in Africa for example or Asia but more or less in Europe us part of Asia maybe middle east as well, there are economic cooperation between the countries and stuff but in the big picture like borderless uh in in very straightforward meaning like no borders in the world I think it's not very realistic (.) at least for maybe 100 years to come in my life in my opinion of course! (laughs).

I-Migrating-Youth-Critic section

In answering a broad question as to their views about youth migration, both participants find a connection in their critical view of young Kosovans that emigrate to EU countries for professional purposes. Albeit Flora positions herself with the young people (we-positioning) in criticising what she considers to be their 'glorification' of the west. Arben critiques by evoking a temporal connection between the Kosovo's independence from Serbia in 2008 and current circumstances.

Extract 19

Interviewer

Arben touched on something I wanted to talk about which is this idea of people leaving Kosovo. One of the issues that seems to be particularly prevalent the last few years is that young people are moving to EU countries to start a new life. What do you think are the main factors as to why they're doing this?

Flora

I think it does not come only to uh, like, the resources part (.) but also the economic growth in Kosovo. It does not provide the labour market opportunities that you people are requiring for uh for example and this starts from like uh problems that you that the system has like uh when it comes to educational system as a whole because for example um it is not in compliance with the labour market needs and in the end we have young people who end up studying for four or five years in a certain field and not being able to like contribute to that field (...) when I see with young people, another thing is this glorification of the western countries we have we have this perception of that uh everything that is western is better than in Kosovo and it's very prevalent.

Arben

To continue when Flora left. I mean, we had a lot of problems, people leaving, I mean, since before war and after war, but let's talk about the period after independence, for example, 2008 and when people really thought that after the independence, everything would be better in Kosovo so we don't have to leave, etc. So, for example, 2014 and after that, we had many people, 100,000 leaving Kosovo by foot through Serbia, Hungary to Austria and beginning the path to Europe. The European Union, not just Europe as a continent. And the thing was that people who didn't have proper education or no education, they were leaving in that time. And everyone was understanding that they don't have opportunities here (...) But now what is happening is that, like, professionals are leaving, so this is becoming a concern for Kosovo. For example, nurses, doctors, engineers, architects.

Post-Polarising section: Pristina community responses to refugees

In response to an intentionally controversial question about the Pristina community's response to refugees, Arben and Flora engage in disagreement about how Pristina residents should perceive refugees becoming a part of the community. Arben clearly recognises that he risks being perceived as racist (hence the qualifying sentence) so he focuses on advocating for those that he feels would have concerns about such circumstances. Flora counters this argument by highlighting the risk in generalising refugees based on ethnicity which Arben agrees with before reverting to his original point.

Extract 20

Interviewer

I was interested in your thoughts on whether you it's legitimate for local communities to feel concerned if refugees are coming into an area regarding the availability of resources?

Arben

I mean uh I think there should be regulations of immigration laws within countries in general. If I would be living in Germany and suddenly, I would see thousands of Kosovans or Albanians from Kosovo coming to my neighbourhood, coming to my city I would be a little bit (...) because I am living in my comfort zone, everything is set, everything is going smoothly and now suddenly people from Kosovo are joining in. Without being racist, I would just be concerned that new people are coming (...) we have seen a lot of, I mean, terrorist attacks based on religion and as revenge. People are concerned (...) it's fair (..) they have contributed for generations to build a safe place to live where everything is

working right and smoothly and, if by any chance new people come who don't share the same values, traditions, or ideas, they can be worried and I agree with that.

Flora

I think a little bit different (.) uh so my opinion is that uh this has to do a lot with the mental barriers that people have from one another and as much as states needs to, err, take measures because, as we talked about, if all the population concentrates in one country then it becomes the problem of, uh, being able to accommodate the needs of these people... but if you're saying that you cannot um come to a certain country because 'you are this or that' then that becomes an issue because this approach is a bit problematic on its own. I also (...) the problem lies on the generalization on this like their ethnicity, it's related to the person and their experience. (...) One does not equal the group.

Arben

Yes, yes, yes, I totally agree. I mean, there shouldn't be generalization based on your background, ethnic, religion, or any other. But still, I would feel concerned a little bit. Even new neighbours would come to live close to my apartment that I don't know anything about. It's humankind, I think, and especially when you have these obviously...all this information from media and everyone else, you cannot just avoid them and tell yourself that it's all hate speech. It's not matching the realistic situation. So I still think that it is fair for a population to be concerned, and I totally understand that.

The interviewer then asks Arben to elaborate on this idea of shared values to explore this potential difference. Arben moves to the idea of shared values being important (implying this may not be the case among some refugees) which Flora rejects in favour of compatible values among residents and refugees. These dissensus moments are then annulled by Arben addressing the interviewer directly that this is not a relevant issue for those residing in Kosovo.

Extract 21

Arben

I just mentioned that shared values is very, it's important in order to like live peacefully between other people. And if people that come with some shared values that you are expecting from them to be matching yours in your country, it would be much easier for them to coexist between each other and maybe in the future like to be, I mean, together living in peace and like just living your own life.

Flora

Yeah, okay, I understand. So there's a difference in my opinion. There's a difference of having common values and being able to respect someone else who has different values. So if these values are not clashing with one another, if I'm not like taking certain actions to like (.) to interact with other people's values and spaces, then I think it's okay. We do not have to all like stand up for the same thing as long as we respect each other for that.

Arben

(addressing interviewer) To be honest, it's not really a topic in Kosovo. It's not that we receive a lot of immigrants from the other countries. And maybe because of that, I never (.) Maybe I had the opportunity to read about it and follow the news, but it's not that it's

a topic that you can daily follow. And you should be very focused in that topic in order to have more information.

8.4. Pairing D (Malmö): Amalia and Tobais

Pairing D: Overview

Pairing D shows that dialogue can be sustained despite a high number of disagreements during the course of the discussion. Even in the first stage of the discussion, the pair did not adopt the previously held position projected by the analysis – i.e.: that both would advocate for those feeling threatened by high numbers of immigrants. However, they did connect as parents on the related issue of what schools should prioritise for the sake of supporting the local community. Both briefly connected over the ‘acceptable migrant’ idea based on their personal experiences as migrants (i.e.: the idea that some immigrants are considered more ‘acceptable’ to a host country because they align with the ethnicity and cultural norms of the majority). However, this manifest into a disagreement about the idea of ‘European identity’ and the value judgements that it creates. The post-polarising topic on the value of socialist ideals to support immigrants in Sweden also caused moments of dissensus around the Swedish concept of *Folkhemmet* (People’s Home) and the legitimacy of this concept when considering the nation’s past.

Perceived Legitimacy

Both brought their life experiences as migrant parents into their discussion on Sweden’s immigration and refugee policies. Framing the issue within their own personal circumstances signalled to each other that the issue was real to them and, consequently, that their views both had legitimacy (despite the differences).

Attitude Certainty

A high level of certainty about their own views on immigration (and related issues), alongside an undoubted legitimacy, could have contributed to a dynamic in which both have the confidence to disagree and the mutual respect to listen.

Amalia

Amalia is Romanian-born Malmö resident who moved here due to a previous relationship (e.g.: ex-partner is Swedish). She is the parent of two young children, works in the hospitality industry and is settled in Sweden.

Tobais

Tobais is Greek-born (Athens) who relocated to Malmö with his partner and young child as it offered them both career advancement; both are settled in Malmö.

As both Amalia and Tobais had a high level of migration-mobility, the ‘Good migrant-Bad migrant’ social representation (i.e.: how many shared features a migrant has with the local community will determine how they are received) was relevant to their personal experiences. Counterintuitively, they also shared an advocating position on those in the Malmö community

that felt concerned by immigrants their area for non-racist reasons. A potentially polarising issue was the thought experiment that a socialist Sweden (as opposed to the current social-democratic model) would be more supportive of immigrants.

Table 13: *Pairing D (Malmö)*

	Age	Gender	MMC position	Immigration Positivity / Attitude Certainty	Map Preference	Worldview
Amalia	33	Female	8	Neutral / High	Borderless	Localised
Tobais	35	Male	7	Highly positive / High	N/A	Pragmatist

Shared Positions:

I-Threatened-Community-Advocate

In responding to stimulus materials in section four of Study A, both adopt this advocating position and recognise that communities which feel threatened by high levels of immigration in their area may do so for non-racist reasons (e.g.: lack of investment in local resources, high unemployment, etc).

Acceptable Migrant – Political Narrative

Both share the understanding that there is a hierarchy in how a community receives migrants based on many shared features (e.g.: language, ethnicity, cultural values, etc.) they share with the host country as they have experienced this in their own lives.

Projected Polarising Issue: Socialism’s potential to help migrants.

Amalia: *I*-Communist-Critic

Tobais: *I*-Socialist.

Compared to the other potentially polarising issues, this is more abstract thought experiment on whether changing from a social-democratic to a socialist or communist model will help migrants in Sweden. Born into the post-communist Romania, Amalia is critical of communist or socialist-level state intervention as a failed idea. In Study A, Tobais discussed immigration through a socialist prism and how it could improve the situation for both migrants and those communities who receive them.

8.4.1. Interview Stages

I-Threatened-Community-Advocate section

In this first section, Amalia and Tobias do not readily adopt a shared position as advocates for a threatened community. Although there is a shared appreciation for why a community may have material concerns, Tobias rejects the idea as having a ‘narrow focus’.

Extract 22

Amalia

I think it's quite self-explanatory I think it's you would always be concerned about, you know, cultures that you don't understand, that they're different than yours and how that

can affect you know your environment. I don't think that necessarily, um, I don't think that an emphasized concern is valid but the concern of any type I think it's valid.

Tobais

I think that the reasons why people do feel threatened, um no, I mean, let me rephrase it, the fact that people do see their everyday lives you know being devastated or their quality of life is dropping etc are absolutely legitimate material reasons for them to start thinking about you know what's going on and what can we do to change it. But I don't really believe that it is a legitimate, uh, issue that we are not liable to a particular (.) I don't think it's as legitimate as other reasons to blame immigration. I think it's just extremely narrow focus, if I'm honest with you.

Amalia

Well, no, but I, you know, I agree with you. I'm not (.) just because they exist and they are legitimate does not mean they're not narrow minded, but that doesn't make it less real. I think (.) I think in my prior experience; the main reason is how the culture will change and how the environment will change.

I-Parent

Whilst they do not share an advocating position, they both adopt an I-Parent position when considering the concerns they perceive the concerns of locals regarding schooling and imperative to teach in Swedish.

Extract 23

Amalia

And in my recent experience, it's (.) who, you know, how the school environments change for the children having to deal with so many immigrants. My daughter herself being an immigrant now in a Swedish school, you know, she just started this year. I just noticed. Many concerned parents and many other kind of dynamics that I did not realise before. On many levels, people worry about immigration from different sides, not only refugees, but white immigrants like me that are quite privileged. You know, we are also (.) they're also people that are worried about us being around, you know, Swedish culture, Swedish schools, and institutions and so on.

Tobais

Well I agree to a great extent. My daughter is not yet in the first school system, but I do have friends, you know, who have a small kids, small children and they are to be moved and they do have some concerns, especially regarding language, And so this is not like a bad topic. It's about a fair school system (.) there are some concerns especially regarding language, Um, if I'm honest with you, (...) that that's one thing I would say that I totally agree with Amalia.

Acceptable Migrant – Political Narrative

Both possess a shared understanding regarding the 'Acceptable Migrant' political narrative based on their own experiences and those of other migrants.

Extract 24

Amalia

I am Russian and Polish and Hungarian and I'm so mixed you know but nobody cares about my heritage or about my religion for that matter nobody ever asked me about my religion because I'm white and I have blue eyes and my children are blonde with blue eyes and they speak perfect Swedish because they were born here (...) what do you say of my privilege because I'm not treated as an immigrant even though when I speak Swedish you can obviously tell I'm not Swedish! They don't question my motives of coming here or, uh, how long will I be here or if I am paying taxes.

Tobais

It's obvious that we're treated differently from my experience. I think it has much to do with the colour of the skin. For example, I have a colleague that is from Iran, she's Christian her children have been called their obituary names in school and that's really hurtful to her because she's not even Muslim but she's treated as one just because she's Arabic... They're not an Arab but the way that they are perceived and the way that the children are perceived it's completely different and again if you do not look white and European you're put in a box in the box of being Muslim and Arab.

I-European - Identity Debate

This moment of connection soon erodes into another disagreement when the conversation moves into the concept of being 'European' and perceived differences between migrants and home country residents. Tobais argues the category of identifying a European in Sweden is too narrow and based on false criteria whilst, in contrast, Amalia argues that the colour of skin is a reliable indicator of heritage.

Extract 25

Tobais

In Brazil, you have their centuries and centuries and centuries the whites are still not considered local to Brazil. For me European (.) European like as the word European is Central European, it's white, it's Caucasian (.) Caucasians are in West Asia (.) it is, you know, Europe has a very complicated history! I would say it includes a lot of like diversity in like, uh, linguistics, colour of skin, phenotypes, colour of hair and a million different things history of course, uh, modern history.

Amalia

Um, so I understand what you're saying (.) it means it is not an informed opinion on how people perceive the word European but we also have this subculture that is European and that looks different and it doesn't really matter because I think that the colour of the skin has huge impact on a person's livelihood and on their ability to integrate in Sweden and anywhere (...) even in Brazil! If you're white because the colour of your skin that shows your heritage.

Tobais

I don't (.) I agree with what Amalia is saying. I agree with that (...) okay but I just (.) I just wanted to say that I think it's, um, I mean how did white people end up in the Americas? There are people in Brazil for example a very mixed country you know they (.) a lot of

slaves abducted, people from Africa were taken there (..) and there are indigenous peoples of course in contrast, for example in North America they were wiped out completely so you have all these heavily mixed, um, phenotype but of course, especially in the beginning and for quite a long time, the white Europeans (..) white European Brazilians were at the top so nowadays you have people who are not at the top and are thinking you know, these people are white (..) so must have white privilege (..) parents or grandparents or great, great, great, grandparents were slave owners or plantation owners or whatever (..) this is why you are more privileged than us (...) even though it might not be the case those people are victimized in a way that most probably have the same conditions.

Post-Polarising section: Socialism's potential to help migrants

In discussing the idea that immigrants would be better served if Sweden were a socialist country, Tobais evokes a temporal connection with the failure of the USSR to argue that a socialist country cannot exist in a capitalist world. Amalia advocates for the longstanding Swedish idea of Folkhemmet (i.e., 'People's Home' - a vision of society where all citizens are cared for) as a type of 'cultural socialism' which Tobias explicitly rejects as irrelevant.

Extract 26

Tobais

The issue is, for example, the USSR (.) this was an existing socialist country or union of countries, but of course, due to its existence in a capitalist imperialist world, a socialist state trying to exist within a capitalist world will always have to defend itself, which means, which means that it's available resources and labour power would have to be spent. And, you know, that's why, that's why the, one of the reasons why the USSR collapsed. (addressing the interviewer) It's, it's a very tough, you know, very tough scenario, what you're describing.

Amalia

I totally agree with what Tobais says in terms of economic socialism, but I think cultural socialism is also something that you guys haven't talked about is because, again, I like to make the world really small to my existence. So for example, a lot of people I hear saying that Sweden is a socialist country. And in the beginning, I would want to jump in like Tobais and say, no, it's not, it's not a socialist country because the economy and because this and because that, but I found out about this cultural socialism and the way that we strive in Sweden to be one class, you know, to be what they call Folkhemmet. To be a middle class that does not have too much luxury that has only the means that, you know, it's a uniform class in society...even the rich and the poor wearing kind of the same clothes, looking, presenting themselves in the same way, having the same opportunities in university.

Tobais

Firstly let me begin by saying that Sweden is one of the most unequal countries in terms of wealth distribution, so I don't really see this Folkhemmet. I hate that word, I really dislike it! I mean we're talking about a country that straight up collaborated with the Nazis 100 percent um (.) they let the Nazis go through Sweden to invade Norway and install their submarine base in the North Sea. So, there's a lot of bad things happening inside there.

Tobias goes on to modify this view in an attempt to sustain dialogue after this explicit rejection of Amalia's views. He does so by agreeing with the concept that Sweden had a type of social democracy but positions her views as being orientated in the past, not the present.

Extract 27

Tobias

But I think what Amalia is describing is also a version of past freedom because, like, for example, in the 70s, 80s (.) this thing existed during the height of like the so-called social democratic welfare state. It did exist. You did have an actual social democratic political party that had the support of the people. So all those policies that were implemented, the million program for building one million residencies, all those things were a thing that did happen. So pretty much what Amalia is talking about, and I agree with that, (...) but she is talking about, not such a radical transformation of Sweden, but we're talking about an older version of Sweden.

Interesting to note that both address the interviewer as the 'audience' to their disagreement and witness to their own attempts to be fair. In the follow-up question, Tobias and Amalia connect with one another by foregrounding what they assume the other person thinks to highlight why they are both correct.

Extract 28

Interviewer

So we're talking then about a perception, if not a reality, then certainly perception of more equality on some level. That there would be an easy relationship between immigrants and those born in Sweden if there was a greater sense of equality? Or am I putting words in your mouth?

Tobias

I would say that, yes. But of course, you need like a series of policies to enact that. And in my opinion, this will never happen in current day Sweden and in Europe. They did If I'm did have like a wealth redistribution type of thing where people, you know, a baseline was set, let's say, in abstract ways that, you know, basic needs should be met. Everybody, as Amalia said, should have an equal opportunity for higher education, access to health care, all those different aspects, of course, (...) Sweden has been completely dismantled, as is absolutely expected.

Amalia

Immigrants, they are so baffled that they have no choice in their child's education. You can't choose the school (.) I'm happy for that because she is in such a blended school with a different kind of. Backgrounds and colours of kids and she (.) she has access to the world and I think, you know, but then you go. Pragmatic Tobias would say, yeah, but 'Where you live, it's already segregated' and that's true, you know, the neighbourhoods here in Malmo are really segregated, like you can see it right away. So then the quality of education is also different.

9. Study B - Conclusions



Study B – Key Outcomes

Opinion Masking

The discursive move of advocating for another group to mask the person's own critical views of immigration was found in these discussions and in Study A. This is likely to be present when the person wishing to express this view is uncertain about how they will be received by others *and* is concerned with impression management (i.e.: wishes to avoid being perceived as prejudiced). Advocating for others that hold the view they wish to express offers a moderate way to navigate these two concerns.

Perceived Legitimacy and Attitude Certainty

Pairing D's ability to sustain dialogue despite frequent disagreements throughout the discussion could be influenced by two factors: Perceived legitimacy and attitude certainty. That both brought their life experiences as migrant parents into their discussion on Sweden's immigration and refugee policies indicated both were invested in the discussion. This investment combined with a high level of certainty about their own views could be what is needed to create a dynamic in which both have the confidence to disagree but also maintain a mutual respect due to their shared experiences.

Everyday Extremism Framing

There was a successful example (Pairing B) of a politically extreme idea being spread from one person to another via framing the issue as 'fantasy-style' thought experiment. This framing allowed the receiver to move from initial disagreement to developing the idea further that voting rights should be limited for those without a government-mandated knowledge of politics. This type of framing could be a successful way of sustaining dialogue when a challenging issue is raised but could also be a means of spreading everyday extremism.

Relevant Talking Points

The paired discussions highlighted how important the relevance of the talking points are for individuals to engage completely in the process. This seemingly irrelevant or unrepresentative content being shared as stimulus materials for Pairing C provided the opportunity to for one participant to critique the facilitator's questions and distance themselves from the discussion during a moment of disagreement to stop the dialogue.

Post-Discussion Relationship Dynamic

An unintentional outcome of the pairings was the discovery that individuals within two of the pairs were familiar with one another. A distinctive difference between the pairs was that Pairing A were likely to meet again, which was not the case with Pairing C. Consequently, Pairing A were not just interacting with one another in the present but also had to manage a future relationship as members of a political party that would meet again. This is likely to increase the motivation to find moments of consensus and avoid engaging in meaningful disagreements, which is what occurred when comparing Pairing's A and D.

Study B aimed to answer the following: What factors allow participants to sustain dialogue when discussing polarising immigration issues? The findings offer five key outcomes for understanding how individuals engage in direct political dialogue with one another over the challenging issue of immigration on their country of residence (see overview below). In contrast to Study A, there does not seem to be country-specific features in how the pairs sustained dialogue. To the contrary, the strategies used by the individuals to present challenging views and ideas transcended any one location. These outcomes form the basis for the strategies and recommendations in section 10 of the report and what could be implemented to offer specific target groups the opportunity to develop their democratic capacity for engaging with others on polarising political issues

10. Recommendations



This final section offers recommendations to three target audiences, policymakers, dialogical researchers, and practitioners, based on the findings from Deliverable 6.6.

Policymakers

The findings suggest that people can develop their democratic capacity for engaging in challenging political conversations and, potentially, learning more about different political viewpoints. The core idea here is that consensus is not an ideal or goal to be achieved given that democracy relies on groups and individuals that hold, in some cases, irreconcilable views. Instead, the focus should be on increasing the public's capacity for engaging in challenging political discussions. The key aim would be to normalise the idea of dialogue which those who hold conflicting political views that neither descends into personal attacks. Recent research shows that political and cultural divisions are deepening across many Western societies (Garzia et al., 2023; Schmidt-Catran & Czymara, 2023). Cultures of polarisation and political partisanship which frames anyone who disagrees as being a 'enemy' in an 'us vs them' dynamic. In these circumstances, an intervention which develops democratic capacities to normalise the idea that sustaining dialogue with others in order to become comfortable with political disagreements in a more productive manner seems timely. Whilst this ambitious aim requires a multifaceted approach, at the community level, one idea is to create Democratic Capacity Workshops. These would be community spaces that allows different sections of society to build confidence in their ability to speak with others, offer the skills needed to critically evaluate political messages, and start to develop stronger local community bonds. .

At present, in four countries in which this research was conducted, there is little, if any, policy initiatives or funding aimed at creating spaces which affords the public the possibility to explicitly develop their democratic capacities. The closest relevant experiences to these pairing studies in an organised structure are Citizens' Assemblies. These assemblies bring together a representative sample of the public to deliberate on complex and often polarising issues, offering a structured environment in which participants debate a specific policy issue. In recent years, Citizens' Assemblies have contributed to shifting the political thinking on polarising

issues – most notably, the Irish Citizens’ Assembly on Abortion between 2016–2017, which broke years of political deadlock on the issue (Palese, 2018). While such processes do help to foster elements of democratic capacities, i.e.: offering a structured space in which to interact with different political opinions, the aim is to find a consensus with guidance and facilitation from experts. Whilst a valid aim within the context of the assemblies, these experiences may not necessarily offer the opportunities to develop the aforementioned democratic skills. Specifically, an ability to engage directly with individuals who hold different views in an attempt to learn from others (as opposed to reaching a consensus or attempt to ‘win the argument’). A key takeaway from Study B’s findings is that dissensus offers individuals the opportunity to practice and build their democratic capacities. The development of such skills could contribute to future assemblies being a richer experience as those involved will be practiced in how to engage in moments of dissensus.

Researchers

For researchers with a dialogical training or those working in think tanks, the outcomes from the four-nation pairing study offer a number of avenues for future exploration. From both conceptual and methodological perspectives, pairing individuals together in online spaces (transnationally in some cases) to explore dialogue sustainment on a polarising political issue was highly novel. Importantly, it was shown to be an effective means in which to understand how individuals navigate challenging political discussions. That is to say, the connection individual shared over re-evoked political positions seemed to, in some cases, create a dynamic which facilitated further dialogue. However, if the political positions are important enough to the individuals to be re-evoked given a relevant discursive content, a greater understanding of the nature of these positions would be an important area for future study. Does their exist a hierarchy of core positions? i.e.: political positions that are ‘central’ to an individual’s understanding of themselves and how they interact with others? If so, what are the implications for how the public make sense of the political landscape? As found with Pairing B, an idea that could be considered to be an example of everyday extremism (i.e.: limiting voter rights for those that fail a political knowledge test at the voting booth) offered a moment of connection between the pair (despite an initial resistance to the idea by one of the discussants). This relationship between the positions a person may hold privately and the ones they adopt when faced with challenging political views in a public space has clear implications for understanding everyday extremism. Namely, how ideas that previously may have been unpalatable can spread during face-to-face political discussions.

Another recommendation to dialogical researchers is that they explore how this pairing process can be upscaled to further understand the dynamics which allow dialogue to be sustained beyond the pairing format. To understand the political positions adopted by the participants, they were presented with stimulus materials with an explicit political view on the polarising issue of immigration (e.g.: images of protests). The stark views presented in these images prompted the participants to ‘take a position’ on the issue. That is to say, it challenged the participants to adopt a position, be that to advocate for or distance themselves from sections of the public who may hold these views. This method contrasts with other dialogical researchers that use stimulus materials to focus on a person’s life narratives (Silvia, Fernández-Navarro,

Gonçalves, Rosa, & Silvia, 2020; Zittoun et al. 2013). Whilst using stimulus materials exhibiting real-world political issues is already an established method (Coultas, 2020; Mahendran, English, & Nieland, 2021b; Mahendran, Magnusson, Howarth, & Scuzzarello, 2019), this foregrounding of political views in the stimulus materials is novel (especially when used to pair individuals together). Given the time-and labour-intensive process of individual interviews and paired discussions, it is valuable to consider if this process can be developed to move the methodology beyond the micro-focus of paired discussions to explore the potential for a broader application.

Practitioners

The final recommendation is a Sustaining Dialogue Attunement Tool for front-line practitioners working in the field directly with participants (e.g.: a partner working with users of a service). Developed from 6.6's findings, the Sustaining Dialogue Attunement Tool offers those with political differences the space to develop a flexible understanding of those with whom they disagree and recognise their own capacity for sustaining dialogue. Designed to be implemented in WP 7's testing phase, the tool consists of an oppositional thinking exercise in which a target group are paired together and are mediated to engage in political dialogue on a challenging issue. The objective is not to 'win' the argument (although that may be the aim for some), but, rather, to develop this capacity for attunement to sustain dialogue with others without resorting to personal attacks. The following offers an attunement tool which aims to compliment WP 6 – specifically, D 6.5's i-Attune interactive which also offers the public the opportunity to developing democratic capacities via an online interactive on the Open University's Open Learn page.

**YOUTH MIGRATION
FROM KOSOVO**



**Brain-drain
Freedom of choice**

Reasons to leave	Reasons to stay
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment opportunities • Higher salaries • Better education • EU countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family ties • Cultural identity • Economic challenges • Loyalty to Kosovo

Step One - Introducing the Political Issue

The process begins with participants viewing contrasting media content on a politically contentious issue relevant to their local context. For example, if the location were Pristina, the stimulus material could be directed towards the polarising issue of youth migration and the reasons why they are relocating to EU countries. They are then asked to record their personal views via a pro-forma, which is used to identify shared connections between each pair and a contrasting perspective on youth migration issue.

Step Two – Pairing Participants Together

After a review of the completed pro-forma by the group facilitators, the group are divided into pairs on shared and polarising issues. A mediator, ideally a facilitator, oversees each pair, ensuring participants are unaware of their

opposing positions in advance.

Step Three - Developing a Connection

The dialogue commences with an initial phase focused on establishing rapport, during which participants share biographical information and interests, identifying commonalities as a means to foster mutual recognition and respect.

Step Four - Introducing the Polarising Content

Following this, the mediator introduces the, potentially, polarising issue in a neutral manner, guiding participants through a sequence of reflective questions to explore their views, underlying motivations, and perceived differences. This approach allows disagreement to emerge organically rather than being frontloaded, thus reducing defensiveness.

Step Five - Reflection

The session concludes with a group-based reflective exercise, in which both participants and mediators provide feedback on their experience of discussing a potentially polarising topic. Observational and self-reported data from these reflections are used to assess the effectiveness of the dialogue and inform future iterations of the tool. Overall, the tool prioritises democratic attunement by emphasising curiosity, connection, and the practice of disagreement, rather than consensus or persuasion.

Overall, Deliverable 6.6 offers three of the project's target audiences a potential avenue for further exploration regarding how the public can sustain dialogue with one another over challenging political issues. A key aim being to increase the public's democratic capacities regarding how they view those with different political views and their comfort with disagreement that goes beyond consensus-seeking or avoidance. Ultimately, shifting the public interact with those whom they disagree offers the potential to limit the spread of everyday extremism. Specifically, the erosion of the 'us vs them' dynamic of political polarisation which limits everyone's capacity to hear another view or engage in a process of understanding 'the other'.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Study A - Interview Structure

Appendix B: Study A - Interview Extracts

Appendix C: Pairing D - Pairing Process

Appendix D: Pairing C - Paired Discussion Interview Structure

Appendix A: Study A - Interview Structure

(A) Political Engagement questions

1. Are you someone who considers themselves to be a political person?
2. Do you follow the news?
3. Where do you follow the news and local events?
4. Are you active in local or national political or social movements?

(B) Migration Mobility questions

5. How long have you been settled in your current city/ town?
6. Could you describe the reasons why you have stayed here?
7. Have you ever moved away from your current city and then returned?
8. Have you ever planned to leave your country of birth – if not, why not?
9. What is your legal status? (e.g.: citizen, dual-citizenship, asylum seeker, etc.)
10. Are there times when you feel outside of your country of residence?
11. Are you settled or do you think you could move/move again in the future?

(C) Map Comparison Task

12. Why do you prefer the Nation state/border-free map?
13. Interesting to note that your map does/ does not include borders – was this important to you?
14. Do you think that national borders serve a useful purpose?
15. Do you think the world would function without national borders?

(D) Immigration Protest Images

16. What are the first few words that come to mind in response to these images?
17. In some of the images, people are expressing different views about immigration – do you agree with any of the views expressed?
18. Do you think (*participant's country*) has the right approach when it comes to welcoming those from other countries to live and work?
19. Looking ahead, what, if any, concerns do you have about the future of your country regarding migration?
20. If you were in power, how would you do things differently to limit these concerns?

Appendix B: Study A - Interview Extracts

1. I-Threatened-Community-Advocate

Astrid (MMC 1, Pristina)

It's understandable. I mean, if a country is struggling to support its own citizens, I get why people would feel that way. But often, unfortunately, these arguments come from far-right movements with underlying racist and exclusionary motives. If people genuinely want to improve conditions for everyone, including migrants, it's one thing. But too often, the message gets twisted by those who aren't really interested in constructive solutions — they're just looking to place blame.

Penny (MMC 8, Edinburgh)

...I think there's a lot of people that feel left behind and forgotten in this country (Scotland) and that is a real issue that we need to deal with, um...the same thing is happening in America, um, because it's been interesting to see who those groups are putting their faith in to get them out of that situation! I think, I think, I think there is some legitimacy to that to that feeling I imagine they do feel that way but I think there is also racism and anger and hiding behind that.*

2. 'Acceptable' Migrant (social representation)

Gerado (MMC 8, Edinburgh)

So in my personal experience as 'technically' an immigrant, people won't associate me with what they view as an immigrant if you were to ask them if they perceived immigrants in a negative sense. I think it's also always going to be, I don't like to say always, but usually in the current political climate you tend to see arguments against immigration ignoring, avoiding, or sometimes very clearly stating a racial and an ethnic aspect that sort of underpins a lot of the discussion, sometimes explicitly, sometimes without knowing.

3. Borderfree World Threats

Jilly (MMC 10, Malmö)

Whilst the world runs on you know the enrichment of the few then it's never going to you know it's never going to be feasible because you've got this very small proportion of individuals hoarding the majority of the wealth and then the rest kind of fighting over the scraps so I think whilst you've got this kind of very imbalanced system and even within (..) India, I think, now has like the most millionaires anywhere and then you've got absolute abject poverty so even within nation states (..) I think that needs readdressing before we think about having like open borders.

Greta (MMC 8, Malmö)

Even if we took away the borders (..) people would try to find people who are similar to them and stuck together to that which, you know, it happens! It's a utopian fantasy that wouldn't work because as humans we're all chasing our own agenda!

Valerie (MMC 10, Malmö)

I think there's something faulty with humans generally like as species we're kind of corrupt to some extent but I think we are very (..) we always have this need to belong to places.

Norbert (MMC 10, Malmö).

...I mean we have this idea that the world is super big so this is my little part of the world and that's nice because then I feel like I can control this and I can feel at home here of course that's part of being human.

Agim (MMC 4, Pristina)

But, of course, I think it would be more interesting or even better if we had the chance to just remove those borders.

Ellie (MMC 4, Edinburgh)

Oh gosh that's really interesting! I would much rather we did not have the barriers between nations that we have erected and that people could move freely.

4. Migration – The Story of Human History?

Karli (MMC 2, Malmö).

So of course, migration is part of our history. But on the other hand, I also do understand that people have been working hard to build where they live, they care about that, and they value that, and they are not interested in it being taken away. And I can understand that, because of course, I mean, if you are already struggling in your daily life, you're not interested in having more problems.

Flora (MMC 1, Pristina)

I have no, no, uh, statement or thoughts on this because I don't know, it's a bit complicated (...) if we go very back, back in history (.) I don't know (.) it would trigger certain people, for example, because I think that some people tend to be, you know, very protective of their territories, you know, they've been forever in a certain place.

Arben (MMC 4, Pristina).

If you really want to support migrants, maybe you can advocate for their rights, do all the attorney work, and if you are in research or academia, you can write papers, lobby for them, create communities, support them differently. But if you just give us the line that "the history of humanity is a story of migration," yes, we get it. But that doesn't change anything in reality.

Jonah (MMC 1, Pristina).

The history of humanity is a story of migration. I think that, yeah, during the whole history, people have migrated. So, you have Africans that migrated to different parts of Europe. Also, you have different countries and different people that migrated to each other.

Giles (MMC 4, Manchester)

I mean, human beings, or Homo sapiens and previous species of human first migrated out of Africa, Homo sapiens 60,000 years ago, they say. So, clearly, where every country is populated, apart from some places in Africa, arguably, by migrants. So, that's clearly right.

Tyson (MMC 7, Edinburgh)

The inclusive solidarity across borders one is the one that resonates most clearly with me. No sympathy at all with the 'shut our borders to refugees' perspective. Zero. Of all opinions,

it might be the one I have least in common with. I cannot wrap my mind around the perspective, which is desperate people don't deserve our sympathy and support.

Appendix C: Pairing D - Pairing Process

I-Threatened-Community-Advocate

In responding to stimulus materials in section four of Study A, both adopt this advocating position and recognise that communities which feel threatened by high levels of immigration in their area may do so for non-racist reasons (e.g.: lack of investment in local resources, high unemployment, etc).

Amalia

Yeah, I just feel that I just feel that first of all Sweden is really going on the right side and I really feel that (.) I feel that it's not evil but I feel that is a natural response on what has happened in the past years that people want to yeah protect themselves I don't I don't see people going on the right with a swastika on their forehead I see them wanting to protect their economy and not wanting to lose their culture and lose their legacy and lose their whatever you know I can see their side in the same time that I can see that okay it's a prosperous country that could offer asylum that could integrate people that could do good things but can we though can yeah yeah kind of happen yeah can a government that is so good as you want it to be in this discussion (.) to fight against cultural and social norms I mean, I don't know.

Tobais

I absolutely do resonate with this person who has obviously been stripped of, you know, his, I don't know, his mortgage interest loan has skyrocketed or perhaps they lost their homes or the NHS is not getting funded as it should or as it used to be, etc. So this person or this group of people, absolutely, they see their, you know, their, you know, their conditions, life conditions, you know, deteriorate and getting worse and getting worse and getting worse. So I also do resonate with these people.

Acceptable Migrant (SR)

Both share the representation that there is a hierarchy in how a community receives migrants based on many shared features (e.g.: language, ethnicity, cultural values, etc.) they share with the host country as they have experienced this in their own lives.

Amalia

No, so like long story short, you know when the in 2015, you know when the Syrian crisis was, I just moved in Malmo from Denmark and I was really hit by this. I was not watching tv and I was not involved in anything, but it seemed that everywhere I worked or every discussion that you would have, it would involve this hatred of immigrants. And everybody felt so freely to speak in front of me, where myself I was an immigrant, but I was white and I just felt like, of course I knew my privilege, but I think I just got super disgusted by it.

Tobais

From my own personal viewpoint, I have never felt like being discriminated against or anything like that. But I have the feeling that if I came from another country, like, I don't know, Afghanistan or Pakistan or something like that, perhaps that would not be the case. Perhaps it wouldn't be expressed towards myself explicitly.

Projected Polarising Issue: Socialism's potential to help migrants.

Amalia: I-Communist-Critic

Tobais: I-Socialist.

Compared to the other potentially polarising issues, this is more abstract thought experiment on whether changing from a social-democratic to a socialist or communist model will help migrants in Sweden. Born into the post-communist Romania, Amalia is critical of communist or socialist-level state intervention as a failed idea. In Study A, Tobais discussed immigration through a socialist prism and how it could improve the situation for both migrants and those communities who receive them.

Amalia

Well, there is, you know, I don't know, probably you know, but there is two sides in this, if, in loving communism. So for us it was mostly, like I've also studied art. I started history at the university. I have a bachelor's in history. Oh, cool. So for me, like when I, when I went to university, it was always a topic of like, there were all these newly communist young folk that were pro-communism that so on but they completely overlook the reality that communism created for vast majority of people, especially intellectuals that were like the class that was not really happy with how things were going. But of course, for the working class and for the poor people, it was the best time, you know, of moving to the cities and getting jobs and having the security that communism was offering. But for everybody else and especially for art and literature and so on, it was detrimental. It set us back decades, right? If you believe that there should be freedom of religion, of course, communism did not work with that at all, you know. So I think for me personally, I see the prosperity that it brought, but I also see the misery for my family and for myself personally.

Tobais

That's a very interesting question. I don't know if it's evident until now, but I consider myself a socialist, so I really try to bring the class perspective in this sort of discussion. So in my imaginary utopian world or whatever, we would all belong to the same class. So as long as this is a given, I would say that people wouldn't need. Wouldn't see a need for borders in the in the sense of a like a nation state and stuff like that.

Appendix D: Pairing C - Paired Discussion Interview Structure

Stage One: Shared Positioning

I-Border-Pragmatist

One of the ideas that came out of the first study was that a borderless world was a noble aspiration but that it would not be realistic.

1. If you agree, what are some of the reason why it would not be realistic?
2. Do you think economic inequality between countries creates a necessity for borders?
3. Do you think a borderless world will ever be a pragmatic option?

I-Migrating-Youth-Critic

From the discussions in the first study, a notable theme was that young people in Pristina are relocating to EU countries.

1. Why do you think young people are doing this?
2. Do you have any concerns about young people migrating from Kosovo?
3. Do you think is important to incentivise young people to stay in Kosovo?

Stage Two: Projected Polarising Footage

Ask the interviewees to view the polarising footage.

Stage Three: Post-Polarising

One of the areas of focus in the first study was how communities respond to refugees moving into their area.

1. Do you think people are right to feel concerned about refugees moving into their local community?
2. What influence do you think the material circumstances of a person's life (job, home, access to services, etc.) have in creating a resistance to refugees?
3. Do you think people who protest against refugees have racist intentions?
4. As a country, do you think Kosovo should be more empathetic to refugees? (or are things fine at the moment?).



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Extremism through Attuned
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